

San Jose State University
Justice Studies 105: Research Methods
Tues/Thurs: 7:30am-8:45am, MH 526
Fall 2008

Professor Frank Samson
Office: MH 525A
Office hours: Tues 8:50am-9:50am
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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.

Student Learning Objectives

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.

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 to meet the reading and writing requirements for this course, take advantage of San Jose State University's Learning Assistance Resource Center, which includes tutorial services and academic skills workshops.

Course Materials

Required:

Maxfield, Michael and Earl Babbie. 2008. *Basics of Research Methods for Criminal Justice and Criminology, 2nd Edition*. Thomson/Wadsworth Publishing.

Additional readings will be made available throughout the semester.

Highly Recommended (possibly Required, pending computer lab availability):

Field, Andy. 2005. *Discovering Statistics Using SPSS (2nd Edition)*. Sage Publications.

Course Requirements and Grading

There are five major requirements for this course:

1. In-class Attendance and Participation (100 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. The instructor may occasionally give pop quizzes to assess adequate preparation. If you miss a pop quiz, there will be no make-ups.
2. Tests (100 pts each test; 300 pts)
 - There will be a test on each of the 4 sections of the Maxfield & Babbie text. There will be 3 tests during the semester for the first three sections, and the test for the 4th section will be part of a comprehensive final exam. The tests consist of multiple-choice, true or false, identifications, and other questions that require a Scantron answer sheet, which you are responsible for providing.
 3. Writing 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. 10 points per assignment will automatically be deducted for 3 or more spelling, grammar, and/or other writing-related errors. Be sure you proofread and have at least one other person proofread your assignments before submission. Take advantage of SJSU's Writing Center resources early and often.
 4. Final Proposal (300 pts)
 - The final proposal will be a synthesis of your writing assignments, incorporating feedback from your peers and the instructor, and comprising a coherent whole. The final proposal should be, at maximum, 4-5 pages (not including your bibliography or appendices), double-spaced, 12 point font, with 1-inch margins. You will be penalized for going over the maximum, so learn to be direct and concise in your writing. 60 points will automatically be deducted for 5 or more spelling, grammar, and/or other writing-related errors. Be sure you proofread and have at least one other person proofread your final proposal before submission. Take advantage of SJSU's Writing Center resources early and often.
 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.

Tests cannot be made up, 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 or make-up test, which will only be granted for the situations already listed.

For writing assignments, except the final proposal, you have a 2-day allowance that you can utilize in 1-day increments anytime during the semester. In other words, if you submit a writing assignment anywhere from 1-second to 23 hours, 59 seconds after the deadline, you spend a 1-day allowance and have a 1-day allowance left. If a writing assignment is due on a Friday, and you have not utilized any part of your 2-day allowance, you can choose to submit your writing assignment by the same deadline on the following Sunday and use up your entire 2-day allowance. It is to your advantage to save up your 2-day allowance and only use the allowance for unforeseen emergencies. Because of instructor due dates to submit final grades, late final proposals will not be accepted, except for documented severe personal illness, family death, jury duty, or athletic scheduling conflict away from campus.

The schedule and assignments may change based upon student progress. You are responsible to know any changes to the schedule or required assignments, 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.

Academic Integrity

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.

Disabilities Accommodations

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 that students with disabilities register with DRC to establish a record of their disability.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE (Subject to change with fair notice)

Week 1 (Week of Aug 26): Introductions; Course expectations

Readings: Ch 1: (*Variables and Attributes; Variables and Relationships*); Ch 3 (*How to Design a Research Project*); Ch 4: *Concepts, Operationalization, and Measurement*

Week 2 (Week of Sep 2) – From ideas to measurement

Readings: Gilliam, Jr., Franklin D., and Shanto Iyengar. 2000. "Prime Suspects: The Influence of Local Television News on the Viewing Public." *American Journal of Political Science* 44(3):560-573.

Friday, Sep 5: Last Day to Drop

Week 3 (Week of Sep 9) - Introduction to asking and answering research questions; Ethics

Readings: Ch 1: *Criminal Justice and Scientific Inquiry*; Ch 2: *Ethics and Criminal Justice Research*

Week 4 (Week of Sep 16)

Test #1

Thursday, Sep 18: Library Orientation (tentative)

Week 5 (Week of Sep 23) – The Research Process

Readings: Ch 3: *General Issues in Research Design*

Assignment #1 due: Single article summary

Week 6 (Week of Sep 30) – Experiments

Readings: Ch 5: *Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs*

Week 7 (Week of Oct 7) – Collecting Data

Readings: Ch 6: *Sampling*

Assignment #2 due: Research Question and References

Week 8 (Week of Oct 14) – Collecting Data

Readings: Ch 6: *Sampling*

Test #2

Week 9 (Week of Oct 21) – Surveys

Readings: Ch 7: *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.

Week 10 (Week of Oct 28): – In the field

Readings: Ch 8: *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.

Assignment #3 due: Literature Review and Argument

Week 11 (Week of Nov 4) – Analyzing existing data

Readings: Ch 9: *Agency Records, Content Analysis, and Secondary Data*

Week 12 (Week of Nov 11)

NO CLASS Tuesday, Nov 11 (Veterans Day Holiday)

Test #3

Week 13 (Week of Nov 18) – Measuring effectiveness: Policy and research

Readings: Ch 10: *Evaluation Research and Problem 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.

Week 14 (Week of Nov 25) – Basic Statistical Analysis

Readings: Ch 11: *Interpreting Data*

Assignment #4 due: Research Design

NO CLASS Thursday, Nov 27 (Thanksgiving Holiday)

Week 15 (Week of Dec 2) – Basic Statistical Analysis (continued); Class Presentations and/or Supplementary Course Sessions

Week 16 (Week of Dec 9) – Wrap-up/Conclusion

Final Proposal due by the beginning of class on Tues, Dec 9.

Final Exam: Thursday, Dec 18: 7:15am-9:30am