

JUSTICE STUDIES 105
RESEARCH METHODS

Instructor: Mona Lynch
office / phone: MH 508 / 924-2958
e-mail: mlynch@email.sjsu.edu
Office hours: T 10:00-12:00 noon; Wed. 2:00-4:00 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 10 online quizzes which will cover the readings and course website materials; complete 4 written assignments; and complete a final research proposal that builds on the assignments. 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 4 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 TEXT:

Maxfield, Michael and Earl Babbie. (2006) Basics of Research Methods for Criminal Justice and Criminology. West/Wadsworth Publishing.

GRADING & ASSIGNMENTS POLICY

The assignment and quiz deadlines are FIRM deadlines. **Assignments 1-4 are to be emailed to me as MS Word document attachments via the email program in WebCT.** Please make sure your NAME is on each assignment document! Each assignment is worth a maximum of 50 points. **NO LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED & NO LATE QUIZZES CAN BE TAKEN UNLESS YOU PROVIDE DOCUMENTATION OF A LEGITIMATE ABSENCE THAT PREVENTED YOUR COMPLETION OF THE QUIZ OR ASSIGNMENT DURING THE ENTIRE WEEK IT WAS DUE.** Legitimate absence includes serious illness, travel on an SJSU sanctioned trip for school related business (i.e., for athletics), and death in the immediate family.

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 quizzes, weekly participation in online discussions, and performance on assignments and final proposal project. You can check your assignment, test, and discussion participation grades throughout the semester under the "My Grades" link on the website, as follows:

Online quizzes:	500 points maximum (10 @ 50 points each)
Assignments:	200 points maximum (4 @ 50 points each)
Discussion	300 points maximum (15 partic. @ 20 points each)
Final Proposal	200 points maximum
Total possible:	1200 points

A range = 1080 points or above

B range = 960-1079 points

C range = 840-959 points

D range = 720-839 points

F = 719 points or below

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

WEEK 1: Introduction to asking and answering research questions.

By August 29, by 11:55PM:

READ: Chapter 1, Lecture 1, explore website.

RESPOND: To discussion board under "Welcome."

QUIZ 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 5, by 11:55PM:

READ: Chapter 2 up to page 41 (stop at Ethical Issues), Lecture 2.

RESPOND: To discussion board under "Lecture 2"

QUIZ 2: Take Quiz 2

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

By September 12, by 11:55PM:

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 1: Answers to questions about online article, posted under "Assignments" as Assignment 1, due to me before midnight 9-12 via the WebCT mail system (send as a MS WORD attachment in that program).

RESPOND: To discussion board under "Lecture 3."

WEEK 4: From concepts to measures.

By September 19 by 11:55PM:

READ: Chapter 4 up to page 108 (stop at Measuring Crime); Lecture 4.

RESPOND: To discussion board under "Lecture 4."

QUIZ 3: Take Quiz 3.

WEEK 5: Measurement issues in criminal justice research.

By September 26, by 11:55PM:

READ: Chapter 4 from page 108 (Measuring Crime) to end of chapter; Lecture 5.

RESPOND: To discussion board under "Lecture 5."

QUIZ 4: Take Quiz 4.

WEEK 6: Ethics and research.

By October 3, by 11:55PM:

READ: Chapter 2 (note switch in chapter order) from page 41-end of chapter; Lecture 6.

RESPOND: To discussion board under "Lecture 6."

QUIZ 5: Take Quiz 5.

WEEK 7: Introduction to data collection and experimental designs.

By October 10, by 11:55PM:

READ: Chapter 6 up to page 157 and then Chapter 5 (note switch in chapter order);
Lecture 7.

ASSIGNMENT #2: Research question and list of 5 scholarly reference relevant to your research project in APA format due as MS Word attachment via WebCT email no later than 10-10-06 before midnight; Research question must also be posted on discussion board under "Research Questions."

RESPOND: To discussion board under "Lecture 7."

WEEK 8: Experimental designs.

By October 17, by 11:55PM:

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

RESPOND: To discussion board under "Lecture 8."

QUIZ 6: Take Quiz 6.

WEEK 9: Survey research: questionnaire construction and administration.

By October 24, by 11:55PM:

READ: Chapter 7; Lecture 9.

RESPOND: To discussion board under "Lecture 9."

ASSIGNMENT #3: (single article summary in APA format) due no later than 10-24-06, before midnight, submitted as MS Word attachment via the WebCT mail.

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

By October 31, by 11:55PM:

READ: pages 157-178 in Chapter 6; "Survey article" under "Article Reading Assignments" on course website; Lecture 10.

RESPOND: To discussion board under "Lecture 10."

QUIZ 7: Take Quiz 7.

WEEK 11: Nonprobability sampling & field research.

By November 7, by 11:55PM:

READ: pages 178-182 of Chapter 6 and Chapter 8; "Field methods article" under "Article Reading Assignments" on course website; Lecture 11.

RESPOND: To discussion board under "Lecture 11."

QUIZ 8: Take Quiz 8.

WEEK 12: Unobtrusive methods.

By November 14, by 11:55PM:

READ: Chapter 9; "Content analysis article" under "Article Reading Assignments" on course website; Lecture 12.

RESPOND: To discussion board under "Lecture 12."

QUIZ 9: Take Quiz 9.

WEEK 13: Program evaluation and policy analysis.

By November 21, by 11:55PM:

READ: Chapter 10 and "Program evaluation article" under "Article Reading Assignments" on course website Lecture 13.

RESPOND: To discussion board under "Lecture 13."

ASSIGNMENT #4 (your research design) must be turned in as MS Word attachment via WebCT mail AND posted on the class discussion board NO LATER THAN 11-21-05 before midnight.

WEEK 14: THANKGIVING BREAK—NO WORK THIS WEEKEND! You can catch up on reading and get to work on your final proposals this week.

WEEK 15: Making sense of findings; Communicating research findings.

By December 5, by 11:55PM:

READ: Chapter 11.

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

QUIZ 10: Take Quiz 10.

WEEK 16: Final Proposals DUE

NO READING

FINAL PROJECT DUE: The final proposal is DUE NO LATER THAN **Wednesday, December 13** at NOON in my box in MH 508.

RESPOND: To discussion board under "Final Comments" by December 12 before midnight.