Course Specifications
Valid as from the academic year 2018-2019

Quantitative Methods and Techniques in Criminology (B001505)

Course size
(nominal values; actual values may depend on programme)
Credits 5.0
Study time 150 h
Contact hrs 45.0 h

Course offerings and teaching methods in academic year 2018-2019
A (semester 1)
Dutch
fieldwork 7.5 h
self-reliant study activities 5.0 h
lecture 25.0 h
group work 7.5 h

Lecturers in academic year 2018-2019
Pauwels, Lieven RE23 lecturer-in-charge
Vandeviver, Christophe RE23 co-lecturer

Offered in the following programmes in 2018-2019
Bachelor of Science in Criminological Sciences
5 A

Teaching languages
Dutch

Keywords
Research cycle, scientific problem, measure, techniques of analysis, sampling, measurement, survey, experimental designs, validity, reliability, secondary data-analysis, questionnaire design

Position of the course
The course Quantitative Criminological Methods and Techniques is situated during the second Bachelor year Criminological Sciences. The course aims to give insight in the specificities of criminological quantitative methods and techniques. The objective of the course is to make the student acquainted with the different methods and techniques in criminology. The focus is not exclusively on statistical techniques, but rather on the methodology itself, and on the possibilities to remediate existing instruments. Attention will be paid to the frequently used methods, i.e. the use of surveys and experimental designs, constructing questionnaires and the use of secondary data analysis

Contents
This course aims at a thorough study of quantitative methods that are frequently used within criminology. In an introductory lecture attention is paid on the specificity of quantitative criminology and ongoing method issues. We introduce rival paradigms and methods, which culminated in a battle between quantitative and qualitative methods (referring to methodological pluralism). After this introduction, the most important aspects of quantitative methodology are discussed. We present the research cycle and its different aspects, attention is paid to the development of hypotheses and research questions: what kind of questions can researchers pose, what is a theory, what are conceptual models of quantitative criminology, how do we measure concepts? Furthermore the use of sampling in quantitative criminology is discussed: what kinds of sampling designs exist? What are the strong and weak points of these designs? We explain the specific terminology used in causal modelling. Separate lectures are devoted to experimental designs and the use of surveys within criminology. These designs are studied within the frameworks of reliability and validity, which are important standards when evaluating methods. Students are also introduced to the “science” of asking questions and developing questionnaires. Response models and insights in response processes from methodological theories are used to assist

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students when developing a questionnaire. Finally, attention is paid to ethical principles and the possibilities of using secondary data.

Initial competences
No special prior knowledge required.

Final competences
1. Having a thorough knowledge and insight in quantitative criminological methods and techniques.
2. Ability to appreciate and interpret in a critical way criminological quantitative literature.
3. Ability to analyse criminological phenomena and reactions on criminological phenomena starting from different quantitative frames of reference.
4. Having the capability to make methodological choices during the setting up of criminological research.
5. Ability to improve autonomously existing research instruments.
6. Ability to develop a critical-scientific attitude towards used quantitative methods and techniques.
7. Being sensible for the opportunities and limitations of methodology in criminology.

Conditions for credit contract
Access to this course unit via a credit contract is unrestricted: the student takes into consideration the conditions mentioned in 'Starting Competences'.

Conditions for exam contract
This course unit cannot be taken via an exam contract.

Teaching methods
Group work, lecture, fieldwork, self-reliant study activities.

Extra information on the teaching methods
Ex cathedra teaching and (to a limited degree) guest lecturing.
In the framework of this course, practical assignments on quantitative data collection are foreseen. Students go into the field to gain experience. They need to contact respondents, collect data and enter the data in a statistical software package (e.g. SPSS). The material for the assignment will be put at the disposal of the students by means of Minerva. On the basis of their experiences and with help of scientific literature they will make a paper in group which will be evaluated. In addition, students are expected to – individually – take care of the analogue data collection forms, the digitalized data collection forms and an electronic data file, which contains the collected data.

Learning materials and price
• PowerPoint presentation of the lectures (available at the electronic learning environment).
• Additional learning material (available at the electronic learning environment).
• Prescribed material in the context of the practical assignment (available at the electronic learning environment).

References

Course content-related study coaching
• Individual guiding by an academic assistant.
• Office hour of the assistant.
• Office hour of the professor.
• Students can pose questions and help each other through Minerva.
• FAQ’s will be dealt with in class.

Evaluation methods
end-of-term evaluation and continuous assessment

Examination methods in case of periodic evaluation during the first examination period
Written examination with multiple choice questions

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Examination methods in case of periodic evaluation during the second examination period
  Written examination with multiple choice questions

Examination methods in case of permanent evaluation
  Participation, assignment

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent evaluation
  Examination during the second examination period is possible in modified form

Extra information on the examination methods
  Periodical evaluation (75%): written multiple choice exam.

  Non-periodical evaluation (25%): participation in and evaluation of practical assignments. The score is a combination of the result of a group component and an individual component.

Calculation of the examination mark
  A combination of non-periodical evaluation (practical assignment, i.e. 25% of the final mark) and periodical evaluation (written exam, i.e. 75% of the final mark).

  Regarding the group assignment: if there is clearly a different input from different group members, then the final mark per student belonging to the same group can still differ. Students who eschew one or more parts of the evaluation can no longer pass the course. In that case, final scores of 8/20 and above will be reduced to the highest non-deliberative quotation (i.e. 7/20).

  When the student attends all parts of the evaluation, but scores less than 10/20 for one of the components, he/she can no longer pass the entire course unit. If, in that case, the total score is a mark of 10/20 or above, then this is reduced to the highest failing mark (i.e. 9/20).

  The partial score for the individual components are not rounded in the calculation of the total score. Only the total score is a rounded mark, in accordance with the rounding rules from the OER. For both components, students have to achieve at least 50 percent (i.e. 10/20). This means that, in an exceptional case, a score of 9.99/20 means that the student did not pass the individual component and, hence, did not pass the entire course unit.

Facilities for Working Students
  The opportunity to make an individual assignment instead of a practical assignment (group work). Theretofore, the work student contacts the responsible lecturer.

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