

FALL 2006/7

SAN JOSE STATE UNIVERSITY  
JUSTICE STUDIES 105  
RESEARCH METHODS

Instructor: Brian Colwell  
e-mail: [bcolwell@stanford.edu](mailto:bcolwell@stanford.edu) (I'm good about checking it.)  
Class meetings: T, TH. 7:30-8:45 AM  
Office hours: T and TH 10:30-Noon (or by appointment)  
Office location: TBA

**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.

**PREREQUISITE:** Bus 90 or Stat 95 or SocS 15 or Soci 102 (or equivalent) or instructor consent.

**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 required to take the Quiz, Midterm and Final Exam. (Although non-multiple choice questions will also be included)

**REQUIRED TEXT:**

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

**REQUIRED MATERIALS:**

Calculator (I suggest a 'Scientific' calculator. It will not be needed until, roughly, the final 3 weeks of class)

**COURSE DROP POLICY**

I may drop any student that does not show up to the first two days of class. Beyond that, **it is your responsibility to make sure classes are dropped.** I will not assume your intentions and will grade any student, regardless of amount of days absent or work missed, according to the grading guidelines detailed below.

#### GRADING, MISSED EXAM & LATE ASSIGNMENTS POLICY, PLAGIARISM

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 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 happen, so make sure you don't miss anything.

Your Please familiarize yourself with the SJSU policy on academic dishonesty, available in pdf format at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/S04-12.pdf>. It is also published in the SJSU print catalog. Use those rules and definitions to guide your conduct in this class.

#### GRADING SCHEME

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:	25 points maximum
Midterm:	100 points maximum
Final:	100 points maximum
Assignments:	75 points maximum (3 assignments x 25 pts.)
Final project:	100 points maximum
Total possible:	400 points

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

WEEK 1 (Aug 24th): Introduction to asking and answering research questions.

**Read:** By Thursday: Chapter 1.

WEEK 2 (Aug 29-Aug.31<sup>st</sup>): Theory; reading social science research.

**Library Orientation. Monday August 29<sup>th</sup> 9am. Rm. 217 of the San Jose (MLK)**

**Library. We will walk over there from class at 9:05.**

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

WEEK 3 (Sept. 5- 7): Research Ethics and Causation.

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

WEEK 4 (Sept 12-14): Causation and Causal Inference.

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

**Quiz: Wednesday, September 14th.**

WEEK 5 (Sept. 19-21): The Research Endeavor.

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

**DUE Assignment #1 –Research Question and References 09/19**

**BRING ONE RESEARCH ARTICLE TO CLASS,**

WEEK 6 (Sept 26-28) Concepts, Operationalization and Measurement

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

WEEK 7 (Oct 3-5): Criminal Justice Measures

**Read:** By Tuesday: Chapter 6

WEEK 8 (Oct 10-12): Introduction to data collection and Brief Midterm Review (Mon)

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

**MIDTERM: Wednesday, Oct. 12th**

WEEK 9 (Oct. 17-19): Individual Project Meetings

Tuesday /Thursday: Individual Meetings

WEEK 10 (Oct. 24-26): Experimental Designs

**DUE Assignment #2 Tues. Oct. 24<sup>th</sup> —The ‘Front End’**

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

WEEK 11 (Oct. 31-Nov. 2): Probability sampling; Nonprobability sampling

**Read:** By Tuesday: page 217-237 in ch. 8.

**Read:** By Thursday: page 237-242 in ch. 8

WEEK 12 (Nov 7-9): Survey Research and Design; Field Research.

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

**Read:** By Thursday: Chapter 10.

WEEK 13 (Nov 14-16): Individual Project Meetings

Tuesday / Thursday: Individual Meetings

WEEK 14 (Nov. 21-23): Unobtrusive Methods and Secondary Research

**DUE Assignment #3 Thurs. Nov. 23--Research Design**

**Read:** By Tuesday: Chapter 11

WEEK 15 (Nov. 28-30.): Interpreting Data: Crosstabs and Statistical Inference.

**Read:** By Tuesday: Chapter 13 pgs 393-405.

**Read:** By Thursday: Chapter 13 pgs. 418-431

WEEK 16 (Dec.5-7): Multivariate Analysis

**Read:** By Tuesday: Chapter 13 pgs 405-418

**FINAL PROJECT DUE: December 5<sup>th</sup>.**

Thursday Dec 7<sup>th</sup>: Exam Make-Up

**Final exam during scheduled exam period: Friday, Dec. 15th, 7:15-9:30 AM**

**NOTE EARLIER STARTING TIME!**

### **Academic Integrity Statement**

Academic integrity is essential to the mission of San José State University. As such, students are expected to perform their own work (except when collaboration is expressly permitted by the course instructor) without the use of any outside resources. Students are not permitted to use old tests, quizzes when preparing for exams, nor may they consult with students who have already taken the exam. When practiced, academic integrity ensures that all students are fairly graded. Violations to the Academic Integrity Policy undermine the educational process and will not be tolerated. It also demonstrates a lack of respect for oneself, fellow students and the course instructor and can ruin the university's reputation and the value of the degrees it offers. We all share the obligation to maintain an environment which practices academic integrity. Violators of the Academic Integrity Policy will be subject to failing this course and being reported to the Office of Student Conduct & Ethical Development for disciplinary action which could result in suspension or expulsion from San José State University. The policy on academic integrity can be found at: [http://sa.sjsu.edu/student\\_conduct](http://sa.sjsu.edu/student_conduct)

To better understand plagiarism and to aid you in making sure that you are not plagiarizing, please see me and/or visit: <http://tutorials.sjlibrary.org/plagiarism/index.htm>

### **American with Disabilities Act**

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with DRC to establish a record of their disability.

Justice Studies Department