# Get ready for BA(Hons) Criminology

What is crime? How do we define 'crime'? Who are the 'typical' criminals? Who is most likely to be a victim of crime? How much crime is there? What types of crime occur most frequently? How can we try to prevent crime? These are some of the key questions that are crucial to understanding crime, and that we will be exploring as part of your **BA(Hons) Criminology**. As your Programme Leader, I warmly welcome you, and hope you are looking forward to joining us at UWE Bristol.

I have provided some information below that will help you to prepare for starting with us and I very much look forward to meeting you soon!

**Paul Gavin**
Programme Leader

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## Before you start

We are looking forward to welcoming you in the week commencing 14 September for Starting Block and the beginning of your programme.

Starting Block will help you settle into university and to help you get to know your teaching team and course mates. We will help you find your way around, get used to our systems, and practise the skills you need to make a strong start. Look out for further emails and explore the Starting Block website with more details.

Your timetable will be available to you via MYUWE (login required) once you have started the enrolment process. Please visit the 'Understanding your teaching timetable' website to find out when your timetable will be published.

**Preparing and arrival**
You can find everything you need to know about enrolment, Starting Block and the start of teaching, on our Preparing and Arrival webpage. Take a look at our website to familiarise yourself with our facilities and services such as the library, study skills, academic support, health and wellbeing support and much more.

**Enrolment**
Once you have satisfied all admissions requirements, we'll send you your login details for our IT systems to enable you to activate your university email account. Once your account has been activated, you'll gain access to the MYUWE platform where you can enrol. Note that your login details for MYUWE are different to those used for the UWE Welcome website. Enrolment for September programmes will only be open from August onwards. You can find guidance and further information on our Enrolment website.

**ID card - upload your photo now**
We can only print your ID card if you have added your photo to MYUWE. To avoid delays, upload your photo as soon as you receive login details. For help, go to our student card guidance.

## Engage with your programme

**Start your learning**
Don't wait until the Autumn, start thinking about some of the central themes that underpin criminology and your degree programme now!

Obviously, crime, criminality and victimisation are all impacted by social context, and this has been particularly evident over the last few years, from the impact of Covid-19 and periods of lockdown, questions about race and gender in policing with the murder of George Floyd in the US and Sarah Everard in the UK, through to changes of government, both here and in the US. Whilst crime rates overall dramatically decreased during periods of lockdown (see: Dodd's article in the Guardian here), some offences saw sharp increases – such as domestic violence and domestic homicide. A good starting point in helping us understand why this might be is Farrell and Tilley's (2020) short article in *The Conversation*. More locally, the toppling of the Colston Statue in Bristol city centre gave us lots to think about in terms of who is a criminal and why.

So, as you start to prepare to join us at UWE Bristol, I would recommend you engage in the following:

- **Perhaps start** with this very succinct summary by Stephen Case in 2017, regarding the problem of pinning down what we mean by 'crime' and how it is defined: www.youtube.com/watch?v=a2lIcZPW6oU. The way in which we define crime is important, as it impacts upon how we measure crime. This is a key starting point of your criminology degree, and is discussed in this article in the *Guardian* by Ally Fogg (2014): www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/jan/16/what-is-crime-measure-definitions

  In sum, what is important to take away from all of this is that different types of crime and criminality are given greater attention and prominence than others. As Fogg's article points out, many crimes (such as white collar crime, corporate crime and state crime) do not actually appear in the criminal statistics – they might fall under health and safety legislation for example. They are therefore rendered 'invisible' and hidden from view, and are often referred to as 'disasters' and 'tragedies' rather than as crimes. This often means that crimes of the 'suites' (rather than crimes of the 'streets') are not seen to be as serious as 'conventional' crime such as assault or burglary. But is this really the case?

- **Keep abreast of the news!** Locally, nationally and internationally. Check the headlines daily and use a reputable news source, such as the BBC website, rather than relying on an algorithm to send updates to your phone

- **Update your Facebook feeds and Twitter/X accounts!** So that you are following

relevant criminal justice organisations and agencies (such as: Prison Reform Trust, Howard League, Centre for Crime and Justice, Ministry of Justice), news sources (such as: The Guardian, BBC News) public figures (such as politicians and social commentators) and keeping yourself informed of criminal justice matters. If you are relatively new to Twitter, a good tip is to see who others (e.g. other Criminologists) are following, particularly if they share your own particular areas of interest. You can also follow the us on Instagram- @CUWECriminologyCommunity as well as our Criminology Society - @uwecrimsociety_

- **Start reading!** When you embark on a criminology degree you will be required to read a lot. There is evidence that suggests reading speed improves and increases when we practice reading. It is argued that reading anything, will help with this. If you cannot remember the last time you read a book, a novel, a biography, an autobiography or even a full length article from a quality newspaper, it is suggested you should do so. Remember that simply reading soundbites from social media is no preparation for the text books, articles and reports you will be expected to read, so try to get into the habit of sustained periods of reading now. Try some of these for starters:

  **BLOG:** Frances Crook (2019) Homelessness and the Penal System

  **REPORT:** Ben Bradford and Matteo Tiratelli (2019) Does stop and search reduce crime?

  **NEWS ARTICLE:** *It was so wrong why were so many people imprisoned over 1 riot in Bristol (Tom Wall, 2024).*

  *Laura Bates (2020) writing about incel culture in Elle*

  **AUTOBIGRAPHY:** *Bryan Stevenson (2014) Just Mercy*

  **NOVELS:** Moses McKenzie (2022) *An Olive Grove in Ends*

  Emily Koch (2020) *Keep Him Close*

  These two books are set in Bristol, and feature people engaging with the Criminal Justice System in various ways!

- **Further insight** into many of the issues studied in your lectures, seminars and one-to-one tutorials can be found on the Centre for Crime and Justice Studies website. You can also find an insightful edition of the Centre's publication here which covers a range of topics that have become areas of concern over the last quarter of a century.

# Read around your subject

A key skill which is required for those aiming for a high level of success within their chosen profession is the ability to think critically about key issues and debates. In order to develop these skills, you should start to read around your subject before you arrive. In preparation for study, we encourage you to read broadly, choosing books and subjects that will interest you. There are some texts which are considered to be 'classics' for those about to study criminology and many of these 'classic' texts are available to purchase second hand or to borrow through libraries. The following are suggestions that will be particularly relevant to the first year of your studies (and beyond) but this is not an exhaustive list, just some ideas. Hopefully, they will generate some more for you!

- Newburn, T. (2017). *Criminology* (3rd Ed). London and New York: Routledge. (If you are going to buy one book – this is a great one to start with)
- Carrabine, E., Cox, A., Cox, P., Crowhurst, I., Di Ronco, A., Fussey, P., Sergi, A., South, N., Thiel, D. and Turton, J., (2020). *Criminology: A Sociological Introduction* (3rd Ed). London: Routledge.
- Croall, H. (2011). *Crime and Society in Britain* (2nd Ed). Harlow: Longman.
- Davies, M., Croall, H. and Tyrer, J. (2015). *Criminal Justice* (5th Ed). Harlow: Longman.
- Downes, D., Rock, P. and McLaughlin, E. (2016). *Understanding Deviance: A Guide to the Sociology of Crime and Rule-Breaking* (2nd Ed). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Jones, S. (2021). *Criminology* (7th Ed). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- McLaughlin, M. and Muncie, J. (2019). *The Sage Dictionary of Criminology* (4th Ed). London: Sage.
- Young, J. (2011). *The Criminolological Imagination*, London: Polity.
- Liebling, A., Maruna, S. and McAra, L. (eds) (2017). *The Oxford Handbook of Criminology* (6th Edition). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

**University life**

There are a huge number of books on university life as well as good study techniques, including:

- Chatfield, T. (2022). *Critical Thinking: Your Guide to Effective Argument, Successful Analysis and Independent Study* (2nd Ed). London: Sage.
- Race, P. (2007), *How to get a good degree: Making the Most of Your Time at University* (2nd Ed). London: Oxford University Press.

## Be prepared

**Access support**
Check the information on our Disability web pages so you know what you need to do. If you need any urgent additional mobility or other support to fully access all activities during your studies, contact me as your programme leader.

**Get equipped**
The University has computers on all our campuses for you to use during your studies. These provide access to our core digital learning tools and any specialist software required for your course. You may have scheduled sessions in computer labs or other specialist facilities, and you will be able to use open-access PCs for self-study.

UWE Bristol licenses many specialist software packages for use on personal laptops for the duration of your course. If you're struggling to meet the financial demands of your course, please contact the Student Money Service team for advice and guidance.

See the UWE website for detailed information on choosing your IT equipment including recommended specifications.

For this programme we recommend the **Core Specification**.

**International students**
The Global Student Support Team offer information and advice to ensure you receive all the support you need to get the best from your time at UWE Bristol. They are here to help you to settle in when you first arrive at UWE Bristol and organise social events to help you to adapt to your new environment.

## Who to contact if you have questions

For any questions about the course, please contact the Programme leader: **Paul Gavin** via email at paul2.gavin@uwe.ac.uk

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Please note: this information has been provided on the assumption that you will meet the conditions of your offer and be eligible to take up your place.

Entry: September 2026 Last updated: Spring 2026