



UNIVERSITY OF  
BIRMINGHAM

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL  
POLICY, SOCIOLOGY  
AND CRIMINOLOGY



# Criminology at the University of Birmingham

## An Introduction

This document is intended to give you a quick introduction to both the discipline of Criminology and our department here at the University of Birmingham. It also offers you some ways to prepare for the start of your course should you wish to, with recommended reading and resources. Information is also provided regarding upcoming Q&A sessions and how to reach out if you want to get in touch.





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## HELLO FROM YOUR ADMISSIONS TUTOR

Hello everyone. My name is Dr Frankie Rogan and I am a Lecturer in the department of Social Policy, Sociology and Criminology at the University of Birmingham. I am also the Admissions Tutor for the department so you may have met me if you've attended open days or offer holder days in the past. We are looking forward to welcoming you to our department in September and are working hard to prepare for your arrival. I hope you find this document useful, and we look forward to you joining our department soon!



# What is Criminology?

In its broadest sense, criminology is *the study of crime*. However, there are many different approaches to this within academia. At Birmingham, our primary focus is on the *social* drivers of crime and so we spend a lot of time thinking about the ways in which crime relates to wider social issues such as poverty and inequality. The location of the criminology degree programme within the School of Social Policy allows students of criminology at the University of Birmingham to explore the ways in which perspectives from other disciplines such as sociology and social policy may further enhance our understanding of crime.

A unique aspect of the University of Birmingham's Criminology degree programme is the focus on social harm as central to the study of crime...







## HARMFUL SOCIETIES

Understanding social harm

# Key Concept: Social Harm

Focuisng on 'social harm' involves interrogating areas that have traditionally been ignored or marginalised within the discipline of criminology - particularly the harms caused by state and corporate actors. The concept of social harm encourages students to think about injuries that are inflicted upon people and societies regardless of legal categorisation (e.g. whether or not something is 'illegal' ) and this allows students to think critically about 'crime' beyond the parameters usually offered by criminology.

Key questions we might consider when thinking about social harm are:

1. What kind of harms are inflicted by social structures (e.g. capitalism)?
2. Why are some harms criminalised and others not?
3. What are the social origins of crime? How does crime intersect with poverty and inequaltiy for example?

# Something To Read...

While there is no expectation that you have read anything before starting your course, you may be looking for something to do over the summer. I've had many emails asking for recommended readings so please feel free to pick one or two of the texts listed here.

There are also some more in-depth recommendations and staff favourites on the following pages!



**Crime**

by Robert Reiner (2016)



**Racism, Crime and Justice**

by Ben Bowling and Coretta Phillips (2001)



**Harmful Societies: Understanding Social Harm**

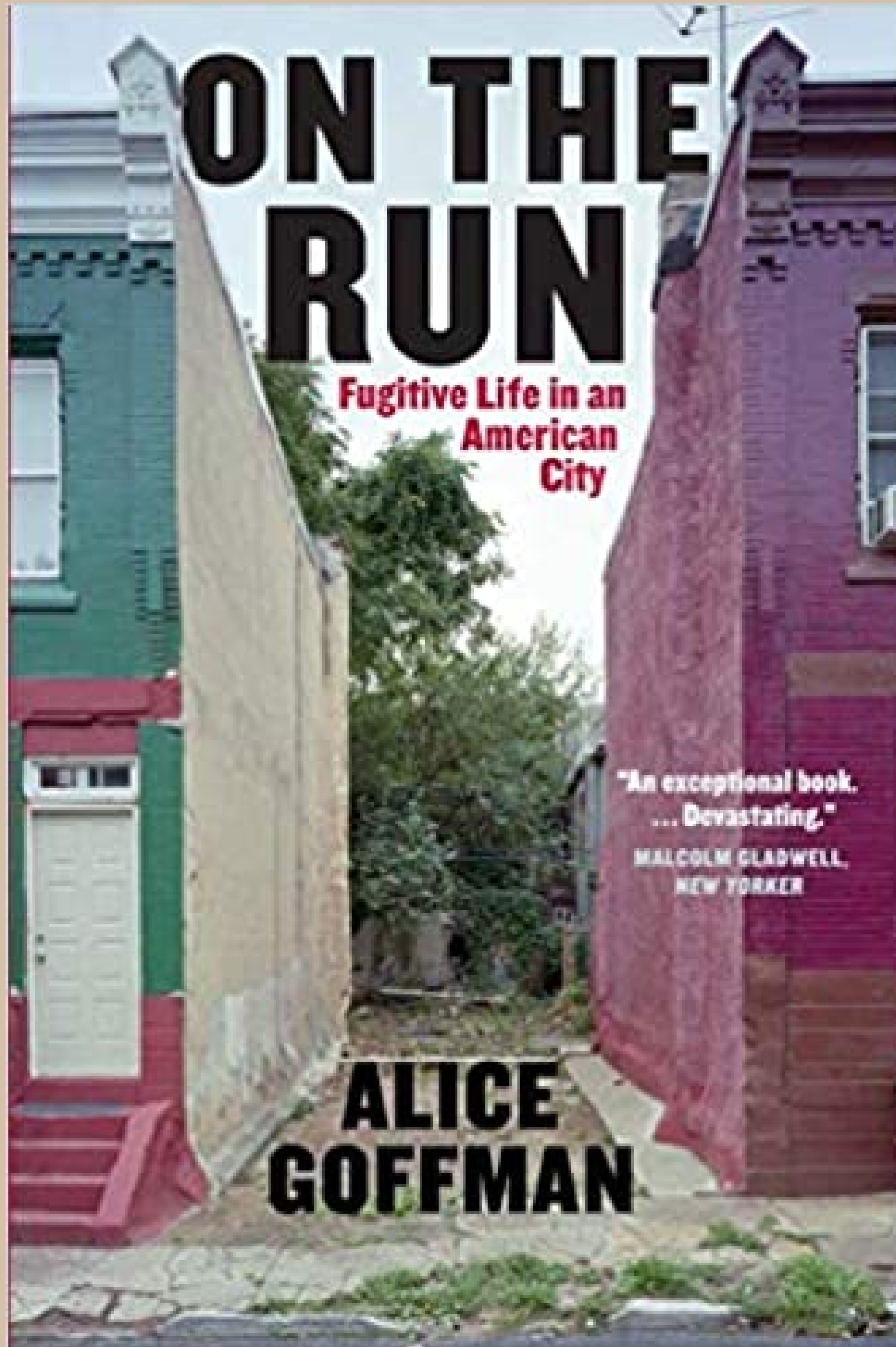
by Simon Pemberton (2015)



**Crime and Society in Britain**

by Hazel Croall (2011)





## Recommended by Professor Simon Pemberton



"Alice Goffman's *On The Run* is based on her ethnographic research of a Philadelphia neighbourhood and touches upon a range of issues that may be of interest to sociologists and criminologists alike: policing, surveillance, crime, and inequality. The book also sparked a debate around research ethics in the social sciences. These debates speak to some of the key issues that will be explored during your degree programme and may be interesting for you to think about. You can read some of these debates in a range of online publications, such as *The New York Times*"



**Recommended by  
Dr Charmian Werren,**

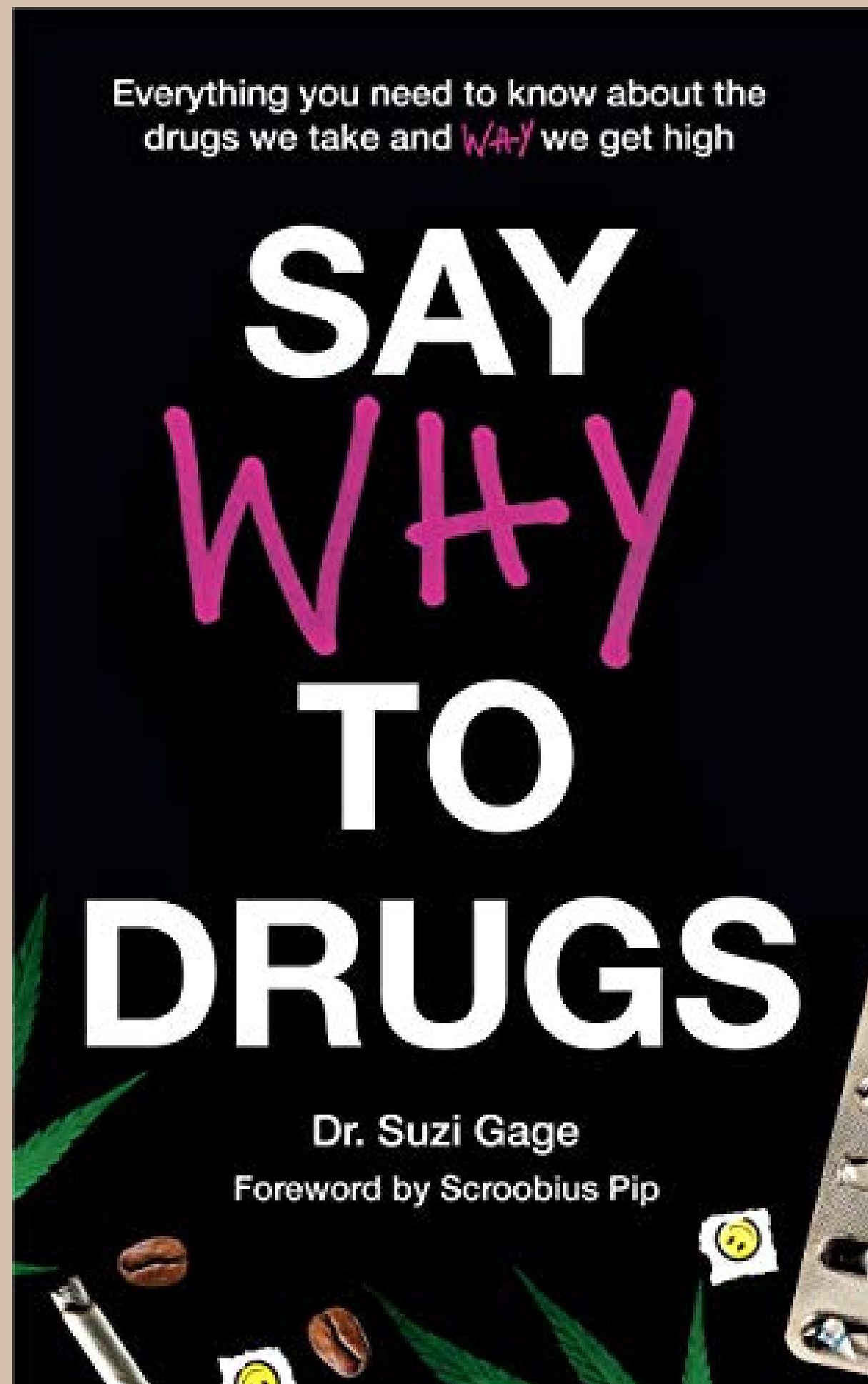
"This book is a great contribution to discussions around policing. Alex S. Vitale challenges the idea that certain forms of intervention (through, for example, diversity training, or improved employment practices) can solve the wider systemic issues within policing itself. Vitale makes the case for an 'end to policing' - exploring alternatives such as legalization, restorative justice and harm reduction. It is particularly relevant in the current moment as debates around police brutality and repression enter the mainstream media and public consciousness."

The problem is not police training, police diversity, or police methods. The problem is the dramatic and unprecedented expansion and intensity of policing in the last forty years, a fundamental shift in the role of police in society. The problem is policing itself.

**Alex S. Vitale**

# The End of Policing





## Recommended by Dr Mark Monaghan

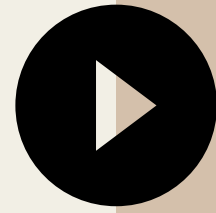


"This is a great book, which helps to challenge and debunk common myths and misconceptions that often circulate around drug use. Grounded in scientific research, the book provides a solid overview of how drugs work and what they do. This book is engaging and accessible and provides a good insight into an often hotly debated topic.

You can also listen to the Say Why to Drugs podcast [here](#)"

# Something to Listen To...

There are also some great criminology and social science podcasts available via many of the mainstream providers (e.g. Apple, Spotify). Some recommendations have been listed here, but feel free to explore and find your own too!



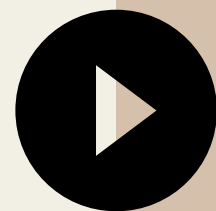
SAGE Criminology



University of Oxford Centre for  
Criminology Podcast



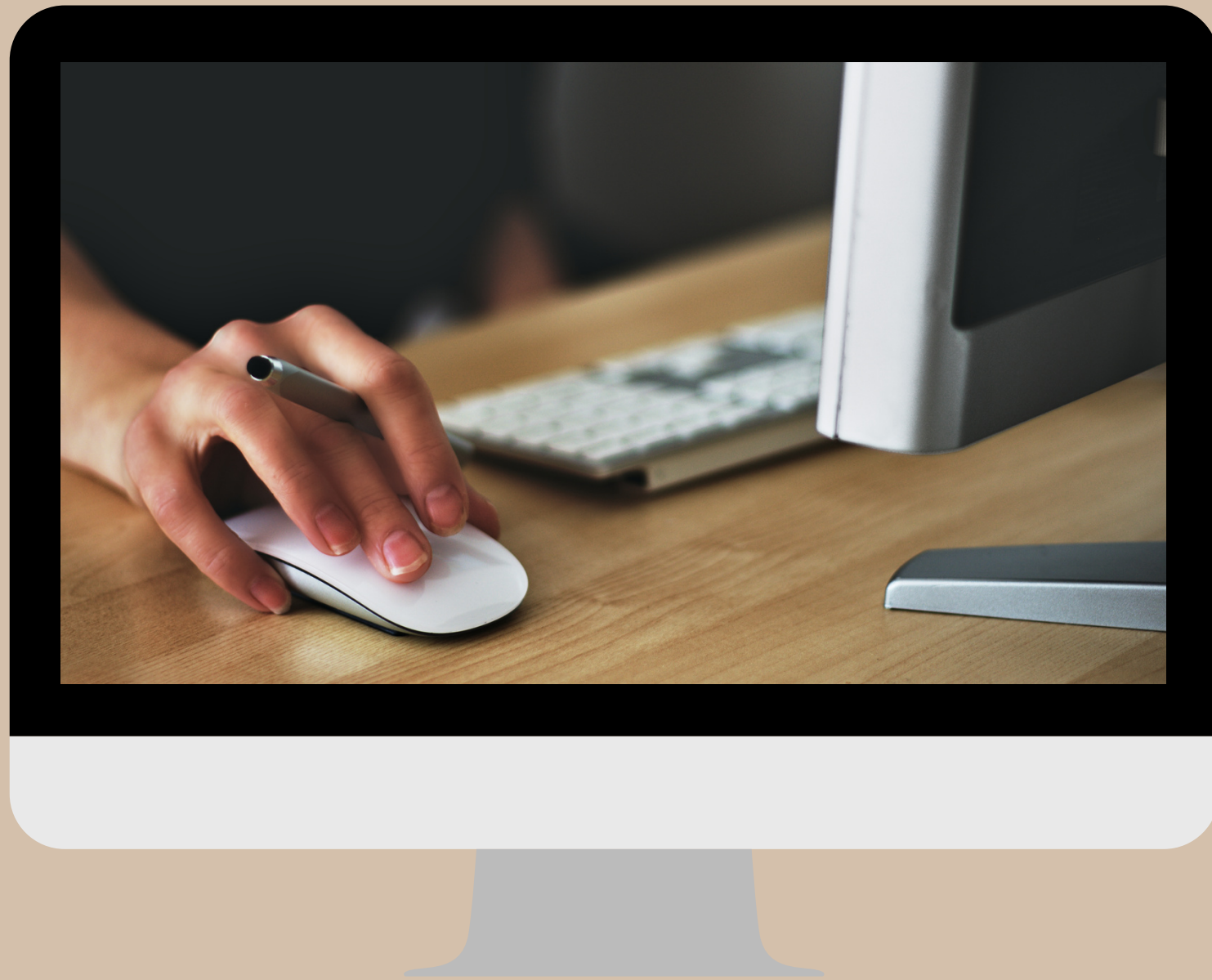
Thinking Allowed



Drug Science Podcast



# Online Resources



## DISCOVER SOCIETY

Discover Society is an online journal which cuts across politics, economics, sociology, criminology and social policy – a truly social science publication. But it is also written for the non-specialist. As such it offers lots of topical debates and discussions which will be relevant to your studies: <http://discoversociety.org/>

## THE CONVERSATION

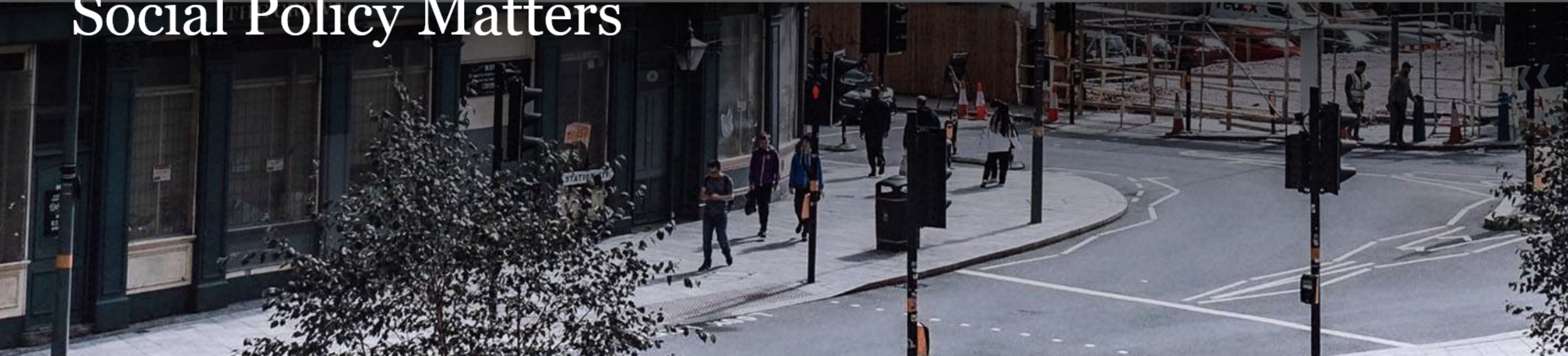
Academic rigour, journalistic flair

The Conversation is a website which contains short articles on a range of subjects written by academics. These articles are written in a more journalistic fashion than ordinary academic articles and is a great resource to help keep up with current academic debates: <https://theconversation.com/uk>



Our School - the School of Social Policy has recently launched a bi-monthly e-magazine, *Social Policy Matters*, where our students and academics share innovative research and opinions across the areas of sociology, social policy, criminology, health service management and social work. Feel free to check out the latest issue [here](#)

## Social Policy Matters





# Staff Research

You may know that our department is full of active researchers who explore a number of timely and relevant topics in their work. Our staff are often at the cutting edge of criminological research, exploring issues relating to prisons, drugs, youth culture and the criminal justice system. Read some short articles written by staff below:



DR ANNA KOTOVA

<https://theconversation.com/why-prisons-should-make-more-time-for-inmates-families-77975>



DR MARK MONAGHAN

<https://theconversation.com/should-the-uk-legalise-cannabis-58527>



# CONTACT AND FURTHER INFORMATION

There will be a final Q&A session with Dr Frankie Rogan on Thursday 3rd June at 5pm - please do register and attend if you'd like to ask any questions!

Please also feel free to get in touch outside of this time. If you have any general enquiries relating to the department, please do feel free to contact us on:

[ug-sp-soc-crim@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:ug-sp-soc-crim@contacts.bham.ac.uk)

Follow us on Twitter (@UoBSocialPolicy) and Instagram (@uobsocpol) for regular updates.

