

FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY
College of Criminology and Criminal Justice
2026-27 Graduate Handbook
Online Master's Program

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In conjunction with the university Graduate Bulletin, this guide is intended to provide graduate students with a reference concerning program requirements. Please consult the University Graduate Bulletin for academic regulations, procedures, and student services.

Any questions you have about your graduate career in the FSU College of Criminology and Criminal Justice may be directed to the Colleges Graduate Program Office at:

E: crimgradprogram@fsu.edu

P: 850.645.9169

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Introduction

The College of Criminology and Criminal Justice

The College of Criminology and Criminal Justice at Florida State University offers a master's degree in criminal justice studies through the University's distance learning program. The degree program is specifically designed for working criminal justice professionals and others who want the rigor and challenge of a first-rate graduate program but also need the convenience and flexibility that distance learning provides.

Quality and Flexibility

The College's master's degree in criminal justice studies is a fully integrated part of our larger graduate program, which is consistently ranked among the top programs in criminology and criminal justice in the United States. Our distance learning courses are taught by the same faculty who teach our on-campus graduate and undergraduate programs. You will be working with faculty who are leading scholars in their fields. Additionally, a comprehensive support system will guide you through every program phase.

Education for Leadership

The master's degree in criminal justice studies is specially designed for highly motivated students seeking leadership positions in law enforcement, corrections, juvenile justice, and elsewhere in the criminal justice system in Florida, the nation, and overseas. Past graduates have achieved national and international recognition and hold prestigious positions in many states and foreign countries.

From the growth of computer crime to the rise of international terrorism, the world that criminal justice leaders must deal with is changing rapidly. The master's in criminal justice studies is based on the idea that today's and tomorrow's leaders will need a broad array of high-level skills to meet the evolving challenges of the field successfully.

To that end, our program offers a solid grounding in the fundamentals of the field, including criminological theory, research methods, and statistics.

Students get hands-on training in computer applications in criminal justice and various courses dealing with vital current issues, from policy and evaluation in criminal justice to the growth of translational crime. We aim to help students build fundamental technical skills and the ability to think critically and use research findings to inform decision-making.

The online master's program aims to provide students with the best elements of the criminological tradition and to make that tradition relevant to the real-world needs of those working on the front lines of the justice system. Accordingly, the College has developed the master's program in consultation with various criminal justice professionals and academic specialists.

Notes:

Master's Program

Orientation

All new FSU distance learning students must complete the online orientation before class registration. Soon after being admitted to the University, please complete the new student checklist at:

<https://distance.fsu.edu/student-support-1>

Here, students will learn about academic policies and procedures, obtain their FSU card number, find registration information, and create their Canvas account with FSU.

The FSU card number and password are essential in facilitating your access to the FSU library database and logging on to Canvas. You may log onto Canvas at myfsu.edu.

Degree Tracks

There are regular degree tracks or study options within the Criminology and Criminal Justice MA or MS degree programs: a course work only option and a thesis option.

Coursework-Only Option: The coursework-only option requires the completion of 36 credits of coursework.

Students may select to complete 36 hours of coursework only or may choose to complete 30 credit hours of coursework along with 6 area paper credit hours or may choose to complete 30 credit hours with a 6-credit hour graduate internship. Students completing the area paper option must nominate a master's directive committee. Consisting of a major professor and two other faculty members, the committee supervises the preparation of the paper and must approve the paper's format, though it need not conform to the University's formal thesis guidelines.

Thesis Option: The thesis option requires successfully completing 30 semester hours of coursework and 6 hours of thesis credits. Students completing a thesis must identify a major professor and supervisory committee. This option requires an oral thesis defense and thesis submission in a university-approved format.

Note: Any individualized course, such as area paper, thesis, directed individual study (DIS), etc., will be subject to out-of-state tuition rates and fees for out-of-state students.

Individualized courses are not eligible for market-rate tuition or state tuition waivers.

Thesis and Area Paper Distinction

Typically, the area paper takes two semesters to complete and involves a high-quality literature review and critique that is focused on one subject that the student is particularly interested in investigating. Conversely, a thesis is based on manipulating and analyzing a particular body of data. In most cases, the thesis also requires two semesters to complete. When completing a thesis, it is not necessary that the student is the one who originally collected the data: secondary data analysis is typically done.

Students are required to seek Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval before commencing any research involving human subjects. The student's name must appear on the approval form as a PI or co-PI for the period when the student's research was conducted. Failure to obtain the required approvals may result in the area paper or thesis being embargoed and unpublishable in any form. Students completing the thesis option must register for 2 hours each semester enrolled until thesis completion even after they have completed 6 hours and during their graduation semester.

Major Professor and Master's Supervisory Committee

Students who choose the thesis or area paper option should select a permanent major professor soon after entering the program. In most cases, this should be done by the end of the first year. They may choose anyone on the faculty with "graduate faculty" status by requesting that the faculty member serves in this capacity. If the faculty member agrees to serve, the student must notify the graduate administrator of the appointment.

The master's degree supervisory committee comprises of the major professor and two other faculty members holding the graduate directive status. Students are expected to choose their additional committee members with the assistance of their major professor. Once selected, names are submitted to the graduate program administrator.

Those choosing the course work only option for the degree will use the graduate administrator and their faculty advisor throughout the tenure in the program.

Master's Requirements

Master's students must complete 36 credits for the degree. These credits are composed of required "core" courses and Criminology and Criminal Justice elective hours and may include up to nine graduate credit hours taken outside of the College.

Coursework

Required Courses

All students must complete each of the following five core courses with a letter grade of "C" or better. If a lower grade is earned in these courses, they must be retaken. A required course may only be retaken once. Students must maintain an overall 3.0 GPA or higher.

CCJ 5078 Computer Applications in Criminal Justice:

Introduces the use of the computer and the Internet. It will include discussions of the use of these technologies within the criminal justice system. The class will cover word processing, spreadsheets, databases, graphics, and internet applications such as email, chat, forum discussions, search engines, web browsers, etc.

CCJ 5285 Survey of Criminal Justice Theory and Research: Gives an overview of the theoretical issues and research on the law and legal control of deviance in society.

CCJ 5606 Survey of Criminological Theories: Provides students with a deeper understanding of criminological theory. Physiological, genetic, psychological, and psychiatric theories of criminal behavior are explored.

CCJ 5705 Research Methods in Criminology: Overviews research design for criminological studies, emphasizing data collection methods and measurement of validity and reliability.

CCJ 5706 Applied Statistics in Criminology: Focuses on the use of statistical techniques in criminology.

Minimum GPA Requirement

Failure to maintain a minimum 3.0 GPA will first result in academic probation and if not corrected in the following semester of enrollment, will result in academic dismissal.

Sampling of Elective Courses

CJC 5020 Penology: A survey of approaches to correction, correctional institutions, their residents, programs and management, and special problems such as probation and parole, riots, outside contacts, and special institutions.

CJJ 5020 Juvenile Delinquency :

Key issues in the study of juvenile delinquency, with special attention to three topics: (1) our society's social construction of concepts like "childhood" and "adolescence" (and the implications this has for our views of juvenile delinquency), (2) the different theoretical perspectives used to explain individual variations in juvenile delinquency, and (3) current thinking and research on the question of how our justice system should best respond to juvenile delinquency.

CJE 5024 Police and Society

A social psychological examination of current issues and problems in municipal law enforcement, including such topics as the informal exercise of police authority, police role conflict, the relative significance of law enforcement and social service, and interactional dynamics of police subculture.

Coursework

CCJ 5456 Criminal Justice Administration: An application of organization and administration theories to the criminal justice system. The course uses an interactionist perspective of administration to facilitate an understanding of the fundamentals of all organizations, including criminal justice organizations.

CCJ 5546 Prevention and Treatment of Crime and Delinquency: Theoretical development of crime prevention, punishment, and treatment. Topics include historical crime control models, crime prevention growth, and aspects such as environmental design, community action programs, and technology systems.

CCJ 5636 Comparative Criminology and Criminal Justice: A comparative analysis of crime issues worldwide reviews the criminal justice system responses to localized and transitional crime.

CCJ 5669 Race, Ethnicity, Crime, and Social Justice: Considers the relationships between race, ethnicity, and crime within the justice system. The effect of social policy on racial and ethnic inequality is studied, and theories of ethnic and racial justice are presented in terms of their effect and criminal justice.

CCJ 5981R Directed Individual Study: A course with contents determined by the student in consultation with the instructor, with whom the student meets regularly for study supervision. It may be repeated for a maximum of 6 hours. (S/U grade only)

CCJ 6665 Victimology: Introduces students to the field of victimology and explores its conceptual boundaries, basic concepts, and literature within various sub-areas. The course will explore policy developments and practical applications that stem from the concern over victims. The progression from a criminal to a victim justice system will be emphasized.

CCJ 5635 Biosocial Criminology: This course provides an overview of biosocial concepts, biosocial findings, and biosocial research designs. The course examines how genes, biology, the brains, and the environment relate to different types of antisocial behaviors.

CCJ 5716 - Criminal Justice Policy and Evaluation: This course focuses on the evaluation of criminal justice policy research with special attention to (1) familiarizing students with current "hot topic" crime programs and policies, and (2) helping students become sophisticated practitioners and consumers of evaluation research.

**CCJ 6920r courses are repeatable to a maximum of 12 hours as long as course topics differ.*

Master's Checklist

36 Total Credit Hours (Required CCJ Courses: 15 Hours) Each required course is typically offered once per year. Please take required courses when offered to ensure no delay of graduation.

- CCJ 5078 *Computer Applications in Criminal Justice* (Fall)
- CCJ 5285 *Survey of Criminal Justice Theory and Research* (Summer)
- CCJ 5606 *Survey of Criminological Theories* (Spring)
- CCJ 5705 *Research Methods in Criminology* (Fall)
- CCJ 5706 *Applied Statistics in Criminology* (Spring)
- CCJ Electives: 12 Hours
- Additional Graduate Electives: 9 Hours

These additional electives can be in criminology and criminal justice or another FSU program. Elective courses must be graduate courses (5000 level or above).

- 27 criminology and criminal justice credit hours are required for the master's degree.
 - 24 credit hours must be graded (**not pass/fail**).
 - Students must maintain an overall GPA of 3.0 or higher
- ** A grade of C or better must be earned in all required courses. No grade below C- will count toward the graduate degree.*

Searching for Classes

Students must search for criminology/criminal justice courses and electives by using the organization code CR. Courses that use the CR code count toward the criminal justice studies major. Any courses not under the CR code may count as outside electives toward the degree if they are at the graduate level.

Steps to search for graduate distance learning criminology/criminal justice courses:

1. Log in to Student Central (my.fsu.edu)
2. Click on the Student Central (SC) button
3. Click the Search link, or click the Search for Classes button
4. Make sure you drop the pull-down menu to the correct term
5. Type in CR in the Academic Organization (academic dept) box
6. Make sure to indicate the course career as a graduate
7. Indicate physical location in the pull-down menu for course attribute
8. Select online for the course attribute value
9. Uncheck the show open classes only box
10. Hit the search button

Please note that some CCJ courses are not part of our major, so it is imperative to search for courses using these steps. Students may also check with the graduate program administrator to verify that courses are part of the major.

Administrative Information

Transfer Credit Policy

Up to 6 graduate-level credit hours from another accredited university or college may be counted toward your degree at FSU. These credits must be approved by the director of the distance learning program and must be equivalent to current FSU courses. Graduate credit hours used toward another posted degree cannot be counted. A grade of B or better must be earned, and courses must be at the graduate level. The transfer credit GPA is not included in the FSU GPA.

Textbook information

Some of your online learning courses may require you to purchase a Course Packet, which will include some combination of the following:

- **Study Guide** – This is your key to the course, as it contains your course syllabus, description of course activities and resources, assignments, and a course calendar. It may also provide additional course content.
- **Textbooks** – Most courses have required readings, which include textbooks and other published materials.

How to Order

Course packets and materials for the online classes are usually available through the FSU bookstore. Sometimes, individual instructors may choose to make materials available through other outlets. When ordering, be certain to include the following:

1. Course prefix and number
2. Section number
3. Course title
4. Semester and year
5. Your name and shipping address

FSU Bookstore

75 N Woodward Ave, Tallahassee, FL 32306

<https://bookstore.fsu.edu/>

Drop/Add

Students may add or drop classes themselves from their schedule through the fourth day of classes. For deadline dates, refer to the Academic Calendar on the Registrar's website: <https://registrar.fsu.edu/>

University Time Limits for Degree Completion

Florida State University requires the work toward the master's degree to be completed within 7 years of one's initial enrollment. This includes any master's course completion at FSU while an undergraduate student.

Graduation

In addition to meeting all the master's degree completion requirements, students must complete the following:

- Request a graduation check with the graduate program administrator during the semester preceding graduation to determine eligibility for the degree.
- Apply for graduation through Student Central during the first two weeks of the last semester (*those who apply for graduation but do not complete the necessary work during that semester must self-delete with the Registrar's Office and register again during the first two weeks of the semester in which they plan to graduate.*)

Permanent Withdrawal

To drop all classes or your only class, you must formally withdraw from the University. Contact your academic program administrator at crimgradprogram@fsu.edu, and the Withdrawal Services at 850-644-1741. There is no grade liability through the seventh week of the semester but they are still tuition and fee liable. Students who cancel their registration and are not enrolled for the following term (not enrolled for two consecutive terms) must apply for readmission.

Readmission

Returning students who meet the following criteria must submit an electronic application on FSU's admissions website at admissions.fsu.edu.

1. Withdrew during a previous term.
2. Canceled their registration and were not enrolled during the previous semester.
3. Have been out of school for two or more consecutive terms (*including the summer term: finishing an incomplete does not count; you must be registered*).

Students seeking readmission must meet the following application deadlines:

- Fall – **July 1**
- Spring – **November 1**
- Summer – **March 1**

Students claiming classification as Florida residents must also reestablish their eligibility for this classification when applying for readmission.

The University reserves the right to refuse readmission to any student with an unsatisfactory academic or conduct record.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: How does a campus student degree differ from an online one?

A: *The coursework covers the same topics, and the same professors teach classes, but, of course, all work is assigned and submitted online. The actual degree is the same. The major for the campus degree program is in criminology, and the online degree program major is in criminal justice studies.*

Q: Does the degree say online?

A: *No. The degree and diploma have the same language as the campus programs.*

Q: What is the minimum number of credit hours I must enroll in?

A: *There is no minimum number of credit hours you must enroll in unless you are applying for financial aid. In order to be eligible for financial aid you have to enroll in at least 6 credit hours.*

Q: How many hours a week do I need to set aside for study or course work?

A: *You should allow at least 10 hours a week to study for each class you're taking.*

Q: What is the program's accreditation?

A: *It is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.*

Q: What happens if I am dismissed?

A: *If a student is dismissed and has no pathway to raise their GPA to a 3.0, the student will not be permitted to re-enter the program regardless of how many hours completed..*

Q: How long does it take to complete a degree?

A: *A full-time student can complete the degree within 2 years, and part-time students will be able to complete the degree within 3 to 5 years.*

Q: What careers will this degree prepare me for?

A: *Law enforcement, corrections, juvenile justice, and community college teaching, among many others.*

Q: What is the maximum amount of time students are allowed to complete the degree?

A: *7 years. This includes any courses transferred in from FSU.*

Notes:

2026-2027 Faculty

Claudia Anderson, Assistant Professor

Ph.D. University of Cincinnati

Theories of crime and social control, punishment, inequality, social reform.

Bill Bales, Professor Emeritus

Ph.D. Florida State University

Sentencing, assessing the effectiveness and consequences of punishment strategies, evaluation of correctional practices and programs, community reentry.

Kevin Beaver, Judith Rich Harris Professor of Criminology

Ph.D. University of Cincinnati

Biosocial criminology, genetic/biological correlates of offending, life-course/developmental criminology and stability of violent behaviors.

Tom Blomberg, Dean, Sheldon L. Messinger Professor of Criminology

Ph.D. University of California at Berkeley

Delinquency, education, and crime resistance, penology and social control, victim services, criminological research and public policy.

Julie Brancale, Assistant Professor

Ph.D. Florida State University

Juvenile and criminal justice policy evaluation, victimization across the life course, police use of technology, education and delinquency, qualitative methods.

Cecelia Chouhy, Associate Professor

Ph.D. University of Cincinnati

Cross-national approach to testing criminological theories, the effectiveness of correction programs, sources of public opinion.

Billy Close, Assistant Professor

Ph.D. Florida State University

Race and justice, political economy of crime and social control, popular perceptions of crime and punishment, media representation of crime and punishment, sociological and criminological theory.

Jennifer Copp, Professor

Ph.D. Bowling Green State University

Intimate partner violence, consequences of incarceration, neighborhoods and crime, adolescence and young adulthood, health and well-being.

Kimberly Davidson, Assistant Professor

Ph.D. Pennsylvania State University

Criminology, corrections, programming and rehabilitation, community entry, substance abuse.

Emma Fridel, Assistant Professor

Ph.D. Northeastern University

Lethal violence, communities and crime, quantitative methods.

Marc Gertz, Professor Emeritus

Ph.D. University of Connecticut

Public opinion and the criminal justice system, organization politics and the courts, comparative courts, interest groups, voting behaviour.

Carter Hay, Professor

Ph.D. The University of Texas at Austin

Family and parenting related causes of adolescent crime, development of self-control and its implications for crime, criminological theory, life course criminology.

Bryan Holmes, Assistant Professor

Ph.D. Pennsylvania State University

Sentencing, courts, race/ethnicity, corrections, inequity in punishment, quantitative methods.

Young-An Kim, Assistant Professor

Ph.D. University of California-Irvine

Neighborhoods and crime, criminology of place, crime patterns in street segments, sociology of health, urban sociology and quantitative research methods.

Gary Kleck, Professor Emeritus

Ph.D. University of Illinois at Urbana

Gun control, crime control, violence.

Megan Kurlychek, Professor

Ph.D. Pennsylvania State University

Impact of criminal justice system involvement on later life outcomes with a particular focus on juvenile justice, sentencing, disparities and the collateral consequences of a criminal record on employment and education.

Brendan Lantz, Associate Professor

Ph.D. Pennsylvania State University

Group crime and co-offending, social networks, violence, hate and bias crime.

David McElhattan, Assistant Professor

Ph.D. Northwestern University

Punishment, inequality, law and society, criminal records, collateral consequences.

Dan Mears, Mark C. Stafford Professor of Criminology

Ph.D. The University of Texas at Austin

Crime and delinquency, juvenile and criminal justice, crime theory, public policy and opinion, domestic violence, immigration, mental health, religion, sentencing, corrections and reentry.

George Pesta, Associate Professor

Ph.D. Florida State University

Correctional education juvenile justice, translational criminology, delinquency and education.

Sylvia Piatkowska, Associate Professor

Ph.D. State University of New York at Albany

Crime and deviance, comparative and international criminology, hate crime, policing, social control, spatial analysis advanced quantitative methods.

Joseph Schwartz, Associate Professor

Ph.D. Florida State University

Biosocial criminology, life-course/developmental criminology, traumatic brain injury, behavioral endocrinology, behaviour genetics, quantitative research methods, criminological theory.

Keller Sheppard, Assistant Professor

Ph.D. Northeastern University

Police use of force, police discretion, communities and crime, quantitative methods.

Sonja Siennick, Professor

Ph.D. Pennsylvania State University

Crime and deviance, life course, quantitative methods.

Brian Stults, Professor

Ph.D. University at Albany, State University of New York
Race and crime, neighborhoods and crime, residential segregation.

Gordon Waldo, Professor Emeritus

Ph.D. Ohio State University

Research methods, law and social control, corrections, delinquency, juvenile justice.

Patricia Warren, Professor

Ph.D. North Carolina State University

Racial profiling, race and class inequalities, disparities in criminal justice processing, crime and social control.

Marin Wenger, Associate Professor

Ph.D. Pennsylvania State University

Stratification, communities and crime deviance, quantitative methods.

Steven Zane, Associate Professor

Ph.D. Northeastern University

Evidence-based crime policy, law and social control, juvenile transfer policy, intersection of social science and law.