

MA IN COMPARATIVE CRIMINOLOGY

The new MA in Comparative Criminology and Criminal Justice in Maynooth University's Department of Law provides students with the opportunity to develop a specialist knowledge of debates around crime causation and control, writes Dr Claire Hamilton, Senior Lecturer, at Maynooth University's Department of Law.

Criminology can be described as the scientific or empirical study of crime, offenders and criminal justice. As an 'industry', it is rapidly expanding, with criminology and criminal justice attracting thousands of students around the world.

The pace of change in Ireland has been somewhat slower. Writing about Irish criminology eight years ago in 'Emergency Services Ireland', I spoke about a discipline still in its infancy, very much in the shadow of the burgeoning discipline in England and other western jurisdictions.

Fortunately, in the intervening period Irish criminologists have seen the development of a number of undergraduate and postgraduate courses in the area, a number of them in my home institution, Maynooth University.

Now in its second year, the new MA in Comparative Criminology and Criminal Justice in Maynooth University's Department of Law provides students with the opportunity to develop a specialist knowledge of debates around crime causation and control, within a comparative and international context.

Students on the programme have thus far been very positive about the unique global perspective on crime, internship opportunities and the flexible timetable which allows for work-study balance.

It is particularly gratifying to see a number of students from the first year of the programme now working in the criminal justice sector, including in positions with non-governmental organisations and as judicial researchers.

VARIETY OF MODULES

Students undertake a wide variety of modules which aim to combine theoretical concepts around the globalised nature of crime with real-world problems such as terrorism and organised crime.

The MA can be taken in both full-time and part-time modes; and modules offered include Criminology & Criminal Justice; Comparative Criminology, International Criminal Law, International Human Rights Law, Prisons, Youth Justice, and Research Methods.

The assessment requirements consist mostly of written assignments and presentations, thereby allowing students the flexibility to plan their study time to suit their own needs. The programme is specifically targeted at those already working in the criminal justice sector as well as students coming directly from undergraduate study.

For this more mature cohort, the programme aims to build upon their existing qualifications and experience with the



Pictured at the launch of the 'Routledge Handbook of Irish Criminology' were (l-r): Michelle Butler, Michael Donnellan, Deirdre Healy, Claire Hamilton and Yvonne Daly.

additional advantage of a genuinely international and comparative outlook.

Students in Maynooth form part of our vibrant community of students and scholars working in the fields of criminology and criminal justice. In June 2016, Maynooth University was honoured to be able to host the 10th North-South Irish Criminology Conference, with Prof Mary Bosworth, Oxford University delivering the keynote presentation on 'Punishment in an Era of Mass Mobility'.

The conference also saw the launch of the seminal '*Routledge Handbook of Irish Criminology*' by Michael Donnellan, Director of the Irish Prison Service, which I co-edited with Deirdre Healy, Yvonne Daly and Michelle Butler (pictured above).

At undergraduate level, Maynooth University has also pioneered the development of the first ever BCL in Law and Criminology in the Republic of Ireland and the first BA Criminology to be offered as part of a broad-based Arts degree.

These programmes have received a hugely enthusiastic response from students, with over 400 students enrolling in 2017/18. All criminology students, whether undergraduate or postgraduate, are taught by members of our expert academic team, drawing on their extensive research and professional experience, with specialisms in areas as varied as prisons, penology, counter-terrorism, human trafficking, alternatives to custody, mental health and youth justice.



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