

## **Criminological Theories**

Code: 100444  
ECTS Credits: 12

**2025/2026**

Degree	Type	Year
Criminology	OB	2

### **Contact**

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### **Teachers**

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### **Teaching groups languages**

You can view this information at the [end](#) of this document.

### **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.

The subject follows the Sustainable Objectives Goals (SOG)

Language of the course:

Lectures (Prof. Josep Cid i Anna Meléndez): Catalan (in case the course would be attended by exchange students, unable to follow the course in Catalan, the language will be Spanish).

Seminars

11 (Prof. Ainoa Torrado): Catalan

12 (Prof. Laura Zurera): English

13 (Prof. Héctor Sánchez): Spanish

### **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 structural 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.

Students should be able to plan a theoretically oriented research. Furthermore, students 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.
- Students must demonstrate they know a variety of criminal policies in order to face criminality and its different foundations.
- Verbally transmitting ideas to an audience.
- Working autonomously.
- Working in teams and networking.

## **Learning Outcomes**

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

## **Content**

### **A) FIRST SEMESTER: THEORIES OF CRIME**

1. Introduction. Concept and meaning of theories of crime.

2. Rational choice theory
  3. Biological theories
  4. Social disorganization theory
  5. Differential association theory
  6. Anomy theory
  7. Theories of gang delinquency
  8. Control theory
  9. Labelling theory
  10. Critical Criminology
  11. Criminological theories: implications for crime prevention
- B) SECOND SEMESTER: THEORIES FOR ESPECIFIC ISSUES**

1. Introduction
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, space and crime
9. White collar crime
10. Religion and crime
11. Theories of desistance

## Activities and Methodology

Title	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Type: Directed			
Lectures	39	1.56	5, 6, 7, 1, 9, 4, 8
Seminars	39	1.56	6, 7, 9, 11, 4
Type: Autonomous			
Exam. Questions on criminological theories and criminological problems	10	0.4	5, 6, 7, 1, 10, 4, 8
Group reserach project	70	2.8	6, 4

**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. During the seminar, students will answer some questions to check the learning and will do a practical activity related to the subject of the reading.

**C) Group Research Project seminars****(i) Aim**

The group research project is focused on a systematic revision of the research in a specific criminological topic. Through this work students will learn about the meaning of doing an evidence-based criminological practice. The structure of the research group project will be detailed at the beginning of the course.

**(ii) Seminar activities**

First seminars will be devoted to understanding the systematic revision methodology. In following seminars students will present their progress and receive feedback from students and professor.

**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.

Annotation: Within the schedule set by the centre or degree programme, 15 minutes of one class will be reserved for students to evaluate their lecturers and their courses or modules through questionnaires.

**Assessment****Continuous Assessment Activities**

Title	Weighting	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Annual Group Research Project	25%	0	0	2, 5, 6, 7, 3, 1, 9, 11, 4, 8
Attendance and participation in lectures and seminars	25%	0	0	5, 6, 7, 1, 9, 4, 8
Exam	25%	0	0	5, 6, 7, 1, 10, 4, 8
Individual essays	25%	0	0	5, 6, 7, 3, 1, 10, 4, 8

**Evaluation model**

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

During the course students should:

- a) Preparing 10 readings and doing exercises in class to discuss issues of the reading. Students will receive a mark of each essay, with suggestions to improve performance.
- b) Do the annual Group Research Project. 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.
- c) 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
- d) Attend lectures and seminars and participate actively in them. Non-attendance is only justifiable in case of illness or similar reasons. Absence due to academic reasons should be accepted in advance by the professor of the course.

Minimum requirements to be eligible to pass the course and to be assessed

Students would be eligible to pass the course when: a) they attend a minimum of 80% of lectures and seminars; b) do the 5 essays per semester; d) do the annual work; d) do the two exams.

Students will be assessed if they have carried out a set of activities whose weight is equivalent to a minimum of 2/3 of the total grade for the subject. If the value of the activities carried out does not reach this threshold, the subject's teaching staff may consider the student as non-assessable.

Items of evaluation

- a) Essays on Lectures (25%)
- b) Annual Group Research Project (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 grade of participation has six levels: Excellent: 10 points; Very good: 8.5 points; Good: 7 points; Acceptable: 5.5 points; Not sufficient: 4 points, in need of improvement: 2.5 points. Participation will be assessed taking both participation in lectures and seminars into consideration.
- 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 items 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 Group Research Project, students will have the possibility to improve 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 be accepted, and the student will get a fail grade (0), without possibility of late assignment. Only excuses based on illness or similar reasons may be accepted.

-In case a student has 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 grade 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.

#### Punctuality

Lectures and seminars start on time. Late arrival and leaving the class before the end will not be admitted, provided there is not reasonable justification.

#### Respect

Students are expected to have a respectful attitude towards the rest of the students. No offensive or discriminatory behavior (due to birth, race, sex, religion, opinion, or any other personal or social circumstance) will be admitted during classes.

#### Single assessment system

It will consist of three exams:

1st) 4 questions on the book of J. Cid & Elena Larrauri (2023). *Teorías criminológicas* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Bosch.

2nd) 4 questions on the mandatory reading of the course. Students need to show that they have a deep knowledge on the readings and they can extract implications for crime prevention.

3<sup>rd</sup>) One question on doing a systematic review in criminology. Students should demonstrate knowledge on this methodology.

## Bibliography

### A. Mandatory handbooks

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

-Cid, J. & Larrauri, Elena (2023). *Teorías criminológicas* (2nd ed.). Bosch.

-Snipes, J., Bernard, T., & Gerould, A. (2019). *Vold's theoretical criminology* (8th ed.). Oxford University Press.

### B. Mandatory readings

The knowledge of these readings will be checked in the essays written in class and they are also required in final 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 University Press.  
<https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199542475.013.0005>

2. Tremblay, R. (2007). The development of youth violence: An old story with new data. *European Journal of Criminal Policy and Research*, 13, 161-170. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10610-007-9050-7>

3. Sykes, G., & Matza, D. (1957). Techniques of neutralization: A theory of delinquency. *American Sociological Review*, 22(6), 664-670. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2089195>
4. Grasmick, H., Tittle, C., Bursik, R., & Arneklev, B. (1993). Testing the core empirical implications of Gottfredson and Hirschi's general theory of crime. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, 30(1), 5-29. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00224278930300010>
5. Lynch, M., & Stretesky, P (2001). Radical criminology. In R. Paternoster & R. Bachman (Eds.), *Explaining criminals and crime* (pp. 267-286). Roxbury Publishing Company.
6. Moffit, Terrie (1993). Adolescence-limited and life-course-persistent antisocial behaviour: A developmental taxonomy. *Psychological Review*, 100(4), 674-701. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-295X.100.4.674>
7. Cullen, F. (1988). Were Cloward and Ohlin strain theorists? Delinquency and opportunity revisited. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, 25(3), 214-241. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00224278880250030>
8. Unnever, J., Colvin, M., & Cullen, F. (2004). Crime and coercion: a text of core theoretical propositions. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, 41(3), 244-267. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022427803257251>
9. 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. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07418829400092421>
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). Transaction Publishers

#### C. Other recommended handbooks

- Medina, J. (2011). *Políticas y estrategias de prevención del delito y seguridad ciudadana*. Edisofer.
- Wilson, J. Q., & Petersilia, Joan (eds) (2001). *Crime. Public policies for crime control*. ICS Press.

## Software

No specific computer program is used in the course

## Groups and Languages

Please note that this information is provisional until 30 November 2025. You can check it through this [link](#). To consult the language you will need to enter the CODE of the subject.

Name	Group	Language	Semester	Turn
(SEM30) Seminaris (30 estudiants per grup)	11	Catalan	annual	morning-mixed
(SEM30) Seminaris (30 estudiants per grup)	12	English	annual	morning-mixed
(SEM30) Seminaris (30 estudiants per grup)	13	Spanish	annual	morning-mixed
(TE) Theory	1	Catalan	annual	morning-mixed