

**Criminological Theories**

Code: 100444  
ECTS Credits: 12

| Degree              | Type | Year | Semester |
|---------------------|------|------|----------|
| 2500257 Criminology | OB   | 2    | A        |

**Contact**

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**Use of Languages**

Principal working language: catalan (cat)  
Some groups entirely in English: No  
Some groups entirely in Catalan: No  
Some groups entirely in Spanish: No

**Other comments on languages**

Should the course be attended by international students, lectures and one seminar will be taught in Spanish. One of the seminars will be taught in English

**Teachers**

Esther de la Encarnación Ordóñez  
María Constanza Busquets Borgheresi  
Anna Melendez Pereto

**Prerequisites**

To follow the course a minimum level of B1 in English is required. To have passed Introduction to Criminology and Criminological Language is strongly recommended. Students that wished to improve their English may attend a seminar in English.

**Objectives and Contextualisation**

The aim of "Theoretical Criminology" is that the student know the different explanations of offending, both at individual level- origen, maintenance and cessation of offending- and at ecological level, explaining the different rates of crime in different contexts.

In the degree, theories of crime are the main framework for criminological research, that will be oriented to validate a criminological theory or an integrations of theories. On the other hand, once the theories have received empirical confirmation, they should be the basis for crime prevention and intervention with offenders.

The general aim of the subject is that the student is able "To understand the criminological theories and reflect on them". The specific aims are: knowing the structure, hypothesis, empirical validity and implications of each theoretical theory. The student should be able to plan a research theoretically oriented. Furthermore, the student should be able to analyze a criminological problem and make suggestions for primary, secondary o tertiary crime prevention based on theory.

## Competences

- Ability to analyse and summarise.
- Analysing the conflict and criminology by using the criminological theories and their psychological and sociological foundations.
- Drawing up an academic text.
- Generating innovative and competitive proposals in research and professional activity.
- Reflecting on the foundations of criminology (theoretical, empirical and ethical-political ones) and expressing this in analysis and propositions.
- Students must be capable of autonomously updating their criminological knowledge.
- Students must demonstrate they comprehend the criminological theories.
- Verbally transmitting ideas to an audience.
- Working autonomously.
- Working in teams and networking.

## Learning Outcomes

1. Ability to analyse and summarise.
2. Drawing up an academic text.
3. Effectively using the theoretical foundations of criminology.
4. Generating innovative and competitive proposals in research and professional activity.
5. Inferring the scientific knowledge of criminology in the applied field.
6. Students must show interest for the scientific updates in the criminological field.
7. Using the psychosocial model in order to analyse criminality.
8. Verbally transmitting ideas to an audience.
9. Working autonomously.
10. Working in teams and networking.

## Content

### A) FIRST SEMESTER: THEORIES OF CRIME

1. Introduction
2. Rational choice theory
3. Biological theories
4. Ecological theories
5. Differential association theory
6. Anomy theory
7. Theories of gang delinquency
8. Control theory
9. Labelling theory
10. Critical Criminology
11. Integrated theories.
12. Balance of theories.

### B) SECOND SEMESTER: THEORIES FOR ESPECIFIC ISSUES

1. Life-course theories of criminological development

2. Family and crime
3. Peers and crime
4. Gender and crime
5. School and crime
6. Immigration and crime
7. Social welfare and crime
8. Neighborhood and crime
9. Spaces and crime
10. Religion, radicalism and crime
11. Exclusion, reintegration and crime
12. Criminological theories and desistance
13. Theoretical criminology and crime prevention

## **Methodology**

### A) Lectures

Theories of crime will be exposed by the professor. During the lectures, activities to promote reflection, incite debate, and check learning will be carried out.

### B) Seminars to discuss criminological papers

Students will attend the seminar having read the paper and written an essay answering questions suggested by professors. During the seminar students will have the opportunity to hear different opinions from students and professor, solve doubts, debating main ideas and, as a result, increase the learning on criminological theories.

### C) Annual work seminars

The annual group work consists of suggesting a prevention program for a crime problem based on one criminological theory. The annual work will be carried by group of 2 or 3 students and will last the two semesters of the course. Once each group have been assigned a single criminological theory, the stages of the annual work are the following:

- Learning of the criminological theory
- Define a crime problem that the theory may explain
- Select hypothesis to explain this crime problem
- Carry out a bibliographical research to look for confirmation or refutation of the hypothesis
- Conclude with hypothesis that have empirical confirmation
- Suggest a draft prevention program based on the hypothesis of theory that have been confirmed
- Carry out a bibliographical research about effectiveness of similar prevention programs
- Approach to the context of intervention toknow prevention programs already on work

- Present your prevention program
- Final presentation of the annual work

The group of students will attend the seminars having prepared the programmed stage of the annual work. During the seminars, students will present their progress and will receive feed-back from other students and professors. Some of the initial seminars will be devoted to teach students about how to carry out a bibliographical research and present the results following academic standards.

#### d) Tutorials

Students have the right to receive tutorials by the professors of the course. Mandatory tutorials may be established to assist students in the annual work and to supervise their progress in the achievement of the learning outcomes.

## Activities

| Title  | Hours | ECTS | Learning Outcomes      |
|--|-------|------|------------------------|
| Type: Directed   |       |      |                        |
| Lectures   | 39    | 1.56 | 4, 5, 6, 1, 8, 3, 7    |
| Seminars   | 39    | 1.56 | 5, 6, 8, 10, 3         |
| Type: Autonomous   |       |      |                        |
| Exam. Questions on criminological theories and criminological problems | 10    | 0.4  | 4, 5, 6, 1, 9, 3, 7    |
| Group research project   | 70    | 2.8  | 5, 3                   |
| Individual work. Study of criminological handbooks and papers          | 142   | 5.68 | 4, 5, 6, 2, 1, 9, 3, 7 |

## Assessment

### Evaluation model

The course follows a continuous evaluation model in which the students will be able to know their level of achievement of the learning outcomes of the course,

During the course students should:

- Present 12 essays, discussing a criminological paper. Students will receive a mark of each essay, with suggestions to improve performance. Maximum length of essays; 1200 words,
- Do the annual work group. Students will present the progress in their work and receive the feed-back from the professor. At the end of each semester a written essay should be submitted and an oral presentation should be done.
- Do two exams, at the end of each semester. In exams students need to show learning of the lectures, handbook and mandatory reading of the course. Further references to prepare the exam will be proposed
- Attend lectures and seminars and participate actively in them. Non-attendance is only justifiable in case of illness or similar reasons.

Requirements to be evaluated

Students would only be assessed when: a) they attend a minimum of 80% of lectures and seminars; b) present at least 10/12 essays; c) do the annual work; d) do the two exams.

#### Items of evaluation

a) Lectures (25%)

b) Annual work (25%). The mark of the annual work is composed by written work (75%) and oral presentation (25%).

c) Attendance and participation (25%). Attendance counts 50% and participation 50%. Each student starts with 10 points in attendance and loses 1 point for each non-justifiable absence to lectures or seminars. The mark of participation has five levels: A (Excellent), 10 points, B (Very good): 7.5 points; C (acceptable): 5 points; D (not sufficient): 2.5 points and E (a lot to improve): 0 points

d) Exam (25%)

At the end of each semester students will obtain a global grade. The final grade will be the average between the two semesters.

#### Requirements to pass the subject

Students need to obtain a minimum mark of 5/10 in each of the four item of evaluation.

#### Resit

Essays with a fail mark may be repeated during the course. Students will have a second chance to pass the exams. In case of fail in the annual work, students will have the possibility to improve their annual work in the exam period. Non-justifiable absences that exceed 20% will conduct to a fail mark in the subject. The maximum mark in case of retake is 5.

#### Other important aspects of the evaluation

-Essays out of time will not accepted and the student will get a fail mark (0), without possibility of late assignment .Only excuses based on illness or similar reasons may be accepted.

-In case a student have a final fail in the exam of the first semester, he/she will have the possibility of taking part in an "improvement seminar" during the second semester, The seminar will be carried out of class hours and at the end students will need to pass an exam. Failure to attend the seminar or failure to pass the exam will conduct to a fail mark in the subject.

-Students with a final mark of 8, as average of the two semesters, that have obtained a mark of 8 in the exam of the second semester, will obtain one point extra. Once this extra point is counted, students with the best marks equal or higher to 9, will be candidates for honours.

#### Fraudulent conduct

Cheating or attempt to cheat in exams will conduct of a fail mark (0) and the student will lose the right of a new assessment. Plagiarism in essays will conduct to a fail mark (0) and warning. In case of relapse, the student will obtain a fail mark (0) and will lose the right of a new assessment.

#### Punctuality

Lectures and seminars start on time. Late arrival will not be admitted.

## Assessment Activities

| Title | Weighting | Hours | ECTS | Learning Outcomes |
|-------|-----------|-------|------|-------------------|
|-------|-----------|-------|------|-------------------|

|   |     |   |   |                            |
|---|-----|---|---|----------------------------|
| Annual group work                                     | 25% | 0 | 0 | 4, 5, 6, 2, 1, 8, 10, 3, 7 |
| Attendance and participation in lectures and seminars | 25% | 0 | 0 | 4, 5, 6, 1, 8, 3, 7        |
| Exam  | 25% | 0 | 0 | 4, 5, 6, 1, 9, 3, 7        |
| Individual essays                                     | 25% | 0 | 0 | 4, 5, 6, 2, 1, 9, 3, 7     |

## Bibliography

### A. Mandatory handbooks

Students need to be familiar with one of these handbooks. Knowledge of the handbooks is required in the exam. Handbooks are also useful to prepare essays and for the annual work

-Cid, J. & Larrauri, Elena (2001). *Teorías criminológicas*. Barcelona: Bosch.

-Bernard, T. Snipes, J. & Gerould, A. (2015). *Vold's theoretical criminology*. New York: Oxford University Press.

### B. Mandatory readings

Students need to present one essay on these readings. The knowledge of the readings will be required also in exams.

1. Bottoms, A. & Von Hirsch, A. (2010). The crime preventive impact of penal sanctions. In P. Cane & H. Kritzer (eds.), *Oxford handbook of empirical-legal research* (pp. 97-124). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

2. Moffitt, Terrie (1993). Adolescence-limited and life-course-persistent antisocial behaviour: A developmental taxonomy. *Psychological review*, 100(4), 674-701.

3. Stark, R. (1987). Deviant places: A theory of the ecology of crime. *Criminology*, 25(4): 893-909.

4. Burgess, R. & Akers, R. (1966). A differential association-reinforcement theory of criminal behavior. *Social problems*, 14, 128-147.

5. Cullen, F. (1988). Were Cloward and Ohlin strain theorists? Delinquency and opportunity revisited. *Journal of research in crime and delinquency*, 25(3), 214-241.

6. Sykes, G. & Matza, D. (1957). Techniques of neutralization: A theory of delinquency. *American sociological review*, 22(6), 664-670.

7. Tremblay, R. (2007). The development of youth violence: An old story with new data. *European journal of criminal policy and research*, 13, 161-170.

8. Cullen F. (1994). Social support as an organizing concept for criminology: Presidential address to the academy of criminal justice sciences. *Justice quarterly*, 11(4), 527-559.

9. Gasmick, H; Tittle, C; Bursik, R; Arneklev, B (1993). Testing the core empirical implications of Gottfredson and Hirschy's general theory of crime. *Journal of research in crime and delinquency*, 30(1): 5-29.

10. Sampson, R., Laub, J. (1997). A life-course theory of cumulative disadvantage and the stability of delinquency. In T. Thornberry (ed.), *Developmental theories of crime and delinquency* (pp. 113-161). New Brunswick: Transaction publishers..

11. Unnever, J., Colvin, M. & Cullen, F. (2004). Crime and coercion: a text of core theoretical propositions. *Journal of research in crime and delinquency*, 41: 244-267.

12. Lynch, M; Stretesky, P (2001). Radical criminology. In R. Paternoster & R. Bachman (eds.), *Explaining criminals and crime* (pp. 267-286). Los Angeles: Roxbury Publishing Company.

C. Other recommended handboks

-Medina, J. (2011). *Políticas y estrategias de prevención del delito y seguridad ciudadana*. Buenos Aires: Edisofer.

-Wilson, J. Q. & Petersilia, Joan (eds) (2001), *Crime. Public policies for crime control*. Oakland: ICS Press.