



Code: SPS/12

Credits: 9

Matter: Youth Criminology

Main language of instruction: Italian

Other language of instruction: English

Teaching Staff

Head instructor

Prof. Diana Olivieri - diana.olivieri@unicusano.it

Dr. Giuseppe Bruno - giuxbru93@gmail.com

Introduction

1. Objective of the course :

The course “Youth Criminology” covers the volume, causes and trends of youthful crime, and examines the prediction, prevention, treatment and control of juvenile delinquency by social control agencies, i.e. different social institutions (law, family, school, among others), and academic disciplines (pedagogy, psychology, sociology, neurosciences, among others).

Specifically, the teaching of the course “Youth Criminology” aims to analyze in detail, through a multidisciplinary study program, the Italian juvenile justice system, with particular attention to the psychopedagogical issues related to the minor age of the offender. Particular emphasis will be placed on the different theoretical explanations – i.e. pedagogical, psychological, biological, sociological and learning theories – of delinquent behavior.

A main section of the course will also be dedicated to Youth Victimology.

The course also aims to define a profile of juvenile offenders and juvenile victims, through the analysis of specific types of offenses.

The final sections of the course explore opportunities for promoting positive change in the lives of young people, with possible paths of prevention through rehabilitative, educational and re-socializing treatment.

Objectives

2. Course Structure:

The course is organized in eight subjects. The first two subjects are an introduction to youth criminology, and theories of deviance development, the following subjects are about young offender characteristics (subject 3), young victim characteristics



(subject 4), juvenile criminal justice system (subject 5), alternative detention measures (subject 6), juvenile crime prevention programs (subject 7), and neurocriminology related to juvenile delinquency (subject 8).

To influence the focus of the course on students' acquisition of critical thinking skills, the course offer two parallel activities to promote a critical analysis about how the media (newspapers, films, television, websites, etc.) portrays youth deviance.

Competencies:

- To be able to place temporally and describe the birth of the concept of “minor” and its place in the criminological field.
- To distinguish the main features of youth criminology from that of general criminology.
- To analyze the main characteristics of the minor author and/or victim of crime.
- To explain the difference between the concepts of antisociality/deviance and delinquency/criminality.
- To know the main features of juvenile victimization.
- To create links between youth victimology and youth criminology as “two sides of the same coin”.
- To be able to describe the main characteristics of primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention, in reference to youth delinquency.
- To be able to search for, interpret and convey mass media information about youth deviance and crime.
- To be able to recognize risk and protective factors on juvenile delinquency.
- To be able to describe the contradictory relationship between risk and protective factors.
- To acquire problem solving skills based on the ability to describe the best prevention, risk assessment and treatment programs that effectively address juvenile deviance and delinquency.
- To couple the right prevention program to a particular deviant profile, applying the appropriate educational and rehabilitative methods.
- To be able to describe the historical evolution and current functions of the Italian Juvenile Court.
- To be able to outline the specifics of the trial in the Youth Court and its possible outcomes.
- To be able to describe the main alternatives to detention, with particular reference to mediation (I.e. Victim-Offender Reconciliation Programs).
- To acquire a critical knowledge of the possible application of neurosciences in the juvenile justice field.

- To be able to distinguish between deviant antisocial episodes and truly delinquent episodes.
- To be able to define the possible path that led a young offender to join a delinquent gang.
- To be able to describe the relationship between a particular family functioning and the delinquent outcome.
- To be able to describe what role the school can have as a causal agent or a crime control agent on one or more student.
- To be able to critically discuss the psychopedagogical elements that affect the question of juvenile imputability and responsibility, as defined by the Italian Penal Code.
- To be able to argue the importance of empathy and affective dysregulation in the development of criminal behavior.
- To be able to descriptively summarize information and relate apparently distant concepts.
- To acquire the ability to put knowledge into practice.
- To use the acquired knowledge to give an independent judgment on the fundamental rights of the child and on the extent of the constitutional guarantees that apply to both the juvenile offenders and those who are victims of crime.
- To acquire skills for independent learning.
- To be able to create arguments which are conducive to critical and self-critical thinking.
- To be able to retrieve and manage information.

Syllabus

3. Programme of the course:

Subject 1. Introduction to youth criminology.

Subject 2. Theories on the development of deviance and criminal behavior.

Subject 3. Characteristics of juvenile offenders.

Subject 4. Characteristics of juvenile victims.

Subject 5. The Italian Juvenile Court and the juvenile criminal trial.

Subject 6. Alternatives to detention and intervention strategies.

Subject 7. Youth crime prevention programmes.

Subject 8. Neurocriminology: neuroscience and youth crime.

Evaluation system and criteria

The assessments of course is based on the following criteria:



1) Final exam:

This exam will be based exclusively on the material covered in the online material and assigned activities. Written exams will be 90 minutes in length.

All written examinations will include a combination of three multiple choice quizzes (where the student should tick the only right answer), and three essay-style questions.

The evaluation of the written essay-style questions will be determined by the degree of knowledge, and terminological rigor that is manifested in the response to the question and, not least, also assess the correction in the expression of legal language. It will also be considered in the final evaluation the participation to one or both the assigned activities.

Bibliography and resources

4. *Materials to consult:* there is no textbook for this course. All required readings will be posted on the course site.