

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE 105
RESEARCH METHODS

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Class meetings: T-Th. 10:30-11:45 AM
Office hours: T 2:00-5:30 PM; Th. 9:00-10:30 AM

COURSE DESCRIPTION & OBJECTIVES:

This course will systematically cover the basic elements of social science research methodology, with an emphasis on criminal justice research. We will learn about the necessary components of research methods to understand, critique, design, and carry out sound research. This class will cover: critically reading research on crime and justice issues, conceiving a workable criminal justice research question, selecting an appropriate method for the research question, designing a criminal justice research study, ethical issues faced when conducting criminal justice research, and how to make sense of research findings.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

In addition to participating in the class discussions and activities on Tuesdays and Thursdays, you need to: complete the required readings prior to the class for which they are assigned; complete a cumulative research project that will be the compilation of several interrelated assignments done throughout the semester, and take two in-class objective format exams and 1 in-class quiz that will cover the readings and lecture materials. The required projects can be on any of a range of topics related to the criminal justice, depending upon your interests.

REQUIRED TEXT:

Maxfield, Michael and Earl Babbie. Research Methods for Criminal Justice and Criminology, 3rd Edition. West/Wadsworth Publishing.

GRADING, MISSED EXAM & LATE ASSIGNMENTS POLICY

Only legitimately excused missed exams can be made up. My policy for what constitutes legitimate excuses generally include the following: your own serious illness or injury (documented by a physician); a documented death in your immediate family; unavoidable, documented, schedule conflict for SCHOOL related purposes (i.e., required by athletic team to be on the road). Only under extreme and unavoidable emergency circumstances will you be able to make up an exam for a legitimate excuse if you have NOT given notice of your absence before the actual scheduled exam period. In other words, don't report your absence after the exam was given, unless you can document your complete and total inability to do so before the exam. You may only make up 1 scheduled exam during the semester, so if you are not in attendance for more than 1 scheduled

exam, you will receive zero points for any additional missed exams. Missed exams #1 & #2 will be taken on the final scheduled day of class during the class period. The make-up exams will be in a different format than the original exams. The missed final period will be arranged if necessary, and will also be in a different format than the original final.

The assignment deadlines are firm deadlines. **NO LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED** unless there is a documented emergency which prevents you from turning it in. Computer / printer breakdowns are generally **NOT** legitimate emergencies. The final project will be graded down 10% for each **CALENDAR** day late. You are responsible for knowing any schedule changes for exams or assignment due dates that were announced in class, even if you were not in attendance.

Your final grade for the course will be based upon your performances on the in-class exams, the assignments, and the final project, as follows:

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Quiz: | 60 points maximum |
| Midterm: | 250 points maximum |
| Final: | 250 points maximum |
| Assignments: | 240 points maximum (6 assignments x 40 pts.) |
| Final project: | 200 points maximum |
| Total possible: | 1000 points |

A range = 900 points or above

B range = 800-899 points

C range = 700-799 points

D range = 600-699 points

F = 599 points or below

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF TOPICS / ASSIGNMENTS / DUE DATES (subject to change if necessary):

WEEK 1 (August 27-29): Introduction to asking and answering research questions.

Read: By Thursday: Chapter 1.

WEEK 2 (Sept. 3-5): Theory and causation; reading social science research.

Read: By Tuesday: Chapter 2; handout.

Read: By Thursday: Chapter 3.

Assignment #1--your responses to the handout--due Thursday, September 5.

WEEK 3 (Sept. 10-12): Introduction to research design.

Read: By Tuesday: Chapter 4.

Assignment #2--your research question--due Thursday, September 12.

WEEK 4 (Sept. 17-19): From concepts to measures.

Read: By Tuesday: Chapter 5.

Quiz: Thursday, September 19.

WEEK 5 (Sept. 24-26): Measurement issues in criminal justice research.

Read: By Tuesday: Chapter 6.

Assignment #3--the relevant literature list--due Tuesday, September 24.

BRING ONE RESEARCH ARTICLE TO CLASS, Tuesday, 9-24

WEEK 6 (Oct. 1-3): Ethics and research.

Read: By Thursday: Chapter 8 (note switch in chapter order).

WEEK 7 (Oct. 8-10): Introduction to data collection.

Read: By Tuesday: Chapter 9 (note switch in chapter order).

Assignment #4—single article summary--due Tuesday, October 8.

WEEK 8 (Oct. 15-17): Experimental designs.

Read: By Tuesday: Chapter 7 (note switch in chapter order).

WEEK 9 (Oct. 22-24): Probability sampling; survey research.

Read: By Thursday: Chapter 10.

MIDTERM: Tuesday, October 22

WEEK 10 (Oct. 29-31): Nonprobability sampling; field research.

Read: By Tuesday: Chapter 11.

Assignment #5--the relevant literature synthesis--due Tuesday October 29

WEEK 11 (Nov.5-7): Unobtrusive methods.

Read: By Thursday: Chapter 12.

WEEK 12 (Nov. 12-14): RESEARCH DESIGN PROJECT WORK

NO FORMAL CLASSES THIS WEEK--REQUIRED INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS ON RESEARCH PROJECTS

WEEK 13 (Nov. 19-21): Program evaluation.

Read: By Tuesday: Chapter 13.

Assignment #6--the research design--due Thursday, November 21.

WEEK 14 (Nov.26): Policy analysis.

NO CLASS THURSDAY--THANKSGIVING

WEEK 15 (Dec.3-5): Making sense of findings; Communicating research findings.

Read: By Tuesday: Chapter 14.

WEEK 16 (Dec. 10): EXAM 1 & 2 MAKE-UPS; FINAL PROJECTS

FINAL PROJECT DUE: Tuesday, December 10 in class.

Final exam during scheduled exam period: Tuesday, December 17, 10:45 AM-NOON. (NOTE LATER START TIME)