

Faculty of Law



ECRI2211 Ethical Issues in Criminology

[30h] 3 credits

Teacher(s): Marie-Sophie Devresse, Dan Kaminski
Language: French
Level: Second cycle

Aims

The purpose of the course is to introduce the student to the main ethical questions which arise in contemporary philosophy, to demonstrate the meaning and the importance of these issues and to construct an ethical framework for action in the field of criminology.

Main themes

I. Content and Method

The course includes two parts, one of which focuses on the meaning of ethics and its foundations; the other part of the course seeks to apply ethical standards to the specific field of criminology.

A. The issue of ethics as it is posed today, the relationship between ethics, moral law and the institutions of society.

B. Ethical issues related to action in the field of criminology:

1) in general terms, what are the human concepts around which criminology is structured? What are the issues which arise today in this regard? How do these issues fit into the broader context of philosophical thought and contemporary anthropology? What are the societal desiderata around which the study and practice of criminology find their ethical and social justification?

2) in more specific terms, the practice of criminology in whatever sector it is exercised, often finds itself confronted with difficult choices: one of the central paradoxes of this discipline and of the practices that it entails perhaps resides in the duality of the functions of assistance in the broad sense and the functions of control which are an integral part of it. Prison wardens, probation officers, guidance teams or philanthropic services, even police officers and youth magistrates - to mention but some of the professions with connections to the field under study - must constantly confront what often appear to be contradictory demands. The weighing of the ethical issues must therefore proceed by examining separately each of these individual fields of activity in the broad field of criminology.

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Content and teaching methods

The aim of this seminar is to provide a forum for reflection and discussion on the nature and the statues of the knowledge created in the field of criminology, as they have been taught during the second year of the course.

Summary : contents and methods

Contents :

Is there a process which is specific to criminology ? As far as criminology can be considered as an activity constituting a university subject, how can it be developed and how can it bring together the knowledge emanating from subjects such as penal law, sociology, psychology and biomedical sciences ? Moreover, how to take into account the fact that criminology is at the same time a project of knowledge and activity permanently questioned by practice and by the socio-political field ? It is hoped that the analysis of the texts given to the participants will lead to uncover and dismantle the contradictions that underlie the very construction of knowledge in criminology. These texts come from the different subject areas which make up criminology.

Methods :

The active participation of the students will be required throughout the seminar on three levels : discussions after lectures, commentaries on written material provided and a personal written project. The seminar will also be a place for debating the epistemological questions linked to the students' research work.

Other information (prerequisite, evaluation (assessment methods), course materials recommended readings, ...)

Pre-requirements : History of criminology, Criminal psychology, Criminal sociology, Penology, Criminal Law.

Evaluation :

The whole of the written productions and the oral participation will apply to a quarter of the points. A written examination, with the support of the texts and the written productions of the course, will be organized to cover the three other quarters of the points. This examination will comprise a theoretical question and a practical question.

Support : readings portfolio.

Other credits in programs

CRIM21MS	Première année du master en criminologie, à finalité spécialisée	(3 credits)
CRIM22	Deuxième licence en criminologie	(3 credits)
CRIM22MS	Deuxième année du master en criminologie, à finalité spécialisée	(3 credits)
ETES9CE	Certificat universitaire en éthique économique et sociale	(3 credits)