

Historical Criticism (B001630)

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

Credits 3.0

Study time 90 h

Course offerings in academic year 2025-2026

A (semester 2)

Dutch

Gent

Lecturers in academic year 2025-2026

Verhenneman, Griet

RE23

lecturer-in-charge

Offered in the following programmes in 2025-2026

[Bachelor of Science in Criminological Sciences](#)

crdts

3

offering

A

Teaching languages

Dutch

Keywords

Critical handling of past and present information sources

Position of the course

This general introductory course aims to provide an insight into the successive stages of historical research and its value for criminological research. What is a source? How to verify the authenticity of a source? How to deal critically with contradictory testimonies? In addition, this course deals with the development of historical research and analysis and gives examples of how to view and understand current issues from a long-term historical perspective.

Contents

The course unit presents a method for dealing critically with the abundance of information with which we are confronted today, as well as with the projection of this situation into a distant and near past. How to find reliable information sources, how to evaluate them critically, and especially: what to do when sources give contradictory information? In other words, how can the scientist, using a multitude of information sources, come to nuanced and well-informed interpretation of both past and present events? Besides applying the method of Historical Criticism for the critical handling of information sources, this course also deals with the incorporation of historical analysis in reflection on current (criminological) issues: how to view and understand recent phenomena and discussions from a historical perspective.

Throughout the course, the applications of historical criticism are discussed in more detail through various criminological cases. It also addresses the new contemporary challenges facing the method of historical criticism, such as the digitisation of sources, post-truth, conspiracy, misinformation and fake news.

As conceived, this course, which itself goes back to a venerable tradition, presents a method that is useful not only to practitioners of history, but also by extension to many other human and social scientists.

Initial competences

- To have an elementary insight in historical and criminological developments.
- To have a standard language knowledge (Dutch, French, English)

Final competences

- 1 To manage contradictions in both sources and information in general scientifically.

- 2 To recognise different visions on historical change as they developed throughout different historical periods.
- 3 To evaluate and contextualise historical research.
- 4 To handle information sources critically
- 5 Recognising the ways in which historical reflection can be incorporated into current debates

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

Access to this course unit via an exam contract is unrestricted

Teaching methods

Lecture

Extra information on the teaching methods

Lectures, but students have the possibility to ask questions (during and after class).
Case-studies and examples are integrated in the lectures.

Study material

Type: Handbook

Name: Reliable sources or fake news? An introduction to historical criticism

Indicative price: € 25

Optional: no

Language : Dutch

Author : Jan Dumolyn en Marc Boone

ISBN : 978-9-46475-012-6

Number of Pages : 331

Online Available : No

Available in the Library : Yes

Available through Student Association : Yes

References

See above, 'leermateriaal': Handbook

Course content-related study coaching

For practical problems and study guidance, students can contact the faculty study guidance and the lecturer and assistants.

Assessment moments

end-of-term 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

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

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

Examination methods in case of permanent assessment

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment

not applicable

Extra information on the examination methods

100 % periodical

Written examen. The exam tests different skills and competences: knowledge of the textbook (multiple choice questions), sense of synthesis and understanding of the content (open thinking questions). At the end of the lesson series, a sample exam and answer model are discussed and made available on Ufora

Calculation of the examination mark

Multiple choice questions: 75%

Open question: 25%

Facilities for Working Students

Facilities:

1 Possible exemption from educational activities requiring student attendance; a

(Approved)

task is imposed in substitution

- 2 Possible rescheduling of the examination to a different time in the same academic year
- 3 Feedback can be given during an appointment during or after office hours