

Arvin Asadi

Criminology at SFU: a Student's Perspective



My studies in Criminology have given me an in-depth understanding of the complexities of criminal behaviour and society's reaction to this phenomenon.

After gaining theoretical and practical knowledge of the criminal justice system, my perceptions and definitions of crime have been deeply challenged. I can now truly appreciate how factors such as class, race, and gender play a role in our efforts to

administer justice. This appreciation has contributed to my ability to critically analyze the media's often-distorted representation of crime.

Before pursuing my studies at SFU's School of Criminology, I took a variety of courses at Capilano College,

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including the one Criminology course the college was offering at the time. From that moment, I knew it was the path for me.

As I approach the end of my undergraduate studies at SFU, I can say the Criminology program has lived up to its reputation of being second to none. It exceeded my expectations.

Throughout my time at SFU, I had the opportunity to learn and discuss some of the most interesting and controversial topics relevant in today's society. These issues included drug policies, prostitution, euthanasia, abortion, capital punishment, corporate crime, forensic science—the list goes on. I learned about the philosophical and sociological history of these issues and how it translates into current law. I was also able to critically analyze the strategies—or lack of strategies—of our criminal justice system in dealing with these important issues.

Two influential courses I have taken recently include Corporate Financial Crimes and Misconduct *CRIM 436* and Wrongful Convictions *CRIM 418*. Both were taught by Professor Joan Brockman, who did a wonderful job of facilitating discussion and tying in current events to the course materials.

In Corporate Financial Crimes and Misconduct, we discussed the lack of democracy within corporate regulation



The W. A. C. Bennett Library

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Academic Quadrangle



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Cornerstone Area of Campus

and the undeniable consequences of the “profit is all” corporate mindset.

This class served as a reminder that corporate executives often face insignificant punishments, despite the fact that their regrettable “business decisions” inflict more damage on society as a whole than any other crime. Contributing factors and solutions to this unacceptable reality were also discussed. I chose to participate in a project that analyzed the famous Bre-X gold stock scandal.

In Wrongful Convictions, we discussed the factors contributing to the conviction of innocent people, including police misconduct, false eyewitness testimony, jailhouse informants, and false confessions.

For the final project, I chose to analyze the case of Wilbert Coffin, a man convicted of murder and executed, based solely upon circumstantial evidence.

It is worth noting that this Canadian case played a role in the abolishment of the death penalty in Canada. Although the case is quite old, many of the other cases we discussed are recent. They illustrate that wrongful convictions can no longer be viewed as rare instances of unavoidable human error within our criminal justice system.

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Several other courses I highly recommend include Restorative Justice, with Dr. Elizabeth Elliott; Forensic Sciences, with Dr. Gail Anderson; and Terrorism, with Dr. Ray Corrado.

Next semester I will be taking advantage of the excellent SFU Criminology field-practice program, coordinated by Professor Neil Madu. It gives students the chance to receive practical experience within the Criminology field of their choice. Students participating in this program may choose from a variety of placements including law enforcement, corrections, and the legal field. I will be working with a criminal lawyer to explore whether criminal law is a potential career for me.

I am looking forward to the journey ahead. ▲

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More of the Cornerstone Area



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View from West Mall Complex