

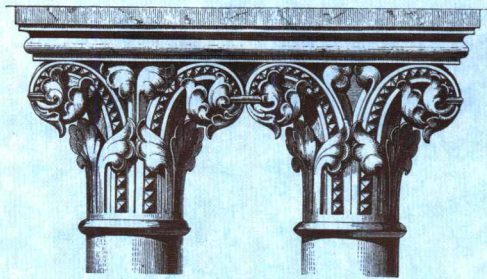
# CRIMINOLOGY TODAY

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FRANK SCHMALLEGER





# CRIMINOLOGY TODAY



**FRANK SCHMALLEGER, PH.D.**

*The Justice Research Association*

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## FOREWARD

The United States is currently witnessing an unprecedented level of violent crime. Not only do the rates of criminal violence exceed anything in our history, but the acts have become more random, more brutal, and targeted toward more vulnerable victims, for example, children and innocent bystanders.

Unfortunately, experts predict another crime wave by the year 2000 because of a projected increase in the number of teenagers in America, who are twice as violent as adults. The next generation of children is also more likely to be born to a single mother, to experience poverty, and to be unemployed than previous generations—all factors known to relate to later criminality. When James Q. Wilson, a foremost authority on crime, wrote recently about what advice he would give to Americans struggling with the crime problem, he offered just two words: “Get ready.”<sup>1</sup>

It is this sense of urgency that creates a daunting challenge for today’s criminology students. Students must, above all, learn criminology so that they can contribute to it’s solutions. In short, *criminology students must seek to become relevant*. We have become too detached from applied criminology, and as a result, current crime policies are overly bureaucratic and highly political. We must strive to change the perception that “criminologists...are insular and detached types who fiddle with equations while the cities burn.”<sup>2</sup>

Criminology is the only academic discipline devoted exclusively to the scientific study of crime causation and control. When the public pressures government officials to “do something” about the crime problem, surely criminologists have an obligation to assist in identifying key issues, proposing policy and program solutions, and evaluating the consequences.

But learning criminology is not easy. In fact, it is hard to imagine a more difficult subject matter than criminology. At its core, criminology requires an understanding of the vagaries of human behavior, with an appreciation of their biological, cultural, and sociological foundations. Each of these contributes a partial explanation for crime, but none is comprehensive and all are fraught with controversy. Understanding crime is made even more complex because the behavior is defined and controlled by a justice system comprised of many diverse organiza-

tions, such as the police and corrections, and each of them is governed by a separate system of complex laws and philosophies. How is one to make sense of all these competing theories and contradictory data?

Thank goodness for Frank Schmalleger's new book, *Criminology Today*! In writing it, he has done most of the hard work for us. He succeeds in making this complex social problem clearly understandable. He begins by describing, in an easy-to-understand manner, the nature and diversity of the crime problem today. He critically reviews the nation's divergent crime indicators, and suggests what recent patterns portend about the crime problem—ever changing, ever more threatening. He then advances our understanding of the causes of crime by synthesizing criminology's most salient theories, grounding his review in current as well as historical traditions. Students can flounder in crime data and theory without a good and objective guide. Dr. Schmalleger serves as an authoritative and compassionate guide.

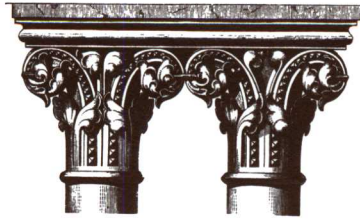
The uniqueness of this book and its biggest strength, derives from Schmalleger's orientation: it is always practical and socially relevant. He teaches the student how to relate criminology facts and theories to the everyday world in which we live. Discussions of the death penalty, for example, are illustrated with newspaper stories of recent executions. And the material covered in the text is particularly up-to-date. Events such as the use of DNA evidence in the O.J. Simpson murder trial, the recent federal Crime Bill, and the Oklahoma City bombing, are all discussed. Including such material not only makes the connection between academic criminology and real-world practice patently obvious, it provides an immediate attention getter for students, who are more likely to become fully engaged by such timely material. In a sense, it makes criminology come alive.

This book synthesizes and interprets the best available evidence on crime and crime control, but it goes still further. In his final chapter, Schmalleger encourages us to consider our future and work towards promoting better crime prevention and control practices. In the end, mastering the material in *Criminology Today* should enable us to do much more than simply sit passively and "get ready" for the next crime wave. For what we understand, we can often change. Schmalleger's text provides an excellent road map for increasing that understanding.

Joan Petersilia, Ph.D.  
Professor of Criminology, Law & Society  
University of California, Irvine  
and former President  
The American Society of Criminology

1. James Q. Wilson and Joan Petersilia, *Crime*, Institute for Contemporary Studies, San Francisco, 1995.
2. Currie, Elliott, "Shifting the Balance: On Social Action and the Future of Criminological Research," *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, Vol. 30, no. 4, 1993.





## PREFACE

More than a quarter century ago the great criminologist Austin Turk, began the preface to his book *Criminality and Legal Order* with these words:<sup>1</sup>

Embarrassment provided much of the initial push that led to the writing of this book. I was embarrassed at my lack of good answers when confronted by students who wondered, somewhat irreverently, why criminology is 'such a confused mish-mash.' ... Some of these students were especially bothered by the 'unreality' of criminological studies, by which they meant the lack of sustained attention to connections between the theories and statistics about crime, and what they heard every day about relations among social conflicts, political maneuvers, and law violation and enforcement.

Much has changed since Turk's time, yet much remains the same. Far more criminological studies have been proposed and conducted. The Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, funded under President Johnson, which made many millions of dollars available in the fight against crime, has come and gone. The Clinton administration's \$30 billion crime bill has become reality, with agencies everywhere scrambling for a part of the financial pie it represents.

Yet crime is still with us, and while crime statistics may actually be showing some decline (although not necessarily because of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, since such decline was evident before the bill's passage), fear of crime continues to run high among wide segments of the American population. Recent public opinion polls conducted by *USA Today*, CNN, and Gallup interviewers all show that crime outranks the economy, health care, foreign policy, and other social issues as the primary concern of the American public today.

Such heightening of concern, while new to many of today's students, appears to follow something of a cyclical pattern. For a long while concerns over individ-

1. Austin Turk, *Criminality and Legal Order* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1969), p. vii.

ual rights have swung the proverbial social and legislative pendulums in what has now come to be seen by many as an overly permissive direction—one in which criminal offenders are coddled and shielded from accountability. Contemporary policy-makers now find themselves awash in calls to reverse the pendulums' direction in order to protect the law-abiding public, to ensure the swift and certain punishment of criminal predators, to unshackle agents of law enforcement, and to make certain that individual offenders are held firmly responsible for their actions.

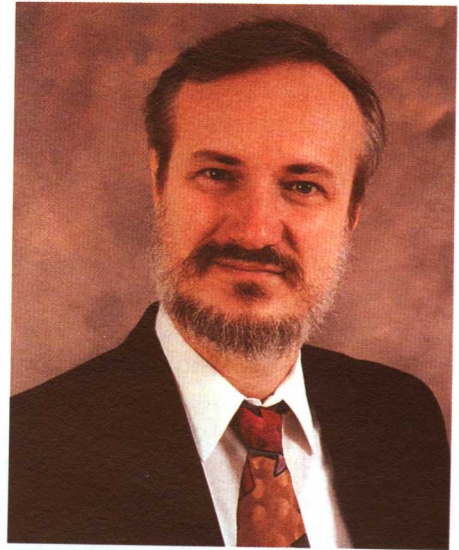
Because of the ever-increasing interest in crime and its causation, today's textbook market is flooded with introductory criminology books. What makes *Criminology Today* different from all the other available texts which deal with the same subject matter? The following list highlights what I see as the important differences:

- *Criminology Today* is up-to-date. It addresses the latest social issues and discusses innovative criminological perspectives within a well-grounded and traditional theoretical framework
- *Criminology Today* is socially relevant. It contrasts contemporary issues of crime and social order with existing and proposed crime-control policies.
- *Criminology Today* is interesting and easy to read. It is written for today's student, and makes use of attention-getting stories, news briefs, images, and graphical outlines to capture student attention.
- *Criminology Today* is policy oriented. Unlike most existing texts, *Criminology Today* stresses the consequences of criminological thought for social policy, and describes the practical issues associated with understanding and controlling crime. Social policies focusing upon prevention, treatment, rehabilitation, and victim restoration are all discussed.
- Finally, *Criminology Today* is thematic. It builds upon the divergence between the social problems viewpoint and the social responsibility perspective. In so doing, it highlights the central issue facing criminologists today: whether crime should be addressed as a matter of individual responsibility and accountability, or treated as a symptom of a dysfunctional society.

The thematic approach of *Criminology Today* presents the social problem perspective as one which holds that crime is a manifestation of underlying cultural issues such as poverty, discrimination, and the breakdown of traditional social institutions. The social responsibility perspective, on the other hand, claims that individuals are fundamentally responsible for their own behavior, and maintains that they choose crime over other, more law-abiding, courses of action. The thematic difference is an important one. Few of today's books provide students with a useful framework for integrating the voluminous material contained within the field. Contrasting the two perspectives, as this book does, provides fertile ground for a dialectical process whereby readers can better understand the central issues defining contemporary criminology and come to their own conclusions about the value of criminological theorizing.

As an author I have tried to ensure that today's students will find *Criminology Today* relevant, interesting, and informative. It is my fondest hope that this book will assist them in drawing their own conclusions about the American crime problem, that it will help prepare them for the future, and that it will allow them to

make informed decisions about public policy in the crime-control area. For one day it is they who will forge public policy, and it is they who will soon be writing books like this one.



Frank Schmalleger, Ph. D., Director  
The Justice Research Association





## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A book like *Criminology Today* draws upon the talents and resources of many people, and is the end result of much previous effort. This text could not have been written without the groundwork laid by previous criminologists, academicians, and researchers. Hence, a hearty “thank you” is due everyone who has contributed to the development of the field of criminology throughout the years, and especially those theorists, authors, and social commentators who are cited in this book. Without their work the field would be that much poorer. I would like to thank, as well, all the adopters—professors and students alike—of my previous textbooks, for they have given me the encouragement and fostered the steadfastness required to write *Criminology Today*.

The Prentice Hall team whom I have come to know so well, and which has worked so professionally with me on this and other projects deserves a special thanks. The team includes: Robin Baliszewski, Janet McGillicuddy, Rose Mary Florio, Judy Casillo, Fred Hamden, Sally Ann Bailey and Chris Pullo. My thanks also to cover designer, Bruce Kenselaer, and interior designer Patrice Sheridan, whose efforts have helped make *Criminology Today* both attractive and visually appealing.

Manuscript reviewers Michael P. Brown, Ph.D., Ball State University; Mark L. Dantzker, Ph.D., Loyola University; Joan Luxenburg, Ed. D., University of Central Oklahoma; Glen E. Sapp, Central Carolina Community College; Dianne Carmody, Ph.D., Western Washington University; Martin E. Heischmidt, Rend Lake College; and Anthony W. Zumpetta, Ed. D., West Chester University, are due a special “thank you” for helping me stick to important themes when I might otherwise have strayed, and for their guidance in matters of detail. I am especially thankful to supplements author Michael Brown for the quality products he has created, and for his exceptional ability to intuitively build upon concepts in the text.

This book has benefited greatly from the quick availability of information and other resources which are available through on-line services such as America-on-Line and Compuserve, and in various locations on the Internet’s World Wide Web. I am grateful to the many information providers who, although they must remain anonymous, have helped establish such useful resources.

I am thankful as well for the assistance of Bill Tafoya and Nancy Carnes, both with the FBI; David Beatty, Director of Public Affairs with the National Victim Center; Chris Rose Crisafulli at the National Criminal Justice Reference Service; and Barbara Maxwell at *USA Today*.

Last, but by no means least, I wish to thank my family—my wife, Harmonie; daughter, Nicole; and mother, Margaret—for their very personal help and encouragement.





## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Frank Schmallegger, Ph.D., is Director of The Justice Research Association, a private consulting firm and “think-tank” focusing on issues of crime and justice. The Justice Research Association, which is based in Hilton Head Island, South Carolina, serves the needs of the nation’s civil and criminal justice planners and administrators through workshops, conferences, and grant-writing and program evaluation support.

Dr. Schmallegger holds degrees from the University of Notre Dame and the Ohio State University, having earned both a master’s (1970) and doctorate in sociology (1974) from Ohio State University with a special emphasis in criminology. From 1976-1994 he taught criminal justice courses at Pembroke State University, a campus of the University of North Carolina. For the last 16 of those years he chaired the university’s Department of Sociology, Social Work, and Criminal Justice. As an adjunct professor with Webster University in St. Louis, Missouri, Schmallegger helped develop the university’s graduate program in security administration and loss prevention. He taught courses in that curriculum for more than a decade. Schmallegger has also taught in the New School for Social Research’s on-line graduate program, helping to build the world’s first electronic classrooms in support of distance learning through computer telecommunications.

Frank Schmallegger is the author of numerous articles and many books, including the widely used *Criminal Justice Today: An Introductory Text for the 21st Century* (Prentice Hall), now in its third edition; *Criminal Justice: A Brief Introduction* (Prentice Hall, 1994); *Computers in Criminal Justice* (Wyndham Hall Press, 1991); *Career Paths: A Guide to Jobs in Federal Law Enforcement* (Regents/Prentice Hall, 1994); *Criminal Justice Ethics* (Greenwood Press, 1991); *Finding Criminal Justice in the Library* (Wyndham Hall Press, 1991); *Ethics in Criminal Justice* (Wyndham Hall Press, 1990); *A History of Corrections* (Foundations Press of Notre Dame, 1983); and *The Social Basis of Criminal Justice* (University Press of America, 1981).

Schmallegger is also founding editor of the journal *The Justice Professional*. He serves as editor for the Prentice Hall series *Criminal Justice in the Twenty-First Century*, and as Imprint Advisor for Greenwood Publishing Group’s criminal justice reference series. His most recent project involves development of an encyclopedia

on crime and justice for Greenwood Publishing Group, for which he has been asked to serve as editor-in-chief.

Schmallegger's philosophy of both teaching and writing can be summed up in these words: "In order to communicate knowledge we must first catch, then hold, a person's interest—be it student, colleague, or policy-maker. Our writing, our speaking, and our teaching must be relevant to the problems facing people today, and they must—in some way—help solve those problems."






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