

CRIMINOLOGY AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE, M.A.

The Master of Arts in Criminology and Criminal Justice program is a professional degree designed to provide criminal justice professionals with coursework in criminal justice system operation, criminology, research methods, and statistics. The degree program provides students with advanced instruction that prepares them to use evidence-based practices in the criminal justice system. Beyond career advancement for practitioners, the Master's degree also provides rigorous social science training that prepares students for continued doctoral study.

Learning Outcomes

1. Students will be able to correctly frame research questions and/or hypotheses.
2. Students will be able to synthesize and critically evaluate existing research studies in a given area, including the identification of any gaps in the literature.
3. Students will be able to select the appropriate research design for their proposed research study.
4. Students will be able to specify the appropriate analytic strategy for their proposed research study.
5. Students will be able to identify and define major criminological theories from the field.
6. Students will be able to synthesize and critically evaluate research studies from a particular theoretical perspective, including the identification of any gaps in the literature.
7. Students will be able to identify the major constitutional limitations governing the conduct of criminal justice actors in the United States.
8. Students will be able to identify principles of distributive and corrective justice and their application to criminal justice settings.
9. Students will be able to identify and discuss important policy changes in America's response to crime.
10. Students will be able to synthesize and critically evaluate research studies from a particular criminal justice policy area, including the identification of any gaps in the literature.

Admission to the M.A. Program

Applicants must possess a baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university. An undergraduate major in criminology, criminal justice, or a related social science is desirable. In addition to meeting all admission requirements of the University's Graduate School, applicants to the M.A. program must submit a university application through the Graduate School, including a written statement describing their interests in the criminology and criminal justice field and goals or objectives for their degree and career. Applicants must also submit scores obtained within the last five years on the Miller Analogies test (MAT), Graduate Record Examination (GRE), or Law School Admission Test (LSAT), two letters of academic reference, and official grade transcripts from all previous institutions. Applications are accepted for fall and spring admission.

In cooperation with the University of South Carolina School of Law, the Department also offers a combined degree program which permits a student to obtain both the Juris Doctor and the Master of Arts in Criminal Justice degrees in approximately four years. Applicants should seek admission into both programs to participate. Link to Law School Bulletin

details: Criminology and Criminal Justice / Law, M.A. / J.D. (<https://academicbulletins.sc.edu/law/degree-programs/criminology-criminal-justice-law-ma-jd/>)

Degree Requirements (30 Hours)

Requirements for the M.A. degree include in the following:

Core Courses (15 Hours)

Must be completed with a grade of B or higher.

Course	Title	Credits
CRJU 701	Survey of Criminal Justice	3
CRJU 702	Law and Justice	3
CRJU 703	Research Methods in Criminal Justice	3
CRJU 705	Quantitative Methods in Criminal Justice	3
CRJU 741	Criminology	3
Total Credit Hours		15

Note: No course may be repeated more than one time. With approval of the graduate director, substantially equivalent courses from outside the department may be substituted for some of these core courses.

Electives (9-15 Hours)

Students choosing the thesis option must take 9 hours of elective courses with no more than 6 credit hours below the 700 level (i.e. 500 or 600 level). Students choosing the non-thesis option must take an additional 6 credit hours of elective courses for a total of 15 credit hours of elective credit with no more than 9 credit hours below the 700 level (i.e. 500 or 600 level).

Thesis or Non-Thesis Option (6 Hours for thesis)

Students may choose to complete a 6 credit hour thesis. Successful completion of the thesis will require an oral defense before the student's thesis committee. Students choosing the non-thesis option must take an additional 6 credit hours of elective courses in lieu of thesis credits for a total of 15 credit hours of elective credit with no more than 9 credit hours below the 700 level level (i.e., 500 or 600 level).

Additional Requirements

In addition to these minimum course requirements, students are required to successfully complete a comprehensive exam. Additional details regarding this requirement and other professional requirements/policies are available in the Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice Graduate Handbook. Students should work with their academic advisor to identify what if any additional hours will be required to create a program of study for this degree.