

SPRING 2004/05

JUSTICE STUDIES 105  
RESEARCH METHODS

Instructor: Brian Colwell

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Class meetings: MW. 7:30-8:45 AM

Office hours: M and W 8:45-9:30 AM (or by appointment)

COURSE DESCRIPTION & OBJECTIVES:

This course will systematically cover the basic elements of social science research and 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 of and presenting 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 introduction to the fundamentals of data analysis.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

In addition to participating in the class discussions and activities on Mondays and Wednesdays, 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, 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. A Scantron is NOT required to take the Quiz, Midterm or Final Exam.

REQUIRED TEXT:

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

REQUIRED MATERIALS:

Calculator ('Scientific' calculator suggested. Will not be used until, roughly, the final 2 weeks of class)

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, 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 (see above). Computer / printer breakdowns are 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. Changes do tend to occur, so make sure you don't miss anything.

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:	50 points maximum
Midterm:	100 points maximum
Final:	100 points maximum
Assignments:	100 points maximum (4 assignments x 25 pts.)
Final project:	150 points maximum
Total possible:	500 points

A range = 450 points or above

B range = 400-449 points

C range = 350-399points

D range = 300-349 points

F = 299 points or below

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

WEEK 1 (Jan 26th): Introduction to asking and answering research questions.

Read: By Wednesday: Chapter 1.

WEEK 2 (Jan 31-Feb.2<sup>nd</sup>): Theory; reading social science research.

**Library Orientation. Monday January 31<sup>th</sup> 8am. Rm. 213 of the San Jose (MLK) Library. We will walk over there from class at 7:45.**

Read: By Wednesday: Chapter 2. (pgs. 29-44)

WEEK 3 (Feb 7-9): Research Ethics.

Read: By Wednesday: Chapter 3 (pgs.51-69)

**DUE Wednesday, Feb. 8<sup>th</sup>: Assignment #1—single article summary**

WEEK 4 (Feb 14-16): Causation and Causal Inference.

Read: By Monday: Review Chapter 1 (pgs 21-23), Chapter 4 (pgs. 78-86)

**Quiz: Wednesday, Feb. 16th.**

WEEK 5 (Feb. 21-23): The Research Endeavor.

Read: By Monday: Chapter 4. (pgs 90-111)

**DUE Wednesday, Feb. 23<sup>rd</sup> : Assignment #2 –Research Question and References**

WEEK 6 (Feb 28- March 2nd) Concepts, Operationalization and Measurement

Read: By Monday: Chapter 5 (pgs.114-134)

WEEK 7 (March 7-9): Criminal Justice Measures

Read: By Monday: Chapter 6

WEEK 8 (March 14-16): Introduction to data collection

Read: By Monday: page 209-217 Chapter 8 (note switch in chapter order).

**MIDTERM: Wednesday, March 16th**

WEEK 9 (March 21-23): Experimental Designs.

Read: By Monday: Chapter 7 pgs. (174-199)

WEEK 10 : (March 28-30) **SPRING BREAK!!! NO CLASS!! SORRY FOLKS!!**

WEEK 11 (April 4<sup>th</sup>-6th): Probability sampling; Nonprobability sampling

**DUE Monday April 4<sup>th</sup>: Assignment #3--Literature Review and Argument.**

Read: By Monday: page 217-237 in ch. 8.

Read: By Wednesday: page 237-242 in ch. 8

WEEK 12 (April 11-13): Survey Research and Design; Field Research.

Read: By Monday: Chapter 9 (pgs.245-273)

Read: By Wednesday: Chapter 10.

WEEK 13 (April 18-20): Unobtrusive methods

Read: By Wednesday: Chapter 11.

WEEK 14 (April 25-27 ): Group Meetings

Monday/Wednesday: Group Meetings

WEEK 15 (May. 2<sup>nd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup>): Interpreting Data: Crosstabs and Statistical Inference.

**DUE Monday, May 2<sup>nd</sup>. Assignment #4--Research Design**

Read: By Monday: Chapter 13 pgs 393-405.

Read: By Wednesday: Chapter 13 pgs. 418-431

WEEK 16 (May 9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup>): Multivariate Analysis

Read: By Monday: Chapter 13 pgs 405-418

**FINAL PROJECT DUE: December 6<sup>th</sup>.**

WEEK 17: May 16<sup>th</sup>: Flex-day, To Be Determined

**Final exam during scheduled exam period: WEDNESDAY, MAY 25<sup>TH</sup>, 7:15-9:30 AM**

**NOTE EARLIER STARTING TIME!**