

What Criminology Studies

Criminal Justice

The object of the field: crime, criminalisation and the response to both.

Criminology studies offending, how conduct gets criminalised, and how societies respond.

THREE QUESTIONS

Why offend · Why criminalise · What works

LEVELS OF ANALYSIS

Person · situation · community · state

- Crime is a legal category, not a fixed natural class
- Acts criminal in one jurisdiction are lawful in another
- Law-making is studied alongside law-breaking
- Most theories explain some offending, never all of it
- Draws on sociology, psychology, law and statistics

LOOK FOR IT

A theory of street robbery may say nothing useful about tax fraud.

Educational reference. This section describes systems and research; it is not advice on any real case.