

FALL 2000  
AJ 202, Section 1  
Wed 5:30-8:15pm  
Computer Classroom 321  
Computer Open Lab 332  
Ph 924-3295

Dr. Jan Johnston  
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*Office Hours:* Mon & Wed 1 – 5:30pm  
(except for staff meetings).  
Tuesdays by appointment.

## AJ 202

### SEMINAR IN JUSTICE SYSTEMS RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

#### **Course Description:**

An examination of research methods applied to solving problems and resolving issues in criminal justice; focus will be on the application of the scientific method to problem-solving and program evaluation.

**Learning Objectives** are for graduate students to develop:

- professional and intellectual skill in formulating research questions, choosing variables as indicators, managing and analyzing data, and presenting findings
- capacity to constructively criticize and evaluate research and to be a discerning consumer of research findings
- competency in using SPSS 8.0 (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) to undertake basic and applied research.

This course is in preparation for AJ203 where the emphasis will be more upon designing an evaluation research plan, choosing methods of data collection, and developing policy implications from the findings.

**Pre-Requisites:** Stat 95 and AJ105 or equivalents.

**Required Texts:**

George Dowdall, Kim Logio, Earl Babbie & Fred Halley (1999): *Adventures in Criminal Justice Research*. Rev. Ed. Thousand Oaks CA, Pine Forge.

Carol H. Weiss (1998) *Evaluation*. Second Ed. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

**Course Requirements and Grading:**

Non-graded weekly exercises using the computer in class and/or quizzes will be administered. A mid-term exam will involve an analysis and critique of a published piece of research. A written paper documenting the student's own research project, is due at the end of the semester. (See separate handout for instructions on the paper.) Students are expected to give oral presentations on their final paper at this time.

Grades will be made up of 15% for the completed exercises, 35% for the mid-term exam, and 50% for the final paper. Active participation in class & above average oral presentations will provide an opportunity for students to raise their grade by one half a level.

**Teaching Philosophy:**

This seminar is an interactive learning experience. After a review of the components of the research process, each class session will involve hands-on interaction with data on the computer. The course also provides opportunity to pursue independent research, possibly as a *prelude* to a masters thesis.

In accord with departmental policy, make-up exams and acceptance of late reports after the due date will be provided only in extreme cases and only where appropriate documentation is provided. However, every encouragement is given to students who wish to learn from their mistakes and earn high grades. Make-up or re-takes of the mid-term exam can be

done at the time of the final exam. The final paper, due November 29<sup>th</sup> may be re-written and re-submitted on or before December 20<sup>th</sup>.

### CLASS SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNED READINGS

- Aug 30 Introduction and review of course: basic, applied & evaluation research; ethical principles.  
*Lab*: Introduction to SPSS: Dowdall et al. Chpt 1, & 2.
- Sep 6 Theory, conceptual propositions & definitions, hypothesis and variables.  
*Lab*: Coding, entering & accessing data: Dowdall et al. Chpt 5.
- Sep 13 The logic of measurement: validity, reliability, multiple indicators, levels of measurement & units of analysis.  
*Lab*: Exploring data sets. Dowdall et al. Chpt 3 & 4
- Sep 20 Research design & sampling. Weiss Chpt 8, 9 & 10.  
*Lab*: Univariate analysis: Dowdall et al. Chpt 6, 7 & 8.  
Describing a variable using frequency tables, means and standard deviations, modes & medians; graphic illustrations using histograms, pie charts and scattergrams.
- Sept 27 Methods of collecting and coding data. Weiss Chpt 6&7  
*Lab*: Univariate analysis: Dowdall et al. Chpts 6, 7 & 8.  
Recoding and modifying variables
- Oct 4 Analyzing and interpreting data. Weiss Chpt 12.  
*Lab*: Univariate analysis (cont.) Dowdall et al. Chpt 9 & 10  
Creating composite measures and indexes
- Oct 11 Presentation of data and critiquing research. Weiss Chpt 12.  
*Lab*: Bivariate analysis: Dowdall et al. Chpts. 11, 12 & 13.  
Crosstabulation and correlation
- Oct 18 Presentation of data and critiquing research. Weiss Chpt 12.  
*Lab*: Bivariate analysis (cont.) Dowdall et al. Chpts 14, 15, & 16. Measures of association – lambda, gamma, Chi-Square, Pearson's  $r$

- Oct 25 MID-TERM EXAM
- Nov 1 Introduction to theoretical modeling.  
*Lab*: Multivariate analysis. Dowdall et al. Chpts 17 & 18  
Regression, *t* tests, analysis of variance, epsilon
- Nov 8 Path analysis.  
*Lab*: Multivariate analysis (cont.) Dowdall et al. Chpts 19 & 20. Odds ratios, logistic regression
- Nov 15 Preparing research reports and proposals. Weiss Chpt 13.  
*Lab*: Review.
- Nov 23 NO CLASS – Thanksgiving Break
- Nov 29 Class presentations of individual research reports  
FINAL PAPER DUE
- Dec 13 Class presentations of individual research projects.  
Feedback on final paper from instructor
- Dec 20 Class presentations of individual research projects  
(if necessary). RE-SUBMISSIONS OF FINAL PAPER DUE  
on or before Wednesday, December 20<sup>th</sup>, 5:30pm.