



**Programme Specification for  
MPhil in Criminology**

**2006/2007**

## Programme Specification for MPhil in Criminology

<b>1. Awarding institution/body</b>	<b>University of Oxford</b>
<b>2. Teaching institution</b>	<b>University of Oxford</b>
<b>3. Programme accredited by</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>4. Final award</b>	<b>MPhil</b>
<b>5. Programme</b>	<b>Criminology</b>
<b>6. UCAS code</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>7. Relevant subject benchmark statement</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>8. Date of programme specification</b>	<b>May 2006</b>

### 9. Educational aims of the programme

#### The first year of the degree aims:

- To provide students with the ability to:
  - evaluate the major theories and fundamental concepts in criminology and criminal justice;
  - analyse critically the inferences that can be drawn from empirical and historical observations of crime and the operation of the criminal justice and penal systems;
  - develop analytical skills required for critical appraisal of criminological research.
- To provide an advanced understanding of particular fields within criminology and criminal justice, relevant to their further careers or academic studies.

#### The second year of the degree aims to:

- give students experience in conducting a major piece of criminological investigation that builds on the skills learned throughout the course through the production of a substantial thesis;
- give students a comprehensive understanding of research techniques applicable to criminological enquiry and empirical research.
- provide students with the skills to integrate theoretical, substantive and technical principles in their analysis of criminological issues;
- develop the students' ability to report research findings;
- prepare students for doctoral work in criminology and for research careers in academia, government and the private sector.

## 10. Programme outcomes

### On completing the first year of the degree satisfactorily, students should:

- have a systematic understanding of the key theories and debates, and a critical awareness of current problems and new insights, at the forefront of criminology and criminal justice;
- have learnt how to assess critically the contribution of research to understandings of crime and justice;
- have demonstrated originality in the application of criminological and criminal justice knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how the established techniques of criminological and criminal justice research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge about offenders, offending, and the criminal justice response;
- have learnt how to produce substantial pieces of written work after researching particular topics for their options and for their dissertation.

Each student will develop a detailed knowledge and understanding of six particular areas of criminological enquiry (i.e., those areas studied through options and dissertation), whilst all students will have acquired a solid understanding (through the courses on 'Explanation and Understanding in Criminology' and 'Understanding Criminal Justice') of:

1. the importance of systematic research in criminology and of evidence-based criminal justice policy development;
2. different perspectives on key issues in the field of criminal justice;
3. different theoretical perspectives on deviance, crime and criminal justice;

### On completing the second year of the degree satisfactorily, students should:

- have developed (through the research methods component of the course and the process of designing a research project and producing a substantial thesis) an advanced understanding of:
  1. the fundamental concepts, techniques, principles and theories of data collection (both qualitative and quantitative) and data analysis;
  2. the key concepts, techniques, principles, facts and theories relevant to the student's chosen area of specialization;
  3. the integration of theoretical, substantive and technical principles in criminological research;
  4. the ethical, philosophical and epistemological problems associated with criminological research;
- be well equipped for critical analysis of crime, criminal justice and the development of criminal justice policy;

- have successfully applied criminological and criminal justice knowledge through the design and completion of a substantial research project;
- have learnt how to produce a substantial and scholarly piece of written work based on empirical evidence or library-based research.

Teaching/learning methods for first year of degree

The primary method of teaching is through seminars at which all students are expected to contribute. These are supplemented by optional lectures and seminars with invited guest speakers, which make no requirement for students to conduct preparatory work or contribute.

A core course runs through the first six weeks of the first two terms (Michaelmas and Hilary). This weekly ninety minute class, taught by Professor Loader and Professor Roberts, is compulsory and students are expected to come prepared to contribute to each class. Preparation for classes is directed by detailed reading lists distributed to students during week 0 of Michaelmas Term at the latest. In these classes, students should acquire the knowledge detailed above (points 1 to 5) through their own reading in preparation for classes (reading the required and suggested materials, digesting them and making preparatory notes should take approximately 20 hours a week), and through discussing the readings with the core course teacher and their fellow students. Student learning is then consolidated through revision in preparation for the final assessment by unseen written examination.

Students also take two optional modules in each of the first two terms and one in the third (Trinity term), for the first six weeks of each term. Again, attendance at the weekly 90-minute classes is compulsory and students are expected to be well prepared so as to be able to contribute fully to the discussion. Preparation for classes is directed by detailed reading lists distributed to students, at the latest, during week 0 of each term (but more usually before the end of the previous term). In these classes, students should develop a detailed knowledge and understanding of their chosen option through their own reading in preparation for classes (reading the required and suggested materials, digesting them and making preparatory notes should take approximately 10 hours a week for each option), and through discussing the readings with the course teacher and their fellow students on that option. Student learning is then consolidated through the preparation of an assessed essay in relation to each of their chosen options.

In addition to the option students take in Trinity term, they write, during that term, a dissertation on a topic of their own choice of between 8,000 and 10,000 words. The dissertation should be library-based, and should not involve the student in any empirical research. Students are expected to carry out the research independently, with only minimum guidance from their dissertation supervisor. In order to ensure that students achieve a rough equality of access to supervision, a maximum of six hours supervision time has been stipulated, which should only be exceeded in exceptional cases. This time is to include both contact with the supervisor and time taken to read through and comment on drafts. Most students will choose to research an area close to one of their option or core course topics, although it is permissible to pursue intellectual interests which have not been specifically developed by this course.

*N.b. This programme specification assumes that the student has followed the MSc Criminology and Criminal Justice degree as the first year of their MPhil programme. In the event of a student following the MSc Criminology and Criminal Justice (Research Methods) course in their first year, the relevant course components and assessment criteria for the first year of the MPhil can be found in the programme specification for the Research Methods MSc.*

Teaching/learning methods for second year of degree

In the second year of the course students are required to submit a thesis which must not exceed 30,000 words and should not normally be less than 25,000 words on a topic of the student's choice, subject to the agreement of the Law Faculty Graduate Studies Committee and Law Board.

During the second year of the course teaching and learning is primarily self-directed. However, the student will have the opportunity to refine their thinking and to consider competing perspectives through regular meetings with their appointed supervisor.

At the beginning of the second year students will also be expected to present their initial ideas for their thesis at a workshop. Student presentations will be discussed and feedback provided. Workshops are attended by fellow students, supervisors and the Graduate Research Co-ordinator.

Students are also encouraged to attend the term-time series of criminology seminars organized by the Centre for Criminology to enhance their appreciation of the latest developments in criminological research. Students will also be directed toward research seminars, workshops and conferences offered by Law – especially socio-legal studies, Politics, Sociology, Social Policy, and Economics, if considered relevant for their chosen area of specialization within criminology or for their research methods.

In addition, the Law Faculty organizes self-sustaining discussion groups which all Faculty Post-Graduates are encouraged to attend. These groups are advertised on the Faculty's Post Graduate email list and can help to accelerate research for those who participate in them.

Basic library and IT training and a writing skills seminars are all offered during weeks -1 and 0 of Michaelmas term (induction weeks).

Research Methods Component

*As part of the MPhil course requirements, candidates are required to follow two courses of instruction in Empirical Research Methods (Research Design and Data Collection and Social Explanation and Data Analysis currently taught by Professor Roberts and Professor Varese). Students can choose to take these courses as part of either the first or the second year of the course.*

The primary method of teaching these two courses is through seminars at which all students are expected to contribute. Preparation for classes is directed by a detailed reading list which is distributed to students, at the latest, during week 0 of the term in which the course will run (but more usually before the end of the previous term).

In these classes, students should develop a detailed knowledge and understanding of research methods through their own reading in preparation for classes and through discussing the readings with the course teacher and their fellow students. Reading the required and suggested materials, digesting them and making preparatory notes should take approximately 10 hours a week for each course. Student learning is then consolidated through the completion of short weekly assignments marked on a pass/fail basis and an essay of 2,500 to 3,000 words at the end of each course.

Assessment

Summative assessment is by the production of five written assignments (assessed essays, one for each option) written unsupervised and unaided during the last three weeks of term, production of a dissertation,

completion of a 3-hour unseen written examination based on the core course in which students are required to answer three questions under strict examination conditions and the production of a 25,000 to 30,000 word thesis.

The first year of study (the M.Sc.<sup>1</sup>) acts as the qualifying test for entry to the MPhil. Students must obtain a weighted 65 per cent average mark in the first year of study in order to be admitted to the second year (i.e. 65 per cent in each of the three components of the first year/M.Sc.). In addition, the student's MPhil research proposal would need to be accepted by the Centre's Board of Studies, the Graduate Studies Committee (Law) and Law Board and appropriate supervisory arrangements found within the Faculty.

The degree of MPhil is awarded to any candidate who has achieved an average weighted mark of 65 per cent for the first year of the course and who achieves a mark of at least 50 per cent for their thesis. The examiners award a distinction to any candidate who achieves marks of 70 per cent or above on at least seven components of the MPhil. In this calculation, each option counts as one component; both the core course and the (end-of-first-year) dissertation count as two components; the MPhil thesis counts as three components.

### Core Course

The core course examination typically includes questions on all of the topics covered in the core course throughout the first two terms. Examiners set papers in line with the content of the course. Some questions cut across topics to assess the extent to which students have understood how, for example, practices in one area of the criminal process impact on those in another.

### Options

Options (other than the *Research Design and Data Collection and Social Explanation and Data Analysis* options) are examined by means of an assessed essay of 3,500–5,000 words, for which time is set aside during the last three weeks of each term.

There are two methods of assessment for the *Research Design and Data Collection and Social Explanation and Data Analysis* options, and both must be satisfactorily completed by all candidates either during the first or second year of the MPhil. First, each candidate will be required to complete weekly assignments which will be marked on a pass/fail basis. A candidate who fails may be required to re-submit the assignment, normally within 7 days. Secondly, at the end of each of the two terms candidates will be required to submit an essay of 2,500 to 3,000 words. In Michaelmas, a choice from three titles will be offered; in Hilary the essay will take the form of an imaginary research proposal of the candidate's own devising.

*In case the student elects or plans to elect to write a thesis that draws significantly on legal research methods, the Law Faculty DGS (Research), at the suggestion of the perspective thesis supervisor, may grant the student exemption from taking Research Design and Data Collection and Social Explanation and Data Analysis and instruct the student to follow a course of instruction, in Legal Research Methods and satisfy the examiners that they have completed to the required standard such tests or exercises as may be prescribed as part of such a course of instruction.*

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<sup>1</sup> The degree of M.Sc. is awarded to any candidate who achieves a mark of at least 50 per cent for (a) the assessed essays, (b) the core course paper, and (c) the dissertation. For this purpose, the individual marks of the five assessed essays are aggregated and an average mark awarded for the assessed essays as a whole. The examiners award a distinction to any candidate who achieves marks of at least 70 per cent on at least five of the papers; in this calculation, both the core course and the dissertation count as two papers. An M.Sc is awarded where a student obtains these marks and either a) chooses to exit the course after the first year or b) fails to gain the MPhil at the end of the second year.

### Dissertation

The dissertation must be between 8,000 and 10,000 words long on a topic of the student's choice, subject to the agreement of the Criminology Board of Studies. The dissertation is carried out independently, with only minimum guidance from a dissertation supervisor. This tests the student's ability to work independently, to research the many sources of empirical or theoretical evidence for their thesis, and to produce a high-quality extended piece of written work.

All Core Course, Option and Dissertation assessments are 'double blind' marked internally by two examiners, or an examiner and an assessor. A sample of scripts from those marked as pass and distinction, as well as any failed or borderline papers, is also reviewed by the External Examiner.

### Thesis

A student must submit a thesis not exceeding 30,000 words and not normally less than 25,000 words on a topic of the student's choice, subject to the agreement of the Centre's Board of Studies, Law Faculty's Graduate Studies Committee and Law Board, in order to complete the degree of MPhil.

All theses are 'double blind' marked by two examiners, one from Oxford and one external.

Candidates must apply to be examined during the Trinity Full Term after the candidate began the second year of the MPhil. The candidate's supervisor will take an active role in suggesting names of suitable examiners and is expected to consult with the candidate over this choice. The ultimate responsibility for the choice of examiners resides with the Law Faculty Board. In all cases two examiners will be needed, one from Oxford and one external. It is unlikely that the Law Faculty Board would appoint other examiners without first consulting with the candidate's supervisor, who in turn should consult with the candidate.

The completed thesis should be submitted by the end of the summer vacation following the third term of research. A candidate who wishes to apply for examination at a later date must seek the approval of the Law Faculty Graduate Studies Committee by the end of week four of the same Trinity Full Term. Only in exceptional circumstances will the committee extend the MPhil deadline.

### Formative Assessment during first year of programme

Formative assessment includes feedback through termly sessions for each student with their academic supervisor and (limited) feedback from dissertation supervisors. In addition, early in the first term the students attend a one-off one hour seminar on writing techniques at which advice is given on the expectations of the examiners and feedback provided to the students regarding their ideas about effective essay writing skills. A similar session takes place in Hilary term in relation to the task of writing a dissertation.

In Michaelmas term option teachers provide students with the chance to write a practice essay, from either of the two options they take, which are assessed and feedback given to students individually. Students may also have this opportunity for some of the options running in Hilary and Michaelmas terms (students should seek advice from individual option tutors). Students are strongly encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity as it is not possible to provide feedback on the compulsory assessed essays submitted in relation to each option taken.

There is an unseen two-hour, two-question MOCK examination for the core course (based only on the topics covered in Michaelmas term), taken in Week 0 of Hilary term at the Examination Schools. Students are required to answer two questions under strict examination conditions. This both provides an incentive for

students to engage in early revision for the final examination and gives them the opportunity to practice their examination technique (this is particularly useful for students who have been out of formal education for a while). The result of this examination does not affect a student's final assessment for the M.Sc. Its purpose is to provide teachers with the opportunity to monitor the student's progress, identify areas of strength and weakness, and provide constructive feedback.

### Formative Assessment during second year of programme

The student will have individual supervisory meetings to discuss the proposed programme of research and to review thesis drafts. The student is therefore provided with ongoing formative assessment and feedback throughout the research project.

In addition, as stated in the 'Teaching/Learning Method' section, a thesis workshop will be held in the first term of the MPhil where students make presentations on their proposed programme of research and the methods they will employ. Workshops are run by the Graduate Research Co-ordinator and are attended by fellow students and supervisors.

Advice about the course is also given by the Academic Supervisor at termly supervision sessions and in the detailed Post Graduate Course Books produced by the Law Faculty and the Centre for Criminology. It should be noted that the Academic Supervisor would normally not be the same person as the Thesis supervisor.

The opportunity to write 'practice' essays are offered to students taking the *Research Design and Data Collection and Social Explanation and Data Analysis*. The course tutor will offer detailed feedback on all aspects of the essay to students who avail themselves of this additional assessment opportunity. The essay will not contribute to the student's final grade.

### Skills and other attributes

Students will have the opportunity to develop the following skills during the course:

#### *I. Intellectual skills*

1. The ability critically to analyse and to deal systematically and creatively with advanced theoretical and empirical work.
2. The ability to present in a concise manner their understanding of complex theoretical issues or sophisticated empirical evidence and the ability to communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences.
3. The ability to draw together ideas from different disciplines and to synthesise them coherently.
4. The ability to demonstrate self-direction and insight in their application of knowledge and in tackling and solving problems, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the field of criminology and criminal justice.
5. The ability to design, pilot and evaluate survey instruments; design, conduct and report in-depth interviews; conduct analysis of quantitative and qualitative data; prepare research reports.



## *II. Practical skills*

For all students taking the MPhil:

1. Strong written skills acquired by preparing for formal assessments including assessed essays, the dissertation, thesis drafts and the final thesis itself.
2. Good time management and the ability to keep to deadlines.
3. The ability to work independently towards: the design of a research project; the collection of data; data analysis; comprehensive review of the literature; critical examination of theory and the development of theory; production of a well-structured and persuasive thesis.
4. The ability to classify and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of different research designs (specifically the “fit” among the methods, data, and argument) of criminological research both as published in refereed journals and as represented in policy/political debates in the popular press.
5. The ability to define, give the significance of, and use key concepts in research ethics.
6. The ability to choose appropriately, and describe in detail sufficient to justify to a non-specialist, a research design, a data source and a method of data analysis for a specific research project.

## *III. Generic skills*

1. Essential skills of writing and presentation (including, organising a thesis, using references and appendices, making citations).
2. Development of autonomous learning, showing responsibility and initiative.
3. Development of critical analysis.
4. Management of research (including managing their time, timetable, relationship with their supervisor).
5. The identification of library resources and how to use them (including searches on the Internet and research using other electronic resources, such as on-line journals).
6. Improvement of their general information and communication technology competence.
7. The ability to learn independently required for continuing professional development.
8. Team working skills (gained particularly in the Research Methods options).
9. Skills in data analysis which include statistical and other quantitative techniques; use of information and communication technology.

## 11. Programme Structures and Features

### First year of degree

#### *Core Course:*

The ‘core’ courses on ‘Explanation and Understanding in Criminology’ and ‘Understanding Criminal Justice’ preceded by some introductory lectures during induction week, run through the first six weeks of the first two terms respectively (Michaelmas and Hilary). The weekly 2-hour classes, taught generally by Professor Loader and Professor Roberts, are compulsory and students are expected to come prepared to contribute to each class. Preparation for classes is directed by detailed reading lists distributed to students during week 0 of Michaelmas Term at the latest. In these classes, students should acquire the knowledge detailed above (points 1 to 4) through their own reading in preparation for classes (reading the required and suggested materials, digesting them and making preparatory notes should take approximately 20 hours a week), and through discussing the readings with the core course teacher and their fellow students. Student learning is then consolidated through revision in preparation for the final assessment by unseen written examination.

#### Michaelmas Term

There are four introductory lectures held during week 0 of Michaelmas term. These lectures have one of two aims. Some are designed to introduce students who are not familiar with the Criminal Justice System of England and Wales to the basic structures and mechanics of this system, so that when they prepare for core course classes they do so sharing a base knowledge about the system. Others introduce students to a topic which they will cover in depth in a core course seminar.

#### *Introductory Lectures*

1. The Field of Criminology
2. Explanation and Understanding of Criminology
3. Prisons
4. Structure of the English Criminal Justice System

#### *Explanation and Understanding in Criminology Seminars*

1. Crime, Modernity and the Urban Experience
2. Crime, Conformity and Sources of Control
3. Crime and Everyday Life: Rational Choice, Routine Activities and Emotional Life
4. Crime, Inequality and Opportunity: Crime in Market Societies
5. Constructing and Reacting to Crime: Labeling, Moral Panics and the State
6. Criminology, Crime and Control in Late Modernity

#### Hilary Term

#### *Introductory Lecture*

1. Research in Criminal Justice

#### *Understanding Criminal Justice Seminars*

1. Public Opinion and Criminal Justice
2. Models of Criminal Justice
3. Responding to Anti-social Behaviour
4. Racism and Criminal Justice
5. Sentencing Reform
6. Parole

*Options:*

Students also take two optional modules in each of the first two terms and one in the third (Trinity) term, for the first six weeks of each term only. Again, attendance throughout the weekly 90 minute classes is compulsory and students are expected to be well prepared so as to contribute fully to discussion.

Michaelmas Term

**1. International Perspectives on the Death Penalty**

This course will discuss the legal and social history of capital punishment through to the present-day scope of the death penalty and the scale of executions. In examining the development of an abolitionist movement on a world-wide scale, the seminars will explore relevant empirical research and legal judgments relating to its application and effects. They will focus on the main features which are fundamental to its arbitrariness: race, religion, quality of legal representation and vulnerable defendants. Finally the roles of public opinion, politics and international human rights law will be considered in the moves to retain and abolish the death penalty. Whilst some of these issues will be explored from the perspective of many jurisdictions which have retained the death penalty, the primary focus of the course is on the US.

**2. Research Design and Data Collection**

How can social scientists be sure that the data used in research are valid and reliable? This course is focused on the challenges and the opportunities that different methods of data collection have for validity and reliability of data. Such methods include experiments and quasi-experiments; questionnaires and survey research; field research, and the collection of written documents. The scientific method, theory testing and research design will also be discussed. Ethical concerns are given special emphasis. This option will provide students with a knowledge base from which to choose appropriate ways to collect valid and reliable data given a particular research question. It will also help students assess the weight that can be placed on the findings of published research in the field of criminology.

Students with an interest in proceeding to a research degree following completion of the MSc must take this option either as part of year one or year two of the MPhil. Students considering the MPhil are strongly encouraged to take this option as part of the first year of study.

**3. Victims**

This course will examine the development of victimology and, in particular, the developing role of victims within the criminal process, in the UK and in other jurisdictions. In doing so, it will go beyond the rather narrow definition of 'victims' employed in the development of victim policy to look at how society responds to victims of atypical crimes and human rights abuses. In going beyond the typical, the course will rely not only on the disciplines of criminology, criminal justice

and victimology, but also engage with politics, social policy and history. Students will be expected to study empirical, theoretical and policy work in these areas.

#### **4. Risk, Security and Criminal Justice**

A key feature of contemporary crime control is the rise of risk management and the pursuit of security. In the 'risk society' suspects are viewed less as bearers of rights than as carriers of risk that need to be managed. This option will analyze the ways in which risk and security are transforming criminal justice thinking and practices. It will explore the costs and benefits of these developments and examine the implications of security policies for justice and individual liberties. The seminar topics are:

Week 1: Risk and the Politics of Contemporary Crime Control

Week 2: The New Penology, Actuarial Justice, and the Language of Security

Week 3: Policing and Risk

Week 4: Crime Prevention and Security

Week 5: The Practice and Burdens of Risk Reduction

Week 6: Risk, Security and Justice

Hilary Term

#### **1. Human Rights and Criminal Justice**

This course looks at the development of human rights principles within the criminal justice system under the European Convention of Human Rights and the Human Rights Act. Students are encouraged to think critically about the various stages of the criminal justice system in the UK, looking specifically at trial procedure, sentencing and imprisonment. This option is largely based on human rights case law and therefore it is most suitable for students with legal training. Non-lawyers considering this option should be aware that they will be expected to read cases in preparation for seminars.

The seminar topics are:

1. Pre-trial Justice;
2. Policing & Surveillance;
3. Silence & Self-incrimination;
4. Theoretical Foundations of Prisoners' Rights;
5. Protection of Personal Liberty;
6. Protection of Rights inside Prison.

#### **2. Policing Global Insecurities**

We inhabit a world of pervasive insecurities and growing security inequalities. It is a world in which threats to public security criss-cross national borders. It is a world in which policing – and the promise of 'security' – is delivered both by sovereign states and by private 'security industries'

beyond the state, local citizens below the state, and new transnational networks above the state. It is a world in which some once clear distinctions – between external and internal security, policing and soldiering, war and crime – are fast breaking down. This option seeks to develop an understanding of the context, meanings and effects of these old and new security practices drawing on literature in criminology, sociology, political science and international relations. It will enable students to develop a critical understanding of the emergence, forms and effects of transformations in policing and security practices under conditions of globalized insecurity, extending both their grasp of the conceptual issues involved, and knowledge of relevant substantive topics. Examples explored are likely to include: local ‘reassurance’ policing; the spread of gated communities; non-state forms of local justice; policing in ‘transitional states’; the ‘war on terror’, Europe as a ‘security community’; and public and private forms of post-conflict peacekeeping. The concern throughout will be to consider what these practices tell us about the nature of, and prospects for, security, liberty, democracy and political community in the world today.

### **3. Mafias**

This course analyzes five criminal organizations that have emerged in different times and contexts: the Sicilian Cosa Nostra, the American Mafia, the Russian Mafia, the Hong Kong Triads and the Japanese Yakuza. Students explore the extent to which these cases, notwithstanding their differences, share crucial characteristics and features. The course examines the historical origins of Mafias as well as what Mafias do in both legal and illegal markets. The second part of the course focuses on how Mafias perform their roles. Students study the resources, the organization, and instances of co-operation and competition between Mafias. The third part of the course analyzes the relationships between Mafias and other organizations, such as states, political parties, and politicians. Finally, the course explores factors that facilitate the expansion and the decline of Mafias.

### **4. Sociology of Punishment**

This course seeks to examine aspects of the extensive body of sociological and criminological literature on punishment to come to an understanding of the contemporary justification of penal policies. Students should emerge from this course with a clear sense of the competing explanations of punishment and with an understanding of the differential impact such ideas have on women and ethnic minorities.

### **5. Social Explanation and Data Analysis**

This option introduces students to different methods of data analysis and theory testing, and in particular methods for finding the existence of, strength, direction and pattern of association in the data. Special emphasis will be given to methods particularly well suited to the study of criminal groups and large-scale social processes: Social Network Analysis and Content Analysis, Comparative Historical Sociology, and basic Game Theory. This option will provide students with a knowledge base from which to choose methods of data analysis best suited to answer their research question. Students with an interest in proceeding to a research degree following completion of the MSc must take this option either as part of year one or year two of the MPhil. Students considering the M.Phil are strongly encouraged to take this option as part of the first year of study.

Trinity Term

### **1. Sentencing**

The aim of this option is to explore some of the legal, theoretical and empirical issues of sentencing, largely by reference to England and Wales. As well as analysing decisions on the use of imprisonment, the course examines the arguments about previous convictions and sentencing, and the justifications for allowing certain factors to mitigate sentence.

### **2. Prisons**

By examining aspects of life behind bars as well as scholarly accounts of the justification of imprisonment, this course will seek to understand the complex role played by the prison in contemporary society. Students will develop a critical understanding of the origins of the prison and of its daily practice. Particular attention will be paid to the experience of women and ethnic minorities behind bars. Topics will range from staffing to education as well as from how institutions deal with prisoners' children to how they maintain order. As an adjunct to the course, students will be given the opportunity to visit prisons in the local area.

### **3. Desistance from Crime**

This course focuses on why and how offenders give up crime with particular reference to the roles of three criminal justice services: the probation service, the youth justice service and the prison service. The option explores two generally separate areas of research: (a) theories of desistance and (b) 'what works' to reduce reoffending; and considers how they inform each other and ways in which they have been taken up in practice. The seminar topics are:

- 1) Desistance theories and research;
- 2) The contribution of probation and youth justice services to the desistance process;
- 3) Research findings on 'what works' to assist desistance;
- 4) Implementing 'what works' in probation and youth justice practice;
- 5) The effects of imprisonment on the desistance process;
- 6) The limits of criminal justice agencies: the roles of personal agency, the community and the state.

*Dissertation:*

In addition to the option students will take in Trinity term, they write, during that term, a dissertation of between 8,000 and 10,000 words. They have a maximum of six hours supervision for this.

*Second year of degree*

*Thesis*

Students wishing to gain admission to the second year of the degree will be required to submit a thesis proposal and title to the Centre's Board of Studies and the Law Graduate Studies Committee by the end of Hilary term. In addition students are also required to apply formally to the Graduate Admissions Office as part of the University's fourth gathered field towards the end of Hilary Term during year one of the course. Please note these applications are a guide only and are subject to confirmation. Further details will be

released following the start of the MSc course in September 2006. Please contact the Graduate Studies Administrator, Cathy Byford, for more details.

The thesis will analyse a topic within the field of criminology broadly conceived. The thesis might cover the same area of Criminology as a dissertation offered in the first year of the degree but the text of the dissertation could not be incorporated into the thesis.

The thesis must not be less than 25 000 words and must not be more than 30 000 words (not counting brief footnotes, technical appendices and a list of references).

Students present their initial thesis ideas at a workshop at the beginning of Michaelmas Term following their admission to the MPhil programme. The ideas are discussed and feedback is provided.

The students then develop these ideas during the year under the guidance of their supervisor. The large scale of the thesis provides the opportunity to undertake fieldwork in order to test theoretical ideas or to conduct sophisticated statistical analysis and thus to complete a major investigation. It is normally drafted during the Michaelmas and Hilary terms of the course, and must be submitted at the latest by the last day of the vacation which follows the term in which the application for the appointment of examiners was made (usually, if not always Trinity Term).

## **12. Support for Students and their learning**

### Thesis supervisor

Students are appointed a supervisor to respond seriously and critically to their work and advise them on their topic and how to develop it. They will meet regularly with their supervisor, although this may be more frequent as they are defining their project and in the period immediately before submission. Supervisors will:

- ⊕ meet students regularly and return submitted work with constructive criticism within a reasonable time;
- ⊕ be accessible to students at appropriate times when advice is needed;
- ⊕ assist students to work within a planned framework and time-table;
- ⊕ monitor students' ability to write a coherent account of their work in good English;
- ⊕ attempt to avoid unnecessary delays in the progress of the research;
- ⊕ pursue opportunities for students to discuss their work with others in the research community (including the presentation of research outcomes where relevant) at University, national and international level;
- ⊕ arrange appropriate temporary supervision for the student during periods of leave.

Whilst specifically concerned with the academic progress of their thesis, academic supervisors can also offer support on a range of welfare matters. The Academic Supervisor is required to write a report on each student's academic progress each term and the contents of this report are communicated to the student, the student's college, and the Graduate Studies Office.

### College advisor

Students receive support on any non-academic matters from their college advisors.

If students experience personal problems which they would prefer not to discuss with their academic or college supervisor, they can receive support from college or department specialist advisors, such as the Welfare Officer or Harassment Officer, Advisor to Women Students, or even the Head of Department. Many colleges have extensive 'Welfare Teams' of fellow students, academic and other staff (for example, nurse, doctor, and chaplain). Additionally, they can contact the University Counselling Service.

#### Departmental/Faculty/University support

In induction week a seminar will be held on student mental health. This seminar, and the booklet which accompanies it, explains the many pressures and challenges students might face during their studies and outlines some of the common problems and mental illnesses that can affect students, ways of dealing with them, and available sources of help. It also includes a detailed list of all sources of help, within the University, locally within Oxford, and nationally, to help students cope with the more minor and the more serious problems. The list explains the work of different support agencies and provides complete contact details.

All MPhil students have access to a wide range of resources and facilities offered by the Centre for Criminology and the Law Faculty. The Centre for Criminology will provide workstations for MPhil students in the Manor Road Building. The educational value of the physical proximity of MPhil students to other academics and researchers in the Centre should be emphasized.

In addition, the Faculty provides approximately 55 workstations exclusively for law graduate students in the Graduate Reading Room on the first floor of the Bodleian Law Library, St Cross building. Each study space is equipped with an ethernet socket providing access to the University computer network. There is also a student common room in the St Cross Building, and a separate room containing 150 lockers where law graduate students may store their personal effects if they wish. Students also have access to college and University computing equipment. IT support is provided by the University, and by each of the colleges or halls.

The Social Sciences Library maintains a large Criminology section. The SSL is located on the ground floor of the Manor Road Building and has lending (as well as reference only) copies of key books. The library has ample graduate workspace and state-of-the-art computing facilities. It is located next to the St Cross Building. The Centre for Criminology is situated on the top floor of the Manor Road Building.

The Bodleian Law Library is an extremely useful reference library for M.Sc. Criminology and Criminal Justice students as it holds the Bodleian's main collection on this subject, and it receives material by copyright deposit. It also purchases items of academic merit from other countries. Series of relevant government papers are held. It therefore has an extensive collection of UK and Irish law, including subsidiary jurisdictions, and has one of the largest holdings of UK statutes and law reports. It provides students with access to a book and journal collection which should cover most, if not all, of their academic needs, almost all on open-shelves. It also has many CD-ROM and web resources on site-license. In term time the library remains open into the late evening on weekdays and during the day at weekends. It also remains open during the day until 7 pm during the vacations. The library staff provide induction tours for new students as well as on-going support.

The Centre for Criminology holds regular research seminars which all graduate students are expected to attend, and which attract distinguished speakers from the international academic community, government and criminal justice agencies

The Manor Road Building houses several departments and offers a wide range of research seminars, lectures and conferences. MPhil students are encouraged to take advantage of these opportunities in consultation



with their thesis supervisor. In addition, their supervisor may advise them to attend lectures and seminars given in the law faculty.

The University provides numerous services to help all of its students. Those most relevant to postgraduates in criminology include:

- The Careers Service, which provides comprehensive information and impartial guidance to students and graduates of Oxford University at all stages of the career decision making process.
- The Computing Service, which provides high quality, low cost, IT support for all students from those just beginning to become familiar with computers to those who need advice about very advanced computer programmes. It also provides access to workstations at its site, computing courses, site-licensed software and email and web space accounts for all.
- The International Office, which is responsible for administering the University's scholarship and bursary schemes for international students. It also runs an annual Orientation Programme for new international students, and provides advice about funding and other issues particularly affecting international students, including immigration questions.
- The Language Centre, which provides resources and services for members of the University who need foreign languages for their study, research or personal interest.

### **13. Criteria for Admission**

1. Candidates are admitted to the M.Sc. programme (first year of the degree) based on the following published criteria:

Candidates for admission would normally possess (or be predicted to obtain) a first class or high upper second class (or its equivalent) degree in law, sociology, politics, economics, social policy, psychology, history, or another subject relevant to criminology. A high upper second class degree is defined as one in which an average mark of 65% or above is attained in courses counting towards the final undergraduate degree classification.

Competence in English Language: A good command of written English is essential for success in the MSc in Criminology and we make it a precondition of admission. If English is not your native language, you are required to achieve a score of at least 630 (or 267 in the computer-based test) in TOEFL (together with a score of at least 5 in the TOEFL Test of Written English, TWE); or one of at least 7.5 in IELTS. Our own preference is for IELTS. You must supply your test result with your application.

Students are not normally interviewed (as this can unfairly discriminate against overseas students who cannot so easily be available for interview). However, the Director of Graduate Studies for Criminology is happy to talk with students considering applying for the Course to describe the content, teaching, assessment, etc and to answer any questions.

As with the other departments and colleges in the University, the Admissions Panel, comprising the Director or Assistant Director of the Centre for Criminology or the Director of Graduate Studies for Criminology, the Graduate Research Coordinator and one or more member(s) of the MSc core teaching staff, selects students for admission solely on the individual merits of each candidate and the application of the relevant selection criteria. To these ends, students submit a

statement of why they wish to be accepted for the course and two samples of their written work. Three academic references are also taken into consideration.

As each year there is a target for the number of M.Sc. students admitted to the course (currently 30) we cannot commit to offer a place to every student who meets our criteria. In recognition of this, we seek to review applications in a gathered field as this enables us to offer places to the best-qualified and most suitable students. Applicants who are thought able but do not at the time of application meet all of the selection criteria may be offered a conditional place. Conditions usually relate to the obtaining of the required standard of undergraduate degree or ability in the English language.

In reviewing applicants the following qualitative admissions criteria are employed (applicants and their referees are encouraged to address these criteria specifically):

**Application:** exceptional academic motivation; capacity for sustained and intense work; developed ability to organise time and set own agenda for study; intrepid attitude towards investigation and learning.

**Knowledge:** applicants will normally have a broad, deep, advanced, and integrated understanding of a subject relevant to criminology such as sociology, economics, politics, psychology, social policy, or history. Preference may be given to those who have studied some criminology, criminal justice, penology, criminal law or the sociology of deviance.

**Reasoning ability:** outstanding analytical abilities, the ability speedily to separate the relevant from the irrelevant, and the ability to develop and sustain complex arguments under pressure; capacities for accurate observation and insightful criticism, including willingness and ability to engage with other social science disciplines; originality and creativity of thought, open-mindedness, and capacity for lateral thinking; excellent powers of synthesis and economy of thought.

**Communication:** willingness and ability to express highly complex ideas clearly and effectively in English, with a particular eye to finesse and economy and an aspiration to professional standards of style and organisation in scholarly writing.

2. The M.Sc in Criminology and Criminal Justice forms the qualifying test for admission into the MPhil. Only students enrolled in the M.Sc. in Criminology and Criminal Justice programme can apply to the MPhil. Students applying for the MPhil must achieve a weighted average overall mark of 65% for the M.Sc. degree. In addition, the students' MPhil research proposal needs to be accepted by the Graduate Studies Committee (Law) and Law Board and appropriate supervisory arrangements found within the Faculty (see also page 14). A consideration that will guide the Committee is the feasibility of the research project within the time available and availability of appropriate supervision. Under exceptional circumstances, supervision may be found outside the Law Faculty.

*Note: Students will be awarded an M.Sc. should they wish to exit the course after the first year, or if they fail to gain the MPhil after the second year.*

#### **14. Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of teaching and learning**

##### Student feedback year 1

This course has a number of objectives. The Director of Graduate Studies for Criminology and teachers are committed to making a thorough evaluation to assess whether the aims and objectives of the course are being achieved and to improve the course by identifying its strengths and weaknesses. There are various methods by which we seek to obtain feedback from students about their experiences. There are informal means by which students can communicate their experiences of this course: through their meetings with their Academic Supervisor and through direct communication with the course teachers. Rather more formal is the role of the **Student Representative**. Students have the opportunity to elect a representative amongst their cohort in week 0 of Michaelmas Term. This person attends termly meetings with the Criminology Board of Studies to represent the students' needs and interests. Apart from this, there is a more structured method for conducting course evaluation, namely the use of an anonymous questionnaire administered in week 6 of each term.

The questionnaire covers the following areas:

- core course (content, methods of teaching);
- options (content, methods of teaching);
- department and university facilities and resources;
- dissertation (Trinity term only);
- supervision;
- student assessment process.

The questionnaires are administered by the Course Tutor at the end of the final class in week 6. One student is designated to collect the questionnaires and to return them in a sealed envelope to the Graduate Studies Administrator. The feedback is then collated, the quantitative data are coded into an SPSS file and the findings presented to the M.Sc. Board of Studies.

The Criminology Board of Studies feeds back to the students, via the Student Representative, their responses to students' comments and concerns. The Board makes clear which of the suggestions for change they feel able to act upon. In some cases change might not be possible until the following academic year.

### Student Feedback year 2

The Director of Graduate Studies for Research Degrees of the Law Faculty<sup>2</sup> is ultimately responsible for year two of the course. S/he, the Centre's Graduate Research Co-ordinator<sup>3</sup>, and teachers are committed to making a thorough evaluation to assess whether the aims and objectives of the course are being achieved and to improve the course by identifying its strengths and weaknesses. There are various methods by which we seek to obtain feedback from students about their experiences. There are informal means by which students can communicate their experiences of this course: through their meetings with their Academic Supervisor and through direct communication with their thesis supervisor. Rather more formal is the role of the **Student Representative**. MPhil students have the opportunity to elect a representative to the Law Faculty's Graduate Studies Committee in the first few weeks of Michaelmas Term. This person attends termly meetings of the Committee to represent the students' needs and interests. Such representatives will be selected by Graduate students across the Law Faculty.

A more structured method for conducting course evaluation is an elaborate two-part (qualitative and quantitative) anonymous questionnaire administered at the end of the MPhil year. The quantitative part of the questionnaire contains six questions aimed at gauging some basic characteristics of the respondent

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<sup>2</sup> In the academic year 2006-07, Dr. Timothy Endicott (MT) and Prof. Lucia Zedner (HT, TT).

<sup>3</sup> In the academic year 2006-07, Dr Mary Bosworth.

(gender; expected grade; prior level of interest) the level of prior interest and effort put into the course, views on level of difficulty and workload; and twelve questions aimed at discovering the views of the student on effectiveness of course structure, of knowledge of their supervisor, clarity of any information and directions offered, ability to stimulate interest in the material and promote discussion during supervision sessions, helpfulness, and two questions on the overall rating of the MPhil year and its overall educational value. The qualitative part of the questionnaire is an open-ended section where students are asked to comment on any other matter related to the MPhil course, such as the availability of texts, usefulness of resources offered by the Centre and so forth.

The questionnaires are administered by the Graduate Studies Administrator who will email the questionnaire to each MPhil student in the summer vacation following their third research term. The feedback is then collated, the quantitative data are coded into an SPSS file and the findings presented to the Michaelmas term Board of Studies meeting and the Law Faculty Graduate Studies Committee.

The Board of Studies and Graduate Studies Committee feeds back to the students, via the Student Representative, their responses to students' comments and concerns. The Committee makes clear which of the suggestions for change they feel able to act upon. In some cases change might not be possible until the following academic year.

Subject to the requirements of data protection legislation, the Course Administrator maintains a database on its alumni to track how our students fare in the employment or higher education market, to review the appropriateness of the course for certain careers, to help students keep in touch with each other, and to provide new students with ideas about possible career choices.

#### *Staff appointment, training and appraisal*

- Newly appointed members of academic staff are required to attend a training programme organised by the University's Institute for Teaching and Learning.
- A senior member of the academic staff is also assigned to each more junior appointee as a mentor, with a brief to provide advice and support pro-actively on teaching matters as well as other aspects of professional development.
- Teaching by recently appointed members of academic staff is witnessed and evaluated by a more senior member of academic staff (not the mentor) before the appointment is confirmed at the five-year-point.
- Teaching assessment and self-assessment also play an important part in the Faculty's system of continuing staff appraisal.

#### *Curriculum Review and Course Management*

Responsibility for the course is vested in the Law Board within the Social Sciences Division. The divisional board has formal responsibility for the maintenance of quality and standards for all courses under its aegis.

Responsibility for the organisation and delivery of the MPhil course is shared between the Graduate Research Co-ordinator, the Director of Graduate Studies (Research), the Criminology Board of Studies and the Law Faculty Graduate Studies Committee. The Law Graduate Studies Committee reports to the Law Faculty Board, which reports to the Social Sciences Divisional Board. These Boards take an active interest in major curriculum changes as well as academic appointments.

### *Review beyond the Faculty*

- The report of external examiners will be a major source of insight into the MPhil's strengths and weaknesses.
- The Social Science Divisional Board and the University's Educational Policy and Standards Committee issue guidance and provide general supervision.
- The Law Faculty is subject to six-yearly reviews by the University as well as the currently prevailing review systems of the Quality Assurance Agency.
- The Centre for Criminology Committee of Management, which meets termly, reviews the progress of the course, including, as appropriate, reports from the Chair of Examiners, the External Examiner, the Graduate Research Co-ordinator and the Director of Graduate Studies for Criminology.

### **15. Regulation of assessment**

All examinations for the MPhil are regulated by the University's Examination Regulations, and compliance with these is supervised by the University Proctors (a judicial authority appointed independently of the administration). In addition, the University and the Social Sciences Division have general policy guidelines relating to the examination process. Examination conventions specific to this programme, governing matters not dealt with in the Regulations, are agreed by the Criminology Board of Examiners (for the first year of the degree) and the Faculty's Examinations Committee, reporting to the Faculty Board. The Faculty Examinations Committee also appoints the Criminology Board of Examiners and Assessors and supervises the conduct of examinations. The Nominating Committee recommends to the Vice Chancellor the name of the External Examiner, who usually serves for three years.

In the first year of the degree the Criminology Board of Examiners are responsible for the setting of papers and for the marking of scripts. This responsibility shifts to the Faculty's Examination's Committee in year two of the degree. University Regulations permit both Boards to be assisted in setting and marking by Assessors, and a few members of academic staff in the Centre for Criminology and the wider Law Faculty will serve as Assessors for both years of the MPhil

#### *Arrangements for assessments for first year of degree*

Questions for the assessed essays (first year of the degree) are set by the option tutor and approved by the Criminology Board of Examiners, and finally by the External Examiner. Each essay is then double-blind marked by the two assessors for each option. Any fails or borderlines are reviewed by the External Examiner.

Dissertation titles are approved by the Criminology Board of Studies (closed business) during Hilary term. Dissertations are double blind marked by two assessors appointed by the Criminology Board of Examiners (the supervisor for the dissertation, appointed by the Criminology Board of Studies, has no responsibility for marking the dissertation). Any fails or borderlines are reviewed by the External Examiner.

Co-assessors whose individual marks are very close (within three marks) usually agree to 'meet half way' and where 'half way' falls between two grades they choose the higher of the two. If there is a wider discrepancy between the marks they discuss their decisions and one or both might agree to re-read the paper and re-consider their grade. Where they cannot agree, a third opinion is sought from another assessor or

examiner. Agreed marks are sent to the External Examiner whose job it is to review the marking, but not to 'third mark' assignments.

The Core Course Exam is set by Professor Loader and Professor Roberts, approved by the Board of Examiners and the External Examiner. Professor Loader and Professor Roberts also double-blind mark the papers.

#### Arrangements for assessment for the second year of the degree

Thesis titles are approved by the Board of Studies and Law Graduate Studies Committee (closed business) during Hilary term of the academic year preceding the student's commencement of the MPhil programme.

The thesis is double blind marked by two assessors appointed by the Law Faculty Graduate Studies Committee and the Law Board. In all cases there will be two examiners, one from Oxford and one external. The supervisor for the thesis, appointed by the Board of Studies, and ratified by the Law Graduate Studies Committee and the Law Board, has no responsibility for marking the thesis.

Any fails or borderlines are reviewed by the Faculty's external examiner. For those intending to go on to doctoral study, the MPhil thesis would normally provide the foundation for the proposed doctoral work and serve as the submission for the qualifying test for the transfer of status from MPhil to D.Phil status.

#### **Arrangements for Reassessments**

##### *First Year of the Degree:*

Core course: Candidates who fail the core-course examination may re-sit the examination in the Trinity term of the following academic year. Candidates who have completed successfully either or both of (a) the options (i.e. have obtained an aggregate mark of 50 per cent or more), and (b) the dissertation may carry forward the marks gained for the successfully completed parts of the course.

Options: Candidates who fail to obtain an aggregate average mark of 50 per cent for their assessed essays in Michaelmas, Hilary and Trinity terms may resubmit those essays in which they have received a mark of 49 per cent or less to the Clerk of the Schools according to the standard timetable for submitting essays in the following academic year. Candidates who have completed successfully (a) the core course examination (b) the dissertation (c) any essay for which they have received a mark of 50 per cent or more, may carry forward the marks gained for the successfully completed parts of the course.

Dissertation: Candidates who fail the dissertation may resubmit the dissertation by the required date in the Trinity term of the following academic year. Such candidates who have completed successfully either, or both, of (a) the core course and (b) the options may carry forward the marks gained for the successfully completed parts of the course.

Candidates who fail one or more of the components of the first year of study (M.Sc.) and have been provisionally accepted into the second year (MPhil), will not be allowed to proceed to the MPhil

##### *Second Year of the Degree:*

Thesis: Candidates who fail the thesis, that is obtain a mark of 49% or less, may resubmit the thesis by the required date in the Trinity Term of the following academic year. Candidates who have completed successfully the components of the M.Sc. and the Empirical Research Methods, may carry forward the

marks gained for the successfully completed parts of the course. Candidates can resubmit the Thesis only once.

No-one may gain the degree of MPhil in Criminology without having attained a 65% average weighted mark for the three elements of the first year of the degree namely the core course exam, the options, and the dissertation, and a pass mark in the fourth element of the degree, namely the thesis.

### **The Role of Examiners**

Internal and external examiners are required to produce reports after the examinations for consideration by the Faculty's Management Committee, the Social Sciences Board and the EPSC. The External Examiner who reports to the Vice-Chancellor each year in which they act comments on whether the standards are appropriate to the award, in part by comparisons with the standards of comparable institutions, and whether the assessment procedures and the regulations governing them, are fair and appropriate. The External Examiner is also required to report on whether the conduct of the examination and the determination of awards have been fairly conducted, and whether individual student performance has been judged in accordance with the regulations and conventions of the Examining Board. Specifically, External Examiners' reports are expected to cover the following points:

- the standards demonstrated by the students;
- the extent to which standards are appropriate for the award;
- the design, structure and marking of assessments;
- the procedures for assessment and examinations;
- whether or not external examiners have had sufficient access to, and the power to call upon, any material necessary to make the required judgements;
- students' performance in relation to their peers in comparable courses;
- the coherence of the policies and procedures relating to external examiners and their consonances with the explicit roles required of them;
- the basis and rationale for any comparisons made;
- the strengths and weaknesses of the students as a cohort;
- the quality of learning which may be indicated by student performance.

The Report is addressed to the Vice-Chancellor, and will be considered by the Faculty of Law, the Social Science Division Board, the Educational Policy and Standards Committee, and the Centre for Criminology Committee of Management. It is also circulated to all M.Sc. Course tutors.

### **Marking Scale**

Admission into the second year of the course is awarded to any candidate who achieves a weighted average mark of at least 65 per cent for (a) the assessed essays (b) the core course paper and (c) the dissertation. For

this purpose, the individual marks of the five assessed essays are aggregated, and an average mark awarded for the assessed essays as a whole. The examiners award a distinction to any candidate who achieves marks of at least 70 per cent on at least five of the papers; in this calculation, both the core course and the dissertation count as two papers.

*Note: The degree of M.Sc. is awarded to any candidate who achieves a mark of at least 50% for (a) the assessed essays (b) the core course paper and (c) the dissertation (as calculated above) and who either a) chooses to exit the course after the first year or b) fails to gain the MPhil at the end of the second year.*

### Assessed essays, core course exam and dissertation

#### 70-100: Distinction level

Papers which are awarded a distinction will be well structured, well argued and comprehensive. They will be analytical, rather than merely descriptive and will go beyond the most obvious sources of knowledge. The candidate will have demonstrated an unusually clear grasp of most of the issues (including all the more important ones), used an unusually wide range of material, and displayed very good skills in evaluating the material and using it to construct arguments which deal with the issues.

80-100: Superb work showing fine command of intellectual debates and making a creative contribution to them.

75-79: Excellent work, intellectually stimulating argument.

70-74: Fine work showing powerful analysis, a distinctive argument, and full awareness of the secondary literature and critical engagement with it.

#### 50-69: Pass

Papers which are awarded a pass mark will demonstrate a competent grasp of most of the more important issues, a familiarity with and understanding of a reasonable range of relevant materials, and good skills in evaluating the material and using it to construct arguments which deal with the issues.

65-69: Strong pass: strong and well-developed analysis with some indication of distinction potential; no significant errors of fact or interpretation.

55-64: Good pass: sound analytical standard with most points developed rather than stated.

50-54: Pass: basic analytical skills apparent from identification of intellectual problems with some structured discussion of them

#### 0-49: Fail

An unsatisfactory piece of work. At best, the answer will simply describe the most relevant research and debates but will not demonstrate any skill at analysis or argumentation. It is likely that this candidate will not have clearly demonstrated much understanding of the question or the issues it raises. Some of the most relevant material is likely to have been ignored and irrelevant material included.

45-49: Marginal fail: inadequate development of points made.

0-44: Outright fail: inadequate coverage and inadequate analysis.



## Thesis

### > 70 Distinction

An excellent thesis that integrates theoretical, substantive and, when appropriate, technical principles into a well structured, well argued and comprehensive piece of research. The candidate will have demonstrated an unusually clear grasp of the theoretical issues relevant to the topic of the thesis, as well as the fundamental concepts, arguments and, when appropriate, techniques and theories of data collection and data analysis. The student will have reviewed and examined all relevant facets of the issue under study and, when appropriate, collected and analyzed data in a correct and discerning manner. The candidate will have addressed fully the ethical, philosophical, epistemological and methodological problems associated with the chosen topic of research and the data used.

### 50-69 Pass

A reasonable or good piece of research. The candidate will have demonstrated a competent grasp of the theoretical issues relevant to the topic of the thesis, as well as the fundamental concepts, arguments and, when appropriate, techniques and theories of data collection and data analysis. The student will have reviewed and examined most of the relevant facets of the issue under study and, when appropriate, collected and analyzed data in an acceptable manner. The candidate will have addressed some of the ethical, philosophical, epistemological and methodological problems associated with the chosen topic of research and the data used.

### 49 or less Fail

An unsatisfactory thesis. The candidate will have demonstrated an insufficient grasp of the theoretical issues relevant to the topic of the thesis, as well as the fundamental concepts, arguments and, when appropriate, techniques and theories of data collection and data analysis as they apply to the issue under study. Alternatively, the candidate will have reviewed and examined the relevant issues in an unsatisfactory manner, or failed to address some crucial issues. For empirical theses, the candidate will have collected and analyzed data that does not speak to the issues raised and the hypothesis the student hopes to explore, or will have analyzed the data using inappropriate techniques. The thesis will also fail if it does not address the most significant ethical, philosophical, epistemological and methodological problems associated with the chosen topic of research and the data used.

## **16. Indicators of quality and standards**

Both the MPhil and the M.Sc. will be subject to systematic internal or external review, as per other courses in the Division. Issues of quality and standards are also addressed in both internal and external examiners' reports and other forms of course evaluation (see 14 above) on an annual basis.

The Director of Graduate Studies will make the External Examiner's report available to all supervisors and will put in place mechanisms designed to ensure that all of those involved in the Course can build on the strengths identified.

The Course is under the aegis of the Faculty of Law which achieved a rating of 5+ in the 2001 Research Assessment Exercise. It is organised by the Centre for Criminology which received a very favourable review in 2001 from the Social Sciences Division of the University. Their report noted, in relation to the M.Sc., that

“The committee recognises the value of this course in allowing the centre’s expertise to be put to wider educational use ...” The MPhil builds on this success.