

CRIMINOLOGY AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE, PHD

The vision of the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice is to be a program that is recognized nationally for its quality and impact on research and instruction. In terms of doctoral education, the aim is to foster a learning environment in which graduate students may gain the necessary knowledge, skills, and competencies to prepare them for careers in academia or in the public or private sectors. The curriculum emphasizes written and verbal communication skills, methodological competency, a strong statistical foundation, and hands-on research experience. Doctoral students will actively engage in research under the supervision of faculty, the Director of the School's Nebraska Center for Justice Research, and/or the Director of the Juvenile Justice Institute.

Program Related Information

Program Contact

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Program Website (<https://www.unomaha.edu/college-of-public-affairs-and-community-service/criminology-and-criminal-justice/graduate-programs/doctor-of-philosophy.php>)

Admissions

General Application Requirements and Admission Criteria (<http://catalog.unomaha.edu/graduate/admission/>)

Application Deadline

- Fall 2026: January 20

Other Requirements

The School of Criminology and Criminal Justice uses a holistic approach when evaluating application materials including the extent to which the applicant's interests align with faculty research areas and an interest in attracting a diverse student body with varying lived experiences. Admissions decisions are competitive with a limited number of qualified students admitted each fall semester. Applicants are typically notified of decision by mid-spring.

- Official transcripts documenting completion of a master's degree. Degree may be in process at time of application.
 - A Master of Arts or Master of Science degree in criminology or criminal justice from an accredited institution is required for unconditional admission into the program.
 - Applicants holding a master's degree in a related social science field (e.g., psychology, sociology, political science, public administration, etc.), but lacking substantive coursework in criminology and criminal justice may be granted provisional admission. Unconditional admission status will be granted upon successful completion of 18 hours of criminology and criminal justice core curriculum coursework.
- English Language Proficiency:** Applicants must have a command of oral and written English. Applicants who do not hold a baccalaureate or other advanced degree from the United States, **OR** a baccalaureate or other advanced degree from a predetermined country on the waiver list (<https://www.unomaha.edu/office-of-graduate-studies/admissions/entrance-exams.php>), must meet the minimum language proficiency score requirement in order to be considered for admission.

- Internet-based TOEFL: 95 with a minimum score of 21 in each of the four areas (the paper TOEFL will NOT be accepted), IELTS: 7.5 (8.0+ is preferred), PTE: 76, Duolingo: 125
 - NOTE:** All English as second language students will be required to complete a proficiency assessment examination upon admission. This assessment will be used to determine if further assistance is required.
- Entrance Exam:** Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores are required.
 - A GRE score above 300 (combined verbal and quantitative portions) and writing score at or above 4.0 and above is preferred. Students not meeting this threshold but demonstrate their exceptional academic potential through other aspects of their application materials may also be considered.
- Statement of Purpose/Statement of Research Interests:** (max. 5 pages)
 - A statement of purpose should describe the applicant's prior education experience, research interests, any relevant professional experience, and long term career goals. Applicants may note their interests in working with specific faculty members with whom their research interests align.
- Writing Sample:** This may be a chapter from a master's thesis, a published article, or a term paper or manuscript written in a scholarly style.
- Resume**
- Letters of Recommendation:** Three letters are required with at least two of the three letters must be submitted by professors who can attest to the applicant's academic strengths through experiences such as having the applicant as a student in their class and/or working under their direct supervision on research projects.

Degree Requirements

Code	Title	Credits
Required Courses		18
CRCJ 9020	SEMINAR ON THEORIES OF CRIME	
CRCJ/PA 9080	ADVANCED STATISTICAL APPLICATIONS (Statistics 2)	
CRCJ 9090	SPECIAL PROBLEMS IN RESEARCH METHODS (either quantitative or qualitative) ¹	
CRCJ 9100	SPECIAL PROBLEMS IN STATISTICAL ANALYSIS (Statistics 3)	
CRCJ 9600	SEMINAR ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEMS	
CRCJ 9800	ADVANCED RESEARCH DESIGN	
Select one three hour diversity course		3
CRCJ 8120	POWER, PERCEPTION AND PUNISHMENT	
CRCJ 9030	SEMINAR ON RACE, ETHNICITY, AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE	
CRCJ 8130	SEMINAR IN WOMEN AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE	
Or a master's-level or higher course from another department as approved by the supervisory committee chair and the doctoral program chair		
Select three hours from the following		3
CRCJ 9050	ACADEMIC WRITING	
CRCJ 9700	TEACHING CRIMINAL JUSTICE AT THE COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY LEVEL	
Electives		18

All doctoral students will select 18 hours of CRCJ courses at the 8000 level or higher, with advisor approval.

Dissertation		
CRCJ 9990	DISSERTATION (see details below)	20
Total Credits		62

¹ This course may be substituted with a course from another department. Permission for course substitution must be granted by a student's supervisory committee and doctoral program chair.

Both 8000- and 9000-level elective courses are available to doctoral students. A maximum of six (6) hours of dual-level courses (8–6 course number) can be included in the program of study.

A maximum of six hours of directed readings (CRCJ 9980) may be included in the program of study. These six hours can be used in preparation for the comprehensive examination. Directed readings intended for comprehensive exam prep may be taken in the semester before the administration of the comprehensive exam. All coursework, excluding coursework in the form of directed readings related to the comprehensive examination, must be completed within two and half (2.5) years from the time a student's program of study is approved by the dean for graduate studies. All students will be required to complete all courses listed as required courses. Students also must take elective courses in criminal justice or related fields.

Students are expected to complete 36 hours of coursework within two years except in extraordinary circumstances. Some of these hours may be taken during summer semesters.

Comprehensive Examination and Admission to Candidacy

After completion of 36 hours of coursework, doctoral students will be required to pass a comprehensive examination. The examination has two parts-criminological theory and criminal justice systems. Students are expected to take both comprehensive examinations during the fall and spring semesters of their third year in the program.

Dissertation

Students may register for dissertation credits after successful completion of one comprehensive examination. The dissertation must reflect original scholarship and contribute to the body of knowledge on criminology and criminal justice. The dissertation topic must be approved by the student's dissertation committee, which consists of a chair and three other members. One committee member must be a faculty member from outside the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice. The dissertation topic, prospectus, and the dissertation all require the approval of the dissertation committee. A doctoral student will be required to take at least one hour of CRCJ 9990 each fall and spring semester while working toward the completion of the dissertation. A minimum of 20 credit hours of CRCJ 9990 is required for all doctoral students.

Total Credit Hours

A minimum of 92 graduate hours beyond the baccalaureate degree. This includes up to 30 hours earned in a master's degree. Satisfactory completion of a teaching practicum is also required.