

San Jose State University
Justice Studies 105: Justice Systems Research
Tues/Thurs: 7:30am-8:45am, MH 525
Spring 2008

Professor Frank Samson
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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 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.

Course Materials

Maxfield, Michael and Earl Babbie. 2008. *Research Methods for Criminal Justice and Criminology, 5th 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. The instructor may occasionally give pop quizzes to assess adequate preparation. Late attendance will lower your class participation score.
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 on the 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.
- 4. Final Proposal (200 pts)
 - The final proposal will be a synthesis of the four writing assignments, incorporating feedback from your peers and the instructor, and comprising a coherent whole.
- 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 or late assignments 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 or make-up test, 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.

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 Jan 20): Introductions; Course expectations

Week 2 (Week of Jan 27)

Library Orientation

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

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

Week 4 (Week of Feb 10) – Theory and the social science approach

Readings: Ch 2: Theory and Criminal Justice Research

Week 5 (Week of Feb 17) - Ethics

Readings: Ch 3: Ethics and Criminal Justice Research

Assignment #1 due: Single article summary

Week 6 (Week of Feb 24) – The Research Process

Readings: Ch 4: General Issues in Research Design

Test #1

Week 7 (Week of Mar 2) – From ideas to measurement

Readings: Ch 5: Concepts, Operationalization, and Measurement

Assignment #2 due: Research Question and References

Week 8 (Week of Mar 9) – Measurement in Criminal Justice Research

Readings: Ch 6: *Measuring Crime*

Week 9 (Week of Mar 16) – Experiments

Readings: Ch 7: *Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs*

Assignment #3 due: Literature Review and Argument

Week 10 (Week of Mar 23): Spring Recess

NO CLASS THIS WEEK

Week 11 (Week of Mar 30) – Collecting Data

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

Test #2

Week 12 (Week of Apr 6) - 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.

Week 13 (Week of Apr 13) – 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.

Week 14 (Week of Apr 20) – Analyzing existing data

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

Week 15 (Week of Apr 27) – 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.

Test #3

Week 16 (Week of May 4) – Basic Statistical Analysis

Readings: Ch 13: Interpreting Data

Assignment #4 due: Research Design

Week 17 (Week of May 11) – Wrap-up/Conclusion

Final Proposal due

Final Exam Schedule

Monday, May 19: 7:15am-9:30am