

BOOK REVIEW

CRIME AND JUSTICE: A GUIDE TO CRIMINOLOGY (4TH ED)

**BY MARINELLA MARMO, WILLEM DE LINT
AND DARREN PALMER (EDS)**

Lawbook Co, 2012, 716 pages

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Previous editions of *Crime and Justice: A Guide to Criminology* (edited by Andrew Goldsmith, Mark Israel and Kathleen Daly) have, since the first edition in 1996, been seminal resources for students of criminology and criminal justice. Undeniably, while not the target audience, many criminology postgraduates and academics also have at least one edition on their bookshelves. As with earlier editions, this most recent collection offers an introduction to various criminological theories, concepts and insights into how the criminal justice system operates in practice, in an Australian context. Revised chapters and six new chapters offer contemporary statistics, case studies, examples, references and content that reflects emerging research and issues confronting criminal justice practitioners and scholars.

The fourth edition is divided into two categories that mirror the structure of many first year criminology and criminal justice units offered at Australian universities. Part One, 'Understanding Crime', unpacks the concepts of crime and criminality. It offers an overview of individual and social explanations for crime and explores issues relating to our understanding and perception of

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crime (considering crime statistics and the role of the media). Contributors investigate crime in relation to various actors and areas: inequalities of crime; youth and crime; crime in the streets; crime in the home; white-collar and corporate crime; environmental crime; state crime; cyber crime; crime across borders; and international crime. Part One closes with a chapter which considers more recent explanations for crime and, in so doing, details current and future directions for criminological research.

Part Two of the text, 'Understanding Criminal Justice', which ideally accompanies second semester undergraduate study, examines the aims and operations of various elements of the criminal justice system — policing in a local and transnational context, courts and corrections — as well as contemplating innovative justice processes and crime prevention strategies. In addition to investigating the roles of victims, experts, lay people and forensics, Part Two also considers failures of justice, criminal justice, and human rights.

Crime and Justice: A Guide to Criminology can operate as a dual semester text that is attractive to students and educators: not only because of thoughtful design, formulation and execution, but also because it is cost effective to use the same text book over two semesters. Part One introduces and canvasses criminological ideas and concepts to good effect. A number of chapters are dedicated to criminological theory in its entirety (individual, social and more recent and emerging explanations of crime), and other chapters, such as those dealing with 'Youth and Crime', 'Crime and the Home' and 'White-Collar and Corporate Crime', for instance, have theoretical underpinnings. Perhaps, if there is one criticism of Part One, it is that for a more thorough appreciation of theoretical explanations for crime, students will need to supplement this text with further reading from other sources.

In his foreword Professor Duncan Chappell confesses that upon reviewing *Crime and Justice: A Guide to Criminology* he was 'smitten by thoughts of envy at the dazzling array of information it contains about crime and justice', and observes that, when he was a student fifty years ago, 'virtually none of the reference material mentioned in the book existed'.¹ Indeed, in previous editions, some of the topics explored in new chapters in the fourth edition were not referenced in the main body of the text or in the glossary.

My own experience is that, while students appreciate learning about various criminological theories or, at the very least, grudgingly accept their value,

¹ Duncan Chappell, 'Foreword' in Marinella Marmo, Willem de Lint and Darren Palmer (eds), *Crime and Justice: A Guide to Criminology* (Lawbook Co., 4th ed, 2012) v.

some of the new chapters included in Part One that are less strictly theoretically based (namely 'Environmental Crime', 'State Crime' and 'International Crime') are amongst the most popular topics of first semester study. Grant Niemann and Marinella Marmo's chapter on international crime is both timely (as the first ruling of the International Criminal Court was handed down this year) and necessary, as often students are not aware of the distinction between transnational and international crime. While admittedly there are definitional debates surrounding both 'transnational' and 'international' crime, these terms are not always clearly articulated, even in topic-focused texts prescribed to second and third year criminology and criminal justice students.

Part Two of the text is focused on the operations of the criminal justice system, considering the roles and functions of police, courts and corrections in Australia. One new chapter, 'Experts, Lay People and Forensics', will be of particular interest to students who, prompted by their fascination with popular culture portrayals of forensic science, have decided to embark on criminal justice studies. Jenny Wise offers a realistic overview of the use of forensic science in the criminal justice system and discusses various phenomena such as the 'CSI effect': the effect that popular culture can have on perceptions of forensic science, which students seem to find equally fascinating. Although, as Chappell notes in his foreword, throughout the text there is limited discussion of the historical evolution of criminal justice institutions and agencies in Australia, this can be excused by the fact that such histories are difficult to compile and condense. Instead, contributors focus on how police, courts and corrections operate both in theory and in practice.

This text boasts a wide range of leading and emerging academic contributors, different voices and a variety of content, something which students appreciate. Yet the uniform structure of the chapters maintains cohesion throughout the text. Chapters are approximately fifteen to twenty pages long, providing a solid introduction to each topic without overwhelming the reader. Each entry begins by noting relevant key terms and is well organised under subheadings. 'Dialogue boxes' are useful, providing contemporary examples of the matters under discussion, and raising issues and questions for the reader to consider. As with the questions which feature at the end of each chapter, the dialogue boxes can suitably prompt discussion in tutorials. Chapters uniformly close with suggested further reading and often a list of useful websites. Evidently, the editors wish to prompt the development of research skills 'for those readers who are approaching crime and criminology for the first time', and this is best illustrated by the inclusion of the final chapter 'National and

International Research Resources', compiled by Heidi Savilla, a law and legal studies librarian at Flinders University.² Savilla provides a guide to an array of criminological sources and resources. I agree with the editors that 'this chapter stands out for its uniqueness in Australia'.³ It is easy to forget just how confronting and confusing university study can be; and the editors and Savilla should be applauded for providing students with a practical research tool.

The strong foundation provided by Goldsmith, Israel and Daly and former authors has ensured that *Crime and Justice: A Guide to Criminology* will continue to be a staple for criminology and criminal justice students and educators in years to come. The great success of this collection is that Marmo, de Lint, Palmer and fellow contributors have produced an innovative revision of an essential text that will inform and inspire the next generation of scholars and practitioners.

² Marinella Marmo, Willem de Lint and Darren Palmer, 'Preface' in *ibid*, xi.

³ *Ibid*.