

Programme Specification

Award and title: MSc Criminology

<i>School:</i>	Humanities
<i>Subject area:</i>	Social Sciences
<i>Entry from academic year:</i>	2026-27
<i>in the month(s) of</i>	September
<i>Awarding institution:</i>	York St John University
<i>Teaching institution:</i>	York St John University
<i>Delivery location:</i>	York St John University, Lord Mayors' Walk
<i>Programme/s accredited by:</i>	N/A
<i>Exit awards:</i>	Postgraduate Certificate Criminology Postgraduate Diploma Criminology
<i>UCAS code / GTTR / other:</i>	N/A
<i>Joint Honours combinations:</i>	N/A
<i>QAA subject benchmark statement(s):</i>	Criminology 2022
<i>Mode/s of study:</i>	Postgraduate periods of study ¹ for full time / part time
<i>Language of study:</i>	English
<i>Paired with Foundation Year</i>	No
<i>Study abroad opportunities:</i>	No
<i>Opt-in YSJU Placement Year opportunity:</i>	No

Introduction and special features

The MSc Criminology is a postgraduate qualification focusing on equipping you with the skills needed to understand contemporary social and criminological issues, how to effectively research those issues, alongside effective approaches to tackle and communicate these issues to audiences of all backgrounds and levels of understanding.

The MSc Criminology is the path for students who wish to increase their knowledge about how crime and criminality can be more fully understood by exploring how the media, politics, the criminal justice system, approaches to policing, the economy, and society intersect with, and impact crime. On this programme you will become critically engaged and aware of how social factors like inequality, precarity, oppression, hegemonic patriarchy (to name a few) impose themselves on society as a whole, and how this may impact crime rates and engagement in forms of criminality. Crucially you will also learn important and valuable technical skills that will allow you to assess crime in society, skills that will be desirable in the workplace and beyond. The knowledge and skills gained through this programme will position you to pursue, and succeed in, careers in the criminal justice system, in social support programs, in non-governmental organisations and the third sector, in social data analytics, and entrepreneurial endeavours.

The MSc Criminology can be studied full-time or part-time. If you are studying full-time, in Term 1 you will take three modules: you will study Advanced Methods in Social Research and Contemporary Research in Social Sciences, alongside Criminological Theory and Practice. These modules ensure you gain experience in a range of research techniques as well as an understanding of the philosophical debates underlying research methods and research design. The modules emphasise hands-on exercises of conducting social research and analysing data and provide extensive practical experience.

Term 2 is comprised of one compulsory module and three optional modules, where you will choose one from the portfolio (modules run dependent on minimal number requirements). This term is designed to allow you to choose a focused pathway that furthers your knowledge in specific areas of interests and sharpens the skills that you will use to succeed on your independent research project. Each of the option modules offer you a deeper understanding of a particular way of thinking about criminology, and how to communicate that understanding effectively to a certain audience. The modules incorporate a social justice element in line with the University's commitment to furthering social justice for all. Option modules will include one Policing-focused module and one Law-focused module to ensure familiarity with broader issues that augment criminology as a disciplinary area. Term 2 also includes some optional non-credit bearing courses on different forms of research software (including NVivo and ArcGIS for example). You will also start planning, and gain ethics approval for, your independent project.

Term 3 sees you engaging in your own research towards an independent project. Your project provides you with the opportunity to master relevant methods in social research, and to deepen your understanding of a specific area of interest. To achieve this, your supervisor will work with you during the term in partnership, helping you develop your research interests and ideas, honing your methodological approaches, and framing and interpreting your data.

If you are studying part-time, you will study the same modules, but the order of delivery will differ slightly.

Special Features of the Programme

- **Flexibility and support**

You will be able to pitch and negotiate your own projects throughout the programme, in line with established assessment criteria that reflect the diversity of research specialisms at YSJU. You will receive 1-2-1 support in designing your independent project which may focus on topic areas such as social inequalities, spatial sociology, technology, social justice, migration, gender, resistance, cultural criminology, criminal justice, health, the body, and embodiment.

- **Skills training**

Practical application is the bedrock of our compulsory and optional modules, and alongside in-built training to support future graduate outcomes, there are also optional training courses in related software (such as Nvivo and ArcGIS) and skills that are in demand by a variety of employers

- **Focused pathways**

In Term 2 you are offered optional modules that allow you to pursue your individual research approaches, and self-select a pathway that furthers your knowledge of, as well as your ability to work with, community support and advocacy organisations, the criminal justice system and/or organisations that investigate crime and society from an academic and analytical position.

Admissions criteria

You must meet the minimum entry requirements which are published on the programme specific webpage. In addition, you must have:

- A 2:2 undergraduate degree in a Social Sciences or cognate disciplinary area

If your first language is not English, you need to take an IELTS test or an equivalent qualification accepted by the University (see <https://www.yorks.ac.uk/international/how-to-apply/english-language-requirements/>).

If you do not have traditional qualifications, you may be eligible for entry on the basis of [Recognition of prior learning \(RPL\)](#). We also consider applications for entry with advanced standing.

Programme aim(s)

The programme aims to develop socially conscious postgraduates with the necessary technical skills to flourish in both the workplace and in further study. The programme, by combining methodological training, research-led option modules, and 1-2-1 supervision across an extended research project, engenders critical and reflexive thinking, theorising and practical attributes that will serve postgraduates well in understanding, exploring and challenging crime, criminality and the situations, institutions and systems that underpin the construction of crime in society today.

Programme learning outcomes

Upon successful completion of the programme students will be able to:

Level 7

- 7.1 Demonstrate a systematic understanding and critical awareness of criminological topics
- 7.2 Use a critical lens to explore the history of ideas, cultural contexts, and the social and political theories that inform and influence the practice of criminology
- 7.3 Engage critically with the intersectionality of power in relation to criminal justice agencies and responses to crime, harm, deviance and victimisation
- 7.4 Identify appropriate methodologies for dealing with complex problems and design a functional research project
- 7.5 Develop critical discussion and analysis with regards to complex concepts, and work independently and with some originality
- 7.6 Successfully complete a substantial empirical research project, systematic review or systematic case study, informed by wide current understandings of criminology

Programme Structure

Code	Level	Semester	Title	Credits	Module status	
					compulsory (C) or optional (O)	non-compensable (NC) or compensable (X)
HUR7004M	7	1	Advanced Methods in Social Research	30	C	X
HUR7005M	7	1	Contemporary Research in Social Sciences	30	C	X
SSC7005M	7	1	Criminological Theory and Practice	20	C	X
SSC7007M	7	2	Crime and Society	20	C	X
Choose one module from SSC7006; SSC7008; and SSC7009M						
SSC7006M	7	2	Social Justice, Communities and Partnerships	20	O	X
SSC7008M	7	2	Policing and Serious Crime Investigation	20	O	X
SSC7009M	7	2	Principles of Criminal Law and Practice	20	O	X
SSC7010M	7	2&3	Independent Project	60	C	NC

Any modules that must be passed for progression or award are indicated in the table above as non-compensable. A non-compensable module is one that must be passed at the relevant level (with a mark of 50) in order to progress.

Please note that not all options may be available every year as they depend on student demand and staff availability.

Learning, teaching and assessment

The MSc Criminology builds on successful undergraduate and postgraduate learning, teaching and assessment approaches in Social Sciences at York St John University (YSJU). The programme provides a range of teaching styles and assessments built around the expertise and interests of the active researchers running each module (or module component). As such, each module will be led by researchers who are experts on the topics they are teaching and who are experts in their fields; this will provide you with the highest quality, and most rigorous, education for each module topic, as well as for the totality of your programme. Classes will involve tutor-led input interspersed with student activities: activities may include small group work, discussions, and library-based research leading to feedback. Modules with lectures will also benefit from the provision of small groups teaching and/or one to one tutorials depending on what is considered the most effective form of delivery in consultation with students.

Facilitating student-led approaches to learning are also crucial and there is an emphasis on independent study outside of formal teaching sessions including directed reading tasks, student-based project work, engaging with the online virtual learning environment (VLE) and attendance at guest lectures and research seminars held in the department. All of this is in the service of producing students who are well-informed on the topics the programme is covering, and who have found research interests within these topics to pursue.

YSJU and the MSc Criminology adopts the position that students are co-producers of knowledge rather than just recipients. You are vital to a student-centred approach to learning, and you will be supported in developing your own voice as you become a guiding figure in the future of the research and professional areas you are interested in. As a result, you will have the opportunity to engage in research in diverse ways as you move through the MSc. This may include paid work taking part in research projects being carried out by staff, or you may produce research for popular publication, alongside contributing to a postgraduate research conference in May (the end of Term 2). The MSc Criminology aims to ensure that you have opportunities to engage in the study of criminology at its highest levels, rather than just hearing about how knowledge is produced.

The MSc Criminology is committed to embedding formative assessment activities as part of its approach to teaching, learning and assessment: these are activities which develop your understanding of how assessed work is marked and how you might produce work to a higher standard. This forms part of our continuous assessment strategy, where we ensure that you receive on-going feedback relating to your learning and development throughout each term rather than simply in assessments at the end of each term: this will assist you in being successful in your studies. You will encounter a range of assessment approaches which are designed to enable you to develop a range of skills that will develop your skills as you transition into the working world, or if you go on to continue your academic studies towards a PhD. Formative and summative assessment will be via a variety of methods appropriate to the specific module and will include written and presentation elements, alongside more creative forms of assessment including debates, podcasts and report writing.

When you complete your MSc Criminology you will have accrued important knowledge related to the ways differing social forces and structures impact crime and criminality. You will also have developed a personal interest in a particular area of criminology that you will develop towards work of publishable quality. Further, you will have gained useful research and technical skills that are desired by employers, with aptitudes in software for research including SPSS, ArcGIS, Stata, Qualtrics, and NVivo. Combined with your understanding and critical engagement with how the structures that effect crime and criminality function, you will be well equipped to spend your professional career working to improve systems, organizations and society more broadly.

Progression and graduation requirements

The University's [general regulations for](#) postgraduate awards apply to this programme.

Any modules that must be passed for progression or award are indicated in the Programme Structure section as non-compensable.

Internal and external reference points

This programme specification was formulated with reference to:

- [University mission and values](#)
- [University 2026 Strategy](#)

- [QAA subject benchmark statements](#)
- [Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications](#)
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Date written / revised: March 23

Programme originally approved: April 2023