

Courses Master Programme International Crimes, Conflict and Criminology

Conflict and Crimes, Mandatory course (12 EC)

The aim of this introductory course is to familiarize students of the master programme International Crimes, Conflict and Criminology with each other and with the main (legal) concepts, (criminological) theories and judicial and non-judicial responses in relation to conflict-related crimes. The core concepts and definitions of international crimes (war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide) will be discussed and illustrated. Similarly, attention will be given to conflict-related transnational crimes such as human smuggling, human trafficking weapons smuggling and terrorism.

After this course students should know the differences between the (legal) definitions and causes of these types of criminality, when and where such crimes occur(ed) and how actors in a national or international context can or should respond to these crimes. In relation to investigating and prosecuting transnational crimes we will discuss the workings of transnational modes of cooperation such as Interpol, Europol and Eurojust. In terms of transitional justice after large scale atrocities we will discuss the value of setting up truth commissions, lustration and international criminal courts and tribunals. During the 'practical week' students will visit relevant institutions such as the International Criminal Court.

During this intensive course students be trained on their practical skills, such as how to give oral presentations and how to write an academic research paper.

Mode of assessment: interim assignments and research paper

Open to: Limited to students of the master International Crimes, Conflict and Criminology

International Criminal Courts and Tribunals, Mandatory course (6 EC)

Content: This course provides students with an introduction into international criminal law, i.e. the law of supranational courts such as the International Criminal Court (ICC), and the ad hoc Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda. The course addresses both the substantive and the procedural aspects of international criminal law. At the end of the course, students will have learnt about legal issues that lie at the heart of the international criminal justice system. They will also have insights into the (practical) challenges faced by international criminal courts and will be able to critically assess the ways in which the courts have approached these challenges. Moreover, by using comparative approach, this course also provides students with a better understanding of their own national criminal justice system.

The topics that will be covered in this course include: The history of international criminal justice; the Institutional structure of the ad hoc Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and Rwanda (ICTR), the International Criminal Court (ICC), and the "mixed Tribunals"; Sources of international criminal law; Substantive law: elements of crimes, criminal responsibility of (military and civilian) superiors, grounds for excluding liability; International criminal procedure: phases of international criminal procedure, evidentiary rules, fact-finding impediments, fair trial principles; Prosecution of international crimes before national courts; Concurrence of jurisdiction between states and international criminal courts and tribunals (primacy versus complementarity); Victims in international criminal procedure.

Mode of assessment: Written exam

Open to: Apart from regular students, the course is also available for: Students from other universities/faculties, exchange students, contractor (students who pay for one course)

Research Methodology on Conflict and International Crimes, Mandatory course (6EC)

Content: The aim of this course is to familiarize students with quantitative and qualitative research methods to study international crimes, other gross human rights violations, conflicts and their aftermath. During the course students will discuss and practice various research methods and their use in case of conflicts, international crimes and transitional justice, such as sampling, instrument design, interviewing, data analysis, statistical testing, for ordinary social research, as well as specific methods for international crimes.

Mode of assessment: Written exam and bonus points (for individual assignments)

Open to: The course is open to master students ICC. Apart from regular ICC students, the course is also open to a limited number of exchange students and students of the master Law and Politics of International Security.

Expert Seminars, restricted elective (you need to choose 2 courses with a maximum of 6 Ec's), seminar 1, 2, 3 and/or 4 (3EC)

Content: Four times a year researchers of VU University's Center for International Criminal Justice or distinguished speakers from other universities or practitioners are invited to share with our students their knowledge and expertise on a specific topic related to international crimes, conflict or international criminal justice (two in period 3 and two in period 5). The purpose of these seminars is to stimulate students to critically think and reflect upon one specific topic for several days. Group size will be limited, thereby allowing, and indeed, forcing, students to actively engage in the interactive class setting. Topics will change per year, but may include: Jihadism and refugees, Perpetrators of World War II, Insider Witnesses in International Criminal Law, Recruitment of child soldiers, Returning Foreign Fighters, War time Sexual Violence, Human trafficking.

Mode of assessment: Paper/essay

Open to: The course is open to master students ICC. Apart from regular ICC students, the course is also open to a limited number of exchange students and students of the master Law and Politics of International Security.

Corporations, Conflict and International Crimes, Optional course (6 EC)

Content: The course corporations and international crimes deals with the involvement of corporations in international crimes and other gross human rights violations. While using a criminological approach we also use insights, knowledge and theories from various disciplines including history, social psychology, organizational sciences, business ethics and political science. Moreover, multiple areas of law are relevant including public international law, human rights law and international and national criminal law. Because the participants in the course have various backgrounds (they are lawyers, political scientists,

psychologists, sociologists, anthropologists and, obviously, criminologists) and because the subject is interdisciplinary by nature, students are encouraged to critically assess the existing viewpoints as well as to bridge the gaps between disciplines (most notably law and social sciences). Moreover, not a lot of research about this subject exists, encouraging students to develop their own critical and creative ideas regarding the subject, the different approaches, and the available theories.

Mode of assessment: Obligatory assignments (pass or fail) and an individual research paper on a topic students choose themselves.

Open to: Apart from regular students in criminology, the course is also available for students from other universities/faculties, exchange students, contractor (students who pay for one course).

Atrocity Actors; Perpetrators, Bystanders and Victims, optional course (6 EC)

Content: In this course you will study the behaviour of the most relevant actors involved in conflicts and other atrocity crimes: perpetrators, bystanders and victims. With regards to perpetrators tries to seek explanations for their involvement in atrocity crimes like genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes. With regards to bystanders it seeks to explain passiveness when witnessing such serious crimes. As to victims, the consequences of serious crimes will be discussed. In doing so the course has an interdisciplinary nature with an emphasis on socio-psychology.

The course we will in particular discuss and debate the thesis that perpetrators of international crimes are merely ordinary people who commit their crimes because they find themselves in extraordinary circumstances. We will delve into various socio-psychological mechanisms and assess their importance in situations when international crimes are committed. Students will get acquainted with various classic socio-psychological experiments such as the Milgram obedience experiment, the Stanford prison experiment and the Asch's conformity experiment and discuss their implications. Since international crimes are often perpetrated by militarized units we will also touch upon military culture, training and its effects on individuals. We will discuss whether situational factors (extraordinary circumstances) can turn ordinary people into perpetrators of international crimes and why it is so difficult to keep hold of your own moral values within a repressive and powerful environment. The course will discuss the most relevant 'bystander theories' such as Darely and Latane's observations on the 'bystander effect'. With regards to the consequences of international crimes, the course will focus in particular on the psychological consequences victims may face and explore if and to what extent effective mental health interventions in different country contexts exist.

Mode of assessment: research paper

Open to: Apart from regular students in criminology, the course is also available for students from other universities/faculties, exchange students, contractor (students who pay for one course).

Transnational crimes and Conflict, optional course (6EC)

Content: This course focuses on the interrelation between conflict and transnational crimes. How do wars or uprisings create, facilitate and proliferate transnational crime? What are the links between organized crime and conflict? During the course a large number of practitioners and teachers from other universities

will be invited to give guest lectures about a specific type of conflict-related transnational crime. Topics may change per year, but expect topics such as conflict-related types of: fraud, human trafficking/smuggling, illegal extraction of natural resources (mining, oil, logging, wildlife crimes), illegal trade in arts and artefacts, illegal weapons trade, environmental crimes, piracy.

Mode of assessment: written exam

Open to: Apart from regular students in criminology, the course is also available for students from other universities/faculties, exchange students, contractor (students who pay for one course).

Terrorism and Security, optional course (6 EC)

Content: What is terrorism and how is it countered? This course deals with the most current issues of security and law in the Netherlands, the EU, and the global context. It examines how countries respond to threats of terrorism and how individual rights can be protected within crisis driven agendas. From an interdisciplinary perspective (combining insights from criminology, criminal law, human rights law, and EU constitutional law), the course trains students to understand terrorism as a phenomenon and discusses how traditional legal frameworks are amended to new areas of security regulation. We shall examine, among other things, whether or not it is possible to profile or identify terrorists, how to respond to returning foreign fighters, and how the EU and international fora balance the fight against terrorism with human rights, thereby considering the different approaches that states have adopted.

Mode of assessment: Written exam with essay questions.

Open to: The course is open to master students in law and criminology. The course is open to master students in law and criminology. A maximum of 50 students may attend this course. Apart from regular students, the course is also available for exchange students.

Transitional Justice in reality; optional course, fieldtrip (3 EC)

Content: Each Academic year students will be given the option to join on a fieldtrip to Bosnia (appr. 4-6 days). The trip is scheduled in the first half of April and will be jointly organized with staff and students. During the trip many interesting places and lectures are to be attended. Past years included the following activities: War Scars and New Times Walking Tour, Visit to Gallery 11/07/95 which is the first memorial gallery in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Visit to The War Childhood Museum, The Srebrenica day-tour, Visit to the ICTY Sarajevo Field (outreach) Office, Siege/War tunnel tour, Visit the Post-Conflict Research Center, Visit to the State Court of BiH, Visit the International Commission on Missing Persons, Meeting with Ivana Kešić, who works for the NGO Educational Center for Democracy and Human Rights (CIVITAS).

Costs for this field trip are approximately 400 euro (ticket, accommodation and activities).

Mode of assessment: A short preparation note must be written beforehand. A field-tri-report afterwards.

Open to: Students form the ICC master and the master International Law and Politics of International Security.

Master thesis, mandatory course (18 EC)

Content: All master students must write a master thesis to finish the program. The thesis is 18 ECTS, which stands for approximately 500 hours of work. Based on a 40-hour work-week this amounts to roughly 3 months' full-time work. A master thesis is the written report of your final research project and will be the culmination of your year's study. While much of your time in the second half of the academic year should be reserved for work on your thesis. By writing your thesis, you should be able to prove to be able to independently initiate and conduct an interdisciplinary research project in the field of international crimes, and conflict. You will have to set up a research design, use the right methodological approach, appropriately analyze the data and draw the correct conclusions. Students will be supervised by a member of the academic staff and will thus get individual feedback on their research plans and progress.

Mode of assessment: Paper/ thesis

Open to: All Students of the Master's programme International crimes, Conflict and Criminology need to write a thesis.

Apart from the above courses, a limited number of students will also be selected to take part in selective 'research assistant' like courses such as CICJ Research Lab and the International Law Clinic. During these courses you will assist teaching staff in ongoing research at the Center for International Criminal Justice (www.cicj.org) or the Netherlands Office of the Public International Law and Policy Group (www.publicinternationallawandpolicygroup.org)