CRIM 3: 2019-20 Long Essays on a range of criminological topics

Course organiser: Professor Loraine Gelsthorpe

Supervisors: to be arranged by the Institute of Criminology depending on essay titles chosen.

Deadlines: Essay 1 due on Monday 20 January 2020, by 12.00 noon
Essay 2 due on Monday 27 April 2020, by 12.00 noon

Introduction: This Paper gives student opportunity to pursue particular interests in Criminology in some depth. With the help and guidance of a supervisor, you will have a chance to engage in independent reading and research.

Assessment: The paper is assessed by means of two long essays of 5000 words each. You are asked to choose two questions from a list that is published each year by the Faculty Board.

Aims and Objectives

- To give students the opportunity to investigate criminological questions and to pursue specific issues and topics in some depth.
- To encourage students to think carefully about criminological concepts and to analyse them rigorously.
- To encourage students to think about the nature of criminological arguments and explanations.
- To encourage students to think about the relation between theory and empirical research and to consider the suitability of the research methods used to answer particular questions in studies.
- To encourage students to think about the kinds of evidence that can be used to support and/or criticise theories and arguments and to weigh up evidence in a careful and considered way.
- To encourage students to write clearly and to develop reasoned criminological arguments of their own.

Teaching
This paper is taught primarily by supervision. There is one introductory lecture for this paper at the beginning of Michaelmas Term. All other teaching for the paper is by means of supervision. There will be three one hour supervisions for each essay.

In the first supervision you can discuss your chosen question with your supervisor in a preliminary way, define how you will approach the question and ask your supervisor for help in putting together an initial reading list.
In the second supervision you can discuss your progress on the basis of a written outline for your essay. In the third supervision you can discuss a draft of your essay with your supervisor. Supervisors will not read more than one draft of your essay.

You will be expected to work on your essays during full term and to be supervised during full term. Unless there are exceptional circumstances where your Director of Studies has provided evidence that you were unable to work for a significant period of time during term, supervisors may refuse to read drafts outside of full term.

CRIM 3 Long Essay Titles for 2019-20

1. ‘Crime is a sociopolitical artefact, not a natural phenomenon. We can have as much or as little crime as we please, depending on what we choose to count as criminal.’ (Herbert PACKER, 1968). Discuss.

2. The fear of crime is sometimes exaggerated by the media. In what ways, if any, does it impact upon the lives of the citizens of late modern societies?

3. Are prevention and protection better than cure when it comes to dealing with mentally disordered offenders?

4. What, if anything, works in reducing offending behaviour amongst adult offenders?

5. ‘Restorative justice is a different way of approaching crime. It asks, firstly, not how do we punish, but how do we restore the wellbeing of the victim, the offender and the community?’ What are the prospects for effective restorative justice in British community life?

6. ‘Crime control, rather than crime itself, is the real danger for our future.’ Discuss.

7. Evaluate the claim that in order to advance knowledge about criminality we need to develop theories which integrate individual and sociological levels of explanation.

8. Critically discuss the relationship between crime, the media, and politics.

9. ‘As one reads history . . . one is absolutely sickened not by the crimes the wicked have committed, but by the punishments the good have inflicted’ (Oscar WILDE, 1891). Should any present-day punishments in England and Wales evoke a similar sense of revulsion?
10. Critically discuss the importance of gender to understandings of pathways into and out of crime.

11. What are the possibilities of re-envisioning critical criminology in the 21st century?

12. ‘An awful lot of crime, from joyriding to murder, from telephone kiosk vandalism to rape, involves much more than an instrumental motivation. Recent work in cultural criminology points to the wide swathe of crime that is expressive rather than narrowly instrumental’ (Jock Young, 2003). What kind of prevention policies have potential to be effective against expressive crimes committed?

13. How can we best understand both the ‘punitive turn’ and the ‘victimological turn’ in late modern society?

14. How best can we explain the disproportionately high number of Black and Minority Ethnic people in prison in England and Wales?

15. ‘Our correctional system reproduces all of the ingredients known to promote violence: isolation, discomfort, pain, exposure to other violent individuals, and general insecurity. In prison we have created a laboratory that predictably reproduces and reinforces aggression . . .’ (Dorothy Otnow LEWIS, 1999). Do prisons do more harm than good?

16. What, if anything, is wrong with the current ways of dealing with young offenders? What might be done differently?

Registering your choices
All students taking this paper must register their choices for their first and second questions with Odette Rogers (ohmr3@cam.ac.uk) in the Sociology Office in 16 Mill Lane by the end of the first week of Michaelmas Term. For each question, please indicate a second choice in case there is a shortage of supervisors for your first-choice question.

Reading
There are no published reading lists for the questions. Reading for each question will be suggested by your supervisor, who may encourage you to look for additional readings and sources yourself.

Deadlines
One electronic version of the first essay should be sent to enquiries@sociology.cam.ac.uk
by **12:00 on Monday 20 January 2020** , one electronic copy of the second essay by **12:00 on Monday 27 April 2020**. As with all material submitted for examination, the marking is anonymous; please do NOT put your name and college on the essay.

**Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is citing the work of others verbatim, as if it were your own, although it does not extend to acknowledging what a supervisor will have said to you in conversation or any note on your work. It includes a paraphrase of the work of others where you do not acknowledge it in a note or some indication of the kind ‘Weber argued’ in the text. It also includes cutting and pasting from the web. If you take material from websites, you must acknowledge it in the same way as from books, articles, and other paper texts.

Plagiarism is a serious offence, and is more readily detected—even from an obscure textual source or a remote site on the web—than you might imagine. It can lead to the University taking disciplinary action. You must read the Faculty’s guidelines on:  
[https://www.hsps.cam.ac.uk/current-students/course-materials/c-m-files/plagiarism](https://www.hsps.cam.ac.uk/current-students/course-materials/c-m-files/plagiarism)

**Assessment**

The marking criteria for the assessment of long essays are available on the website.