



**COURSE DATA**

**DATA SUBJECT**

**Code:** 35058  
**Name:** Criminal Psychology  
**Cycle:** Undergraduate Studies  
**ECTS Credits:** 6  
**Academic year:** 2025-26

**STUDY (S)**

Degree	Center	Acad. year	Period
1302 - Degree in Criminology	Facultat de Dret	1	Second quarter
1923 - Double Degree Programme Law-Criminology	Facultat de Dret	1	Second quarter

**SUBJECT-MATTER**

Degree	Subject-matter	Character
1302 - Degree in Criminology	Psychology	BASIC
1923 - Double Degree Programme Law-Criminology	Year 1 compulsory subjects	COMPULSORY

**COORDINATION**

CARBONELL VAYA ENRIQUE

BELEÑA MATEO M ANGELES

**SUMMARY**

The subject Criminal Psychology is a basic and semester course in the first year of the Degree in Criminology. It consists of a total of 6 credits and provides the most current knowledge available regarding prediction (risk and protective factors), psychological evaluation of antisocial and criminal behavior, the psychology of testimony, and decision-making both individually and collectively. It represents a deepening of the psychological aspects involved in antisocial and criminal behavior, which were introduced in the first semester of the first year with the General Psychology subject, where students are introduced to basic processes. It will have its continuity and complement in the courses of Prevention and Treatment of Crime and Victimology.

The general objective of this course is to introduce the student to the fundamental topics of criminal psychology, leaving aside victimology which is studied in another subject; therefore, it focuses on the analysis of criminal typologies and the psychological information sources through which a crime can be understood, assessed, and studied. The testimony of witnesses and victims is proposed as a fundamental source of information for determining the fact and the attribution of responsibility: the characteristics of



discourse, as well as verbal and non-verbal behavior patterns, will determine credibility and the validity of their statement in psychological terms. A second key source of information is obtained through strategies, techniques, and psychological assessment tests, which allow for the consideration of mental state, the existence of psychopathology, and help explain the dynamics of the criminal act. Once the relevant information has been acquired and considered from a psychological point of view, the transmission in the forum proceeds. It is the jurors, judges, and courts who will be persuaded or not by the findings of the criminal investigation and will make their decisions. This decision-making process of laypeople (jurors) and professionals (judges and magistrates) is valued in this subject.

## PREVIOUS KNOWLEDGE

### RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER SUBJECTS OF THE SAME DEGREE

There are no specified enrollment restrictions with other subjects of the curriculum.

### OTHER REQUIREMENTS

## COMPETENCES / LEARNING OUTCOMES

-

Comprender los procesos psicológicos básicos en el ser humano, tales como personalidad, procesos cognitivos, motivación, aprendizaje, implicados en la adquisición, desarrollo y mantenimiento de la conducta normal y la antisocial y delictiva. G: 5 y E: 21

Conocer y aplicar las técnicas y estrategias para la evaluación y predicción de la conducta criminal.

Identificar las variables neuroanatómicas, neuroquímicas, hormonales, genéticas y de género que influyen en la conducta violenta. G: 5 y E: 21

Saber determinar los factores de riesgo y protectores los menores o mujeres en riesgo o con conductas antisociales. G: 5 y E: 18, 22

Saber diferenciar y detectar los diferentes tipos de comportamientos antisociales en la infancia, adolescencia y edad adulta. G: 5 y E: 15

Saber utilizar un lenguaje psicológico técnico que permita expresar los conceptos correctamente y desde una perspectiva de género. G: 1 y E: 14

## DESCRIPTION OF CONTENTS



## 1. Aggression, Antisocial Behavior, and Crime

### **Definitions or stigmatization. Social impact of crime. Risk factors vs. Psychological disorders of the offender**

The objective is to analyze the main aspects related to life history variables, psychological state, psychopathology, cognitive, motivational, and social processes involved in the emergence of criminal behavior.

## 2. Criminal Investigation Psychology

### **Psychological profiling: concept and assessment. Classic profiles. Abuse and profiles. Sexual offenders. Child sexual offenders.**

The objective is to analyze the main aspects related to life history variables, psychological state, psychopathology, and their relationship with the dynamics of crime.

## 3. Testimonial Psychology

### **Perception in testimony. Information processing and memory of witnesses and involved parties. Persuasion and credibility. Credibility and its parameters: special cases.**

The study of the processes involved in the elaboration and transmission of witness testimony, especially that of victims. It analyzes the basic psychological processes related to the experience, construction, and reproduction of testimony.

## 4. Decision-Making Psychology

### **The decision-making process and its parameters. Decision-making by specialists (police officers, experts, judges, and courts). Decision-making by laypeople (jurors, witnesses, involved parties). Persuasion in decision-making.**

Decision-making is an essential process in the investigation of criminal behavior; whether by the offender who commits the act, the victim who reports it or not, the police/judicial investigation, the psychological assessment of those involved, the presentation and persuasion in court, the actions of jurors, the participation as a witness, and finally, the actions of judges and magistrates. This section aims only to introduce the importance and complexity of the process, which is more a result of art and experience than of scientific knowledge.

## 5. Psychological Assessment of Victims and Offenders

### **Conceptual framework. Reliability and validity. Classification and main assessment tools in the field of criminal psychology. Evaluation of criminal behaviors.**

It will also analyze the most relevant strategies, techniques, and assessment tools for the psychological evaluation of the behavior of victims and offenders.



**6. Testimony Assessment: Evaluation of Statements**

**Methods for evaluating credibility, simulation, and deception.**

It considers the fundamental strategies and techniques for detecting lies/deception and assessing the credibility and validity of testimony.

**WORKLOAD**

**PRESENCIAL ACTIVITIES**

Activity	Hours
Theoretical and practical classes	60,00
<b>Total hours</b>	<b>60,00</b>

**NON PRESENCIAL ACTIVITIES**

Activity	Hours
Attendance at other activities	5,00
Individual or group project	23,00
Independent study and work	30,00
Preparation of lessons	10,00
Preparation for assessment activities	12,00
Resolution of case studies	10,00
<b>Total hours</b>	<b>90,00</b>

**TEACHING METHODOLOGY**

**Various teaching methodologies will be employed in order to maximize the effectiveness of the teaching-learning process.**

Lectures or expository classes by the professor are an essential element of university teaching. However, this guide also aims to encourage student engagement in their own learning process. Based on these principles, the following dynamics and methodologies will be applied:

**Lectures or Expository Classes**

The objective of these classes is not to fully develop the syllabus but to focus on the key aspects and concepts of each topic, provide students with analytical frameworks for the course content, develop content that may be less accessible to students, and encourage technical-scientific debate. Therefore, students are expected to attend classes having already read the relevant topic (Class Preparation). Along with the core textbook of the course (*Soria, M.A. & Sáiz, D. Coords. (2006): Criminal Psychology. Madrid: Pearson Educación*) and the theoretical paper described below, these form the main components of the theoretical assessment.



### **Theoretical Paper**

All students must prepare an original theoretical paper (maximum 30 pages) on one of the subtopics of the syllabus. The paper should have an applied orientation to real-life situations. It may be done in groups of up to 4 people (individual submissions are also allowed), with free group formation. This paper must be submitted 15 days before the official exam date of the course (topics 1, 2, and 3 to Prof. Carbonell; topics 4, 5, and 6 to Prof. Beleña), either via email or in printed form.

### **Practical Sessions**

Due to the limited time allocated to the course, it is difficult to conduct extensive practical sessions for all the proposed content. Four practical sessions have been planned for this course. All of them will work with real cases and aim to apply the procedures and strategies developed in the course syllabus.

### **Practical Work**

Each student must complete a practical task assigned by the professor of the session and submit it 15 days before the course exam for evaluation by the corresponding professor. These practical tasks are individual.

### **Tutorials and Contact with the Professor**

The conditions at the University of Valencia allow all students access to the Virtual Classroom and email. In this course, communication will be encouraged both via email (permanent tutoring) and through the Virtual Classroom for information exchange (notes, instructions from professors, grades, announcements, etc.). Additionally, students are offered direct contact during the office hours indicated in this course guide.

### **Complementary Activities**

The Criminology Degree offers a series of seminars and complementary activities that will be announced in due course, and which students are expected to attend. Please consult the Criminology Degree website.

## **EVALUATION**



---

**The competencies of this subject will be assessed through written exams, problem-solving and practical case analysis, presentation of papers, oral presentations and lectures, participation in seminars, scientific visits, and text commentary.**

These assessment methods combine different approaches to avoid focusing solely on theoretical aspects, which would favor memorization over understanding and the applicability of theoretical knowledge. Likewise, these student assessment techniques incorporate other activities proposed throughout the course: seminars, readings, personal assignments, etc. Therefore, we believe that a **multiple assessment system** is appropriate for this subject, meaning various complementary evaluation methods, with the following general structure:

---

## **Theoretical and Practical Tests**

**Written exam and problem-solving/practical case analysis, where applicable (60%, i.e., 6 out of 10 points)**

---

## **Continuous Assessment**

**Through: paper presentations (20%), oral presentations and lectures, participation in seminars, scientific visits, text commentary (20%)**

Each of the departments involved in teaching (Basic Psychology and Personality, Psychological Assessment and Treatment) will contribute 1 point out of 10 to the continuous assessment grade, and 2 points depending on the syllabus topic addressed in the theoretical paper.

Students who do **not pass the continuous assessment activities** in the first exam session may take a **second exam session**, in which they will be evaluated on all recoverable continuous assessment activities. They may retain the grade for non-recoverable components (e.g., group work, oral presentations).

---

**Each academic year, the course guide will specify the exact evaluation procedure, which may follow the system outlined below:**

**Final Grade = Theoretical Grade + Practical Grade**

---

## **Theoretical Grade: 60% (6 points)**

Earned through the following activities:



- **Exam** on the date, time, and location officially scheduled (covering class content, the indicated textbook, and additional materials provided by the professor).  
**Value: 4 points**
- **Theoretical Paper** to be submitted 15 days before the official exam date (as described in the methodology section).  
**Value: 2 points**

---

### Practical Grade: 40% (4 points)

Earned through the following activities:

- **Exam** on the date, time, and location officially scheduled (covering class content, the indicated textbook, and additional materials provided by the professor). It will include a section applying knowledge to practical cases.  
**Value: 2 points**
- **Participation in practical sessions**, attendance at activities, and completion of individual practical tasks (as described in the methodology section).  
**Value: 1 point per task, total of 2 points**

---

There is **no minimum score required in each part** to pass, but all assignments must be submitted and exams taken. Failing one exam session results in failing the entire subject. Partial grades or passed components cannot be carried over between sessions, but grades for assignments and tasks will be retained within the same academic year (i.e., for both exam sessions).

---

### Honors Distinction (Matrícula de Honor)

This may be awarded to students who take the evaluation test designated by the course's teaching unit. In any case, the provisions of **Article 17 on Honors Distinction** from the *Regulations on Assessment and Grading of the University of Valencia for Undergraduate and Master's Degrees* (approved by the Governing Council on May 30, 2017 ¿ ACGUV 108/17) will apply.

## REFERENCES

- Sierra, J.C., Jiménez, E.M. y Buena-Casal, G. (Coords.)(2006): *Psicología Forense: manual de técnicas y aplicaciones*. Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva.



- Jiménez Gómez, F. (Coord.)(2001). Evaluación Psicológica Forense. Tomos I, II, III y IV. Salamanca: Amarú Ediciones.
- Soria, M.A. y Sáiz, D. (Coords.) (2006): Psicología Criminal. Madrid: Pearson Educación
- Burón, J. (Ed.) (2003): Psicología médico-forense. Bilbao: Desclée de Brouwe
- Cantón, J y Cortés. M.R. (2003) Guía para la evaluación del abuso sexual infantil. Madrid: Pirámide
- Garrido, V. (2005). ¿Qué es la psicología criminológica? Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva
- Clemente, M. (Corrd.)(1995). Fundamentos de Psicología Jurídica. Madrid: Pirámide.
- Echeburúa, E y Guerricaechavarría, C. (2000) Abuso sexual en la infancia: víctimas y agresores. Barcelona: Ariel
- Soria, M.A. (Coord.)(2005): Manual de Psicología Jurídica e investigación criminal. Madrid: Pirámide
- Garrido, E; Masip, J. y Herrero, M.C. (Coord) (2006) Psicología Jurídica. Madrid: Pearson Educación.
- Fernández-Ballesteros, R. (Dir.)(2005): Evaluación psicológica. Conceptos, métodos y estudio de casos. Madrid: Pirámide.
- Manzanero, A.L. (2008) Psicología del Testimonio. Madrid: Pirámide
- Raine, A. y Sanmartín, J (2002) Violencia y Psicopatía. Barcelona: Ariel
- Sanmartín, J. (Coord) (2004) El laberinto de la violencia: causas, tipos y efectos. Barcelona: Ariel
- Vázquez, B (2005) Manual de psicología forense. Madrid: Síntesis
- Ríos Martín, J.C.: Cuestiones de política criminal: funciones y miserias del sistema penal, Granada, 2017.



- González Fernández, J., Tiffon Nonis, B. (2022). Casos prácticos de psicopatología y psicología criminal y forense. Colombia: J.M. Bosch Editor
- Carrasco Ortiz, M.A.; Rubio-Garay , Fernando. Eds. (2022). Psicología Jurídica y Forense: Vol I: Aspectos Psicológicos y Legales Básicos. Vol II: Ámbitos de Aplicación. España: Editorial Sanz y Torres, S.L.