

## Youth Criminology and Youth Law (B001504)

**Course size** *(nominal values; actual values may depend on programme)*

**Credits 6.0**

**Study time 180 h**

**Course offerings and teaching methods in academic year 2024-2025**

A (semester 1)

Dutch

Gent

lecture

**Lecturers in academic year 2024-2025**

De Bondt, Wendy

RE23

lecturer-in-charge

Vandeviver, Christophe

RE23

co-lecturer

**Offered in the following programmes in 2024-2025**

[Bachelor of Science in Criminological Sciences](#)

**crdts**

6

**offering**

A

**Teaching languages**

Dutch

**Keywords**

Minors, youth, childhood and adolescence, juvenile delinquency, juvenile delinquency law, social reaction, youth care.

**Position of the course**

- To provide knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon of juvenile delinquency, the existing Belgian juvenile delinquency law, practices of societal responses, and specific topics within the field of youth criminology (e.g., youth as offenders, victims, youth and police, etc.).
- To impart insights and critical thinking frameworks concerning the above-mentioned areas of knowledge.

**Contents**

**PART 1: Legal Framework focusing on Juvenile Delinquency and Youth Support Law (by Prof. De Bondt)**

**Chapter 1 - General Introduction**

As the way we perceive children and young people has changed significantly in recent years and is fundamental to the development and application of the legal framework, the development of the concept of childhood is discussed. This includes attention to the impact of adolescence as stage of life on the legal position of minors as well as its significance for government interventions, whether or not linked to the committing of criminal offenses.

**Chapter 2 - The Phased Development of youth law**

With the general introduction in mind, this chapter outlines how the development of the concept of childhood has translated into a phased development of youth law. To fully understand and interpret contemporary youth law, a brief overview of the legal history of youth law is presented. Four phases are distinguished: (1) ignorance about the relevance of distinction between adults and children, (2) the protection phase, (3) the development of decreed youth support law, and (4) the development of decreed juvenile delinquency law.

**Chapter 3 - Youth support today**

The fundamental principles, actors, and functioning of integrated youth care are approached from both a legal-technical and a practical perspective. The complexity of identifying and monitoring a troubling parenting situation is examined through a number of case studies. Attention is also given to the sometimes precarious legal position of minors in integrated youth care.

**Chapter 4 – Juvenile delinquency law**

The fundamental principles, actors, and functioning of juvenile delinquency law are approached from both a legal-technical and a practical perspective. Attention is given to whether youth law is considered "criminal" in nature or not, and the legal consequences it has for the applicable regulations regarding procedural safeguards and possible international cooperation.

## **PART 2: Youth Criminology: Theoretical and Methodological Framework (by Prof. Vandeviver)**

### **Chapter 1 - What is Youth Criminology and Youth delinquency?**

The first chapter discusses and scientifically interprets the central concepts of 'youth criminology' and 'juvenile delinquency.' It delves into the link between youth and criminality and how this connection can be explained from the perspectives of criminology and related disciplines. The emphasis is on the most current explanations for juvenile delinquency and the insights from neuropsychology.

### **Chapter 2 - Juvenile Delinquency in Historical Perspective**

The second chapter explores the historical developments concerning 'youth' and 'juvenile delinquency.' It thoroughly examines the emergence of societal and scientific attention to 'youth' and 'juvenile delinquency.' The chapter also addresses the Belgian developments in the field of juvenile delinquency.

### **Chapter 3 - Measuring Juvenile Delinquency**

The third chapter extensively covers the quantitative aspects of youth criminology, including an overview of various data collection initiatives. Students are acquainted with the advantages and limitations of official crime statistics (including statistics from the juvenile prosecutor's office), self-report studies, and surveys of victims. The chapter also discusses available youth criminological research in Belgium and touches upon the (international) decline in juvenile delinquency.

### **Chapter 4 - Juvenile Delinquency in Perspective: Facts & Figures**

In the fourth chapter, the nature and extent of 'juvenile delinquency' in Belgium are explored. Students are guided through the different available data sources to derive the most important trends regarding juvenile delinquency.

### **Chapter 5 – Capita Selecta**

Each year, based on research results from recent studies and current affairs, specific topics are covered in collaboration with the students. Indicatively, topics such as the following may be addressed:

- Neuropsychological models explaining juvenile delinquency
- Juvenile delinquency: perpetrators and victims
- Specific forms of juvenile delinquency, e.g., sexual victimization and offending, violent radicalization, youth gangs, etc.

#### **Initial competences**

- Basic knowledge of Belgian Criminal Law (both substantive criminal law and criminal procedure)
- Fundamental knowledge of etiology & criminological theories
- Fundamental knowledge of qualitative and quantitative methods

#### **Final competences**

- 1 To have a thorough, scientific, and practically applicable knowledge and understanding of the youth criminological research object (the phenomenon of juvenile delinquency and societal reactions).
- 2 To have a profound knowledge of the fundamental principles of the current Belgian youth law.
- 3 Being able to describe briefly the basic terms commonly used within youth law.
- 4 To understand the course of legal proceedings concerning juvenile cases and critically discuss the challenges.
- 5 Being able to identify various links and actors within youth care and the juvenile delinquency system and to discuss their roles.
- 6 Being able to indicate and compare the specificity of different models of social response targeting young people.
- 7 Being able to critically discuss important dimensions of the reform debate.
- 8 To have an insight into the practice of Belgian youth law.
- 9 Being able to critically analyze evolutions and problematic tensions within youth law based on data related to its practice.
- 10 To know the specific projects addressing the approach to juvenile delinquents in Belgium
- 11 To have insight in juvenile delinquency as a societal and criminological

phenomenon.

- 12 To know the classical explanatory theories applied to juvenile delinquency.
- 13 To know the historical evolution of juvenile delinquency.
- 14 Being able to discuss the shifting views on juvenile delinquency and its approach based on societal and political evolutions.
- 15 Being able to reflect critically on the phenomenon of juvenile delinquency and societal reactions, formulating pro and contra arguments regarding an issue related to juvenile delinquency and its approach.
- 16 Being able to take a position in an assigned youth case, to defend this position clearly in an oral presentation and to reflect on the case in group.

#### 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

Seminar, Lecture, Independent work

#### Extra information on the teaching methods

**Lecture** – The material is taught in the form of hearing- and responding lectures. The lectures aim at familiarizing students with the principles of youth criminology and youth law. Through these lectures, students gain a multidisciplinary understanding of the basic principles, theoretical background, current state of scientific research, and practice in the field. The self-discovery aspect is activated through the technique of hearing- and responding lectures. By asking questions and provoking reactions, the goal is to encourage students to actively and critically engage in thinking and participating. The lectures given by the responsible lecturers are supplemented with a series of guest lectures, where experts in the field and practitioners share their knowledge and experiences with the students.

**Independent work** – For the youth law component, students independently review a case. Based on a few questions, they formulate a written substantiated position. For this they use the tools provided during the lectures.

**Seminar** – The position taken in independent work is then explained orally to fellow students. Thereafter follows a critical reflection of the case in group.

#### Study material

Type: Handbook

Name: Youth law  
Indicative price: € 25  
Optional: no  
Language : Dutch  
Author : Wendy De Bondt

Type: Slides

Name: Slides Jeugdcriminologie  
Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty  
Optional: no  
Available on Ufora : Yes

Type: Slides

Name: Youth law  
Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty  
Optional: no  
Language : Dutch  
Available on Ufora : Yes

Type: Reader

Name: Reader Jeugdcriminologie  
Indicative price: € 30  
Optional: no

Type: Other

Name: Code Youth law  
Indicative price: € 25  
Optional: no  
Language : Dutch  
Author : Wendy De Bondt  
Available on Ufora : No

## References

Referenties zijn toegevoegd in het leermateriaal. Indicatief kan verwezen worden naar:

- Burfeind, J., & Bartusch, D. J. (2015). *Juvenile delinquency: An integrated approach*. Routledge.
- Eliaerts, C., Weijers, I. (2015). *Jeugdcriminologie. Achtergronden van jeugdcriminaliteit*. Den Haag: Boom Juridische Uitgevers.
- Enzmann, D., Kivivuori, J., Marshall, I. H., Steketee, M., Hough, M., & Killias, M. (2018). *A Global Perspective on Young People as Offenders and Victims* (pp. 19-28). Cham: Springer.
- Junger-Tas, J., Decker, S. (2008). *International Handbook of Juvenile Justice*. Dordrecht: Springer.
- Junger-Tas, J., Marshall, I. H., Enzmann, D., Killias, M., Steketee, M., & Gruszczynska, B. (2012). *The Many Faces of Youth Crime*. Dordrecht: Springer.
- Krohn, M. D., & Lane, J. (Eds.). (2015). *The handbook of juvenile delinquency and juvenile justice*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Whitehead, J. T., Lab, S. (2017). *Juvenile justice: An introduction*. Routledge.

## Course content-related study coaching

Personal feedback, personal & collective feedback through Ufora.

## Assessment moments

end-of-term and continuous assessment

## Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the first examination period

Written assessment with multiple-choice questions, Written assessment with open-ended questions, Written assessment

## Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the second examination period

Written assessment with multiple-choice questions, Written assessment with open-ended questions, Written assessment

## Examination methods in case of permanent assessment

Participation, Presentation

## Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment

examination during the second examination period is possible

## Extra information on the examination methods

### Youth law component (Prof. De Bondt)

#### - Permanent evaluation: presentation and participation

• Presentation and participation (/4): The Students' capacity to present a position coherently and structured orally is evaluated. In addition, the student is evaluated on his cooperation and contribution to the critical reflection on the cases presented.

#### - Periodic evaluation for the lectures

• The written exam with **open questions** aims to test whether the students have acquired knowledge and understanding of specific theories, terms, structures, actors, and principles of the field. The questions also seek to assess the students' ability to apply their acquired theoretical knowledge by formulating their own critical opinions on current issues.

### Part Juvenile Criminology (Prof. Vandeviver):

#### - Periodic evaluation for the lectures

• The written exam consists of **closed questions (Multiple-Choice Exam with a higher threshold)** that assess the extent to which students have acquired knowledge and understanding of specific theories, terms, structures, actors, as well as the principles of the field of juvenile criminology. The questions also gauge the students' ability to apply their acquired theoretical knowledge to current issues related to juvenile criminology.

## Calculation of the examination mark

### Permanent evaluation

4/20 consisting of

- Presentation
- Participation

### Periodic evaluation

16/20 consisting of

- Written exam youth law of Prof. De Bondt (open questions): /6
- Written exam juvenile criminology of Prof. Vandeviver ( MC questions): /10

Students who do not participate in all evaluations (both periodical and permanent evaluations) will be declared as having failed this course. Students who do not participate in all evaluations can obtain a maximum of 7/20 for this course.

Students can only pass the course if they have participated in all evaluation moments and have passed the component of each individual teacher.

### Transfer of partial scores

Transfer of the obtained partial scores (from the non-periodical evaluation) to the second examination opportunity is possible. However, the student involved can also decide not to transfer the partial scores from the non-periodical evaluation.

## Facilities for Working Students

Does not apply.