

# Tips on How to Successfully Navigate the Criminal Justice Program

1. [Download a copy of our major checksheet](#) from the website to review and familiarize yourself with the basic major requirements. The checksheet provides a detailed overview of all criminal justice major requirements.

2. [Meet with your advisor regularly](#). If you are unsure who your advisor is contact the department at 775-2582.

3. Our curriculum offers a strong foundation of core criminal justice courses (see checksheet) while at the same time allowing the opportunity for great flexibility and specialization within the program. Therefore, [you will typically have two or more course choices](#) that can be used to fulfill our program requirements. These choices are specified on the checksheet. For example, you can take the first methodology class through the Urban Studies Department (URS 410) or the Sociology Department (SOC 306).

4. Briefly we have three major types of requirements in our program. They are generically referred to as 'the core', 'foundation requirements' (also known as 'area requirements'), and 'advanced electives'

The CRJ [Core \(20 hours\)](#) is comprised of five courses An overview of the Criminal Justice System (PLS 442), an internship (e.g. PLS 484, URS 92, or SOC 433) and a statistics (PLS 210 or SOC 300) and methods sequence (SOC 306 & 406 or URS 410 & 411).

Our [Criminal Justice Foundation Courses \(36 hours\)](#) focus on three key areas: Behavior, Institutions, and Law. All students are required to take 12 hours in each of these three areas (see checksheet for course options)

The final type of requirement is our [Advanced Electives](#). This area allows you to tailor your courses to your particular occupational or substantive interest. Students should complete [12 hours](#) in this area (see checksheet for course options)

5. [Not all courses are offered every quarter](#). With the exception of the internship, it is therefore a good idea to get critical courses (e.g. most of your core courses) completed before your senior year. It may be difficult to get into some of the courses you want as a sophomore or junior but be patient, as seniors you will have first dibs!

6. The **methodology courses in the core are sequenced** (that is, you must take them in order). It works best if you take the statistics class first (i.e. PLS 210 or SOC 300), the introductory methods class second (SOC 306 or URS 410), and the final methods class (SOC 406 or URS 411) last. Also, for the final two classes, be sure to stay within the same discipline (i.e. take SOC 306 and SOC 406 **OR** URS 410 and URS 411 – do not mix and match them!)

7. In most cases we recommend that you take the **internship** in your junior year. You can take it in any of the three contributing departments (PLS, SOC, URS). To enroll, contact the department you want to work through (e.g. SOC) during **the quarter prior to the time you would like to take the course**, and arrange an appointment with the internship coordinator. Once you have met and discussed the type of internship you are interested in, the coordinator will clear you to register for the course.

8. In addition to your major course requirements do not forget that you have to complete all University and College requirements. In particular, do not wait too long to take your COLA (College of Liberal Arts) **language requirement**. The courses are sequenced. If you get off track it can be difficult to complete!

9. Two University requirements that are particularly important are that all students must have a minimum of **192 credits for graduation and 60 of these credits must come from upper-level (300 & 400-level) classes**. For most students this will not be an issue, but be sure to check with your advisor if you have several transfer credits from another university or community college to be sure you will have a sufficient number of upper-level credits to graduate.

If you are a transfer student a good rule of thumb to remember is that whenever you have a choice of taking an upper or lower level class-- take the upper-level class!

10. Another important University requirement is that each student is required to obtain credit for four writing-intensive (WI) courses in general education and for two additional courses in the major. However, you can also fulfill this requirement by obtaining three "WI" courses in general education and three in the major. If you are a transfer student this number may be adjusted so be sure to check with your adviser to determine how many you will need.

11. In the **quarter prior to your graduation date** (e.g. winter quarter for a spring graduation), you need to make an appointment to meet with the program director to conduct a **graduation check and exit interview**. At this time, you will be given a graduation check form that will allow you to register for graduation through the registrar's office.

12. Portfolio Requirement--As part of our internal program assessment we ask that you **turn in copies of your term papers from three of your five core classes** to the department before you graduate (SOC 406/URS411 should be one of these three). We will keep these on file and verify completion of this requirement during the graduation check. You will not be able to graduate if you have not completed the portfolio so be sure to submit these documents early!

*If you have questions feel free to contact us. The Criminal Justice program is located in 270 Millett Hall or you can call our administrative assistant, Mary Zurawka at (937) 775-2582.*

*Sep 2009*