

Fall 2003

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE 105  
RESEARCH METHODS

Instructor: Mona Lynch  
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Class meetings: T-Th. 9:00-10:15 AM, room TBA  
Office hours: T 12:30-3:00 PM; Th. 12:30-2:30 PM

COURSE DESCRIPTION & OBJECTIVES:

This course will systematically cover the basic elements of social science research methodology. 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 justice issues, conceiving a workable research question, selecting an appropriate method for the research question, designing a research study, ethical issues faced when conducting social science 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 proposal that will be the compilation of several interrelated assignments done throughout the semester, and take 1 in-class quiz and two in-class objective format exams which will cover the readings and lecture materials. The required projects can be on any of a range of topics, depending upon your interests.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

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. You may only make up 1 scheduled test during the semester, so if you are not in attendance for more than 1 scheduled exam or quiz, you will receive zero points for any additional missed exams. Missed quizzes and midterms will be taken on the final scheduled day of class during the class period. The make-up tests may be in a different format than the original exams. The missed final period will be arranged if necessary, and may 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.

Please familiarize yourself with the SJSU policy on academic dishonesty, available in pdf format at: <http://www.sjsu.edu/academic.html>. It is also published in the SJSU print catalog. Use those rules and definitions to guide your conduct in this class.

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:	100 points maximum
Midterm:	200 points maximum
Final:	200 points maximum
Assignments:	300 points maximum (6 assignments x 50 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

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

WEEK 1 (August 26-28): Introduction to asking and answering research questions.

**Read:** By Tuesday: Chapter 1.

WEEK 2 (September 2-4): Theory and causation; reading social science research.

**Read:** By Tuesday: Chapter 2; online article: Payne, Brian K. and Robert Riedel Jr. (2002).

Gun control attitudes and the criminal justice student: Do differences exist? College Student Journal, 36, 314-323. Available in full text on Expanded Academic Index.

**Read:** By Thursday: Chapter 3.

**Assignment #1-- answers to questions about online article due Thursday, September 4**

WEEK 3 (Sept. 9-11): Introduction to research design.

**Read:** By Tuesday: Chapter 4.

**Assignment #2--your research question--due Thursday, September 11.**

WEEK 4 (Sept. 16-18): From concepts to measures.

**Read:** By Tuesday: Chapter 5.

**Quiz: Thursday, September 20.**

WEEK 5 (September 23-25): Measurement issues in criminal justice research.

**Read:** By Tuesday: Chapter 6.

**Assignment #3--the relevant literature list--due Tuesday, September 23.**

**BRING ONE RESEARCH ARTICLE TO CLASS, Tuesday, 9-23**

WEEK 6 (September 30-October 2): Ethics and research.

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

WEEK 7 (Oct. 7-9): Introduction to data collection and experimental designs.

**Read:** By Tuesday: Chapter 9 up to page 218 (note switch in chapter order).

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

**Assignment #4—single article summary--due Tuesday, October 7.**

WEEK 8 (Oct. 14-16): Experimental designs.

**MIDTERM: Thursday, October 16**

WEEK 9 (Oct. 21-23): Probability sampling; survey research.

**Read:** By Tuesday: page 218-238 in ch. 9 & Chapter 10.

**Assignment #5--the relevant literature synthesis--due Thursday, October 23**

WEEK 10 (October 28-30): Nonprobability sampling; field research.

**Read:** By Tuesday: p. 238-242 of ch. 9

**READ:** By Thursday: Chapter 11.

WEEK 11 (November 4-6): Field observations & research design independent work

WEEK 12 (November 11-13): Unobtrusive methods.

**Read:** By Tuesday: Chapter 12..

WEEK 13 (November 18-20): Research methods consultations; independent work

WEEK 14 (November 25): Program evaluation and policy analysis.

**Read:** By Tuesday: Chapter 13.

**Assignment #6--the research design--due Tuesday, November 25.**

WEEK 15 (December 2-4): Making sense of findings; Communicating research findings.

**Read:** By Tuesday: Chapter 14.

WEEK 16 (December 9): QUIZ/MIDTERM MAKE-UPS; FINAL PROJECTS

**FINAL PROJECT DUE: Tuesday, December 9 in class.**

**Final exam during scheduled exam period: Friday, December 12, 8:15-9:30 AM.**

**NOTE LATER STARTING TIME!**