Study of Specific Criminal Offences (B000169)

Course Specifications
Valid as from the academic year 2019-2020

Course
Valid as from the academic year 2019-2020

Course offerings and teaching methods in academic year 2019-2020

A (semester 2) Dutch

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<td>Guided self-study</td>
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Lecturers in academic year 2019-2020

De Bondt, Wendy

Offered in the following programmes in 2019-2020

Bachelor of Science in Criminological Sciences
- Credits: 5.0
- Offering: A

Master of Science in Teaching in Social Sciences (main subject Criminological Sciences)
- Credits: 4.0
- Offering: A

Master of Science in Criminological Sciences
- Credits: 4.0
- Offering: A

Teaching languages

Dutch

Keywords

Legislation on criminal offences, Constitutive elements of crime, Case law, Legal doctrine, Comparative criminal law

Position of the course

This course is specialised and aims at gaining insight in the multitude of criminal offences and provides instruments to analyse this legislation (constitutive elements of the crime, case law, legal doctrine and contextualisation in time and space).
The course builds upon the knowledge and competences acquired during the course "Substantive Criminal Law", including the exercises organised within this course.

Contents

PART 1 - Introduction
- the development of criminal law
- the offence (constitutive elements, classification, grounds for justification and excuse, mitigating and aggravating circumstances)
- the criminal responsibility (moral elements of crimes, grounds for exclusion of guilt)
- the attempt and participation
- recidivism (temporary, permanent and special forms)
- the sanction (sentencing and execution)
- comparative law

PART 2 - Analysis of crimes
- Collective in depth analysis of several crimes to allow students to gain insight and improve their legal skills
- Illegal adoption, sale of children, surrogacy (phenomenological assessment, legal framework, current criminalisations, future policy options/requirements)
- Corruption (public and private corruption) & swindling
- Drug related offences (with a specific focus on the international legal context and the possibility of legalising/decriminalising/depenalising/regulating cannabis related offences)
- Money laundering (with a link to fiscal fraud) (with a specific focus on the importance

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of comparative legal research to expose differences in criminal legislation between different jurisdictions)
- Discrimination, racism & xenophobia (phenomenological assessment, legal framework, current criminalisations) (with a specific focus on the current initiatives inspired by conservative right-wing politics)
- Terrorism and participation in a criminal organisation (including the discussion on the need for more criminal measures in the fight against radicalisation and extremism) (with a specific focus on the importance of comparative legal research to expose differences in criminal legislation between different jurisdictions)
- Final topic is decided on ad hoc, in light of ongoing discussions and/or recently taken legal initiatives.

**PART 3 – Microteaching**
- Presentation-sessions to allow students to present their crime analysis to the other students
- The topics of the microteaching sessions are determined at the beginning of the lecture series together with the students (e.g. rape and other sexual offences, breach of professional secrecy, slander, disobedience, insubmission, hit and run, surrogacy, organised crime, euthanasia, abortion, suicide, assault & battery,...)

**Initial competences**
- Students are expected to have elementary knowledge of
  - the general principles of criminal law (obtained by following the course "Substantive Criminal Law")
  - the sources of criminal law and how to find them
  - the international, European and national dynamics surrounding the development of crimes

**Final competences**
1. Having a command of and being able to apply the jargon of the study of criminal offences
2. Having the ability to discuss the historical, political, economical and/or sociological context in which certain criminal offences arise
3. Having a critical-scientific attitude towards, sources and (scientific) literature on criminal offences
4. Being able to evaluate the work of other students and provide constructive feedback based on a set of criteria
5. Ability to reflect in a critical-scientific manner (including being able to draft a relevant research question and through offering a scientifically researched analysis and logical legal reasoning)
6. Being able to assess and elaborate on the added value of comparative legal research for the study and further development of criminal offences
7. Having the ability to discuss topics with peers and working together as a team
8. Ability to communicate in a structured way both orally and in writing on legal and policy developments (a.o. through presenting and defending the results of own research and through participating in a debate)
9. Being aware of the societal role criminologists (could) have regarding the development of criminal offences
10. Ability to assess current developments in a balanced, mature fashion.

**Conditions for credit contract**
- Access to this course unit via a credit contract is determined after successful competences assessment

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

**Teaching methods**
- Guided self-study, group work, lecture, microteaching, self-reliant study activities

**Extra information on the teaching methods**

**Lectures:** The material is mainly taught in the form of hearing- and responding lectures. The lectures aim at familiarising students with the influence and application of the principles relevant for the process underlying the development of crimes, as well as with the techniques to critically evaluate those crimes. With a view to improving the evaluation skills, the lectures are aimed at encouraging students to use a multidisciplinary perspective taking due account of the historical, political, economic and sociological context. The self-exploring character is activated by the technique of hearing-and responding-lectures. By asking questions and provoking reactions, active participation and critical thinking is spurred. During the lectures, students are explicitly confronted with pending legal proposals to raise awareness of their societal role and responsibilities as future criminologists.

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Guided self-study: students independently prepare a number of aspects or topics related to the selected offences for the written and oral exam, based on the directions provided for and skills picked up during the lectures.

Group work: students – divided in small study groups – are to formulate a research question, relevant for the course. On the basis of that question, they are to write a critical paper. In this paper, they are to defend a creative viewpoint regarding a relevant question by offering a scientifically researched analysis and logical reasoning.

Microteaching: students assess papers of their peers and provide constructive feedback on their written work. Thereafter, papers are orally defended, students ask each other critical questions on their papers and/or presentations and engage in a debate on the topic.

Independent work: students draft a short reflection paper concerning a pending legal proposal.

Lifelong learning: Students are informed about relevant scientific activities such as workshops and seminars relevant for the course.

Learning materials and price
• Source book with legislation (including the Criminal Code) and case law, composed by the lecturer (estimated price €25) (may be used during the exam);
• comprehensive reader with literature made available through Minerva (of which only a selection needs to be studied);
• slides of the lecturer distributed via Minerva and complemented with the students’ own lecture notes; and
• student papers complemented with the comments made during the discussion in class.

References
Included in learning material

Course content-related study coaching
• Continuous feedback/coaching possible;
• Interactive assistance via Minerva; and
• Office-hours.

Evaluation methods
end-of-term evaluation and continuous assessment
Examination methods in case of periodic evaluation during the first examination period
Written examination, oral examination
Examination methods in case of periodic evaluation during the second examination period
Written examination, oral examination
Examination methods in case of permanent evaluation
Oral examination, participation, assignment, peer assessment
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
Non-periodic evaluation
Students prepare a course related paper as elaborated on above, prepare an oral presentation at which occasion students demonstrate their capacity to orally defend their position and respond to critical questions addressed to them by their co-students. Additionally, students are evaluated on their ability to evaluate the written work of their co-students by means of providing constructive feedback, their ability to (prepare and) formulate critical and relevant questions and their ability to participate ad hoc in the debate. Finally, students draft a short reflection paper regarding a pending legal proposal.

Periodic evaluation
The exam tests the knowledge, insights and scientific thinking abilities and written and oral communication skills of the examinandus. The questions aim at testing if the student has gained insights and knowledge relating to the terminology, the relevant structures, the system, and the principles of the course area. Finally, the questions aim at testing if the student can apply the gained knowledge by formulating an opinion regarding a complex legal issue. The exam will be written followed by an oral examination

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Calculation of the examination mark

**Non-periodic evaluation**
13/20 comprised of
• 5p - course related paper as described above;
• 2p - oral presentation of the paper, at the occasion of which students are evaluated on their skills to defend their position and build a legally solid line of argumentation
• 3p - evaluation and feedback provided to other students, critical reflection and formulation of questions, participation during the debate.
• 3p - critical reflection paper regarding a pending legal initiative

**Periodic evaluation**
7/20 - entailing open and short questions spread over both a written as well as an oral exam. The oral exam is a crucial addition to the written exam. It aims at verifying/consolidating (re-evaluating, where necessary going into more detail into the understanding and insight and/or associations and links). The result of the periodic evaluation in its entirety (7 out of 20) is only final after having conducted both the written and oral part. The oral part can correct the provisional mark obtained with the written part. As a guideline the maximum variation will be 2 points.

**Participation requirement**
The students are required to participate in all evaluations (the periodic as well as the non periodic evaluation). If not, the student will be declared failed. In practice this means that, students who do not participate in all evaluations can achieve maximum 7/20 for this course.

**Facilities for Working Students**
Working students are allowed to had in their course paper solely in an electronic format. In light of the non-periodic evaluation, it is however essential to be able to be present in (at least) two classes after the Easter Holidays.

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