

Justice Studies 105: Justice Systems Research

Instructor: Frank Samson

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Course Catalog Description:

Interaction of theory, research and practice in the justice process; purpose and limits of research; introduction to basic research design and methods of inquiry, social statistics, sampling and ethical issues in preparation of research reports. Prerequisite: Bus 90 or Stat 95 or SocS 15 or Soci 102 (or equivalent) or instructor consent. Units 3.

Course Pedagogy

Students can expect a participatory learning experience throughout the semester. Class activities and discussions are designed to help you develop basic research skills, so adequate out-of-class preparation, especially completing the assigned readings, will be essential to move the learning process forward. Weekly quizzes will test your knowledge of material from the readings.

This course is reading-intensive and the writing assignments are designed to help you engage the material with creativity and greater insight. If you do not feel adequately prepared for the reading and writing requirements of this course, take advantage of San Jose State University's Learning Assistance Resource Center, which includes tutorial services and academic skills workshops.

If you are a student with special needs (i.e. verified physical or psychological disabilities which require academic accommodations), please let the instructor know by the end of the second day of classes. Failure to inform the instructor may result in no accommodations with regards to learning and evaluation.

Course Materials

Maxfield, Michael and Earl Babbie. 2005. *Research Methods for Criminal Justice and Criminology, 4th Edition*. Thomson/Wadsworth Publishing.
Additional readings will be made available throughout the semester.

Course Requirements and Grading

There are five major requirements for this course:

1. In-class Attendance and Participation (200 pts)
 - Since the learning experience depends largely on in-class activities and discussions, prepared and enthusiastic participation during these exercises will make up a portion of your grade. Late attendance and absences will lower your class participation score.
2. Quizzes (25 pts each quiz, 12 quizzes: 300 pts)
 - There will be a quiz on each chapter of the Maxfield & Babbie text. There are 13 chapters for 13 quizzes, but you will be allowed to drop your lowest quiz score. You are responsible for providing your own Scantron answer sheet for the quizzes.

3. Written Assignments (Four (4) assignments; 50 pts each assignment: 200 pts)
 - These assignments will help you think about various stages of the research development process as you work toward developing your final proposal.
4. Final Proposal (200 pts)
 - You will have a choice between completing a 5-6 page oral history paper (subject requires instructor approval in advance), or a creative project (project requires instructor approval in advance). Oral history papers and creative projects will be due during the time of the scheduled final exam.
5. Final Exam (100 pts)
 - There will be a cumulative multiple-choice final exam to make sure you remember various ideas from the readings and lecture material. You are responsible for providing your own Scantron answer sheet for the final exam.

Since you will be allowed to drop the lowest of thirteen (13) quiz scores, there will be no make up quizzes given. No late assignments will be accepted, except in the following cases: documented severe personal illness, family death, jury duty, or athletic scheduling conflict away from campus. Except in the cases of family death and severe personal illness, you must notify the instructor a week in advance to qualify for the excused, late assignment, which will only be granted for the situations already listed. Final proposal grades will be dropped 10% per 24 hour period after the due date/time. You are responsible to know any changes to the schedule and/or due dates, even if you are not present for announcements made during class about such changes.

The following grading scale will be used to calculate your final grades (and percentages will NOT be rounded up):

A range: 900-1000 pts

B range: 800-899 pts

C range: 700-799 pts

D range: 600-699 pts

F range: Below 600 pts

For CR/NC grading, a CR (Credit) will be assigned for 70% or better (no rounded percentages). Below 70% will receive a NC (No Credit) grade.

Absences and Tardiness

Class attendance is mandatory. You will be dropped from the course for excessive absences. Excessive late attendance will decrease your class participation score.

Academic Honor Code

Cheating, plagiarism, or other violations of the Academic Honor Code will not be tolerated. Academic dishonesty will result in a failing grade ("F") and the student may be reported to the college for further disciplinary action. Student disruption will also not be tolerated. See SJSU Class Schedule for further information on SJSU's Academic Integrity Policy, including information regarding plagiarism, academic judicial procedures, and your student rights.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Week 1 (Week of Jan 25): Introductions; Course expectations

Week 2 (Week of Jan 30)

Library Orientation

Week 3 (Week of Feb 6) - Introduction to asking and answering research questions

Readings: Ch 1: Crime, Criminal Justice, and Scientific Inquiry

Quiz 1

Week 4 (Week of Feb 13) – Theory and the social science approach

Readings: Ch 2: Theory and Criminal Justice Research

Quiz 2

Week 5 (Week of Feb 20) - Ethics

Readings: Ch 3: Ethics and Criminal Justice Research

Quiz 3

Assignment #1 due: Single article summary

Week 6 (Week of Feb 27) – The Research Process

Readings: Ch 4: General Issues in Research Design

Quiz 4

Week 7 (Week of Mar 6) – From ideas to measurement

Readings: Ch 5: Concepts, Operationalization, and Measurement

Quiz 5

Assignment #2 due: Research Question and References

Week 8 (Week of Mar 13) – Measurement in Criminal Justice Research

Readings: Ch 6: Measuring Crime

Quiz 6

Week 9 (Week of Mar 20) – Experiments

Readings: Ch 7: Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs

Quiz 7

Assignment #3 due: Literature Review and Argument

Week 10 (Week of Mar 27): Spring Recess

NO CLASS THIS WEEK

Week 11 (Week of Apr 3) – Collecting Data

Readings: Ch 8: *Overview of Data Collection and Sampling*

Quiz 8

Week 12 (Week of Apr 10) - Surveys

Readings: Ch 9: *Survey Research and Other Ways of Asking Questions*
Hagan, John, Carla Shedd, and Monique R. Payne. 2005. "Race, Ethnicity, and Youth Perceptions of Criminal Injustice." *American Sociological Review* 70(3): 381-407.

Quiz 9

Week 13 (Week of Apr 17) – In the field

Readings: Ch 10: *Field Research*
Zhou, Min and Carl L. Bankston, III. 1998. "Delinquency: Insiders and Outsiders." *Growing Up American: Vietnamese Children Adapt to Life in the United States*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation. Pp. 185-215.
Pager, Devah. 2003. "The Mark of a Criminal Record." *American Journal of Sociology* 108(5): 937-975.

Quiz 10

Week 14 (Week of Apr 24) – Analyzing existing data

Readings: Ch 11: *Agency Records, Content Analysis, and Secondary Data*

Quiz 11

Week 15 (Week of May 1) – Measuring effectiveness: Politics and research

Readings: Ch 12: *Evaluation Research and Policy Analysis*
Bobo, Lawrence D., and Devon Johnson. 2004. "A Taste for Punishment: Black and White Americans' Views on the Death Penalty and the War on Drugs." *Du Bois Review*. 1(1): 151-180.

Quiz 12

Week 16 (Week of May 8) – Basic Statistical Analysis

Readings: Ch 13: *Interpreting Data*

Quiz 13

Assignment #4 due: Research Design

Week 17 (Week of May 15)

Wrap-up/Conclusion

Final Proposal due

Final Exam Schedule

MW 3:00pm class: Monday, May 22, 12:15pm-2:30pm

M 5:30pm class: Monday, May 22, 5:15pm-7:30pm