



PhD Programs of Research

School of Public Service Leadership

Version 2.0 Effective January 2017

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CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Guidelines

Criminal justice is a social science that attempts to identify and explain the patterns of criminal behavior and to analyze society's ability to manage crime and delinquency. Utilizing a multi-tiered approach, learners in the PSF specialization study criminal justice through the context of policing, criminal behavior, corrections, juvenile justice, and the legal process.

Learners searching for a dissertation topic should rely on the topics/issues covered throughout their coursework. The key element in designing successful dissertation is aligning the theory, methodological undertaking, and problem statement. Learners are strongly encouraged to use this guide in assisting them chose an appropriate topic. Other recourses available to learners include their professors, colloquia staff, and the numerous topics areas provided throughout courses.

Appropriate Theories/Theoretical Perspectives

Criminal justice is central to the moral fabric and social cohesion of society and as such, the general theoretical paradigms focus on the developmental Life-course explanations of crime, Psychological explanations of crime, Sociological explanations of crime, and the Economic Focusses of crime. The major theories include:

Theories that are more specialized include:

- Anomie/Strain Theory
- Biocriminology Theories
- Consensus Theory
- Control/Social Bond theory
- Critical Theory and Radical Theories (as related to Constitutive Criminology, Critical Criminology Cultural criminology)
- Cultural Deviance Theories
- Deterrence/Rational Choice Theories
- Evolutionary theories
- Feminist Theories (limited to the following perspectives--- Traditional/Conservative, Liberal/Mainstream, Radical, Marxist/, Postmodern, Postcolonial
- Functionalism (As it relates to criminal justice)
- Life Course Theory
- Labeling Theory
- Marxist Theories
- Positivist Theory (limited to Biological; psychological sociological positivism)
- Power Control Theory
- Routine Activity Theory
- Social Bonding/Control Theories (limited to Containment Theory, Drift Theory Self-Control Theory (as it relates to criminal justice)
- Social Ecology
- Social Disorganization Theory
- Social Learning Theory
- Structuralism (as it relates to criminal justice)

- Symbolic Interactionism (as it relates to criminal justice)

Appropriate Topic Areas

The Criminal Justice program focuses on three independent yet related systems, commonly referred to as “policing,” “courts,” and “corrections.” Another area of study within the Criminal Justice program includes criminal behavior. As such, it is recommended that learners choose a research topic in these general areas.

Note: The expectation is that the learner be able to demonstrate a link to their dissertation topic and one of the areas covered throughout the specialization. Again, learners are encouraged to work with their professors and colloquia staff in choosing a dissertation topic.

Example topic areas include, but are not limited to the following topics

- All levels of law enforcement practices and personnel
- Prosecutorial and judicial functions
- Courts
- Sentencing
- Punishment
- Correctional systems both institutional and community-based
- Treatment/rehabilitation of offenders
- Recidivism
- Changing Crime Patterns
- Technology
- Victimology
- Juvenile justice
- Role of Police in Society
- Globalization of Crime
- Domestic preparedness
- First Response
- Terrorism
- Militarization of the law enforcement
- Constitutional Rights etcetera.

Inappropriate Topic Areas

As most topics may have the potential in broadening the understanding of the discipline, a learner has a wide breadth of subjects from which to choose. However, the burden of identifying a topic falls to the learner as one must clearly demonstrate a gap in the current research literature, a link with public safety (criminal justice) and how the research can be conducted ethically. Approaches that are essentially political or ideological in intent, biased or prejudicial to or against any group or entity, unethical in content, method, or application are not appropriate.

Research concerning the populations (noted below) is more complex and/or requires additional time and resources to study. In addition, research involving the military is subject to additional levels of permission and review outside of Capella’s IRB. Thus, learners choosing to conduct research in these areas will experience an overall increase in time, effort, and resources.

NOTE: The following populations may be considered vulnerable- prisoners, children, elderly, victims, refugees, evacuees, those with limited cognitive ability to provide consent (this includes individuals with substance abuse), and others as defined by the IRB.

Learners are encouraged to consider the use of secondary data analysis as an option for research in the noted areas and to contact the IRB for additional information.

Important Journals

The program examines criminal justice from the perspective of public safety. Thus, learners are encouraged to become familiar with the field's organizations and the respective Journals. Some of the more common journals in the field are included in the following list:

- American Criminal Law Review
- American Journal of Criminal Justice
- American Journal of Criminal Law
- American Journal of Political Science
- American Journal of Psychiatry
- American Journal of Sociology
- American Political Science Review
- American Sociological Review
- British Journal of Criminology
- Crime and Delinquency
- Criminal Justice and Behavior,
- Criminology
- Journal of Clinical and Consulting Psychology
- Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology
- Journal of Interpersonal Violence.
- Journal of Personality and Social Psychology
- Journal of Politics
- Journal of Quantitative Criminology
- Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency
- Journal of Research and Treatment
- Justice Quarterly
- Law and Human Behavior
- Law and Society Review
- Police Quarterly
- Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies & Management
- Prison Journal: An International Forum on Incarceration & Alternative Sanctions
- Public Administrative Review
- Punishment & Society Social Problems

- Sexual Abuse
- Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior
- Theoretical Criminology
- Violence and Victims
- Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice

Note: The program's Learner Success Lab (PSF page) also includes useful information and resources.

Important Professional Organizations

The program examines criminal justice from the perspective of public safety. Thus, learners are encouraged to become familiar with the listed organizations and the respective journals. Notable associations are included in the following list:

- Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences
- American Society of Criminology
- American Criminal Justice Association
- American Correctional Association American Society of Criminology
- Asian Association of Police Studies.
- Center for Research in Crime and Justice
- European Society of Criminology.
- International Police Executive Symposium
- National Criminal Justice Association
- National Association of Police Organizations
- Southwestern Association of Criminal Justice
- Sociedad Mexicana de Criminología Capitulo Nuevo Leon, A.C.

Notes: In addition, most States also have individual organizations that may also benefit the learner.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Guidelines

Appropriate Theories/Theoretical Perspectives

In broad terms, the discipline of emergency management studies how human beings create, interact, and cope with hazards, vulnerability, and disaster events. Thus, the primary focus of research concerns the study of how human beings cope with hazard events

through activities related to preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation.

Akin to the field of medicine, emergency management is an applied field that draws on a multitude of disciplines. As such, there are no restrictions concerning what theories/theoretical perspectives that may be used to study the field. However, the theory must align with the problem, research questions, and data collection.

What follows are just a few of the primary theoretical paradigms that are commonly used when studying issues of emergency management:

- Symbolic Interactionism
- Functionalism
- Conflict Theory
- Structuralism
- Vulnerability
- Social Constructionist Theories (as related to hazards and disasters)
- Organizational Behavior Theories
- Emergent Behavior Theories
- Development Theories (as related to economy globalization and complex societies)
- Risk Perception and Communication Theories (as related to hazards disasters and response)

Appropriate Topic Areas

The emergency management program is organized around historical disasters, the social science literature pertaining to disaster issues and the science of emergency management practices, standards/guidelines and the four phases of emergency management (Response, Recovery, Preparedness, and Mitigation). As such, dissertation topics must be linked to one of these areas. Examples include, but are not limited to the following areas:

- Communications
- Command and control
- Cooperation and coordination
- Disasters
- Emergency Management Profession
- Governments
- NIMS
- ICS

- Emergency operation centers
- Hazard Events
- HSEEP
- Organizations involved in disasters
- Public Administration
- Mitigation
- Preparedness
- Policy
- Stakeholders
- Sustainability
- Recovery
- Resilience
- Response, Risk
- Training and exercises
- Vulnerability.

Note: The expectation is that the learner be able to demonstrate a link to their dissertation topic and one of the four phases areas covered throughout the specialization. Again, learners are encouraged to work with their professors and colloquia faculty in choosing a dissertation topic

Inappropriate Topic Areas

A variety of topics have the potential in broadening the understanding of the field. The topic must clearly demonstrate a gap in the current research literature, a link with public safety (emergency management) and how the research can be conducted ethically. Approaches that are essentially political or ideological in intent, biased or prejudicial to or against any group or entity, unethical in content, method, or application are not appropriate. Topics exploring the outcomes of patients, clinical research, education, criminal justice, and health administration are not appropriate.

Research concerning the populations (noted below) is more complex and/or requires additional time and resources to study. In addition, research involving the military is subject to additional levels of permission and review outside of Capella's IRB. Thus, learners choosing to conduct research in these areas will experience an overall increase in time, effort, and resources.

NOTE: The following populations may be considered vulnerable- prisoners, children, elderly, victims, refugees, evacuees, those with limited cognitive ability to provide consent (this includes individuals with substance abuse), and others as defined by the IRB.

Learners are encouraged to consider the use of secondary data analysis as an option for research in the noted areas and to contact the IRB for additional information.

Important Journals

The program examines Emergency Management from the perspective of public safety. Thus, learners are encouraged to become familiar with the field's organizations and the respective Journals. Some of the more prestigious journals in the field are included in the following list:

- Asian Journal of Environment and Disaster Management Disasters
- Disaster Prevention and Management
- Environmental Hazards
- Environmental Management
- International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction
- International Journal of Disaster Risk Science
- International Journal of Disaster Resilience in the Built Environment
- International Journal of Emergency Management
- International Journal of Mass Emergencies and Disasters
- Jamba: Journal of Disaster Risk Studies
- Journal of Disaster Research
- Journal of Crisis and Contingencies Management
- Journal of Emergency Management
- Journal of Extreme Events (Until mid-2015, open access if you register)
- Journal of Homeland Security and Emergency Management
- Journal of Natural Disaster Science
- Natural Hazards
- Natural Hazards Review
- Natural Hazards and Earth System Sciences
- Revista Internacional de Desastres Naturales, Accidentes e Infraestructura Civil
- Risk Analysis
- Risk, Hazards, & Crisis in Public Policy
- Risk Management

Note: Three discontinued journals that published valuable emergency management research include *Australasian Journal of Disaster & Trauma Studies* (1997-2012), *Disaster Management and Response* (2003-2007) and *Mass Emergencies* (1975-1979). All of the volumes and issues of each journal are openly accessible online.

Note: The program's Learner Success Lab (PSF page) also includes useful information and resources.

Important Professional Organizations

The program examines emergency management from the perspective of public safety. Thus, learners are encouraged to become familiar with the listed organizations and the respective Journals. Worthwhile associations are included in the following list:

- American Society of Public Administration
- Empower
- Foundation for Comprehensive Emergency Management Research
- International Association of emergency Management

- National Emergency Management Association

Most States also have individual organizations some of the more active ones are listed here:

- Alabama Association of Emergency Managers
- Arizona Emergency Services Association
- Arkansas Emergency Management Association
- California Emergency Management Association
- Colorado Emergency Management Association
- Connecticut Emergency Management Association Inc.
- Florida Emergency Preparedness Association
- Iowa Emergency Management Association
- Kansas Emergency Management Association
- Kentucky Emergency Management Association
- Louisiana Emergency Management Association
- Maryland Emergency Management Association
- Association of Minnesota Emergency Managers
- Mississippi Civil Defense Emergency Management Association
- New York State Emergency Management Association
- North Carolina Emergency Management Association
- North Dakota Emergency Management Association
- Emergency Management Association of Ohio
- Oregon Emergency Management Association
- Keystone Emergency Management Association (Pennsylvania)
- South Dakota Emergency Management Association
- Emergency Management Association of Texas
- Utah Emergency Management Association
- Virginia Emergency Management Association
- Washington State Emergency Management Association
- Wisconsin Emergency Management Association