

Compulsory courses

Master Forensics, Criminology and Law compulsory courses

Faculty of Law

Criminological Perspectives

Full course description

The course Criminological Perspectives will introduce students to the field of crime, crime causation and crime control. More specifically, the course will provide a better understanding of:

- 1) The assumptions our scientific knowledge of crime (development) is based upon;
- 2) Various explanations of crime from different disciplines and on various levels;
- 3) Possibilities to apply and integrate criminological theories;
- 4) The rationale behind the contemporary response to crime.

By reviewing current as well as former insights, the development of criminology as a science is portrayed, as well as the way it is influenced by developments in society.

The course is characterized by tutorial groups where, according to the PBL model, students apply their insights to current cases, real-life problems and policy issues. In addition, a number of weblectures will be given.

Course objectives

Upon completion of this course, the student must:

- Be able to recognise the differences and similarities between the various theoretical movements as to research questions, explanations, assumptions, levels of explication and opportunities for theoretical integration;
- Know the contents of the main criminological explications and be able to apply them to concrete (knowledge) issues;
- Be able to draw conclusions based on information about research results as to the empirical tenability of theories;
- Be able to comprehend the rationale behind the current fight against and prevention of crime and substantiate this with practical examples.

CRI4017

Period 1

2 Sep 2024

25 Oct 2024

[Print course description](#)

ECTS credits:

- [J.M. Nelen](#)

Teaching methods:

PBL, Lecture(s)

Assessment methods:

Written exam, Assignment

Keywords:

Crime causation and crime control

Faculty of Law

Evidence

Full course description

This master course deals with how we may reconstruct past events for purposes of a criminal trial. What is evidence, with which purpose is evidence collected and by whom? These are some of the questions that will be raised in this course. Evidence in criminal proceedings may be collected before the actual trial or (much later) at the main hearing. What are the consequences of this division especially in view of the probative value of evidence? Attention will be paid to how conclusions can be drawn from the evidence that is on the table. Does the evidence that is presented prove that the accused committed the offence as charged? Why is the burden of proof on the prosecution and how does this relate to the presumption of innocence? What are the consequences of evidence that was illegally obtained on the one hand, but might still be reliable and relevant on the other? Evidence may be direct evidence or indirect: for example, a witness may report what she saw herself or what she heard somebody else stating (hearsay). There are different sources of evidence and different qualities that complicate both admission and evaluation of the evidence in a criminal court. In the final part of the course, you will apply the acquired knowledge by analyzing the famous English case of *Rex v. Bywaters and Thompson*: you will make your own assessment of the evidence provided and decide whether the accused Frederick Bywaters and Edith Thompson were guilty of murder of Edith's husband Percy Thompson.

Before or during the course a visit will be paid to a criminal court to see evidence gathering and its evaluation in practice. You will be invited to describe what you see and interpret the practice of the relevant court in line of the literature.

Course objectives

The goal of this course is to gain a deep understanding of the complications relating to the collection, admission, interpretation, evaluation and assessment of evidence in different criminal justice systems. Students will be able to identify that whether a fact is proof of a certain probandum may depend on several factors such as the method of analysis. Students will be taught to distinguish between the different criminal justice systems and the way these deal with evidence. In addition, the course aims at a thorough understanding of the choices that these systems made in establishing rules of evidence. The ability to apply this theoretical knowledge to actual case problems will be the outcome of this course. Lastly, students will be able to understand the meaning of evidence in the

larger context of criminal proceedings and its relation with the concept of the truth, both in law as well in other disciplines.

Prerequisites

basic knowledge of criminal procedure

Recommended reading

- Terence Anderson, David Schum and William Twining, *Analysis of Evidence*, Cambridge University Press, Second Edition, November 2009
- Coursebook
- E-reader

CRI4021

Period 1

2 Sep 2024

25 Oct 2024

[Print course description](#)

ECTS credits:

6.0

Instruction language:

English

Coordinator:

- [M.M. Dolman](#)

Teaching methods:

Lecture(s), PBL

Assessment methods:

Assignment, Written exam

Keywords:

Evidence, burden of proof, probabilities, weight, probative force, evaluation, analysis, fair trial, admission, presumption of innocence, principle of orality, witness testimony, expert evidence, self-incrimination, comparative criminal procedure, evidentiary systems, beyond reasonable doubt, exclusion, truth

Faculty of Law

Advanced Criminal Procedure

Full course description

The course focuses on advanced topics of criminal procedure from a human rights perspective. Major topics of criminal procedure are discussed through the study of jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights: torture, inhuman and degrading treatment and violent police conduct; the right to liberty in relation to arrest and pre-trial detention; the application of presumption of innocence during and after criminal proceedings; the right to fair trial and cross-examination; the right to appeal; the right to privacy in relation to investigative measures. The course has also a practice-oriented element, i.e. the procedure before the European Court of Human Rights and how an application to the Court can be drafted.

Course objectives

- The student identifies the context and application of defence and fair trial rights as these are defined by the European Court of Human Rights;
- The student outlines the most recent developments in the interpretation of procedural rights;
- The student criticises the relationship between individual rights and measures of criminal procedure and assesses the balance between crime control and due process;
- The student deduces legal problems regarding procedural rights from facts and formulates them into a formal legal complain;
- The student composes an application for the European Court of Human Rights

Prerequisites

Bachelor in Law. In case of a Bachelor in other discipline entrance exam for the master Forensics Criminology and Law is required

Recommended reading

- Harris, O'Boyle and Warbrick, Law of the European Convention on Human Rights, 4rd. Ed., Oxford University Press, 2018
- Human Rights Handbooks nrs. 1, 3, 5, 6 available on the ECtHR website: <http://www.coe.int/web/human-rights-rule-of-law/human-rights-handbooks>

CRI4024

Period 2

28 Oct 2024

20 Dec 2024

[Print course description](#)

ECTS credits:

6.0

Instruction language:

English

Coordinator:

- [C. Peristeridou](#)

Teaching methods:

PBL, Lecture(s), Assignment(s), Presentation(s)

Assessment methods:

Written exam, Assignment

Keywords:

Human rights and criminal procedure; Torture; Deprivation of liberty; Fair trial; Presumption of innocence; Right to silence; Criminal procedure and privacy; European Court of Human Rights; European Convention of Human Rights

Faculty of Law

Psychology and Law

Full course description

In this course, the discussion will revolve around the value of various pieces of evidence from a legal psychological perspective. We will discuss the theories on the use of evidence from a legal psychological perspective and then apply these insights to documents from actual criminal files. What is the power of eyewitness statements? What is the evidential value of a line-up identification of a perpetrator by a witness? And what about the value of a confession from a suspect? Finally, scenario-based investigation is discussed in the context of judicial decision-making.

Course objectives

1. The student can understand legal psychological concepts and insights and explain these in their own words;
2. The student can correctly discuss and illustrate legal psychological concepts and insights;
3. The student can identify the most important risks in a specific case;
4. The student can analyse a specific case from legal psychological insights with a view to develop an own judgment and to formulate recommendations.

Prerequisites

None

Recommended reading

- Costanzo, M. & Krauss, D. (2021). Forensic and legal psychology. Psychological science applied to law. Macmillan learning.
- Lassiter & Meissner (2010). Police interrogations and false confessions: Current research, practice, and policy recommendations. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Tolia, Read, Ross, & Lindsay (Eds.), (2007). Handbook of eyewitness psychology: Volume I: Memory for events. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum Associates.
- Lindsay, Ross, Read, & Tolia (Eds.), (2007). Handbook of eyewitness psychology: Volume II: Memory for people. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum Associates.
- Several articles (available online) per week are included in a reader.

CRI4015

Period 2

28 Oct 2024

20 Dec 2024

[Print course description](#)

ECTS credits:

6.0

Instruction language:

English

Coordinator:

- [M.R. Vanderhallen](#)

Teaching methods:

Master Forensics, Criminology and Law

PBL, Lecture(s)

Assessment methods:

Portfolio

Keywords:

criminal investigation, forensic interview, evidence evaluation, identification procedures, legal decision-making, Criminal law

Specialisation courses

Master Forensics, Criminology and Law courses

Faculty of Law

Organisational Crime

Full course description

Organisational Crime is an elective, specifically designed for students of the master Forensics, Criminology and Law (English and Dutch track), but accessible for students of other master programs as well. Organisational criminology studies violations of rules and ethics (deviant behavior) by legitimate organisations (e.g. corporations, governments, etc.) and their management. In the fields of criminal justice and criminology, it is a relatively new concept. It concerns the kind of offences that were never labeled outright as criminal before, at best, only in an indirect way. As with the concept, the academic field of organisational criminology is relatively new, hence its study is still in its adolescent phase making it a real challenge for practitioners. Many issues are still in dire need of elucidation. Therefore, during tutorial sessions students will deal with a number of sub-aspects about which (academic) discussions are far from reaching a consensus, offering students the opportunity to become actively involved in maturing this fascinating domain. During the first part of the course, the subject matter will be introduced and several different approaches to studying the phenomenon of organisational crime will be discussed. During the second part of the course, we study and analyze different cases of organizational crimes focusing on different levels of analysis (micro, meso, macro) while paying attention to different crucial criminological elements (means, motives, opportunities, control, etc.) The policy implications of different approaches are discussed as well. The critical multidisciplinary approach taken in this course is relevant given the structure and the notions underlying the master in Forensics, Criminology and Law, which takes a multidisciplinary approach to crime and criminal justice in order to develop a more critical understanding of various forensic disciplines in relation to the law.

Course objectives

By the end of the course the participants should have developed the following capacities and accumulated insights in respect of the following areas of substantive knowledge:

Capacity:

- The capacity to conceptualize behaviours and events that belong to the area of interest of organisational criminology.
- The capacity to identify aspects of these behaviours in event that are relevant to categorise them within existing definitions in the discipline.
- The capacity to construct and apply definitions to these behaviours and events to support a

critical analysis of why and how they occur.

- Different theoretical explanations that exist for organisational crime at the macro, meso and micro level.
- The capacity to critically reflect on existing and potential measures to limit and prevent instances of organisational crime with due regard for the insights developed regarding the definition and explanation of these events and behaviours.
- The capacity to write an analytical academic paper.
- The capacity to reproduce substantive knowledge built during the course.
- The capacity to apply the knowledge and capacities built during the course in the analysis of a case.
- The capacity to present orally the main research findings of the case study in a concise and coherent manner.

Area of Substantive Knowledge:

- Different definitions that exist in the field of organisational criminology.
- Different theoretical insights and proposals for preventing and limiting instances of organisational crime.

Prerequisites

Prior (basic) courses in criminology are not required but strongly recommended.

Recommended reading

E-reader

CRI4020

Period 4

3 Feb 2025

4 Apr 2025

[Print course description](#)

ECTS credits:

6.0

Instruction language:

English

Coordinator:

- [J.M. Nelen](#)

Teaching methods:

PBL, Lecture(s), Project-Centered Learning

Assessment methods:

Assignment, Final paper

Keywords:

Corporate crime, white collar crime, state and governmental crime, criminology

Faculty of Law

Criminalistics and Forensic DNA

Full course description

Criminalistics deals with forensic evidence in criminal cases. Students will take a legal perspective to achieve an overview of the most relevant methods of forensic sciences with a focus on DNA evidence. The course provides students with a broad understanding of criminalistics and forensic science and stimulates critical reflection on forensic methods. Its practical aim is to enable future judges, prosecutors and defence lawyers to ask the right questions to forensic experts in court. Fallacies and biases resulting in wrongful convictions or inadmissibility of evidence in court will be discussed.

Course objectives

Students should be able to:

- have a basic understanding of several areas of criminalistics and their application in legal practice;
- have a basic understanding of the weaknesses and fallacies of criminalistics methods and how forensic expertise can be refuted in criminal court;
- recognize prosecutors and defence fallacies in interpreting forensic results;
- have basic understanding of police investigations and crime scene analysis including red flags of crime scene staging and various risks of biases
- understand the opportunities and risks of criminalistics being depicted in contemporary popular culture (e.g. CSI-effect);
- understand basic scientific methods and their connection to admissibility of evidence in court;
- understand logically correct reasoning (Bayesian reasoning) and how this applies to forensic science;
- know the essentials of forensic DNA research and evaluation of DNA fingerprint comparison;
- achieve a basic understanding of wrongful convictions and related legal and societal consequences;

Recommended reading

- Richard Saferstein, Criminalistics An Introduction to Forensic Science (Pearson, Global Edition) Edition 11 (2015). ISBN: 978-1-292-06202-
- selected texts in the reader of the course

CRI4026

Period 4

3 Feb 2025

4 Apr 2025

[Print course description](#)

ECTS credits:

6.0

Coordinator:

- [R. Hofmann](#)

Teaching methods:

European Criminal Law

Full course description

During this course we will focus on the influence of European Union law on national criminal law and criminal procedure. The goal of this course is to understand the indirect and direct influence of European norms on national substantive and procedural criminal norms; also the emerging of European criminal norms will be analysed. This course does not deal with issues of cooperation between the Member States, such as the European Arrest Warrant and Europol; those topics are the subjects of the bachelor course European Criminal Justice Area (LAW3012). In the first session, the students are familiarised with the field of European Criminal law by understanding the competence of the Union in this field, the obligation of the Member States and the interaction between European and criminal law in the context of European law enforcement. The second session deals with the influence of European law by criminal law and vice versa in the field of the four freedoms. In the following sessions we examine the emerging of European criminal norms of substantive and procedural criminal law. Further issues on the relation between criminal law, general principles of Union law and human rights are addressed. Special attention is paid to the enforcement of European law by national authorities and on the method of preliminary rulings in criminal law. During the tutorials, students are required to apply advance research and analytical skills such as writing ECJ preliminary reference questions (or answers) and conducting research on the implementing national legislation of European Criminal law instruments. Because of the content of the course, a good knowledge of European law and criminal law is required.

Course objectives

The goal of the course is to examine the influence of European Union law on criminal law and analyse the emergence of European Criminal law norms. The course also aims at a deeper understanding of the practical areas of European Criminal law such as the implementation of EU rules and the preliminary reference procedure before the ECJ.

Prerequisites

Basic knowledge of European law and of a national criminal justice system.

Recommended reading

- Literature: -André Klip, European Criminal Law: An Integrative Approach, Intersentia, fourth edition, Cambridge-Antwerpen 2021;
- André Klip, Materials on European Criminal Law, Intersentia, fourth edition Cambridge-Antwerpen 2022
- Reader with additional literature and case law, as announced in the course book

CRI4007

Period 4

3 Feb 2025

4 Apr 2025

[Print course description](#)

ECTS credits:

6.0

Instruction language:

English

Coordinators:

- [A.H. Klip](#)
- [C. Peristeridou](#)

Teaching methods:

PBL, Lecture(s)

Assessment methods:

Written exam, Final paper

Keywords:

European Criminal law, national criminal substantive and procedural law, rights of the accused
Faculty of Law

International Criminal Law

Full course description

The object of this course is to provide an introduction into International Criminal Law as a field of law which imposes responsibilities - and criminal accountability - directly on individuals and punishes violations of specific prohibitions through international judicial mechanisms. After having a look at the emergence of international criminal law, the course will focus on the jurisdictional regime and admissibility issues before the International Criminal Court: How is the jurisdictional regime of the ICC different from other international(ized) tribunals and courts, and why? Who or what can trigger - or possibly challenge - a prosecution? Subsequently the course will take a closer look at substantive criminal law applicable before the ICC in order to establish what are the various elements of the so-called core crimes at the ICC (genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and the crime of aggression) and which principles and modes of criminal liability apply to individuals. For instance: when can we speak of genocide? What conduct amounts to a war crime? And also: How is criminal liability imposed in situations of command responsibility? In order to understand how this is done, the course will then explore international criminal procedure: what model/system of procedural rules is used? How does this procedural system work in practice? Who are the actors involved? What are their rights? In its last part, the course will look at the challenges and possible alternatives to international criminal proceedings in order to understand the numerous obstacles that complicate the course of justice in this field of law and whether there are (better) alternatives to the proceedings before the ICC. Issues such as State cooperation with the ICC and possible conflicts of interests (e.g. immunity) will be addressed.

The course will consist of 7 tutorials and some additional expert lectures. The lectures will (mostly) be delivered by experts that operate in the field of international criminal law. They will provide students with special (insight and insider-) knowledge on how international criminal law functions

and feels in action, and will give them a taste of the real problems and challenges faced by practitioners in the field. Next to the lectures, there will be case studies (with specific questions) that the students will need to study, prepare and then present in assigned groups.

Course objectives

The aim of the course is to provide a clear idea of the origins and objectives of international criminal law, and to give an overview of the numerous challenges faced in this field of law. Furthermore, the course aims to make students familiar with the procedural system of certain international tribunals (such as the ICC) and with alternatives to international proceedings, such as truth and reconciliation commissions or national proceedings. The ultimate goal of the course is to provide students with the tools and consequently the ability to apply both substantive and procedural legal provisions and the acquired (theoretical) knowledge to concrete cases.

Prerequisites

- Good knowledge of substantive criminal law and criminal procedure
- Basic knowledge of international law, especially international humanitarian law

Recommended reading

- R. Cryer, H. Friman, D. Robinson, E. Wilmshurst, *An Introduction to International Criminal Law and Procedure*, Cambridge University Press 2019, 4th ed.
- Case Law assigned for each week
- Additional literature indicated for each week

CRI4023

Period 5

14 Apr 2024

13 Jun 2025

[Print course description](#)

ECTS credits:

6.0

Instruction language:

English

Coordinator:

- R.M. Heemskerk

Teaching methods:

Lecture(s), PBL

Assessment methods:

Written exam, Final paper

Keywords:

International criminal law / international criminal courts and tribunals / international crimes / individual, responsibility and command responsibility / national prosecutions / transitional justice

Faculty of Law

Forensic Psychopathology

Full course description

Forensic psychopathology plays an important role in criminal law. This course deals primarily with the criminal liability of offenders with psychopathology (e.g. the issue of diminished responsibility). Emphasis is put on a number of mental disorders and the meaning and relevance of these disorders in relation to criminal behavior and criminal liability. Special attention will be given to offenders with either psychotic disorders or personality disorders.

Course objectives

- Learning to identify different kinds of psychopathology (e.g., being able to distinguish psychotic disorders from personality disorders);
- Obtaining knowledge about the development, symptoms and treatment of these disorders;
- Creating the ability to assess how different types of mental disorders may predispose to criminal behavior (i.e., being able to evaluate how a particular constellation of symptoms can put somebody at risk of committing a certain type of crime);
- Discriminating real mental disorders from feigned psychopathology;
- Applying the obtained knowledge by critically analyzing the putative link between psychopathology and criminal behavior in true court cases.

Prerequisites

None

Recommended reading

A reader with articles on forensic psychopathology will be made available.

CRI4016

Period 5

14 Apr 2024

13 Jun 2025

[Print course description](#)

ECTS credits:

6.0

Instruction language:

English

Coordinator:

- [M. Jelacic](#)

Teaching methods:

PBL, Lecture(s)

Assessment methods:

Written exam, Assignment

Keywords:

Offenders, criminal responsibility, mental disorders.

International Cold Case Analysis Project

Full course description

The International Cold Case Analysis Project (ICCAP) is organized once a year and is one of the specialization courses (elective) in the master Forensics, Criminology and Law. A cold case is “an unsolved life crime (murder or manslaughter) or a very serious crime that carries a minimum prison sentence of 12 years” (www.om.nl/onderwerpen/coldcases). This project results from a partnership between UM and Amber Alert Europe and is coordinated by Karsten Bettels from Amber Alert Europe. Under the guidance of a team of UM supervisors and the project coordinator (Karsten Bettels), students study a cold case. This case is provided by the project coordinator via a secured digital student platform. Students can only work on the case via this Stud.ID platform in a safe/private environment. Students have to sign a confidentiality agreement and a memorandum of understanding before getting access to the case file.

Students work in a team of 10 UM students complemented with students from other universities worldwide. By working in a multidisciplinary group, the case is looked at from different backgrounds/disciplines where students can make a unique contribution from their own discipline in terms of providing new insights and a possible solution to the case.

At the end of the elective course, an online presentation is given to the UM supervisors and the project coordinator. This presentation will also be attended by police and prosecutors.

The elective course runs from October 7th until May 16th. The official start is on October 21st with an online welcome meeting at 16:00. Between October 7th and October 21st students are required to upload the requested documents and become familiar with the Stud.ID portal and the other team members.

It is a labor-intensive course that requires app. 2 days/week.

Course objectives

Getting acquainted with a complex criminal case file and learning to deal with evidence in criminal cases in relation to possible scenarios. The main goal is to learn to think logically and try to arrive at new insights without assumptions.

Prerequisites

There will be a selection process for this elective course. A total of 10 students from different disciplines can participate. Students from the Master Forensics, Criminology and Law can apply for a place in this course.

To apply, students should submit a motivation letter, curriculum vitae and grade list(s). Based on these documents, students will be invited for a selection interview. Selection criteria include: study results, relevant additional activities, experience with criminal cases and good writing skills.

You can apply for a spot on the ICCAP team by emailing a motivation letter, curriculum vitae and grade list to J.noack@maastrichtuniversity.nl before Sept. 16th. The selection interviews will take

Master Forensics, Criminology and Law

place on September 24th. Selected students will be invited by mail.

CRI4030

Year

1 Sep 2024

31 Aug 2025

[Print course description](#)

ECTS credits:

6.0

Coordinator:

- [M.R. Vanderhallen](#)

Thesis

Master thesis Forensics, Criminology and Law

Faculty of Law

Master thesis forensica, crimin

Course objectives

The student is able to autonomously formulate a legal research question at Master's level and to provide an answer to this question in a legally and linguistically correct and structured manner and with adequate references.

The student is able to collect and interpret relevant legal sources, and where necessary also social and scientific data, with the aim of formulating an opinion on a legal question. This opinion is based on the weighing of relevant legal and possibly societal or ethical aspects.

In answering the research question, the student is able to apply his/her knowledge and insight in such a way that this shows a professional approach to his/her work or profession.

The student demonstrates knowledge and understanding and is able to contribute to the development and/or application of original ideas, either within an academic or a professional context.

In this context, the student demonstrates in particular that(s)he has the required competences for substantiating and solving problems in the field.

The student equally demonstrates that (s)he has the ability to integrate knowledge and handle complexity, and formulate judgements even with respect to research questions that are new, in the sense that they have not yet been addressed widely or extensively in earlier publications, or interdisciplinary.

The student demonstrates that (s)he is capable of communicating his/her conclusions, and the knowledge and rationale underpinning these clearly and unambiguously to a scientific audience that mainly consists of lawyers but may include professionals from other fields.

The student demonstrates that (s)he possesses the research and writing skills necessary to carry out legal research autonomously either within an academic or within a professional context.

LAW4070

Year

1 Sep 2024

31 Aug 2025

[Print course description](#)

ECTS credits:

12.0

Instruction language:

Dutch

Coordinator:

- [L. Díez Sánchez](#)

Teaching methods:

PBL

Assessment methods:

Written exam

Internships

Internship Forensics, Criminology and Law

Faculty of Law

Master's internship forensics (6)

Full course description

The Maastricht Faculty of Law considers the internship to be a fully-fledged programme component of law school. A practical internship provides students with work experience that is tightly connected to their studies. It supports students in developing the necessary legal and social skills. The internship is not compulsory but many students use the opportunity of an internship to gain practical experience.

LAW4580

Year

1 Sep 2024

31 Aug 2025

[Print course description](#)

ECTS credits:

6.0

Instruction language:

Dutch

Coordinators:

- [K.G.M. Mertens](#)
- C.A.E. Franssen

Assessment methods:

Final paper