

Fall 2005

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE 105
RESEARCH METHODS

Instructor: Mona Lynch
office / phone: MH 513 / 924-2958
e-mail: mlynch@email.sjsu.edu
Office hours: T 12:30-3:00 PM; Th. 9:30-10:30 AM, 12:30-2:00 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.

Upon completion of this course, you will be able to: identify, locate, read, and utilize scholarly published research on criminal justice and related social science issues; understand which methods are appropriate for different kinds of research questions; pose a research question and design an appropriate study to answer that question; and evaluate and critique social science research.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

In addition to participating in the class discussions and activities online, you need to: complete the required weekly readings during the week they are assigned; take 2 online tests and one on-line comprehensive exam which will cover the readings and course website materials. Each week, I will post discussion questions or problems on the discussion board of the course website. It is a course requirement that you respond to these discussion questions each week of the semester; and occasionally post your own discussion questions, as directed by me. You will also need to post 2 of your 5 assignments on the discussion board so that we can generate discussion about them within the class (you will also need to turn them in to me via email as word documents). The discussion board should be viewed as a central tool for you in this class—in the absence of meeting in person, we will be creating a virtual classroom through the discussion board, and I encourage all of you to use it above and beyond the required use. It is a place to post questions if you need clarification on anything, seek advice from your peers on your project topic, share resources and explore ideas.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Maxfield, Michael and Earl Babbie. (2004) Research Methods for Criminal Justice and Criminology, 4th Edition. West/Wadsworth Publishing.

GRADING & ASSIGNMENTS POLICY

The assignment deadlines are FIRM deadlines. **NO LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED. Assignments 2-5 are to be emailed to me as MS Word document attachments to the email address listed above.** Please make sure your NAME is on each assignment document! Each assignment, including the orientation quiz (Assignment 1) is worth a maximum of 50 points.

You must post to each week's discussion question by the weekly deadline—**YOU WILL NOT GET CREDIT FOR YOUR REQUIRED RESPONSES IF THEY ARE LATE!** You can post your own questions or discussion outside of the required discussion at any time.

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. Violation of this policy will result in a MINIMUM consequence of a referral to Student Affairs and zero credit on any affected work.

Your final grade for the course will be based upon your performances on the online tests, weekly participation in online discussions, and performance on assignments. You can check your assignment, test, and discussion participation grades throughout the semester under the "My Grades" link on the website, as follows:

Online exams:	400 points maximum (2 @ 100 points each; final @ 200 points)
Assignments:	250 points maximum (5 x 50 points each)
Discussion	150 points maximum (15 weekly part. x 10 points each)
Total possible:	800 points

A range = 720 points or above

B range = 640-719 points

C range = 560-639 points

D range = 480-559 points

F = 479 points or below

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

WEEK 1: Introduction to asking and answering research questions.

By August 30, 5 PM:

READ: Chapter 1, Lecture 1, explore website.

RESPOND: To discussion board under "Welcome."

ASSIGNMENT 1: Take orientation quiz, under "Quizzes" section.

WEEK 2: The scientific method; theory in criminal justice; reading social science research; Introduction to the San Jose Library.

By September 6, 5 PM

READ: Chapter 2, Lecture 2.

RESPOND: To discussion board under "Lecture 2"

WEEK 3: Causation in research; introduction to research design.

By September 13, 5 PM

READ: Chapter 3; Lecture 3, and the 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. This article is available in full text on Expanded Academic Index through the SJ Library site. You should be able to find this article in full text after you read Lecture 2.

ASSIGNMENT 2: Answers to questions about online article, posted under "Assignments" as Assignment 2, due to me no later than 9-13-05, 5 PM.

RESPOND: To discussion board under "Lecture 3."

WEEK 4: From concepts to measures.

By September 20, 5 PM

READ: Chapter 5; Lecture 4.

RESPOND: To discussion board under "Lecture 4."

WEEK 5: Measurement issues in criminal justice research.

By September 27, 5 PM

READ: Chapter 6; Lecture 5.

RESPOND: To discussion board under "Lecture 5."

ONLINE EXAM #1 must be completed by 9-27-05, 5 PM.

WEEK 6: Ethics and research.

By October 4, 5 PM

READ: Chapter 4 (note switch in chapter order); Lecture 6.

RESPOND: To discussion board under "Lecture 6."

ASSIGNMENT #3: Research question and list of 5 scholarly reference relevant to your research project in APA format due no later than 10-4-05, 5 PM; Research Question must also be posted on discussion board.

WEEK 7: Introduction to data collection and experimental designs.

By October 11, 5 PM

READ: Chapter 8 up to page 218 and then Chapter 7 (note switch in chapter order);
Lecture 7.

RESPOND: To discussion board under "Lecture 7."

WEEK 8: Experimental designs.

By October 18, 5 PM

READ: "Experiment article" under "Article Reading Assignments" on course website;
Lecture 8

RESPOND: To discussion board under "Lecture 8."

ASSIGNMENT #4: (single article summary in APA format) due no later than 10-18-05, 5 PM.

WEEK 9: Survey research: questionnaire construction and administration.

By October 25, 5 PM

READ: Chapter 9; Lecture 9.

RESPOND: To discussion board under "Lecture 9"

WEEK 10: Survey research: defining a population and selecting a sample using probability sampling techniques.

By November 1, 5 PM

READ: page 218-238 in Chapter 8; "Survey article" under "Article Reading Assignments" on course website; Lecture 10.

ONLINE EXAM #2 must be completed by 11-1-05 by 5 PM.

RESPOND: To discussion board under "Lecture 10."

WEEK 11: Nonprobability sampling & field research.

By November 8, 5 PM

READ: p. 238-243 of Chapter 8 and Chapter 10; "Field methods article" under "Article Reading Assignments" on course website; Lecture 11.

RESPOND: To discussion board under "Lecture 11."

WEEK 12: Unobtrusive methods.

By November 15, 5 PM

READ: Chapter 11; "Content analysis article" under "Article Reading Assignments" on course website; Lecture 12.

RESPOND: To discussion board under "Lecture 12."

WEEK 13: Program evaluation and policy analysis.

By November 22, 5 PM

READ: Chapter 12 and "Program evaluation article" under "Article Reading Assignments" on course website Lecture 13.

RESPOND: To discussion board under "Lecture 13."

ASSIGNMENT #5 (your research design) must be turned in AND posted on the class discussion board NO LATER THAN 11-22-05 by 5 PM.

WEEK 14: Making sense of findings; Communicating research findings.

By November 29, 5 PM

READ: Chapter 13.

RESPOND: To discussion board under "What does it all add up to?"

WEEK 15 (December 6): **ONLINE EXAM OPENS; MUST BE COMPLETED BY 12-13-05, 5 PM.**

RESPOND: To discussion board under "Final Comments."