

FALL 2001
AJ 202 Section 1
Mon 5:30-8:15 pm

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Office Hours: Mon, Wed 1-5:30pm
(except for faculty meetings).
Other times by appointment.

AJ202

Seminar in Justice Research & 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 methods to problem-solving and program evaluation.

Learning Objectives:

Graduate students will 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 10.0 (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*. 2nd Ed. New Jersey, Prentice Hall.

Course Requirements and Grading:

Weekly assignments involve research planning exercises and data management and analysis using the computer and are graded credit/no-credit. 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 illustrated by graphics on their final paper at this time.

Grades will be made up of 15% for the weekly assignments, 35% for the mid-term exam, and 50% for the final paper. Active participation in class and 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. Students have the choice of working in small groups of 2 or 3 or working alone on the research project. However, all final written reports must be individually produced.

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 December 3rd may be re-written and re-submitted on or before Monday, December 17th, 2001.

CLASS SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNED READINGS

- Aug 27 Introduction and review of course: basic, applied & evaluation research; ethical principles.
Lab: Introduction to SPSS: Dowdall et al. Chpt 1 & 2.
- Sep 10 Theory, conceptual propositions & definitions, hypothesis & variables.
Lab: Coding, entering and accessing data: Dowdall et al. Chpt 5
- Sep 17 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 24 Research design & sampling. Weiss Chpt 8,9,10.
Lab: Univariate analysis. Dowdall et al. Chpts 6,7 & 8.
Describing a variable using frequency tables, means & Standard deviations, modes and medians; graphic illustrations using histograms, pie charts and scattergrams.
- Oct 1 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 8 Analyzing and interpreting data. Weiss Chpt 12.
Lab: Univariate analysis (cont.) Dowdall et al. Chpts 9 & 10.
Creating composite measures and indexes.
- Oct 15 Presentation of data and critiquing research. Weiss Chpt 12.
Lab: Bivariate analysis. Dowdall et al. Chpts 11,12, & 13.
Crosstabulation and correlation.
- Oct 22 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.
- Oct 29 MID-TERM EXAM

- Nov 5 Introduction to theoretical modeling.
Lab: Multivariate analysis. Dowdall et al. Chpts 17 & 18
Regression, T tests, ANOVA, epsilon
- Nov 12 Path analysis.
Lab: Multivariate analysis (cont). Dowdall et al. Chpts 19 &
20. Odds ratios, logistic regression.
- Nov 19 Preparing research reports and proposals. Weiss Chpt 13.
Lab: Review
- Nov 26 Preparation of research project.
- Dec 3 FINAL PAPER DUE
Class presentations of individual research projects
- Dec 10 Class presentations of individual research projects
Feedback on final paper from instructor
- Dec 17 Class presentations of individual research projects
(if necessary).
RE-SUBMISSIONS OF FINAL PAPER DUE
ON OR BEFORE MONDAY, DECEMBER 17, 5:30PM.