Methods and Techniques of Criminological Research

## Prof. Serena Favarin

***COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES***

The course aims to provide students with:

– theoretical and empirical knowledge on the research process, with specific reference to criminology;

– theoretical and empirical knowledge on the main research methods used in criminology;

– theoretical and empirical knowledge to plan a project of criminological research, also taking into account the ethical limits imposed on the researcher;

– the knowledge of the main data sources used in criminology;

– the ability to apply techniques of descriptive data analysis to investigate criminality and victimisation in time and space, using Excel and the QGIS software.

*Knowledge and understanding*

At the end of the course, students will be able to understand how to conduct criminological research, with reference to each phase (process), types of (deductive or inductive) thinking process to follow and data collection technique. In addition, they will be able to appreciate the ethical limits to be respected during research and independently produce descriptive analysis in criminology using data on reported crime and victimisation investigations.

*Ability to apply knowledge and comprehension*

At the end of the course, students will be able to apply the theoretical and empirical knowledge acquired by setting up research projects, starting with their dissertation, and they will be able to conduct quantitative descriptive analyses by using Excel and the QGIS software.

*Independence of judgement*

At the end of the course, students will have acquired a theoretical and empirical knowledge that will enable them to critically evaluate other people’s criminological research projects and to appreciate their strengths and limits. Independence of judgement will be developed through students’ active participation during lessons which will focus on the analysis of criminological research already conducted. In addition, students will be able to produce their own preliminary analyses on data from authoritative sources.

***COURSE CONTENT***

During the module the following topics will be explored:

* Introduction to the course and how it is assessed;
* What it means to do criminological research and why to carry out criminological research;
* The process of criminological research and its phases.
* Methods of data collection: theory and analysis of criminological research already conducted.
* Preparing a research project and criminological research ethical implications;
* The main databases in the criminological field: data on crime, delinquency and victimisation investigations
* Data analysis techniques on victims, in time and space with practical exercises using Excel and QGIS software.

***READING LIST***

The reference reading list consists of essays and book chapters in English and is updated from year to year. The updated reading list will be provided at the beginning of the course on Blackboard. For information, this is a possible reading list:

F.E. Hagan, *Research Methods in Criminal Justice and Criminology,* Pearson Educational Limited, Harlow, 2017 (10th ed.).

Painter, K.A. & Farrington, D.P. (1999) "Street lighting and crime: diffusion of benefits in the Stoke-on-Trent project", in K. A. Painter e N. Tilley (edited by), Surveillance of Public Space: CCTV, Street Lighting and Crime Prevention, Monsey, N.Y.: Criminal Justice Press – limited to pp. 77-86.

Johns T.L. at al., (2017) "Testing the effectiveness of two retail theft control approaches: an experimental research design", in Journal of Experimental Criminology, 13, pp. 267–273.

Menting et al. (2020) “The influence of activity space and visiting frequency on crime location choice: findings from an online self-report survey”, in British Journal of Criminology, 60, pp. 303–322.

Zaitch (2002) Trafficking Cocaine: Colombian Drug Entrepreneurs in the Netherlands, The Hague Kluwer Law International (excerpt).

Martins, N. at al. (2013), "A Content Analysis of Print News Coverage of Media Violence and Aggression Research", in Journal of Communication, 63: 1070-1087.

Rogerson (2004) “Crime Incidence, Prevalence and Concentration in NDCs: Implications for Practice”, Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research.

***TEACHING METHOD***

Lectures; practical exercises on criminological studies already covered, in order to identify the research project and exercises for the application of data analysis techniques that will be held in the computer lab. During the course data analysis software will be introduced and used. With the exception of the introductory lesson and some recap/workshops, the course is held in English.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

Students will be assessed through a 90-minute written exam in English based on the topics of the course (slides+ texts from the reading list + exercises uploaded to Blackboard) which will include:

* First part: 3 open ended questions on the theoretical contents of the course (45 minutes – 15 points);
* Second part: 4 blocks of data analysis exercises (45 minutes – 15 points).

The sum of the two parts will reflect in the final mark of the exam (max 30 points with the possibility of acquiring honours in the case of excellent results). In order to proceed with the sum of the two parts and the registration of the final mark, it is necessary to obtain a passing mark (9/15) both in the first theoretical part and in the second practical part (9/15).

Students who attend lectures and participate in quick-assignments that are carried out in class to guide the discussion on the scientific studies that are presented in class, can acquire up to a maximum of 3 additional points. In case students obtain additional points, all marks above 30 will be registered as 30 cum laude. Further information will be given at the beginning of the course through the syllabus and the Blackboard platform.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

Attendance is strongly recommended due to the practical nature of the course. Several exercises and assignments will be carried out in class with students. Furthermore, the course includes use of Excel and an introduction to the use of QGIS.

Updated programme, reading list, instructions and other documents will be published on the *Blackboard* page of the course. Blackboard will also be the tool for communicating changes in schedule, exam information and more. All students (including non-attending students and students who have not completed courses in due time) are invited to register for the course on *Blackboard*, and to keep up to date.

Each year the course content is updated. For this reason, students who do not pass the exam within the eight scheduled exam dates will have to follow the course content and assessment methods of the course delivered in the following academic year.

Further information can be found on the lecturer's webpage at http://docenti.unicatt.it/web/searchByName.do?language=ENG or on the Faculty notice board.