SYLLABUS

AJ 105  JUSTICE SYSTEMS RESEARCH

COURSES DESCRIPTION:
This course provides students with the major principles of research methods applied to the field of administration of justice. It discusses the relationships among theory, research and practice in the justice process. The course will introduce students to basic research designs, methods of inquiry, sampling, statistics, and ethical issues in research.

The course is divided into three major parts:
1. The first part covers the beginning stages of the research process: logic of research, choosing a research topic, developing hypotheses, defining variables, and choosing a research design.

2. The second part introduces students to the basic processes of scientific research: measuring variables and sampling techniques.

3. The third part discusses the various data collection methods, such as survey research, observations, experiments and document research.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:
1. To appreciate the need for knowledge based on scientific research data in the field of criminal justice.

2. To understand the logic and principles of research methods.

3. To understand advantages and limitations of various research methods in order to become an intelligent and critical reader of research reports.

4. To be able to evaluate and use research findings appropriately for improvements of justice systems and programs.

5. To develop a basic competency in research design, sampling, data collection and data analysis in order to provide empirical data for reports, planning, interventions and innovations in the field of administration of justice.

COURSE TEXTS:

REQUIRED: Fitzgerald, Jack and Steven M. Cox. RESEARCH METHODS IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE

RECOMMENDED: Maxfield and Babbie, RESEARCH METHODS FOR CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND CRIMINOLOGY.

GRADING SYSTEM:

1. THREE EXAMINATION:
There will be three required exams in this class. The exams will consist of true-false and multiple choice questions. All three exams must be taken in order to pass the course. The three examinations are weighted equally.

First Examination 1/3
Second Examination 1/3
Third Examination 1/3
The final letter grade will be based on the following distribution:

A+ = 100-97,  A = 96-93,  A- = 92-90
B+ = 89-87,  B = 86-83,  B- = 82-80
C+ = 79-76,  C = 75-68,  C- = 67-65
D+ = 64-62,  D = 61-53,  D- = 52-50
and (F = 49-0)

2. MAKE-UP EXAM:
The department policy for make-up examinations will be followed. ONE make-up examination is allowed under extreme circumstances, only for students who have valid reasons. Permission to take a make-up examination has to be obtained prior to that particular exam. The student has to provide the proper documentation. This make-up examination will be taken during the last exam.

3. ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION:
Regular attendance is extremely important for this class. If you have to miss a class, you should borrow notes. Due to the nature of the materials in this course, it is very difficult to understand new information presented in lectures and discussions without sufficient background knowledge.

Do not hesitate to ask questions either in class or during my office hours. Class participation is strongly encouraged. Excellence in class participation can serve as extra credit for raising your final letter grade by half a grade, e.g., from B+ to A-.

4. RESEARCH PROPOSAL:
Every student is permitted to submit a research proposal for extra credit. It must be typed and submitted by December 2, 2002. A good proposal can serve as extra credit for raising your final letter grade by half a grade, e.g., from B+ to A-.

TOPICS AND ASSIGNED READINGS

I. LOGIC OF RESEARCH AND CHOOSING A RESEARCH PROBLEM

INTRODUCTION
Week 1 1. Research and Criminal Justice
Fitzgerald & Cox, Ch. 1

Sept. 2 No Class -- Labor Day

Week 2 2. Scientific Research, Perspectives and Ethics
Fitzgerald & Cox, Ch. 2

II. INITIAL STAGES OF DEDUCTIVE PROCESS

Week 3, 4 1. Theories, Hypotheses, and Variables
Fitzgerald & Cox, Ch. 3, pp. 62-68
   a. Choosing a Research Topic
   b. Identifying Units of Analysis
   c. Identifying Theories and Hypotheses
   d. Defining Concepts and Variables
   e. Measuring Variables
   f. Validity, Reliability and Precision

Week 5, 6 2. Research Designs: Exploratory Research, Descriptive Research, Prediction, Explanatory Research, and Evaluative Research
Fitzgerald & Cox, Ch. 3, pp. 68-77, 88-90.

September 30 FIRST EXAMINATION GOOD LUCK !!!

October 7 Library Day
III. SAMPLING

Week 7, 8, 9  Logic and Types of Samples
            Fitzgerald & Cox, Ch. 4
            a. Probability Sampling

Week 10  b. Non-Probability Sampling

Nov. 4  SECOND EXAMINATION – GOOD LUCK !!!

IV. DATA COLLECTION METHODS – TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

Week 11, 12  A. Survey Research
             Fitzgerald & Cox, Ch. 7, pp. 145-148
             Fitzgerald & Cox, Ch. 5
             1. Questionnaire Surveys
             2. Interview Surveys

Week 13  B. Observation & Field Studies
          Fitzgerald & Cox, Ch. 6, pp. 131-135.

Week 14, 15  C. Experiments
             1. Logic of Experimental Design
                Fitzgerald & Cox, Ch. 6, pp. 136-139.
             2. Types of Experimental Design
                Fitzgerald & Cox, Ch. 3, pp. 73-87.

December 2  Research Proposal Is Due.

December 9  Last Day of Class

December 17 (Tuesday) 7:15-9:30  FINAL EXAMINATION – GOOD LUCK !!!