

SS6308: MASTER'S THESIS IN CRIMINOLOGY

Effective Term

Semester B 2025/26

Part I Course Overview

Course Title

Master's Thesis in Criminology

Subject Code

SS - Social and Behavioural Sciences

Course Number

6308

Academic Unit

Social and Behavioural Sciences (SS)

College/School

College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CH)

Course Duration

Non-standard Duration

Other Course Duration

2 Semesters (Semester A & B mode) / 2 Semesters (Semester B & S mode)

Credit Units

0-6

Level

P5, P6 - Postgraduate Degree

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 (Co-requisites: SS5301 or SS5302 for full-time mode study only)

Precursors

Nil

Equivalent Courses

SS6308 is equivalent to SS6308B

Exclusive Courses

Nil

Part II Course Details

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 critical thinking and to encourage intellectual debate among students through their investigation of significant issues or problems of concern to criminologists.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

CILOs		Weighting (if app.)	DEC-A1	DEC-A2	DEC-A3
1	To critically review the research literature related to the topic of study	10	x	x	
2	To integrate relevant literature into the theoretical framework	10	x	x	x
3	To identify valid research questions/variables or hypotheses for study	10	x	x	x
4	To link research framework methods with the theoretical	10	x	x	x
5	To conduct data collection and analysis and write up a research report	60	x	x	x

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 real-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.

Learning and Teaching Activities (LTAs)

LTAs	Brief Description	CILO No.	Hours/week (if applicable)
1	1. Research Report 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.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	

2	2. Supervision Session	Supervision sessions will be conducted to guide students through the project, discuss their challenges and resolve any difficulties throughout their learning process. The supervisor will provide feedback to the students' work during these sessions.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	
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Additional Information for LTAs

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.

Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

	ATs	CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks ("-" for nil entry)	Allow Use of GenAI?
1	Research Proposal	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	20	1) Conduct proof editing 2) Generate initial ideas 3) Conduct preliminary analysis	Yes
2	Research Report	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	80	1) Conduct proof editing 2) Generate initial ideas 3) Conduct preliminary analysis	Yes

Continuous Assessment (%)

100

Additional Information for ATs

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: Research Report (80%)

Students are required to submit a research report 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:

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

Assessment Rubrics (AR)

Assessment Task

Research Proposal (20%) (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

- 1.1. Ability to critically analyse and synthesise relevant literature
- 1.2. Ability to integrate relevant literature into a theoretical framework
- 1.3. Ability to identify valid research questions/variables or hypotheses for the study
- 1.4. Ability to demonstrate superior grasp of knowledge and skills in linking research methods with the theoretical framework
- 1.5. Ability to formulate clear, logical, and detailed plan on research methodology and data analysis

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) High

Good

(B+, B, B-) Significant

Fair

(C+, C, C-) Moderate

Marginal

(D) Basic

Failure

(F) Not even reaching marginal levels

Assessment Task

Research Report (80%) (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

- 2.1. Ability to demonstrate superior execution of research procedures and statistical analyses
- 2.2. Ability to produce clear and logical report of research findings
- 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
- 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

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) High

Good

(B+, B, B-) Significant

Fair

(C+, C, C-) Moderate

Marginal

(D) Basic

Failure

(F) Not even reaching marginal levels

Assessment Task

Research Proposal (20%) (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

- 1.1. Ability to critically analyse and synthesise relevant literature
- 1.2. Ability to integrate relevant literature into a theoretical framework
- 1.3. Ability to identify valid research questions/variables or hypotheses for the study
- 1.4. Ability to demonstrate superior grasp of knowledge and skills in linking research methods with the theoretical framework
- 1.5. Ability to formulate clear, logical, and detailed plan on research methodology and data analysis

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) High

Good

(B+, B) Significant

Marginal

(B-, C+, C) Basic

Failure

(F) Not even reaching marginal levels

Assessment Task

Research Report (80%) (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

- 2.1. Ability to demonstrate superior execution of research procedures and statistical analyses
- 2.2. Ability to produce clear and logical report of research findings
- 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
- 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

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) High

Good

(B+, B) Significant

Marginal

(B-, C+, C) Basic

Failure

(F) Not even reaching marginal levels

Part III Other Information

Keyword Syllabus

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.

Reading List

Compulsory Readings

Title	
1	Bachman, R., & Paternoster, R. (1997). Statistical methods for Criminology and Criminal Justice. NJ: McGraw-Hill.
2	Bouma, G. D., & Atkinson, G. B. J. (1995). A handbook of Social Science Research. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
3	Cooper, H. M. (1998). Synthesizing research: A guide for literature reviews. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage.
4	Fowler, F. J. Jr. (1995). Improving survey questions: Design and evaluation. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage.
5	Joyner, R., Rouse, W., & Glatthorn, A. (2018). Writing the winning thesis or dissertation: A step-by-step guide. Corwin, https://doi.org/10.4135/9781544317229
6	Levin, J., & Fox, J. A. (2004). Elementary statistics in social research: The essentials. NY: Pearson.
7	Maxfield, M. G., & Babbie, E. R. (2018). Research methods for Criminal Justice and Criminology (8th ed.). United States: Cengage.
8	Miller, D. C., & Salkind, N. J. (2002). Handbook of research design and social measurement: A text and reference book for the Social and Behavioral Sciences 6th Edition. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage.
9	Miller, L. S., & Whitehead, J. T. (1996). Introduction to Criminal Justice research and statistics. Cincinnati, OH: Anderson.
10	Neuman, W. L. (2003). Social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
11	Posavac, E. J., & Carey, R. G. (1997). Program evaluation: Methods and case studies (5th ed.). NJ: Prentice-Hall.