

# *The Criminology & Criminal Justice Companion*

by Susan Robinson and Tracy Cussen  
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Reviewed by Dr Henry Prunckun

Criminology has been the subject of scholarly inquiry for over a century. The first appearance of the term was in the late-1800s, but the first university degree program did not appear until the mid-1900s. This may seem odd, but as a distinct discipline, criminology grew out of sociology, and to some extent psychology and law. What started as the study of the sociology of deviance, is now a field of study in its own right.

Though, the study of system of administration associated with crime—criminal justice—incorporates many other disciplines. Some of these disciplines are economics, business management, psychology, law, political science, physics, and biology. So, we see that the subject areas that touch on how crime is defined, enforced, or how justice is applied to those deemed criminal are very wide.

As a result, the decades since the first university courses in criminology were offered have seen a plethora of text books published. Two approaches to how authors have approached this task can be summarised as: those that take a macro look at crime and justice issues; and those that present a micro-examination of specific topics. Both approaches are valuable to students and practitioners but having approached the subject in this way means that one needs several texts to provide a comprehensive set of reference material. However, Robinson and Cussen's text—*The Criminology & Criminal Justice Companion*—offers scholars a single source of authoritative information.

Unlike other texts on these topics, this is a slim volume. Nonetheless, when compared to some voluminous texts, its brevity provides more usable information per page. Although graduate students may have the luxury of time to sit and read

a lot of material, undergraduates need to understand what could be called an avalanche of information, and they need to do this quickly. So too do criminal justice practitioners, especially government policy officers; they often need an authoritative source of information that is readily accessible. In my view, this is the central strength of *The Criminology & Criminal Justice Companion*—critical information in an easy to understand discussion.

The book features chapters on key aspects of criminology and criminal justice. It covers theories and theorists, some of the key issues in the field, an examination of the criminal justice system, and how criminal justice research is conducted. For the undergraduate student, there is a chapter on how their new-found crime and justice knowledge can be used to establishing a career for themselves. Overall, this is an impressive new text that will be at home with scholars as well as practitioners.

#### ABOUT THE REVIEWER

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