

City University of Hong Kong
Course Syllabus

offered by Department of Social and Behavioural Sciences
with effect from Semesters A 2024/2025

Part I Course Overview

Course Title: _____ Master's Thesis in Criminology _____

Course Code: _____ SS6308/SS6308B _____

Course Duration: _____ 2 Semesters (Semester A & B mode) /
2 Semesters (Semester B & S mode) _____

Credit Units: _____ 6 _____

Level: _____ P6 _____

Medium of Instruction: _____ English _____

Medium of Assessment: _____ English _____

Prerequisites: _____ At least completed 12-credits, including:
SS5301 Advanced Theories in Criminology &
SS5302 Research Methods in Social Sciences
(Course Code and Title) _____ (Co-requisites: SS5301 or SS5302 for full-time mode study only) _____

Precursors: _____ Nil
(Course Code and Title) _____

Equivalent Courses: _____ SS6308 is equivalent to SS6308B
(Course Code and Title) _____

Exclusive Courses: _____ Nil
(Course Code and Title) _____

Part II Course Details

1. Abstract

This course aims to enable students to consolidate their acquired knowledge in criminology and research methods and apply them to the planning and conducting of a research project in a specific topic of criminology. The course is designed to foster independent thinking and to encourage intellectual debate among students through their investigation of significant issues or problems of concern to criminologists.

2. Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

(CILOs state what the student is expected to be able to do at the end of the course according to a given standard of performance.)

No.	CILOs	Weighting (if applicable)	Discovery-enriched curriculum related learning outcomes (please tick where appropriate)		
			A1	A2	A3
1.	To critically review the research literature related to the topic of study	10%	√	√	
2.	To integrate relevant literature into the theoretical framework	10%	√	√	√
3.	To identify valid research questions/variables or hypotheses for study	10%	√	√	√
4.	To link research methods with the theoretical framework	10%	√	√	√
5.	To conduct data collection and analysis and write up a research report	60%	√	√	√
		100%			

A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

A2: Ability

Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to self-life problems.

A3: Accomplishments

Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

3. Learning and Teaching Activities (LTAs)

(LTAs designed to facilitate students' achievement of the CILOs.)

LTA	Brief Description	CILO No.					Hours/week (if applicable)
		1	2	3	4	5	
1. Individual Research	In normal circumstances, each student will conduct his/her individual Master's Thesis in Criminology. Students will be advised to conduct literature review, identify research questions/variables or hypotheses, collect and analyse data, and compose the final report. The project supervisor will guide each student throughout the process.	√	√	√	√	√	
2. Supervision Session	There will be individual and group supervision sessions for students to discuss their challenges and to resolve their difficulties throughout their learning process. The supervisor will provide feedback to the students' work during these sessions.	√	√	√	√	√	

Notes:

SS6308 and SS6308B are equivalent courses. The courses are designed for students in different mode of study.

SS6308

Student of combined/part-time mode study are required to take SS6308. The normal duration of the course is 2 semesters (Semester A and Semester B). No further extension is permitted.

SS6308B

Student of full-time mode study are required to take SS6308B. The normal duration of the course is 2 semesters (Semester B and Summer Term). No further extension is permitted.

4. Assessment Tasks/Activities (ATs)

(ATs are designed to assess how well the students achieve the CIOs.)

Assessment Tasks/Activities	CILO No.					Weighting	Remarks
	1	2	3	4	5		
Continuous Assessment: 100 %							
Research Proposal	√	√	√	√	√	20%	
Individual Research Report	√	√	√	√	√	80%	
Examination: 0 % (duration: , if applicable)						100%	

Further description of ATs:

AT1: Research Proposal (20%)

Students are required to submit a research proposal at two stages. At the first stage, they should submit a thorough literature review, including logical arguments of and proficiency in integrating relevant concepts and previous empirical findings in the literature review. At the second stage they should submit a detailed plan on research methodology and data analysis.

AT2: Individual Research Report (80%)

Each student is required to submit a research report with length between 7,000 and 10,000 words, which is normally, but not restricted to, composed of literature review, hypothesis, results, discussion, and references. Originality is encouraged but not a part of the standard requirements. Students are to demonstrate the following attainments in their work:

1. A critical review of relevant literature; an understanding of the concepts/theories applicable to the questions chosen; appropriate formulation of research questions or hypotheses.
2. Appropriate methods and procedures were chosen to carry out the research; sensitivity to methodological issues is demonstrated.
3. The use of appropriate research methods to analyze data and evaluate research questions or hypotheses.
4. A clear understanding of the findings and an appreciation of the limitations of their own research; sensitivity to cross-cultural issues is demonstrated.

5. Assessment Rubrics

(Grading of student achievements is based on student performance in assessment tasks/activities with the following rubrics.)

Applicable to students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter

Assessment Task	Criterion	Excellent (A+, A, A-)	Good (B+, B, B-)	Fair (C+, C, C-)	Marginal (D)	Failure (F)
1. Research Proposal (20%)	1.1. Ability to critically analyse and synthesise relevant literature	High	Significant	Moderate	Basic	Not even reaching marginal levels
	1.2. Ability to integrate relevant literature into a theoretical framework	High	Significant	Moderate	Basic	Not even reaching marginal levels
	1.3. Ability to identify valid research questions/variables or hypotheses for the study	High	Significant	Moderate	Basic	Not even reaching marginal levels
	1.4. Ability to demonstrate superior grasp of knowledge and skills in linking research methods with the theoretical framework	High	Significant	Moderate	Basic	Not even reaching marginal levels
	1.5. Ability to formulate clear, logical, and detailed plan on research methodology and data analysis	High	Significant	Moderate	Basic	Not even reaching marginal levels
2. Individual Research Report (80%)	2.1. Ability to demonstrate superior execution of research procedures and statistical analyses	High	Significant	Moderate	Basic	Not even reaching marginal levels
	2.2. Ability to produce clear and logical report of research findings	High	Significant	Moderate	Basic	Not even reaching marginal levels
	2.3. Ability to demonstrate correct and critical interpretation or discussion of research findings in relation to previous studies, and to offer implications and limitations of the study	High	Significant	Moderate	Basic	Not even reaching marginal levels

	2.4. Ability to demonstrate overall good organization and scholarly writing style, to comply with research ethics, and to show no evidence of academic dishonesty	High	Significant	Moderate	Basic	Not even reaching marginal levels
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Applicable to students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024

Assessment Task	Criterion	Excellent (A+, A, A-)	Good (B+, B)	Marginal (B-, C+, C)	Failure (F)
1. Research Proposal (20%)	1.1. Ability to critically analyse and synthesise relevant literature	High	Significant	Basic	Not even reaching marginal levels
	1.2. Ability to integrate relevant literature into a theoretical framework	High	Significant	Basic	Not even reaching marginal levels
	1.3. Ability to identify valid research questions/variables or hypotheses for the study	High	Significant	Basic	Not even reaching marginal levels
	1.4. Ability to demonstrate superior grasp of knowledge and skills in linking research methods with the theoretical framework	High	Significant	Basic	Not even reaching marginal levels
	1.5 Ability to formulate clear, logical, and detailed plan on research methodology and data analysis	High	Significant	Basic	Not even reaching marginal levels
2. Individual Research Report (80%)	2.1. Ability to demonstrate superior execution of research procedures and statistical analyses	High	Significant	Basic	Not even reaching marginal levels
	2.2. Ability to produce clear and logical report of research findings	High	Significant	Basic	Not even reaching marginal levels
	2.3. Ability to demonstrate correct and critical interpretation or discussion of research findings in relation to previous studies, and to offer implications and limitations of the study	High	Significant	Basic	Not even reaching marginal levels
	2.4. Ability to demonstrate overall good organization and scholarly writing style, to comply with research ethics, and to show no evidence of academic dishonesty	High	Significant	Basic	Not even reaching marginal levels

Part III Other Information (more details can be provided separately in the teaching plan)

1. Keyword Syllabus

(An indication of the key topics of the course.)

There is no formal syllabus in terms of contents but the course will consist of:

- Group discussion for the determination of topic areas for research and exchange of ideas in literature review;
- Reading assignment, development and preparation of a research proposal on a topic in line with the research interest of a supervisor;
- Research design, and data collection, analysis and interpretation; and
- Preparation and presentation of the research report.

2. Reading List

2.1 Compulsory Readings

(Compulsory readings can include books, book chapters, or journal/magazine articles. There are also collections of e-books, e-journals available from the CityU Library.)

1.	Bachman, R., & Paternoster, R. (1997). <i>Statistical methods for Criminology and Criminal Justice</i> . NJ: McGraw-Hill.
2.	Bouma, G. D., & Atkinson, G. B. J. (1995). <i>A handbook of Social Science Research</i> . Oxford: Oxford University Press.
3.	Cooper, H. M. (1998). <i>Synthesizing research: A guide for literature reviews</i> . Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage.
4.	Fowler, F. J. Jr. (1995). <i>Improving survey questions: Design and evaluation</i> . Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage.
5.	Levin, J., & Fox, J. A. (2004). <i>Elementary statistics in social research: The essentials</i> . NY: Pearson.
6.	Maxfield, M. G., & Babbie, E. R. (2008). <i>Research methods for Criminal Justice and Criminology</i> (5th ed.). United States: Thomson Wadsworth.
7.	Miller, D. C., & Salkind, N. J. (2002). <i>Handbook of research design and social measurement: A text and reference book for the Social and Behavioral Sciences, 6th Edition</i> . ThousandOaks, Calif.: Sage.
8.	Miller, L. S., & Whitehead, J. T. (1996). <i>Introduction to Criminal Justice research and statistics</i> . Cincinnati, OH: Anderson.
9.	Neuman, W. L. (2003). <i>Social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches</i> . Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
10.	Posavac, E. J., & Carey, R. G. (1997). <i>Program evaluation: Methods and case studies</i> (5th ed.). NJ: Prentice-Hall.