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Teaching Atrocity Criminology with ICTY Archives: Disciplinarity, Research, Ethics

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Abstract

This paper examines three aspects of an undergraduate course, *Criminologies of Atrocity*. The course uses the extensive volume of testimony and other evidence held in online archives at the UN International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and culminates in assessed individual research projects. After a description of the intellectual and institutional context of the course and an account of course delivery, the paper examines three dimensions of the course. First, the course successfully encourages a multi-disciplinary orientation among students in line with the historical development of criminology, the demands of studying atrocity, and identified pedagogical benefits. Second, the course is situated in relation to the research-teaching nexus, with pedagogical benefits around inclusion, democratization, and learning. Finally, literature on research ethics is applied to the teaching of the course. The paper supports the integration of publicly available archives into teaching which combines substantive and methodological dimensions of criminology.

Keywords: criminology, pedagogy; archives; atrocity; disciplinarity; research-teaching nexus

Introduction

The UN International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) operated from 1993 to 2017, indicting 161 individuals, of whom 90 were convicted of international crimes. The tribunal produced a huge volume of documentation, available in a public online archive, including transcripts, judgments and decisions, and even court exhibits (Vukušić, 2022). Among claims made for the tribunal, these archives have been identified as a resource to understand the history of the region and the conflict (Human Rights Watch, 2006, p. 14). Already, researchers are making use of this material in criminological and other analyses (Bećirević, 2014; Karčić, 2022; Klusemann, 2012; Komar, 2008; Tanner & Mulone, 2013; Vukušić, 2023). Many works reflect a growing engagement with atrocity crimes (largely reflecting the core crimes covered by international criminal law) on the part of criminologists (Aydın-Aitchison et al., 2023). This paper supports the integration of publicly available archives in criminology teaching which combines substantive and methodological dimensions. *Criminologies of Atrocity* is a senior undergraduate course using the extensive volume of testimony available from the ICTY, culminating in individual assessed research projects. After a description of the intellectual and institutional context of the course and course delivery, the paper explores three dimensions of the course. First, the course is shown as a successful attempt to encourage a multi-disciplinary orientation in line with the historical development of criminological research, the demands of studying atrocity, and pedagogical benefits. This is not specific to a course using public archives, but is well served by a course requiring students to distil a range of research papers to then help them make sense of data. Second, the course is situated in a research-teaching nexus, with specific pedagogical benefits identified around inclusion, democratization, and learning. Finally, in keeping with the sensitive nature of the archival material handled on the course, lessons from literature on research ethics are applied to teaching.

Criminologies of Atrocity

The course

Criminologies of Atrocity is delivered over one semester, including ten weekly seminars (see appendix 1), a mid-semester ‘reading week’, and four to five weeks for submission of the assessed research report. Ad hoc support sessions are offered in the assessment period. The course assumes study time of approximately 200 hours, roughly distributed as 10% in formal classes, 60% in independent study during teaching weeks and the interim reading week, and 30% during the assessment period after formal teaching. Students are encouraged to start thinking about the assessment at an early stage and the last two weeks of teaching in particular focus on supporting students in working on their research projects. Significant time is dedicated to the assessment element because the underlying research project on which students are assessed is a key aspect of their learning. The achievement of learning outcomes, and measurement of that achievement, are served by this aspect of the course.

The arc of the course starts by introducing students to criminological and other approaches to the study of atrocity, before focusing on studies of perpetrators and victims. This part of the course gives students a foundation for asking their own questions. Were the course a research paper, these weeks would be the literature review. After this, we move to the broad context within which students will carry out research, and using Catherine Baker’s (2015) book of the same title as a key source, introduce the students to the *Yugoslav Wars of the 1990s*. Carrying on the metaphor, this would be the context section in a written paper. The rest of the course focuses increasingly on research methods and developing research projects. A session on the ICTY introduces students to the documentary output from the tribunal, and asks them to reflect how this could be used in a research project. Zooming in on transcripts of testimony, students consider the potential benefits, limitations and ethical issues of using court testimony in research on atrocity crime, and are introduced to qualitative coding. The remainder of the

course involves students working increasingly independently on their own research on perpetrators or victims, supporting provisional substantive findings, as well as an argument on the viability of using the ICTY as a source of criminological data. This is written up in a report of up to 5,000 words, and students are supported with a model essay map. The report assessment of performance across key elements of the course, and all learning outcomes.

Course context

The course organizer is actively involved in criminological research on atrocity, including making use of, and reflecting on the value and limitations of, the archives of the ICTY (e.g. Aitchison, 2014a; Aydın-Aitchison 2020). This extends to supervising PhDs similar substantive and methodological dimensions. Before the 21st century there were only isolated pockets of criminological engagement with atrocity crime (e.g. Durkheim, 1915; Glueck, 1944; Christie, 1952). We could paraphrase Doubt's question to sociologists (2000, p. 1): can criminology claim to be a viable study of crime when it ignores the most significant and harmful crimes? The question is as valid for teaching as research. Indeed, what we teach will likely shape the research of the future through students' own research careers. The years since the turn of the millennium have seen more sustained attention from criminologists (see Aitchison, 2014b, pp. 24 ff). In Europe, a special issue of the *European Journal of Criminology* on atrocity crime (Karstedt and Parmentier 2012) and the founding of a European Society of Criminology working group on atrocity crime in 2013 are key indicators of development. The stream of panels offered by the group, with researchers at all career stages from post-graduate students through to senior Professors, is an established feature at the Society's conferences. Offering a course on atrocity criminology reflects the current state of play in the discipline. Moreover, teaching about atrocity prepares students to engage critically with some founding assumptions of the discipline, for example around social solidarity, deviance, or how and why we punish. *Criminologies of Atrocity* engages first and

foremost with the etiological dimensions of criminology, focusing on explanations of perpetration and victimization.

After several years of teaching atrocity in single sessions in general criminology courses, a pilot version of *Criminologies of Atrocity* was trialed as a two day assessed research seminar at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam with support from the *Erasmus+* teaching mobility scheme. Subsequently, internal course approval procedures were completed for a full course.¹ All assessment is marked by the course organizer, moderated internally and reviewed by an external examiner. Since January 2020 the course has been delivered four times. This coincides with a global pandemic and abysmal industrial relations in UK Higher Education.² The result is that no iteration of the course has been entirely normal. The double-whammy of strikes and “Remote Emergency Instruction” (Fry, 2022) instituted in response to lock-down disrupted the course to such an extent that changes in assessment were required. A complete and fully online version of the course was delivered in 2021, including the original assessment by research report. In both winter/spring and fall 2022, strikes led to a limited number of class cancellations, but not enough to seriously undermine the arc of the course.

Methods

The research used two forms of data collection and analysis. The first explores students’ openness to working across disciplinary boundaries, and consists of assessments from all

¹ These focus on subject area benchmarks (e.g. Quality Assurance Agency, 2022), level descriptors (see SCQF, 2022), equalities obligations, and practical matters.

² Along with many other academic and academic related professional service staff represented by the Universities and College Union, the author has undertaken industrial action, including strikes and action short of a strike every year since 2018.

students who submitted work in any of the four iterations of the course (n=115). These were coded for citations of scholarly work from eight disciplines established in atrocity research.³ Coding operates at the level of individual citations and at the level of paragraphs to explore the interaction of multiple disciplines. Of these papers, 23 were part of a replacement assessment introduced to take account of major disruption to the class in its first year. Students were asked to “summarize and critically evaluate criminological and associated knowledge” on a group of atrocity victims or perpetrators of their own choosing. These papers were analyzed in their entirety. They are distinct from the remaining three years where engaging with existing scholarship was part of a 5,000 word report on research in the ICTY archives. The essay map suggested dedicating between 40 and 45 percent to an introduction and review of literature, and for years 2-4, these were the material for analysis. In total 3,631 citations across 1,145 paragraphs were attributed to different disciplines. To provide a comparison, a full set of essays was included from a further course in the criminology subject area of the Law School (N=28). This course, on sentencing and judicial culture, was explicitly interdisciplinary and required students to write a response of up to 3,000 words on one of five set questions. Here, 1,272 citations were coded across 428 paragraphs.

The second approach involved a survey open to students from all four iterations of the course. The survey was sent out to 115 students and former students by e-mail addresses taken from

³ Anthropology, Criminology, History, Law, Philosophy, Political Science and IR, the Psych Sciences (Psychiatry and Psychology), and Sociology. A ninth category of ‘other’ was used and captured a range of further disciplines and fields of study, including Area Studies, Development Studies, Epidemiology, Media Studies, Population Studies, and Women’s Studies among others.

University records⁴. Of these, 56 (49 per cent) submitted a response within the three week window in which the survey was open. The survey asked contextual questions on students' degrees, but did not record information that would identify them personally. The sample characteristics are given in table 1. Further questions explored the themes of disciplinary, research and teaching, and ethics, discussed in subsequent sections. The research was conducted in line with an internal institutional ethical review process.

Table 1 Summary of survey sample characteristics (n=56)

	N	%
Course iteration		
1 (Jan 2020)	12	21
2 (Jan 2021, online)	17	30
3 (Jan 2022)	15	27
4 (Sept 2022)	12	21
Year of study when taking CoA		
3 rd	27	48
4 th	26	46
Other	3	5
Type of degree programme		
Single honours	35	63
Joint honours	18	32
Other	3	5
Primary discipline		
Law	36	64
Politics/International Relations	16	29
Criminology	2	4
Sociology	2	4
Prior study of criminology		
Yes	25	45
No	31	55
Main current activity		
Employed	19	34
Undergraduate study	18	32
Professional qualifications	11	20
Taught postgraduate programme	5	9
Postgraduate research programme	2	4
Seeking work or study	1	2

⁴ This figure excludes 2, for whom no details were recorded, and 1 where the recorded e-mail address returned a delivery failure message.

Disciplinarity in *Criminologies of Atrocity*

Here, I set out the context of a multi-disciplinary orientation on the course in terms of criminological scholarship, developments in Higher Education, and pedagogical benefits. I introduce key learning outcomes and outline the relevant elements of course delivery before presenting findings. The evidence, including comparison with another interdisciplinary criminology course, shows students demonstrate a strong multi-disciplinary perspective. Criminology is widely recognized as “multi-disciplinary” in scholarship and professional frameworks for the discipline (Garland, 1994; Gault, 1918; Quality Assurance Agency, 2022). As criminology consolidated as a field with the features of an institutionalized discipline (e.g. textbooks, journals, societies, conferences, and programmes of study, see Cao, 2020), concerns were raised that benefits of autonomy may be outweighed by costs of insularity. Conversations risk becoming more inward looking, neglecting new developments in disciplines that nurtured criminology in its infancy (Bosworth & Hoyle, 2011, p. 6). A positive and open orientation to other disciplines is key to a healthy criminology. Although interdisciplinarity is a prominent agenda, evident in relation to research, teaching and training in individual institutions and national funding agencies (Edinburgh Futures Institute, n.d.; Scottish Graduate School for Social Science, 2018), achieving disciplinary crossovers in teaching is not always well supported.⁵ Key pedagogical training materials neglect the topic of teaching across, and between, disciplines in favor of a focus on teaching within disciplines (Fry et al., 2015). I have encountered challenges in delivering cross-disciplinary programs and courses. In recent years, increased pressure for places has led to administrative units

⁵ Similar concerns are expressed concerning a lag between research councils expressing support for interdisciplinary work, and putting in institutional structures to support this (Wilthagen et al., 2018, p. 21).

divided by discipline (e.g. schools, subject areas) raising the drawbridge and favoring “their own” students for access. This impacts the range of disciplinary backgrounds represented by students in class-room discussions and runs directly against good practice in interdisciplinary teaching and learning (Blackmore in Land, 2012, p. 54). In *Criminologies of Atrocity*, most students are undertaking an LLB in Law, with some on joint degree programs bringing a second discipline. A handful of exchange students have added to disciplinary diversity. There are pedagogical and other benefits to integrating multiple disciplines in teaching and learning. From a pedagogical perspective, the reiteration (i.e. not simple repetition) involved in looking at a problem across several disciplines supports deeper learning (Reybold & Halx, 2012, p. 335). Thinking about students’ future roles, whether as critical citizens, or in particular employment, it is worth recognizing that the challenges they will face are not organized according to disciplinary boundaries (Cox, in Stephen, 2015, p. 286). Students understand this and can be frustrated by compartmentalization of knowledge (Gross, in Reybold & Halx, 2012, p. 326), something expressed in positive terms by students on the course attracted by something “different”, or in Gross’ terms, in their desire for a broader experience (*ibid*).

The course advances a multi-disciplinary approach to atrocity crime. This remains true to the diverse disciplinary origins of criminology, and reflects the “crowded field” of atrocity studies, well-developed before criminologists gave serious and sustained attention to the problem (Aydın-Aitchison et al., 2023). As a field of study, it has been addressed by Anthropology, Economics, Law, History, Philosophy and Political Theory, Political Science, Psychiatry, Psychology and Sociology, and by specialist branches of knowledge such as Genocide Studies. Over four years, course learning outcomes (appendix 2) shifted from emphasizing knowledge of the relationship between criminology and other disciplines, including their role in the development of criminologies of atrocity, to cover knowledge of those disciplines’ engagements with atrocity crime in their own right. A further learning

outcome on distilling and applying intellectual frameworks to complex problems recognizes the integration and synthesis of different disciplinary perspectives. The first two weeks of the course introduce atrocity research and emphasize contributions from multiple disciplines. Introductions give a chance to identify students' home disciplines. As the course is taught to students in their third and fourth years, most have a clear sense of a disciplinary background, commonly in Law, but also in International Relations, Criminology, Sociology and Psychology. I bring in my own disciplinary journey, from a joint degree in History and Politics, through graduate studies in Criminology in a School of Social Sciences, lecturing in Social Policy, to my current home in a Criminology team within a Law School. I draw out the strengths this brings to my scholarship, but am open about insecurities and challenges in moving across disciplinary frontiers. Students are encouraged to think about what they can draw from their own disciplinary foundation, and to draw confidence from this; but also to develop humility in their encounters with other scholars asking different questions, or using different tools to answer the same questions. Much of the rest of the session is based around an introduction to criminology, and to the development of criminological scholarship on atrocity. On the former, Radzinowicz's (1961) "search" for criminology, recognizes that criminology is not "self-contained", is characterized by internal diversity, crosses the boundaries of law and social science, and advances through interdisciplinary liaisons. The latter notes the recent atrocity turn in criminology, and while the focus is on criminologists' output, the previous dominance of other disciplines in atrocity research is highlighted.

In the second week, student groups are tasked with looking at studies drawn from History, Law, Political Science, Social Psychology and Sociology. This is preceded by a short video using Barbaza's work (2019) on the relationship between disciplinarity and inter-disciplinarity. Barbaza favors a healthy tension between the two to support knowledge creation and disciplinary growth. The dynamism of a discipline is sustained by internal

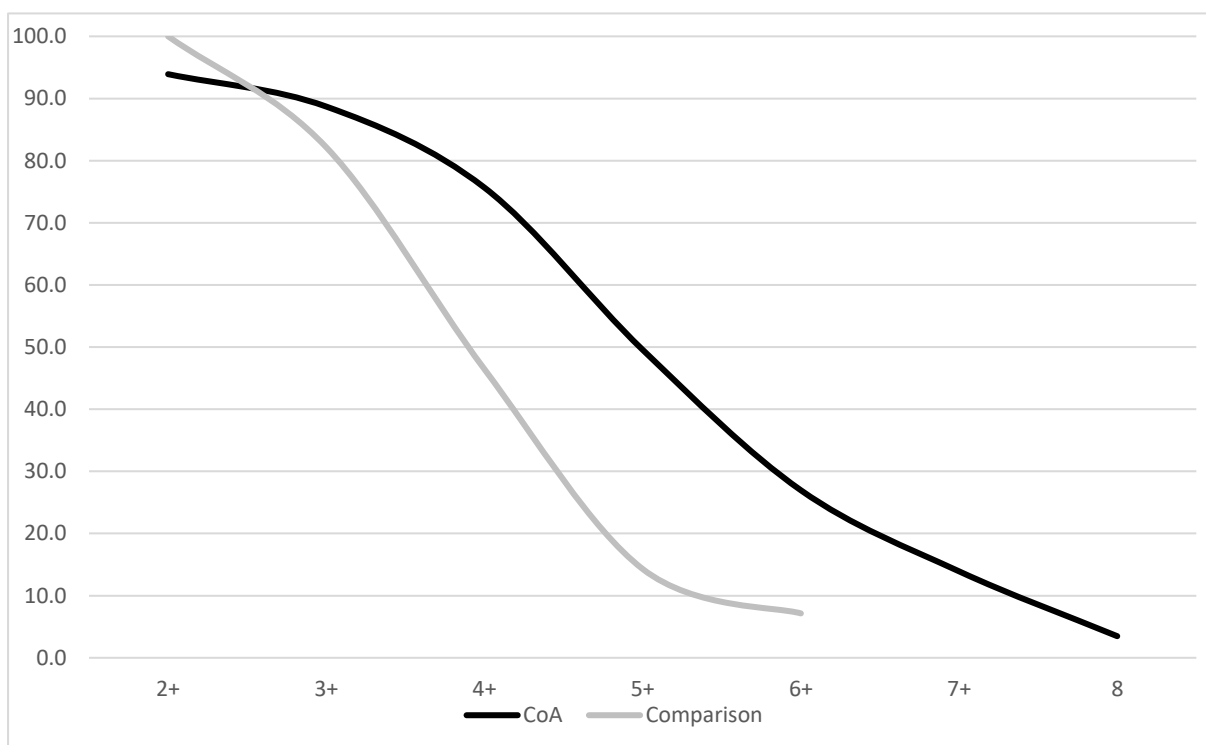
elements, working in a shared framework, and by external elements of working with others who share interests but may operate with different concepts, theories or methods. Success in the later depends on the former (Barbaza, 2019, pp. 312–313), mirroring criminologists' views on disciplinary autonomy and the need to maintain connections with other disciplines. Equipped with a common set of questions, students examine different disciplinary works in terms of questions asked, concepts and methods used, theory advanced, and elements engagements with other disciplines. As reporting back on disciplinary exemplars proceeds, groups increasingly make cross-references to each other, often in terms of identifying complementarity and scope for working together. Students also refer to differences between the disciplines they have been schooled in and the ones they are now tasked with studying, most often positively in terms of how it might change their thinking or fill in certain gaps. Through the exercise, students were able to identify specific characteristics of different disciplines, but also showed disciplinary humility in recognizing that no single discipline has a monopoly on knowledge about atrocity, nor a holistic explanation that would not benefit from interdisciplinary engagement. Sometimes this is suggested already in the sources used. For example, Bulutgil's (2016) Political Science study of ethnic cleansing uses historical source material and historiography, and the *longue durée* sociological work on violence of Malešević (2017) has a temporal dimension that draws support from historical approaches. Students also recognize that key concepts, such as power, do not belong to one discipline, but inform Political Science and Sociology, and add new understandings to how law operates. The session ends with a reflection on criminology as a rendezvous discipline, setting students up to be "voracious" in their consumption of literature across a range of disciplines (see Zedner, 2007, p. 275) and open to synthesizing these to respond to the specific questions about atrocity driving their interest. The balance on subsequent reading lists varies from week to week, but none is mono-disciplinary. In most cases, those writing in journals that are

explicitly criminological, or who are in roles identified at individual or departmental level as such, are in a minority. Students on the course have the opportunity to actively constitute their own criminology of atrocity.

There are strong indications of disciplinary openness and interdisciplinary working in papers submitted by students on *Criminologies of Atrocity*. Over four iterations, student papers cited an average of 4.5 of the eight named disciplines, with variations from 3.8 to 5.3 across year groups. The mean for the comparator course was 3.5, with the difference being significant at a 95 per cent confidence interval. No paper from the comparator course cited less than two disciplines, but six papers (5 per cent) on *Criminologies of Atrocity* cited only one of the named disciplines, and one paper was submitted with no citations to academic work. Figure one shows the comparison, with a greater proportion of *Criminologies of Atrocity* students citing 3 or more disciplines up to 8 disciplines. Looking at papers as a whole gives a measure of the extent to which students draw on different disciplines, while looking at paragraph level approximates the extent to which they use different disciplines to build frameworks and knowledge. Compared to the sentencing course, *Criminologies of Atrocity* featured a greater proportion of paragraphs using two or more disciplines (50 compared to 33 per cent). Finally, the balance between disciplines cited varies. In the sentencing course, there is a large concentration of citations in two disciplines: Criminology (50 per cent) and Law (33 per cent). In *Criminologies of Atrocity*, no single discipline accounts for more than 22 per cent, with Criminology, History, Law, and Politics and International Relations accounting for 16 to 22 per cent each. The data alone cannot attribute these differences solely to the teaching. Other credible factors that should also be taken into account. Criminology is better established as a field of studies in relation to sentencing than atrocity. This implies that students exploring sentencing will find more supporting material from criminologists and in criminological sources than their counterparts studying atrocity. If Criminology is a

rendezvous discipline, the former may benefit from a wide range of disciplinary knowledge and influence being distilled already by criminologists, without having to go to other disciplines directly. The range of disciplines with something to say on sentencing may also vary, although of the eight disciplines explored here, only one (Anthropology) was not cited by any sentencing student.

Figure 1: Percentage of students citing number of disciplines in papers submitted to *Criminologies of Atrocity* 2020 to 2022 (n=115) and comparison course (n=28)



The survey asked students five questions regarding disciplinarity, asking them to express their agreement or disagreement on a five point scale from strong disagreement (-2) up to strong agreement (+2). These are summarised in table 2. Students indicated strongly (93 per cent) that the course had introduced them to more disciplines than other courses at the same level. As the questions move from measuring their openness to using multiple disciplines, to how confident they felt in doing this, there is an increase in negative or neutral responses, but a large majority are still positive. This suggests the course is succeeding in its ambition to

encourage disciplinary openness, but that further work might be done to equip students to integrate this in to their work. Finally, a sub sample of students answered on the extent to which they subsequently benefitted from a wider set of disciplines in further study or work. Again there is a further drop off, but the majority of answers remain positive (77 and 63 per cent respectively). While not all work undertaken during or in the immediate years following study involves addressing problems across disciplinary boundaries, a large proportion of students do encounter these. Relevant comments in an optional free text box after included the value of interdisciplinary experience in job interviews and in dealing with complexity (3 comments), while others noted that their work did not yet require or give space for using different disciplines (2 comments). The survey shows students appreciate the value of diverse disciplinary resources, and draw value from them in later life, in further study and work.

Table 2 Views and experiences of disciplinarity

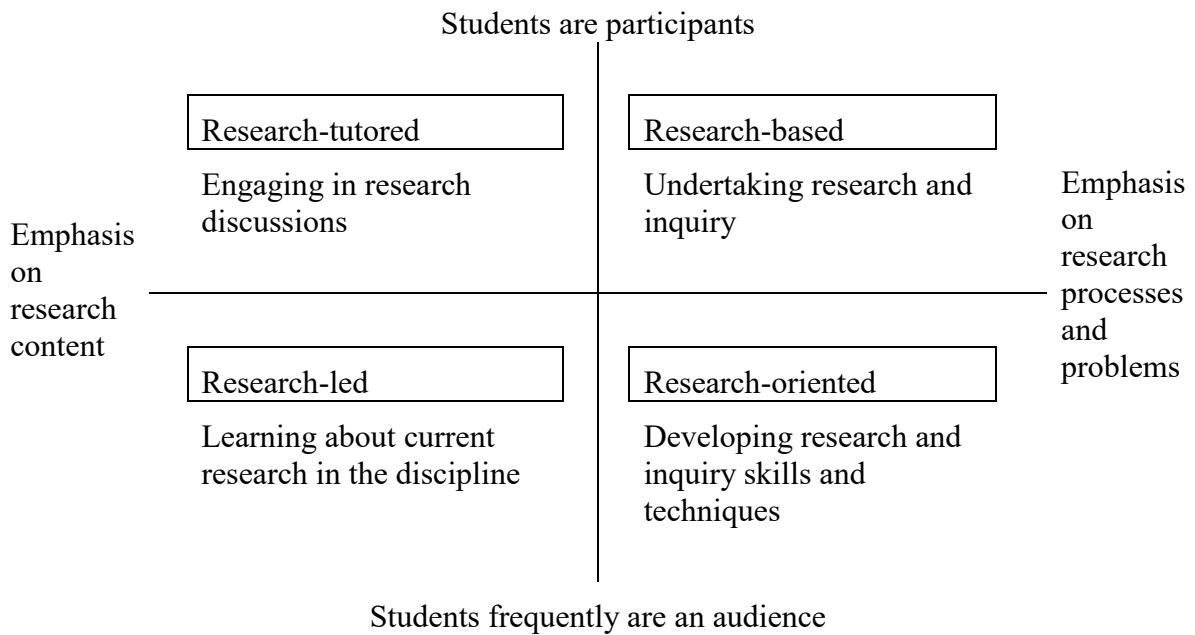
	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	Mean (Min -2, max 2)	N
Compared to other courses at the same level, CoA exposed me to work from a wider range of disciplines	92.9	3.6	3.6	1.55	56
By the end of the course, I saw value in drawing on work from multiple disciplines	91.1	5.4	3.6	1.57	56
By the end of the course, I felt more confident in drawing on work from more disciplines	83.4	8.9	7.1	1.2	56
In subsequent study, I benefitted by drawing on work from more disciplines	77.3	17.0	5.6	1.19	53
In subsequent employment, I benefitted by drawing on work from more disciplines	63.4	29.3	7.3	0.83	41

The research-teaching nexus in *Criminologies of Atrocity*

This section frames the course in a typology of research in teaching and learning (Jenkins and Healey, 2012). I argue that supporting students as co-participants in knowledge creation realizes pedagogical benefits around inclusion, democratization, and learning. While it is interpreted in different ways, a “nexus”, or at least a “proximity”, between research and

teaching is a distinguishing feature in higher education (British Academy, 2022; Humboldt, in Land, 2012, p. 50; Palmer, 2020, p. 4; Varnava & Webb, 2009, p. 371). The practical implications of the nexus may not be realized, with one meta-study seeing the two sides as “very loosely coupled” at best (in Jenkins & Healey, 2012, p. 130). A nexus suggests a bi-directional relationship (British Academy, 2022, p. 7), but my focus here is only on the benefits of bringing research into the classroom, using a four-fold typology (Jenkins & Healey, 2012, pp. 132–133, replicated in Figure 2).

Figure 2: A typology of research links in undergraduate teaching and learning (Jenkins & Healey, 2012, p. 133)



Criminologies of Atrocity features elements of each quadrant of the typology, with a gradual shift from left (emphasis on research content) to right (emphasis on research process and problems). There is an early emphasis on students as participants, which shifts as the course moves on, to students as drivers defining the direction for their own learning (appendix 1 lists weekly topics and approach). The course is research-led in that it is designed and delivered by staff and postgraduate researchers actively using the archives of the ICTY in their own

research, and we draw on this, and on a wider set of research in and beyond criminology throughout the course. Table 3, below, shows that students recognized *Criminologies of Atrocity* as being informed by research more so than in their degree as a whole. In asking students to write about current knowledge in the field as part of their research report, we ask them to set up their own project, and in doing this they need to show awareness of the content of relevant research. However, lecture-style content, where students are conceived of as an audience, or at least an audience for an instructor, is not the main way of coming to know research content. Rather, students are more often guided into group work with structured questions with which they can interrogate the research literature. Through group work, the emphasis is on participation, although as separate groups report back to each other, they will also take on the role of audience, learning about the specific focus of others. As we move into the second half of teaching, the emphasis shifts clearly to the right of the typology. Students are taught technical skills (computer aided qualitative design), but remain active participants in discussions of methodological issues arising from the nature of the sources. As the timetabled classes move towards an end, students transition into leadership of research, defining their own projects, creating new knowledge, and setting it beside existing knowledge in the field. In doing so, students actively learn about atrocity crime, about criminology, about international criminal justice, and about researching.

Treating students as co-participants in knowledge creation, has several benefits. First, the nexus between research and teaching and learning is realized in its strongest form in that researching and learning are unified as one activity. Students felt encouraged to see themselves as a researcher more on *Criminologies of Atrocity* than in their degree as a whole (table 3). While anecdotal, a comment from one student on the course to a Teaching Assistant captured this: “Finally it feels like we are actually at university.” To some extent this reflects frustration felt by students who are attracted to inclusion in a research community, yet feel

excluded or kept at arm's length from the research taking place in universities (Jenkins & Healey, 2012, p. 130 citing both Zamorski and Brew). Not all students appreciated this, with one free-text comment suggesting that the emphasis on treating students as researchers placed additional demands on them when they would have preferred more on “things directly relevant to performing well in the assessment, which is the student's main priority.”

Giving students a space to direct their own learning through research represents one way of democratizing the classroom (Nouri & Sajjadi, 2014). Here, students are treated as equals in a common pursuit of new knowledge in line with Freire's principles for a critical pedagogy (Nenadovic & Somun, 2021, p. 70), and further still, in the constitution of the discipline of criminology through their engagement with other disciplines in pursuit of criminological knowledge. While certain research projects undertaken by students show a strong relation to themes introduced explicitly in literature used in the first phase of the course (e.g. perpetrators as “ordinary” people, or the concept of the “ideal victim”), many students pursue topics that are either not introduced, or are touched on only lightly in classroom sessions and accompanying readings. This has included, violence against Roma; intra-ethnic violence; the role of media; foreign fighters; economic crime and economic motivations; human shields; and the targeting of hospitals. For some students the course is the beginning of a deeper engagement with the field, and they extend their research into a final year dissertation. One remarkable dissertation built on the Yugoslav case to compare with other trial venues, showing how the gendered representation of female perpetrators intersects with racist attitudes rooted in coloniality. Compared to their degree as a whole, students felt more in control of their learning and that their contributions were valued on *Criminologies of Atrocity* (table 3). This shows in outputs: an external examiner praised student work as “deeply engaging and interesting to read” and demonstrating “exceptional levels of critical engagement methodologically and intellectually with the course”.

Table 3 Research, teaching and control over learning (7 point scale)

	In degree as a whole (n=56)	In CoA (n=55)
To what extent did you feel teaching was informed by relevant research	5.30	6.40*
To what extent did you feel encouraged to see yourself as a researcher	4.14	5.91*
To what extent did you feel in control of your learning	4.27	5.76*
To what extent did you feel your contributions were valued in class and in assessments	4.63	6.04*

*significant at 95% confidence interval

A third benefit from integrating of research, moving from discussing research papers through to conducting a small scale research project, is that it encompasses a range of different learning types. Laurillard’s conversational framework for learning separates out different learning experiences: acquisition, discussion, collaboration, production, inquiry and practice (Laurillard, 2002b; see also Kennedy et al., 2015). This caters to diverse students, and to students who may learn different elements best at different times in different ways. In the first weeks of the course (1-4), the main elements are *acquisition*, often through reading, *discussion* of readings in groups, and *collaboration* in organizing material to present back to other groups in the class. In the middle section of the course, particularly in week 5, we add *production*, with students tasked with developing teaching materials. The final stages, including the assessment period, adds *inquiry* and *practice* through the research report. As noted, this final period makes up a significant proportion of the 200 hours of work expected on the course. This is not simply to give students time to work on their assessments, rather it is conceived as an integral part of learning. Finally, by engaging students in research as equal participants, the course focuses on “enduring qualities” rather than specific knowledge, focusing on ways of knowing rather than knowledge itself (see Laurillard, 2002a, pp. 18–20). This prepares students in their third year with skills they can use in final year dissertations; but also relates closely to employability. Laurillard notes that existing professional

knowledge is not enough in practice as it can not “fit every case” (Laurillard, 2002a, p. 18), and McGee and Palmer note employers’ demands for people who can synthesis new knowledge (McGee & Eriksson, 2020, p. 111). The survey asked students to assess the extent and depth of learning on *Criminologies of Atrocity* compared to other courses of a similar level. Only 5 per cent felt their learning was less extensive, and 7 per cent less deep, than in other courses. On the other hand, 63 per cent claimed more extensive learning, and 70 per cent deeper learning.

Ethics, Care and Teaching *Criminologies of Atrocity*

The particulars of the course, working with archives of political violence, put ethics at the center of *Criminologies of Atrocity*. In this final section, I set out three ways the course engages with ethical practice. First, using archives of atrocity in teaching raises similar ethical issues to research, particularly duties to those whose lives, experiences, and trauma are represented in ICTY transcripts and exhibits. Second, the course generates an ethical responsibility to students as audience and as co-participants in researching violence. And third, the course aims to encourage ethical reflection and practice on the part of the students, and to set this beside current institutional frameworks for research ethics. Three texts on research ethics (Biddolph, 2021; Campbell, 2016; Subotić, 2021), all of which are on the course reading list, are useful guides to teaching atrocity ethically.

The ethics and politics of research on extreme violence, in particular through “atrocity archives,” is a work in progress across disciplines and interdisciplinary fields (see, e.g. Jessee & Anderson, 2020). Dealing with research subjects who are reached indirectly through recorded testimony does not remove the responsibility to consider a range of possible adverse effects on those subjects, even in the event that they are no longer alive. One risk is that researchers of extreme violence may experience incentives to use material covering “the most

gruesome episodes, the most descriptive suffering, the most painful stories” (Subotić, 2021, p. 348). This stems the evocative power these accounts have to support particular points, but Subotić also suggests that some may use such material in pursuit of a reputation as a scholar capable of studying difficult subjects. Both could be as true in teaching as in research. In making recommendations to researchers, Subotić keeps a firm eye on the purpose for which material is being used, and on possible ongoing harms to the subjects of archives, and their communities (2021, pp. 347, 349, 351). Subotić, Campbell and Biddolph all exemplify a strong sense of ethical responsibility in researching political violence, and for Campbell, this is frequently expressed in terms of accountability. Her concerns around accountable dissemination practices are mitigated in the less public context of teaching. But teaching is an opportunity to encourage ethical handling of sensitive material by setting an example, and issues beyond dissemination remain significant in teaching and learning. Constructing “ethically accountable concepts”, which make visible patterns of domination and power (Campbell, 2016, pp. 154–155), translates into a critical pedagogy through which students are empowered to identify and interrogate power relations, making it possible for them to challenge these (Hamilton, 2013; Nenadovic & Somun, 2021; Nouri & Sajjadi, 2014).

Research ethics extend to consideration for the well-being of researchers, in this case the students on the course, and the Teaching Assistants. The material covered on the course, whether research papers or monographs, or the content of the ICTY archive itself, is frequently “unsettling, upsetting and confronting” (Dalton, 2020, p. 97). Biddolph’s account of her experiences reading ICTY transcripts and sustained immersion in the digital archives describes visceral and affective impacts (2021, pp. 541, 545). My own experiences in periods of working intensively on transcripts of testimony echo this, and it is fair to expect that at least some students may find the material emotionally challenging. The terminology of “trigger warnings” is well-known, but popular discourse and wide and loose usage has diluted

its meaning and diverted it away from a process of reflection on the relationship between teaching and *pre-existing* trauma (Dalton, 2020). Nonetheless, when teaching material that includes extreme violence, it is worth reflecting on how best to prepare students to deal with this, and how to respond if they experience difficulty. Dalton's teaching approach sets the ground for students and exemplifies the duty of care to students covering "difficult" material. It extends beyond identifying the kind of material likely to be studied, to outline self-care and protective strategies, guidance on handling sensitive topics respectfully, and the need for mindfulness with respect to others in class discussions (2020, p. 97). From the outset of *Criminologies of Atrocity*, we discuss these themes. Students know that they can remove themselves from lessons if they feel the need, and that they can discuss any difficulties they experience with me as their course organizer.

This approach also sets the tone for ethical reflection throughout the course, represented most strongly in weeks on victims and on using transcripts of court testimony as data, and again in the assessment. Students are not required to complete institutional ethics approval procedures, but are required to reflect on ethics in the final research report. As Subotić (2021, pp. 350–351) and Campbell (2016, pp. 158–159) note, ethical research practice is an ongoing commitment, not necessarily well-captured in the narrow focus of institutional review procedures. On *Criminologies of Atrocity*, the ethical reflection neither starts nor finishes with an institutional review form, but we build in time to consider its strengths and weaknesses for archival research in general and specifically on atrocity. In doing so, the course reflects the expectations in benchmarks for degrees in Law and Criminology, and undergraduate study more broadly, for making ethically sound judgments in complex contexts and in relation to research (Quality Assurance Agency, 2019, secs. 1.4, 2.2; 2022, sec 1.8; Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework, 2022).

The survey asked a series of questions regarding the preparation of students ahead of reading material dealing with extreme violence, the way in which material was handled in teaching, and the extent to which the course supported their handling of dealing with ethical issues in other contexts.⁶ The question used a seven point scale representing a shift from ‘not at all’ to ‘very much’. The results are presented in table four.

Table 4 Ethical issues, frequencies (%) and mean, “assess the extent to which...” (7 point scale), n=56

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Mean
...course guidance and instructor input prepared you for the nature of the material	0.0	1.8	5.4	3.6	19.6	26.8	42.9	5.93
...sensitive material was handled appropriately	0.0	0.0	1.8	1.8	5.4	17.9	73.2	6.59
The course has helped you to identify and deal with ethical issues in other work or study contexts	1.8	1.8	5.4	17.9	23.2	25.0	25.0	5.34

Free text comments were less common here than in sections on disciplinary and the research-teaching nexus (8, compared to 14 each). While one indicated that they found the texts on ethics rather ‘difficult to parse’ and that class sessions did not clear this up, the comments are generally positive. One in particular noted that they had been upset in other courses when graphic descriptions of conflict related sexual violence were handed out without any prior ‘heads up’. Even though the nature of the subject in criminology, or other courses handling atrocity, might suggest the difficult content, this comment suggests that students value specific introductory remarks prior to handling sensitive material.

⁶ An error in the wording of a further question about ethical issues in researching and writing on atrocity means it had to be excluded from results.

Concluding remarks

As criminologists increasingly engage with atrocity crime in research, this is reflected in criminological curricula, including atrocity-focused sessions in general criminology courses and specialist courses like *Criminologies of Atrocity*. The public archives of international courts and tribunals provide researchers with sources of evidence in building criminological knowledge of how and why atrocity takes place, and of perpetrators and victims of atrocity. Other resources are available, whether online, or in local and national archives and museums that reach beyond atrocity. For example, the records of the Criminal Court at the Old Bailey have been digitized and made available online (*Proceedings of the Old Bailey* n.d.), covering 197,745 trials between 1674 and 1913. The logic of the *Criminologies of Atrocity*, its approach to disciplines, research, and ethics can be extended beyond atrocity archives. Using such archives as teaching resources, we can bring students attention to some of the most pressing problems of our contemporary world. Further, those students can learn about criminology, including but not limited to atrocity, interdisciplinarity, research, and ethics while developing their autonomy as critical thinkers.

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Appendix 1: Course outline, aims and approach by week

Week	Topic	Aims	Approach
1	Criminology and atrocity	Introductions: course, people, aims & approach, criminology, atrocity, the development of atrocity criminology, studying difficult material.	Conversation & lecture.
2	Atrocity beyond criminology	Understanding disciplinary engagements with atrocity, common points & differences; identifying potential for transdisciplinary research; criminology's contribution.	Discipline-focused discussion groups; reports back to, discussion with, full class.
3	Perpetrators and atrocity	Building knowledge of perpetrator-based research, methodology & epistemology; competing explanations for perpetration; levels of explanation.	4 discussion groups based on different individual perpetrators or categories of perpetrator; reports back to, discussion with, full class.
4	Victims and atrocity	Understanding relationship of victimology to atrocity research; ethical issues in researching victims of political violence; representations of victims in the criminal justice process.	Mixed lecture/group discussion; 4 groups discussing common set of ICTY transcripts and press reports, followed by feedback and wider discussion with whole class.
5	International justice and atrocity	Introducing the ICTY its work, claims about its achievements, familiarization with tribunal output.	Lecture; group discussions on ICTY document pack, wider class discussion on using materials as part of research project.
6	Reading week (no class). Optional formative paper comparing different disciplines.		
7	The Yugoslav Wars and Atrocity	Building knowledge of the conflicts, the background to these & drivers of conflict, the parties, & the main events.	Group-work producing teaching materials for an introductory lecture (slides), made into video-lecture by course organiser.
8	Using court transcripts as data	Understanding methodological issues & ethical issues in using ICTY testimony & exhibits as criminological data.	Approach: Lecture. Discussion groups using testimony and reporting back. Institutional review of ethics applied.
9	Using software to code sources	Building basic understanding of qualitative research approaches and principles of coding.	Approach: Lecture and guided lab session, using a common set of transcripts.
10	Formulating questions and selecting cases	Supporting students as they work towards their own research projects.	Approach: Lab session, with individual support.
11	Developing codes and coding transcripts	Supporting students as they work on their own research projects.	Approach: Lab session, with individual support.
12-16	Students work on their research and reports, with optional drop in support sessions.		

Appendix 2: Learning objectives (original and revised)

Revised for 2022 delivery (key changes in bold)	Original learning outcomes used 2020 to 2022
<p>By the end of the course students should be able to demonstrate: Broad knowledge of core criminological scholarship on the problem of atrocity, and further knowledge on scholarship in other disciplines (history, political science, social psychology, sociology); knowledge of the development of criminological study of atrocity since the early 20th century; more detailed knowledge of concepts and theories in the area of perpetrator studies or victimology as they relate to atrocity crime; working knowledge of the Yugoslav wars of the 1990s, accounts of the drivers behind these, and of key participants; working knowledge of the work of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, and of the claims made regarding its achievements</p> <p>By the end of the course students should be able to demonstrate: The ability to distil and applying intellectual frameworks to conceptualize and analyze complex problems; critical judgement regarding the work of others and one’s own work; the ability to present a structured argument and analysis derived from a larger body of material (theoretical, methodological and empirical); to make ethical judgments on the use and presentation of sensitive archival materials relating to atrocity violence.</p> <p>By the end of the course students should be able to demonstrate: Core skills in qualitative data analysis, including basic knowledge of principles of data-coding and the use of Computer Aided Qualitative Data Software; capacity to manage and analyze qualitative criminological to produce findings.</p> <p>By the taking the course students should develop autonomy and creativity in formulating research questions and selecting appropriate data; experience in working productively with others in groups and respecting the input of others; experience of working under guidance.</p>	<p>By the end of the course students should have attained: A detailed knowledge of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia contextualized by predecessor, contemporary and successor international criminal trial venues and their domestic equivalents; an understanding of key elements of the criminal justice process and the parties involved; an essential knowledge of the contours of the wars in Yugoslavia from 1991 to 2001; a detailed knowledge of core criminological scholarship on atrocity crimes backed by knowledge of its relationship to scholarship in other disciplines (history, political science, social psychology, sociology); a knowledge and understanding of the roots and development of criminologies of atrocity.</p> <p>By the end of the course students should have developed: Core skills in qualitative data analysis, including basic knowledge of principles of data-coding and the use of Computer Aided Qualitative Data Software (NVivo); capacity to assess criminological data in terms of validity and reliability</p> <p>By the end of the course students should have had experience of distilling and applying intellectual frameworks to conceptualize and analyze complex problems; critical judgement regarding the work of others and one’s own work; the ability to present a structured argument and analysis derived from a larger body of material (theoretical, methodological and empirical)</p> <p>By the taking the course students should develop autonomy and creativity in formulating a research question and selecting appropriate data; experience in working with others in groups and respecting the input of others; experience of working under the guidance of a supervisor (i.e. course organizer)</p>

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