



Graduate Academic Learning Compact

Criminal Justice

Program Mission Statement

The Department of Criminology & Criminal Justice seeks to provide its students with the theoretical, practical and research foundations for understanding crime and the criminal justice system in its social context. The faculty is committed to excellence through development of focused and relevant scholarship and instruction. Through research and teaching in the areas of law creation, crime and deviance, and societal responses to law violation in policy and practice, students develop a greater understanding of social control and its dynamic processes. All departmental coursework stresses the importance of critical thinking about justice issues, particularly as they relate to race, class, and gender dynamics in social relations. Our graduate program emphasizes theory and research, while undergraduate internships enhance relevance to current practice and further prepare students to apply their knowledge in the field. Students at the graduate level receive advanced instruction in research design and theory, helping students focus their skills for direct application or more advanced study. Rigorous commitment to peer-review and collegiality help assure an ethic of self-reflection, and continuous improvement governs all departmental processes.

Student Learning Outcomes

Graduates will be able to:

Critical Thinking (Optional)

- To demonstrate writing and critical thinking skills at a level appropriate for graduate-level education in the social sciences.

Content/Discipline Knowledge

- To achieve a comprehensive understanding of the legal, social, and political contexts of justice, crime and punishment.
- To understand, articulate, and apply the major theoretical schools of thought in criminology and criminal justice research.

Independent Learning/Scholarship

- Independently assess and/or conduct research using methods from the literature which are linked to criminal justice theory in order to demonstrate their knowledge of the discipline

Content/Discipline Knowledge

- Achieve an understanding of the disciplinary contexts of justice, crime and punishment.

Knowledge of Literature of Discipline

- To assess and/or conduct research using the appropriate qualitative and quantitative research designs on researchable topics.
- Understand, articulate, and apply the major theoretical schools of thought in criminology and criminal justice research.

Professional Skills

- Demonstrate an integrated understanding of the literature, theory, and methods of criminology and criminal justice.

Assessment Approaches

Student learning will be assessed in select MSCJ courses using one or more of the following measures: exams, papers, and presentations. Specifically, the aforementioned will be used to measure a student's understanding of the legal, social, and political contexts of justice, crime and punishment; the understanding, articulation, and application of major theoretical schools of thought in criminology and criminal justice; a student's ability to assess and/or conduct research using appropriate qualitative and quantitative research designs on researchable topics; and a student's writing and critical thinking skills.