

CRIM4010: Honours I Contextualising Criminological Research

Newcastle City Precinct
Semester 1 - 2023



THE UNIVERSITY OF
NEWCASTLE
AUSTRALIA

The Newcastle Law School is committed to providing an inclusive environment in which all cultures are accorded respect and all students and staff are expected to act with honesty, fairness, trustworthiness and accountability in dealings with others. The School recognises and respects the unique histories and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their unbroken relationship with the lands and the waters of Australia over millennia, and the validity of Aboriginal ways of knowing. We are dedicated to reconciliation and to offering opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to access and succeed in higher education.

OVERVIEW

Course Description

Through this course, students will gain an understanding of how research problems are conceived and acted upon in criminology. The course contextualises criminological research and theory within key debates on criminal justice. Students will consider the philosophical underpinnings of criminological research, as well as ethical and political components of research in response to vital questions, such as: 'what is criminological knowledge?', 'how do we know what we know about crime?', and what are the causes and range of approaches to responding to criminal justice issues? The core concept of the course is 'epistemology' – the kind of knowledge that researchers are producing. A central learning objective is for students to gain insight into how epistemology – the theory of knowledge, especially with regard to its methods, validity and scope – features in their own research.

Skills Focus

This course will focus on assisting students to develop the following skills:

- Evaluating criminological research for its validity and generalisability.
- Understanding how criminological knowledge is produced, disseminated, and interpreted.
- Contextualising criminological enquiry in social and political contexts.

Compulsory Attendance

Attendance at all classes will be monitored and records maintained by the Course Coordinator. In order to satisfy the "Compulsory Attendance" requirement, students must be present at a minimum of 80% of scheduled classes as spelled out in the course outline, unless they are able to demonstrate that their absence falls within the Adverse Circumstances policy. Unless this requirement is met, despite marks awarded in other assessment items, the student will receive a zero mark and an CF grade for the course.

Requisites

A major or degree in Criminology with a minimum credit grade average.

Contact Hours

**Newcastle City Precinct
Workshop**
Face to Face On Campus
2 hour(s) per week
For 6 weeks starting in week 1.

Refer to the course schedule for class times, or contact course

COURSE OUTLINE

www.newcastle.edu.au
CRICOS Provider 00109J

coordinator Dr. Alice Neikirk.

Classes in CRIM4010 are interactive, with an expectation that students will actively participate in discussions based on weekly readings, class activities, and presentations by instructors and guest speakers.

Unit Weighting 20

Workload Students are required to spend on average 120-140 hours of effort (contact and non-contact) including assessments per 10 unit course.

CONTACTS

Course Coordinator **Newcastle City Precinct**
Dr Alice Neikirk
Alice.Neikirk@newcastle.edu.au
(02) 0492440741
Consultation: I will be available for consultations outside of scheduled class times; please contact me via email if you wish to arrange a time to meet.

Teaching Staff Other teaching staff will be advised on the course Canvas site as applicable.

School Office **Newcastle Law School**
5th Floor
NU Space
409 Hunter Street
Newcastle
Law-School@newcastle.edu.au
+61 2 4921 8666

SYLLABUS

Course Content CRIM4010 centres on the question – 'what is criminological knowledge'?

Students will be introduced to philosophical and historical discussions related to the question of criminological knowledge, and how we know what we know.

Topics covered may include:

- epistemology
- what is truth?
- epistemological positions: positivism, phenomenology, hermeneutics, social constructivism, interpretivism, empiricism
- theory to practice
- research as action
- reflexivity, positionality, subjectivity and bias

Course Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of the course students will be able to:

1. Explain in writing how knowledge production in criminology is influenced by, and influences, philosophical and political perspectives and practices on criminal justice issues.
2. Select and synthesise key intellectual issues and debates in criminology to justify the scope and method for a research study.
3. Critically evaluate the quality of research conducted in criminology.
4. Identify the criteria used to evaluate the quality of research conducted in criminology.
5. Present and defend an epistemological viewpoint in relation to a criminal justice research project.

Course Materials

The required text for this course is: Pamela Davies and Peter Francis (eds). 2018. *Doing Criminological Research*. SAGE.

Additional course materials and readings are required and will be referred to and, where possible, made available on Canvas. Readings will need to be completed prior to classes.

Please monitor your emails and announcements as well as the Canvas “modules” tab for the course as new material reflective of contemporary issues or news stories may be added each week.

Schedule Refer separate document titled ‘Schedule’ on the CRIM4010 Canvas home page.

ASSESSMENTS

This course has 3 assessments. Each assessment is described in more detail in the sections below.

	Assessment Name	Due Date	Involvement	Weighting	Learning Outcomes
1	Essay	Week 6 – Friday 11:59PM	Individual	50%	1, 2, 3, 4
2	Reflexive Journal	Week 12 – Friday 11:59PM	Individual	40%	1, 2, 3
3	Oral Presentation	Week 6 – In Class	Individual	10%	1, 2, 3, 4, 5

Late Submissions The mark for an assessment item submitted after the designated time on the due date, without an approved extension of time, will be reduced by 10% of the possible maximum mark for that assessment item for each day or part day that the assessment item is late. Note: this applies equally to week and weekend days.

Final Grades To ensure that grades are fair both within and between courses and cohorts, Newcastle Law School has a rigorous policy of moderating and reviewing assessment. The School Assessment Board (SAB) reviews all final grades before they are released to students, and the SAB process may result in the overall marks of a class being moved up or down by a specific amount, thus impacting individual marks. This is consistent with grading practices in other Law Schools across the country and important to ensure the integrity of assessment. This means that the final grade you are awarded may not be the sum of marks you have received in all assessments.

Assessment 1 – Essay – The Production and Dissemination of Criminological Knowledge

Assessment Type Written Assignment

Description This task requires the student to critically reflect on trends in criminological research and evaluate how these shape our understanding of “crime” “problems”.

The student should respond to one of the following prompts in an essay format:

1. Criminological research has emphasized Western traditions and values to the detriment of the discipline.
2. Can criminological research, written and published by the relatively privileged, truly appreciate crime in disadvantaged communities.
3. There is a trend in the social sciences where research with certain groups should only be conducted by members of those groups. Is this position appropriate in Criminology, especially given that the overwhelming majority of crime is committed by men?
4. Identify a flaw in how knowledge and/or theory in Criminology is produced. Explain that flaw and critically evaluate its impact in the field, with recommendations on how it can be overcome.
5. A question proposed by the student and approved by the course coordinator. The question must be about epistemology in Criminology.

Weighting 50%

Length 2,500-3,000 words

Compulsory Requirements Attempt/Submission Requirement - Students must attempt/submit this assessment item to pass the course.

Due Date Week 6 – Friday 11:59PM

Submission Method	Via course Canvas site.
Assessment Criteria	Will be published on the course Canvas site.
Referencing	Harvard referencing (author/date/page number if direct quoting) is standard for all Criminology assessments. Written assignments need to be referenced in Harvard.
Return Method	Online via course Canvas site.
Feedback Provided	Yes.
Opportunity to Reattempt	Students will NOT be given the opportunity to reattempt this assessment.

Assessment 2 – Reflexive Journal

Assessment Type	Written Assignment
Description	<p>Students must maintain a research diary, with weekly entries about their research progress. Each entry should be a maximum of 200 words.</p> <p>The diary is used to record emerging ideas regarding the research project. By way of example, it might incorporate any of the following, in addition to other relevant reflections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reflections on CRIM4010 and CRIM4020 course content and how this relates to the proposed research• Connections between emerging issues in crime and Criminology and how they relate to the proposed research• Evaluations of the emerging research literature and connections between these sources and your own insights/interpretations• Challenges that have been identified with the proposed research project and critical analysis of how these challenges can be approached
Weighting	40%
Length	2,000-,2400 words
Compulsory Requirements	Attempt/Submission Requirement - Students must attempt/submit this assessment item to pass the course.
Due Date	Week 12 – Friday 11:59PM
Submission Method	Via course Canvas site.
Assessment Criteria	Will be published on the course Canvas site.
Referencing	Harvard referencing (author/date/page number if direct quoting) is standard for all Criminology assessments. Written assignments need to be referenced in Harvard.
Return Method	Online via course Canvas site.
Feedback Provided	Yes.
Opportunity to Reattempt	Students will NOT be given the opportunity to reattempt this assessment.

Assessment 3 – Oral Presentation

Assessment Type	Presentation
Description	Students will deliver an oral presentation (maximum 10 minutes) in class in week 6. The presentation should synthesise the literature analysed up to this point in the student's literature review. This literature should be examined in light of theoretical and methodological similarities and differences. The presentation should, at a minimum:

- Evaluate how existing research – as evident in the literature relevant to the student’s project – has been conducted
- Critically reflect on whose voices or perspectives are evident in this literature and whose voices or perspectives might be missing
- Consider what gaps might be present in the criminological approach or understanding of this topic and how these gaps could be addressed

Students are encouraged to go beyond these dot points in evaluating how the discipline of Criminology has produced knowledge in relation to their research topic.

Presentations should include PowerPoint slides as a visual aid.

Students are expected to respond to questions from fellow students and instructors about their presentation.

Weighting	10%
Length	10 minutes
Compulsory Requirements	Attempt / Submission Requirement - Students must attempt/submit this assessment item to pass the course.
Due Date	In class, week 6.
Submission Method	Delivered in class as a presentation.
Assessment Criteria	Will be published on the course Canvas site.
Return Method	Online via course Canvas site.
Feedback Provided	Yes.
Opportunity to Reattempt	Students will NOT be given the opportunity to reattempt this assessment.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Grading Scheme This course is graded as follows:

Range of Marks	Grade	Description
85-100	High Distinction (HD)	Outstanding standard indicating comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the relevant materials; demonstration of an outstanding level of academic achievement; mastery of skills*; and achievement of all assessment objectives.
75-84	Distinction (D)	Excellent standard indicating a very high level of knowledge and understanding of the relevant materials; demonstration of a very high level of academic ability; sound development of skills*; and achievement of all assessment objectives.
65-74	Credit (C)	Good standard indicating a high level of knowledge and understanding of the relevant materials; demonstration of a high level of academic achievement; reasonable development of skills*; and achievement of all learning outcomes.
50-64	Pass (P)	Satisfactory standard indicating an adequate knowledge and understanding of the relevant materials; demonstration of an adequate level of academic achievement; satisfactory development of skills*; and achievement of all learning

		outcomes.
0-49	Fail (FF)	Failure to satisfactorily achieve learning outcomes. If all compulsory course components are not completed the mark will be zero. A fail grade may also be awarded following disciplinary action.

*Skills are those identified for the purposes of assessment task(s).

Assessment Moderation

To ensure that grades are fair both within and between courses and cohorts, Newcastle Law School has a rigorous policy of moderating and reviewing assessment. The School Assessment Board (SAB) reviews all final grades before they are released to students, and the SAB process may result in the overall marks of a class being moved up or down by a specific amount, thus impacting individual marks. This is consistent with grading practices in other Law Schools across the country and important to ensure the integrity of assessment. This means that the final grade you are awarded may not be the sum of marks you have received in all assessments.

Communication Methods

Communication methods used in this course include:

- Canvas course site: Students will receive communications via the posting of content or announcements on the Canvas course site.
- Email: Students will receive communications via their student email account.
- Face to Face: Communication will be provided via face-to-face meetings or supervision.

Course Evaluation

Each year feedback is sought from students and other stakeholders about the courses offered in the University for the purposes of identifying areas of excellence and potential improvement.

Please make sure to complete your CES for this course when it becomes available at the conclusion of the semester, so that we can continue to improve this course!

Oral Interviews

As part of the evaluation process of any assessment item in this course an oral examination may be conducted. The purpose of the oral examination is to verify the authorship of the material submitted in response to the assessment task. The oral examination will be conducted in accordance with the principles set out in the [Oral Examination Guidelines](#). In cases where the oral examination reveals the assessment item may not be the student's own work the case will be dealt with under the [Student Conduct Rule](#).

Academic Misconduct

All students are required to meet the academic integrity standards of the University. These standards reinforce the importance of integrity and honesty in an academic environment. This course is concerned with the production of knowledge, thus all submitted work must be the student's own and not be developed in whole or in part by AI. Academic Integrity policies apply to all students of the University in all modes of study and in all locations. For the Student Academic Integrity Policy, refer to <https://policies.newcastle.edu.au/document/view-current.php?id=35>.

Adverse Circumstances

The University acknowledges the right of students to seek consideration for the impact of allowable adverse circumstances that may affect their performance in assessment item(s). Applications for special consideration due to adverse circumstances will be made using the online Adverse Circumstances system where:

1. the assessment item is a major assessment item; or
2. the assessment item is a minor assessment item and the Course Co-ordinator has specified in the Course Outline that students may apply the online Adverse Circumstances system;
3. you are requesting a change of placement; or
4. the course has a compulsory attendance requirement.

Before applying you must refer to the Adverse Circumstance Affecting Assessment Items Procedure available at: <https://policies.newcastle.edu.au/document/view-current.php?id=236>

Important Policy

The 'HELP for Students' tab in UoNline contains important information that all students should

Information	be familiar with, including various systems, policies and procedures.
Wellbeing Resources	There are a variety of pressures on law students, and being able to perform well academically under pressure, without excessive stress will contribute to enhanced outcomes in wellbeing and academic results. Reach out to support services and learn ways to maintain your mental health, deal with stress and common issues like perfectionism, procrastination and anxiety.

To access UON support:

<https://www.newcastle.edu.au/current-students/support/personal>

Ph: 4921 6622 or email: counselling@newcastle.edu.au

For support outside of office hours call the University Crisis Support Line on 1300 653 007 or for chat SMS 0488 884 165.

For immediate support contact Lifeline 24/7 on 13 14 11 or <https://www.lifeline.org.au/>

This course outline was approved by the Head of School. No alteration of this course outline is permitted without Head of School approval. If a change is approved, students will be notified and an amended course outline will be provided in the same manner as the original.

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