

2024-2025

STUDY ABROAD MODULES

CRIMINOLOGICAL SCIENCES



Why choose criminology at VUB?

Located just a stone's throw away from the Brussels Courthouse and central services of the police and national security, VUB is ideally situated for studies in criminology – but of course, that's not all.

Critical thinkers of tomorrow

Our curriculum will teach you critical assessment of current issues using scientific insights in various criminological fields such as youth criminology, urban criminology, policing and penology. All subjects are rooted in a strong believe in both humanistic values and methodological integrity, creating the critical thinkers of tomorrow.

Qualitative approach

We always seek to answer questions of "how" and "why" and carry this out in both our education and research. Our qualitative approach rouses curiosity and interest in how people perceive and give meaning to concepts related to crime.

Student-centred education

The Criminology Department at VUB places you as a unique person at the core of our education. Professors and teaching assistants are highly accessible, ensuring you receive the support you need.

The following courses are taught in English and are available to incoming students of all levels, allowing bachelor's students to take master's level courses and vice versa. You should take on a minimum of 21 ECTS for which you have free choice – with an exception of the electives related social sciences, out of which you can choose a maximum of 2 subjects.

What courses can you follow?

English courses	
Mandatory	
Criminological encounters (bachelor)	6 ECTS
Highly recommended electives	
Crime & the City (master)	9 ECTS
Critical Perspectives on Policing, Surveillance, Penology and Youth Criminology (master)	9 ECTS
Legal, Ethical and Social Issues of Artificial Intelligence (bachelor)	6 ECTS
Sustainability: an Interdisciplinary Approach (bachelor)	6 ECTS
Law electives	
Comparative Criminal Law and Criminal Procedure (master)	6 ECTS
European Labour and Employment Law (master)	6 ECTS
European Public Law (master)	6 ECTS
International Law II (master)	6 ECTS
Introduction to Common Law and Legal English (bachelor)	3 ECTS
Law and money (master)	6 ECTS
Legal Professions in the Digital Age (Regulatory Framework and Capita Selecta) (master)	6 ECTS
Privacy and Data Protection Law (master)	6 ECTS
Selected Topics of Company Law (master)	6 ECTS
The Use of Genomic Data - Ethical and Legal Issues (master)	6 ECTS
Electives related to Social Sciences*	
Statistics for the Social Sciences (bachelor)	6 ECTS
Social Demography (bachelor)	6 ECTS
Modern Diplomacy (master)	6 ECTS
Challenges to democracy (master)	6 ECTS

*Classes with maximum capacity. Exchange students from the faculty 'Economic and Social Sciences and Solvay Business School' are given priority.

Want some more detailed information?

Criminological encounters (6 ECTS)

This course unit is part of the master of Urban Studies. This course discusses current themes, concepts and theories in criminology. It analyzes the complexities of defining, explaining, measuring and reacting to crime in a conversation with practitioners and scholars from different fields within criminology. What are the origins of crime? What makes a criminal? Poverty? Inequality? Mental disease? How to measure crime? How to research it? What groups and actions are criminalized? What are the main characteristics of offenders and victims in different types of crime? How to tackle crime? How to prevent it? How to punish it? These are some of the questions that will be discussed in this course. The course combine different teaching strategies including the preparation and presentation of seminars by students, the analysis of multimedia material, like movies and documentaries, combined with key readings on the topic and, most importantly, the encounters with practitioners and scholars in the field of criminology and on related areas who will be invited to share their experiences.

Students will be assessed on the basis of a group task (40%) activity and a final oral exam (60%) with written preparation. For the oral exam students will be allowed to bring and consult a summary of classes and texts prepared by themselves. For the group task students will prepare one seminar based on both the mandatory and supplementary texts for one of the course's sessions. Students are expected to deliver their slides and a written explanation of the intervention they plan to make in class.

Crime & The City (9 ECTS)

Crime and the city introduces students in the large domain of urban criminology. The main goal of the course is to discuss how space matters to criminology. Space influences citizens' lives, practices, experiences and emotions, at the same time that it is created and recreated on a daily basis by its inhabitants, commuters, users, and visitors. These processes will be studied in their relationship with crime, fear, disorder and urban conflicts. At a theoretical level, the profile builds on the subdomain of urban criminology, combining criminological, urban studies, social geographical theory and method. The first central theme of the course is fear. This concept will be critically discussed and decomposed in its different meanings and connections to the city, with particular attention to public space. Different aspects of fear will be treated: such as the relationship between fear and space; fear of the other (gender and ethnicity); labelling, representation, stigmatization of neighbourhoods; nightlife; the politics of

fear; and the relationships between fear and securitization. The second central topic of the course is order. This topic will be explored through a multiplicity of subthemes that include public order, incivilities, nuisances, crime prevention, conflicts in public spaces; urban securitization; surveillance and control of public spaces; protests and the right to the city; and a critical analysis of environmental criminology and situational crime prevention. The third central topic is qualitative urban criminology methodologies. Through practices like city walks and photography, students learn how to conduct observation in public spaces. Moreover, the students are supported and stimulated to explore alternative qualitative urban criminology methodologies.

Students will be assessed on the basis of an oral exam and a practical assignment.

Critical discourses on Policing, Surveillance, Penology and Youth Criminology (9 ECTS)

This course is designed to provide students with an understanding of critical perspectives on policing, surveillance, penology and youth criminology. By examining these areas through a critical lens, students will gain insights into the complexities and challenges surrounding law enforcement, criminal justice and youth justice systems.

The themes that will be discussed and analysed change on a yearly basis and can include the following topics:

- Police legitimacy
- Surveillance and technology
- Gender and youth crime and justice
- Detention of youngsters
- Victimology and restorative justice
- Experiences of punishment
- Immigration detention

An overview of the content of the lectures and seminars will be provided in the beginning of the semester. Each of the lectures is accompanied with texts and slides. The texts form the basic material for this course. Students will also have to make two assignments linked to the lectures and seminars.

Legal, Ethical and Social Issues of Artificial Intelligence (6 ECTS)

The students learn about the interdisciplinary dimensions and consequences of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and about the interaction between AI and society, in particular by going deeper into the legal, ethical and societal issues of AI. The course focuses on various case studies and research examples from the public and private sectors in Belgium but also internationally. The course requires active participation of the students. Participation consists of reading the required texts in advance of the lectures and online resources that are provided and active participation in discussions during the lectures.

Students will be assessed on the basis of a legal, ethical and social analysis of chosen case study and their defence of the paper at an oral exam.

Sustainability: an Interdisciplinary Approach (6 ECTS)

Major social challenges call for systemic changes. However, changing our diverse and complex society is difficult and the outcomes are unpredictable. The course consists of three tracks. In the first track 'theme sessions on sustainable development' present-day sustainability challenges are presented by experts from academia, government or society, each active in a different discipline or working transdisciplinary. These talks are followed by a discussion about the extent to which each field can support transitions towards a sustainable society, and from where inter- and transdisciplinary collaboration is required. The second track 'Empower sessions on working with wicked problems', the basic concepts and models for sustainable change in our diverse and complex world are explored. Through literature and observations, these sessions tackle the notion of complex adaptive systems, as well as transition management, including systems thinking. The third track is 'Group assignment, community engaged research and learning' The insights from the theme and empower sessions are completed by a practical experience. Interdisciplinary groups of students develop a pathway for transition of a novel innovation towards a sustainable future. Hereby students explore in depth the complexity, possibilities, challenges, and essential stakeholders of the system around that innovation.

Students will be assessed on the basis of a written exam and a practical assignment.

Let's get in touch

Mobility office faculty: mobility.rc@vub.be