



LISA

/ THIRD YEAR CRIMINOLOGY STUDENT



I started studying Criminology at Salford 2018 after completing an Access course in Social Sciences and Psychology at Bury College, Manchester. This is where I became interested in criminology – I knew I wanted to join the police but I wanted to learn more about society first.

When you tell people you are studying criminology, their first thought is you are investigating crimes, murders, etc. but this is not the case. Criminology is more than that - it is about the foundations that underpin society. You look at the societal causes for crime and explore a broader scope of issues, for example, why inequalities such as poverty and lack of opportunity can be linked to criminal behaviour, or why more men are victims or violent crimes whereas women are more likely to be a victim of domestic violence.

My first experience at Salford university's open day was the reason I chose to study at Salford. I had been to other open days at other universities in Manchester, but I was really impressed by Salford, in particular the two lecturers that gave taster lectures on the day. They were really passionate about the subject and the two topics they spoke about really sparked my own interest for the subject. They spoke of the 2011 riots in England and the sociological and criminological causes for them and also about media representations of Amanda Knox and how her guilt was constructed through the media. I found all of this fascinating and



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I knew by these two lectures and how the lecturers spoke about studying at Salford that I was going to get a broad degree. Salford itself felt like home and everyone is really welcoming.

We learn in variety of ways on the course, we have main lectures which provide a broad overview of the topic we are covering that week, this is backed up by seminar groups where we get to discuss the topic in more detail in smaller groups and further our knowledge. We also have podcasts and video lectures which are usually focused on the assignment. We have had plenty of guest lecturers and guest speakers which are really beneficial and a great way to learn about criminology applied to real-world settings. For the Violence and Society module we had James Treadwell who is a well-known criminologist whose work focuses on violence in prisons and the structures behind this. On the Criminal Justice and Human Rights module in the first year we had a guest talk from Janet Alder whose brother Christopher Alder died in police custody - this highlighted institutional racism and really made me think of the unequal treatment BAME communities can experience. We have also had agencies come in to speak to us such as The National Crime Agency who spoke to us about what the agency does and how to apply. We had the Greater Manchester police chief Ian Hopkins come in to talk to a small group of us and we got to question him about the structures of the police, current challenges policing such as knife crime and policing in a public sphere. There has been plenty of outside experience and input throughout my course which has given me a wider understanding of the modules I am studying and criminology as a whole.





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Two of my favourite modules I chose in my second year were Violence in Society and Understanding Victims and Victimisation. I chose these two modules because I wanted to get more of an understanding for the causes of violence in society and a greater understanding of the victim. These modules complement each other really well and they both make you question your own understanding of topics and how both these topics are understood by society. The concept and definition of violence is really narrow and when we think of a violent act we often think of just the act itself, such as harm that it caused to another person. However, violence and victimisation uncovers more than this - the narrow definition does not cover the wider nature of violence in society.

I am currently a student representative which is something I have done since first year. I speak with other students on my course and arrange sessions to feedback to my programme leader about the student experience. This is massive at Salford and they really care about hearing from students about their experience on the course, what is going well and what can be done differently. I've had many volunteering opportunities through my studies at Salford. In second year I was school rep which required me to work with the dean of students to feedback issues from student reps. I was also involved on programme reapproval panels and student disciplinary panels - my involvement was to be there as part of the student body. Last summer, I undertook a volunteer placement at the European Sociological Association conference in Manchester. This was a great experience as I got to meet sociologists from all the over world and other students from other universities. The experience really opened my eyes to the broader issues that can be studied in criminology and sociology and how research is undertaken.

The support that has been available during my studies has been second to none, the staff are always on hand for questions at the end of lectures or via email. The staff do not treat us like students they treat us like fellow criminologists and this is often how they will refer to us, I feel this helps because it gets you into a good mindset and you really do feel like a criminologist. There is support

from library staff who can help you with research. The uni run online support services and workshops to help with academic study such as essay writing courses, Harvard referencing courses, etc - there really is plenty of support available.

I am now coming to the end of my degree and I really do feel the way in which the degree has been delivered has really opened up much more choices for me on what I would like to do in the future. I have changed my mind from my original career plan and I am going to undertake a criminology research masters so that I can further my research on female narratives of the criminal justice system. I feel the modules I have studied at Salford have really changed my perspective on what I feel can achieve after my degree.

LISA'S TOP TIPS:

The best advice I would give someone who is thinking about studying at Salford, is find out as much as you can about the course first, speak to lecturers email them for more information and get a greater understanding of what modules will covered and whether that's right for you. Try to read as much as you can before you start, all of the lecturers on the course are active in research and are published so ask for recommendations on areas to read around as this will benefit you massively and gives you a head start. I followed some of the lecturers on Twitter before I started and a lot of them posted what they was covering in lectures, what books they were recommending, what research they were doing, etc - this massively helped me widen my own knowledge. Also look at what else the university offers before you start. University can be quite intimidating, especially if you are moving away from home, so I found it really helped me to get involved in university life outside of my academic studies such as societies, volunteering the student union. This made me feel part of something and is great experience to have for when you finish your studies.

