Research on gender and crime emerged as a distinctive subfield within American criminology in the 1980s, and has developed significantly since that time. Today, research in this area is represented by a diversity of perspectives and methods. This presentation will walk through major periods of development in the field, discussing the contributions of each and tracing the pathways to contemporary ways of thinking about gender, crime, and violence. The presentation will argue that much of the current research on gender, crime, and violence can be viewed from a “choice within constraint” framework. This perspective moves beyond deterministic views of the effects of social structures on offending by emphasizing that gender, race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, and other structural locations combine to create a complex tapestry of opportunities and motivations that shape crime and violence across groups and situations. The choice within constraint framework focuses on how multiple inequalities shape micro-level interactions, while also allowing for agency in how people respond to social and structural opportunities and constraints.

Karen Heimer, PhD., is Professor and Chair of Sociology at the University of Iowa. She also holds appointments in the Public Policy Center and the Department of Gender, Women’s and Sexuality Studies at Iowa. Her research focuses on gender and crime, violence against women and minorities, juvenile delinquency, and imprisonment. Heimer currently is working with Janet Lauritsen and Joseph Lang studying the factors associated with violence against minorities and women over time (funded by NSF and NIJ). She also studies perceptions of motherhood among women in prison with Stacy De Coster, and is continuing research on juvenile delinquency, women’s offending, and imprisonment trends. She is co-editor of Gender and Crime: Patterns of Victimization and Offending (with Candace Kruttschnitt). Heimer received the 2012 Distinguished Scholar Award from the American Society of Criminology’s Division on Women and Crime, and became an ASC Fellow in 2015. She is a past chair of the Crime, Law, and Deviance Section of the American Sociological Association. She has served terms as ASC Executive Counselor (2008-2012) and ASC Vice-President (2014), and is currently ASC President-Elect.

Wednesday, May 10th
Reception at 4:30 p.m. – Lecture at 5:00 p.m.
Standish Room, Science Library 300
UAlbany Uptown Campus, 1400 Washington Ave.
This event is free and open to the public.

Event hosted by the Michael J. Hindelang Criminal Justice Research Center and University Auxiliary Services