

Nottingham Trent University Course Specification

Basic Course Information

1.	Awarding Institution:	Nottingham Trent University
2.	School/Campus:	School of Social Science / City Campus
3.	Final Award, Course Title and Modes of Study:	MA Criminology FT and PT
4.	Normal Duration:	FT 1 year and PT 2 years
5.	UCAS Code:	N/a

6. Overview and general educational aims of the course

The course offers you an exciting opportunity to study criminology at an advanced and specialised level. A distinctive feature of criminology at NTU is its theoretical, practice and strong policy orientation. By studying the course you will gain comprehensive knowledge of explanations of crime and how these perspectives influence the ways in which societies across the world respond to international problem of crime. You will actively engage in critical evaluation of the many theoretical, policy and organisational drivers shaping and informing sustainable responses to crime. As well as thinking about theoretical and policy relevant issues you will do your own criminological research through the application of different methods and approaches as well as enhancing your employability through work based experience. This course is designed to enable progression in research, policy and practice roles in the public, private or voluntary arenas in the UK and internationally. In line with the Higher Education Academy (HEA) 'Framework for Internationalising Higher Education' you will have a global learning experience preparing you to make a responsible contribution in the context of a globally interconnected society. You will study criminology in a dynamic environment and be taught by an academic team who have experience of doing research for, and working in, criminal justice agencies and other public and voluntary community sector organisations.

The overarching aims of the course are to enable you to:

- demonstrate your critical and informed understanding and analysis of criminology;
- systematically construct criminological knowledge, generate your own questions and check the veracity of knowledge claims and the underlying assumptions of policy and practice decision making;
- show your critical awareness of the history of ideas, the globalised cultural context, and the social and political theories that inform and influence the practice of Criminology;
- graduate with extensive theoretical as well as vocationally relevant, and policy-orientated, knowledge of crime and responses to crime, drawing on internationally relevant examples and comparative approaches to the subject;
- apply criminological theory to understand the role of power in defining crime and victimisation and sustainable policy responses to crime and deviance;
- leave the course with critical awareness of the current philosophical, theoretical and methodological problems, debates, and insights that are at the forefront of, and shape, the discipline;
- become an independent scholar who can apply specialised and advanced conceptual and methodological tools to evaluate criminological knowledge;
- enhance your life-long learning skills and personal development by enabling you to adopt an independent and reflective approach to your learning and practice;

- Enhance your employability through work experience by emphasising qualities such as independence and accountability, leadership, problem solving, creativity and sophisticated communication skills.

You can be confident that the aims and learning outcomes of the MA Criminology comply with the Quality Assurance Agency's 'Master's degree characteristics' (published in September 2015) as well its 'Criminology subject benchmark statement' (published in March 2014). Also, in June 2016 the MA Criminology was reviewed and restructured as part of Nottingham Trent University's 'Curriculum Refresh' involving external employers. Our external examiner has described the course as 'a fine programme that conforms well to contemporary practice and priorities in postgraduate criminology education'.

7. **Course outcomes**

Course outcomes describe what you should know and be able to do by the end of your course if you take advantage of the opportunities for learning that we provide.

Knowledge and understanding

By the end of the course you should be able to:

- Demonstrate in-depth and systematic understanding of current criminological knowledge and scholarship at the forefront of the discipline.
- Critically evaluate historical and contemporary explanations of crime, deviance and victimisation, and how these perspectives influence approaches to studying criminology.
- Critically evaluate and reflect upon the theoretical, policy and organisational drivers that shape and inform contemporary responses to crime in globally interconnected societies across the world.
- Critically analyse the interrelationship of theory and practice in criminological study.
- Critically analyse the role of power in defining crime and victimisation in relation to sustainable criminal justice policy interventions and practice.
- Critically appraise the design, implementation and evaluation of crime reduction initiatives.
- Critically interpret the conceptual, methodological and policy issues surrounding the analysis and evaluation of the causes of crime and how to control it locally, nationally and internationally from an intercultural and comparative perspective.
- Critically appraise approaches to criminological research, including methods and their application in the work place.

Skills, qualities and attributes

By the end of the course you should be able to:

- Critically analyse the complex intellectual and practical challenges faced by people working in the criminal justice sector.
- Communicate ideas effectively and with clarity in writing and/or speech.
- Critically reflect on how conceptual, methodological, policy relevant and practical issues have informed your thinking.
- Critically reflect on the ethical implications of your work.
- Apply appropriate concepts and/or methods to study different aspects of criminology and crime from a comparative perspective.
- Complete a substantial work-based empirical research project, which is informed by theoretical and methodological debates in the discipline.

8. **Teaching and Learning Methods**

You will experience a wide-range of teaching and learning methods on the course, ranging from traditional lecturing to role-playing. Interactive aspects of

the taught provision are designed to enhance individual understanding and facilitate supported and shared development. Lectures and seminars will usually be combined in order to offer you depth of knowledge as well as an opportunity to participate in and lead discussions. Other teaching and learning methods involve individual and group work leading to presentations. For example, there are:

- Debates on a given topic, requiring you to conduct library-based research on a range of criminological topics. The preparation for and participation in the debate allows the assessment of a range of skills including research, analytical, team-working and debating skills.
- Student-led seminars offer you a regular opportunity to test and develop your ideas and receive the tutor's feedback.

Teaching on the course also benefits from the research activities developed within the School of Social Sciences. Currency of taught material is ensured by a strong synergy between research and professional activities and teaching. All members of the team publish books and/or articles, engage with a range of research and professional activities, present papers at national and international conferences and engage in a professional capacity with local, national and international criminal justice forums as part of a global academic community where exchange, partnership, collaboration and networking occurs.

Consequently the course encourages you to acquire extensive knowledge of the discipline, including relevant professional skills, proficiency in the use of relevant software, a capacity for independent thought and enhanced information, data, and time management skills.

Modules run on a year-long system. Each module, with the exception of the Work Based Research Project, will usually meet for 2 - 2½ hours per week, and you can therefore expect between 10 and 12 hours of face to face contact per week, with your timetable usually scheduled over two consecutive days.

9. Assessment Methods

Assessment plays a key role in the learning process, providing an impetus to learning and enabling you to be given feedback for personal development and growth. The course is assessed through the University's Grade Based Marking Scheme. The MA Criminology has a varied, fair, and consistent assessment regime based upon clearly specified criteria and uses a variety of assessment techniques to ensure that the range of learning outcomes are met. Writing skills are tested via essays, reports, policy papers, case studies and the final work based research project. Whilst many of your assessments will be written your interpersonal communication skills will also be developed via presentations.

Summative feedback will be provided for all final pieces of assessment. There is also formative assessment, which scaffolds learning and gives you the opportunity to submit or present your work for review ahead of summative deadlines. All core modules will develop and test your skills cumulatively, and will do this by emphasising the complementarity of both formative and summative assessment. Thus formative assessment is used on each module before or while you are working towards your final assessment to encourage independent and active learning. The rationale, which encourages a strongly developmental approach to learning, is threefold:

1. To inform you of your strengths and weaknesses, thus playing a part in facilitating personal development;
2. To increase your motivation by providing you with positive and constructive developmental feedback;

3. To give you the opportunity to review and consolidate aspects of your learning.

The approach of the MA Criminology team to assessment is driven by our commitment to deliver a curriculum that is exciting, cutting-edge, and which reflects the needs of today's NTU graduate attributes. These include 'intellectual curiosity, enthusiasm for learning and an aptitude for self-directed learning'. Each module on the MA Criminology also adopts an explicitly global or international perspective on a range of criminological issues, considering sustainable responses and solutions to injustice and inequality.

At least four of the modules are team-taught, which allows for a responsive and varied curriculum which reflects the individual and collective research interests of the team.

10. Course structure and curriculum

The MA Criminology has been designed to provide a challenging contemporary curriculum, which reflects the specific features of criminology and criminal justice as a field. The course is especially focused on key practical and theoretical issues. It also provides you with a sense of the development of thought in the subject and also enables you to get an advanced understanding and practical application of a range of methods and methodologies available to support research and practice in the work place.

The MA Criminology consists of 180 credits, currently made up of four modules (30 credit points each) and a Work Based Research Project (60 credit points).

Core modules:

- Approaches to Criminological Theory and Research Methods
- Contemporary Criminal Justice Policy and Practice
- Crime, Community and Neighbourhood
- Offender Management, Policing and Crime Reduction.

Plus

- Work Based Research Project (15,000 words).

All the modules are specifically designed to reflect current development and thinking in understanding and responding to crime, and in the development, implementation and evaluation of criminal justice policies. The course is structured around a core spine of four taught modules. More specifically, *Approaches to Criminological Theory and Research Methods* and *Contemporary Criminal Justice Policy and Practice* provides you with a highly developed grounding in contemporary approaches to the theoretically informed analysis of crime, whilst at the same time firmly embedding the critical discussion and exploration of these issues within the context of the increasingly globalised working environment and processes within which crime policy and practice operates. The third module in this spine, *Crime, Community and Neighbourhood* explores the role of place and neighbourhood in shaping crime hotspots, and examines the methodological, conceptual and technical issues surrounding the evaluation and analysis of criminological data at the level of communities and neighbourhoods.

The role of the *Offender Management, Policing & Crime Reduction* module is to not only complement the other core modules but also to enable you to tailor the course to your individual preferences and according to your professional objectives, specifically their career aspirations to work in different organisations within the sector (e.g. the police, the NOMS, the courts).

The *Work Based Research Project* is intended, as with many MA level courses, to be the pinnacle of the course, drawing together skills and expertise, by giving you the opportunity to display your creativity and imagination in the design and execution of a research project working within an organisation in the criminal justice sector. As such, you will be directed to display specialist skills of design and project management, critical, analytic and synthesising skills that would be transferable to further postgraduate studies or to working in other professional settings. Members of the Criminology team are available to supervise projects in their area of specialism, and where necessary we would allow a project to be supervised by another colleague from the wider Department of Sociology and School of Social Sciences.

If you are part-time student the MA is studied over a 2 year period. In your first year you will be required to take 60 credits, which will include *Approaches to Criminological Theory and Research Methods* and *Crime, Community and Neighbourhood*. The remaining 120 credits will be taken in the second year, including *Contemporary Criminal Justice Policy and Practice* and *Offender Management, Policing and Crime Reduction*. You will start your *Work Based Research Project* in the first year, completing it at the end of your second year.

11. Admission to the course

The MA Criminology welcomes any student who is capable of benefitting from, and successfully completing a route through the course, on either a full-time or part-time basis. Information on entry requirements is now found on the Applying tab in Course Finder.

Detailed entry requirements for this course are available at:

www.ntu.ac.uk/macriminology

Applicants whose first language is not English will additionally be required to demonstrate proficiency in the language. English Language requirements for this course are available at www.ntu.ac.uk/international.

The Nottingham Language Centre, located at the University's City site, provides intensive courses in English for Academic Purposes, designed for international applicants if your knowledge of English does not reach the required level. You may attend these courses prior to commencing your studies, where appropriate and compatible.

12. Support for Learning

The course begins with an induction programme which will explain its aims, delivery and expectations. Early in the course this will include an emphasis on employability skills and career planning, through the preparation of a Personal Development Plan (PDP). This will involve you being allocated a personal tutor who will provide academic guidance and pastoral support. Our personalised tutorial system is there to make sure you have a point of contact throughout your time with us. Your personal tutor, in collaboration with the employability team, will also engage you in developing employability skills and in career planning activity. You will be provided with a course handbook which explains how the course works and outlines the support provided by the teaching team and the University.

During the course, communication between staff and students is done both on a face-to-face basis and via email. All teaching staff will provide regular 'office hours' when they are available to see you. Throughout your time at NTU you will be also

be assigned a personal tutor who will provide both pastoral and academic support. This role will be supplemented by your Work Based Research Project supervisor.

As an MA Criminology student you will have access to the University's libraries and computer facilities, and the further computer, technical and administrative resources provided by the School of Social Sciences. The University has its own workspace on the internet, which is called NOW. This is used by all members of the course to support and enhance module delivery, and is the principal means of disseminating course information.

The Boots Library - located in the heart of the city campus - will be the main resource for your studies. Many course materials can be accessed online, and there are an ever-growing number of e-books and electronic journal utilised. Good communication between library personnel and the course team continues to ensure that appropriate and up-to-date material is available to you.

Support within the Department of Sociology is supplemented by effective School-based academic and pastoral support, which is widely publicised and used well by existing students. If you are an international student you will also have the option of in-session English support to help you with developing and sustaining your writing skills. The MA Criminology will have regular Course Committees where a representative of your course can share their experiences and provide on-going feedback.

13. Graduate destinations / employability

This course is suitable for both those who currently work in the criminal justice field and are looking to enhance their career opportunities and for students seeking employment in criminal justice agencies operating at central, regional and local government levels, such as the Home Office, police forces and local government, as well international opportunities in an increasingly globalised world. From day one the employability team will assist you in developing a CV and identifying the skills required by the labour market. Graduates may go on to pursue a range of professional careers in criminal justice related work in either the statutory, commercial or community voluntary sectors.

Graduate employability is fundamental to the strategic aim of NTU, as reflected in the fact that NTU is consistently placed close to the top of the league table of all UK Universities for graduate employment. The knowledge and skills that Criminology graduates attain are generally those that employers in a variety of different sectors seek, which means that as a Criminology graduate you should have a good opportunity to promote yourself to suitable employers. The Department of Sociology has strong links with the criminal justice sector including the police, probation and prison services, community safety partnerships, a range of other statutory agencies, as well as the voluntary and community sector that all have a stake in criminal justice policy. The staff team conduct research in these areas and also regularly consult such organisations about the type of knowledge and skills they are looking for in potential employees so this can be reflected by the course content.

As Criminology graduate from this course you will have had the opportunity to reflect on the subject and transferable skills that you have learned while preparing coursework. These include expertise in writing complex yet concise analytical pieces, developing and implementing a research project, and the ability to present in-depth ideas. You will also have been helped and encouraged to articulate those skills in relation to particular occupations that you may be interested in pursuing. Course learning outcomes and assessment strategies are designed in part to help you to develop transferable skills and attributes as outlined in section 7 above. While the primary aims of a university course have

traditionally been intellectual in nature and specific to the subject(s) under study, NTU realises the importance of the role of higher education in training graduates to move into the labour market. It is envisaged that you might be entering the course because at a later date you will seek employment within the criminal justice arena. To this end, the course further develops and enhances the qualities and skills desired by prospective employers operating in the criminal justice field. Above all, these include independent critical thought, analysis and evaluation, partnership working skills and self-directed learning. In addition, this course focuses on developing the following skills: communication, time-management, team-working, and IT/modern technologies.

In addition to the expertise available within the School of Social Sciences, the University has a comprehensive careers service open to all students to assist in securing employment – you can access the Career's Service pages of the NTU website here: <http://www.ntu.ac.uk/careers>.

14. Course standards and quality

Course standards are monitored in a variety of ways:

- A course committee of staff and students monitors your feedback on module delivery and the learning experience.
- An external examiner supports the course team and ensures quality in the delivery and assessment of the course. They also advise where course enhancements might be implemented as well as highlighting examples of good practice.
- You are given detailed feedback on each piece of assessed work, and on non-assessed diagnostic work
- You will have a personal tutor with whom you can discuss your progress and gain additional feedback or advice on learning.
- The course is lodged within the School of Social Sciences and is managed within the guidelines and standards set and assured by the School.

15. Assessment regulations

This course is subject to the University's Common Assessment Regulations (located in section 16 of the Academic Standards and Quality Handbook). Any course specific assessment features are described below:

There are no course specific exceptions from the University's postgraduate course common assessment regulations.

16. Additional Information

Collaborative partner(s):	None
Course referenced to national QAA Benchmark Statements:	Yes. Both the 2010 and 2014 versions (http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Documents/SBS-Criminology-14.pdf)
Course recognised by:	N/A
Date implemented:	May 2017
Any additional information:	N/A