

Criminal Justice Versus Criminology at University of La Verne.

The Information below is sourced from talking points share with us by the Sociology & Criminology Department, with additional resources provided with the assistance of Copilot AI but reviewed by staff from the Office of Academic & Career Services.

We want to validate a possible desire to major in Criminal Justice but as a main campus undergraduate, the only option that is available currently is Criminology.

- *It makes sense that you're drawn to Criminal Justice — it's a dynamic field focused on how society responds to crime.*
- We want to assist you with your career goals (law enforcement, courts, corrections, etc.) and we believe that your degree in Criminology will get you there just as efficiently as if you majored in Criminal Justice.

Highlighting the Overlap

- **Criminology at ULV covers many of the same topics:**
 - Courses on corrections, policing, and juvenile delinquency include system responses. Both majors share most courses.
 - Students still learn about institutions like courts and corrections, but through the lens of theory and social context.
- Criminology will give you a **broader foundation**: *You'll not only study how the system works, but also why crime happens — which makes you better prepared to understand and improve justice practices.*

3. Differentiating the Value of Criminology

- Criminology is **closely tied to Sociology**, giving ULV students a strong liberal arts foundation.
- As a graduate in Criminology, you'll become a versatile candidate in the marketplace where expertise in criminal justice is valued. You will be able to work in justice-related careers *and* in research, policy, or social services.
- A Criminology degree might give you a competitive advantage: *Employers value graduates who understand both the causes of crime and the operations of justice systems.*

Options at the University of La Verne

- *At ULV's main campus, the degree option is Criminology. If you want a Criminal Justice degree specifically, that's available through ULV Online or at Cal State campuses.*
- However, we want to reassure you that **career paths overlap**: many Criminology graduates go into law enforcement, corrections, or legal administration, too!

The Big Picture

- Criminology is a **gateway**:
 - It prepares students for graduate study in Criminal Justice, Law, or Public Policy.
 - It equips them with critical thinking skills that apply across justice careers.
- *Think of Criminology as giving you the 'why' and the 'how.' You'll graduate with a deeper understanding of crime and justice than many peers who only study one side.*

 *At ULV, main campus students major in Criminology — a program that blends theory with practice. You'll explore the causes of crime while also studying how police, courts, and corrections respond. This dual perspective prepares you for the same careers Criminal Justice majors pursue, with the added advantage of a strong liberal arts foundation.*

Frequently Asked Questions: Criminology vs. Criminal Justice at ULV

1. Can I still work in law enforcement with a Criminology degree?

Yes. Many Criminology graduates pursue careers in law enforcement, corrections, probation, and related fields. The program provides both theoretical knowledge and practical insights into how the justice system operates, making graduates well-prepared for these roles.

2. What's the difference between Criminology and Criminal Justice?

- **Criminology** focuses on the *why* of crime — theories of offending, deviance, and social causes.

- **Criminal Justice** focuses on the *how* — the institutions and processes that respond to crime, such as police, courts, and corrections.
At ULV, Criminology courses often include system-focused content, so students gain exposure to both perspectives. Both majors often share the same core courses.

3. Why does ULV offer Criminology instead of Criminal Justice on the main campus?

Criminology is closely tied to Sociology, a core discipline at ULV and many liberal arts institutions. This connection provides students with a strong liberal arts foundation and prepares them for a wide range of careers and graduate study opportunities.

4. If I really want Criminal Justice, what are my options?

- **Main Campus students** may choose **Criminology**.
- **ULV Online students** may choose **Criminal Justice**.
These programs are mutually exclusive at the point of admission, so students should select the pathway that best fits their goals and learning environment.

5. Will Criminology limit my career opportunities compared to Criminal Justice?

Not at all. In fact, Criminology often broadens career options because it combines system-focused study with deeper analysis of the causes of crime. Graduates are prepared for justice-related careers *and* for roles in research, policy, and social services.

6. Can I go to graduate school in Criminal Justice or Law with a Criminology degree?

Absolutely. Criminology provides an excellent foundation for graduate study in Criminal Justice, Law, Public Policy, Sociology, and related fields.

Key Message for Students:

Even if Criminal Justice isn't available on the main campus, ULV's Criminology program equips students with the knowledge and skills to pursue the same careers — with the added advantage of a strong liberal arts foundation.