

San José State University
Spring 2015
Justice Studies 114-1 (JS Area B Required Course)
Research Methods
Dr. Chris Hebert
Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3:00 to 4:15 in MAQ 520

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The plural of anecdote is not evidence.
(Anon.)

Prerequisite: Having taken and passed JS 100W with a C or better is required for JS 114. This requirement will be strictly enforced and students will be required to provide proof of having met the prerequisite on January 27th. Students who have not fulfilled the prerequisite will be disenrolled from the course. Absence from class on January 27th will be presumption of failing to fulfill the prerequisite. Students with a legitimate cause for absence and who provides proof of fulfilling the prerequisite will be allowed to re-enroll in the course, space, budget, and policy permitting.

Catalog Description: Introduction to quantitative research methods used in Justice Studies. Includes relationship of theory to empirical evidence; logic underlying methods of inquiry; ethics in conducting empirical research; and methodological design, operationalization, and data analysis.

Note: Justice Studies 114 is a required course for the Justice Studies major. As with all JS courses, to be accepted for credit towards a degree a grade of "C" or better is required. In addition, because JS 114 is a required course failure to obtain a grade of "C" or better after two attempts will result in disqualification from the degree program.

If you are taking JS 114 for the second time, plan on meeting with me early and often to track your progress in the course.

Section Specific Description and Student Learning Objectives: My learning objectives are modest: to train students to observe, interpret, and interact with the world through the lens of a research scientist. The second is for students to develop an appreciation for satirical understatement. These will be achieved through the Justice Studies learning objectives for JS 114:

1. Demonstrate a detailed understanding of the quantitative research methods commonly utilized to conduct empirical research in the areas of social and criminal justice.
2. Write a research paper in the area of social or criminal justice that applies proper research methodology.
3. Understand core concepts and competencies in criminological and justice research including ethical research, empiricism, problem identification, hypothesis formation and testing, sampling, observation, measurement, data analysis, causality, and report writing.

Office Hours

General Statement on Office Hours: My practice of meeting with students is best described as an “open door or knock or spotted walking around” policy. Outside of office hours, I’m happy to talk with you 19 out of 20 times. All I ask is that if I tell you that I can’t talk right then, please respect my wishes.

Tuesday and Thursday: 11:50 – 12:15
 4:20 – 4:55

If the question is class related (but not personally related as in missing a scheduled quiz or assignment) please bring it up class. If you don’t understand something, chances are other students, students shyer than you, don’t understand it either and they will (quietly, as they are shy) appreciate your asking what they could not vocalize.

Chat: I will be offering optional “Chat” sessions through Canvas. In the other courses that I am offering this semester, I am offering chat sessions with the expectation that they will be visited primarily by students who desire a bit more expository discourse than provided in class and secondarily by students who are occasionally unclear on a bit of the course material. For this class, I expect that every student will, at the least, check in and follow along once a week while others will attend every or nearly every session. The learning objective that I wrote above would not pass muster with a curricula review committee but is the flat-out truth. Most of our learning consists of taking some new about the world and shaping it to fit into our existing mental “filing” system. My goal here is more ambitious; it is to change the filing system itself to enable you to develop a deeper, more comprehensive understanding of the world around you. That takes time and practice and success and failure. If having gotten this far and you are thinking: “What a load of horsefeathers,¹” that is most certainly your right. But you will likely want to check in regularly unless you are one of the few who have an intuitive understanding of what an area under a curve represents, random sampling, population flows, and when “significance” is not significant to anyone at all. Nonetheless, participation in chat sessions is not graded nor am I offering any credit for participation. The reason for the latter is simple: to a far greater extent than other courses, your active participation in the course is absorbed and reflected in the quality of your work products. Are you responsible for material presented in a chat session? No, but you are responsible for all materials assigned in the course and chat sessions will largely be about the assigned material, you are ultimately responsible for any assigned material discussed in a chat session.

DAYS AND TIME OF CHAT SESSIONS ARE FOUND AT ANNOUNCEMENTS IN CANVAS.

Required Readings:

- 1) **Fundamentals of Research in Criminology and Criminal Justice 3rd edition** 2015 Bachman, Ronet and Russell K. Schutt. Sage Publications, Los Angeles.
- 2) **Statistical Concepts For Criminal Justice and Criminology** 2009 Williams III, Frank P. Pearson Education, Upper Saddle River, New Jersey.
- 3) **A Guide to Writing Sociology Papers 7th ed.** 2013 The Sociology Writing Group Worth Publications.
- 4) Other material referenced as required. All will be costless electronic distributions.

¹ No, I wouldn’t in the greensheet. ;)

Required Datasets:

1) This is the website for the datasets referenced in Fundamentals of Research ... in the Performing Data Analysis ... section at the end of each chapter.

<http://www.sagepub.com/bachmanfrccj3e/study/default.htm>

2) General Social Survey: We will use the 2012 for exercises and students are encouraged to use the GSS for their paper.

<http://www3.norc.org/GSS+Website/Download/SPSS+Format/>

The codebook, which is massive (35MB) and confusing until some practice reading it is found at:

http://publicdata.norc.org/GSS/DOCUMENTS/BOOK/GSS_Codebook.pdf

It contains all questions and variables ever asked in the GSS, the vast majority of which were not asked in 2012.

3) Other datasets as assigned.

Required Software:

1) SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences): Available at 102 Clark (turn right at main entrance, turn left when the glass wall ends. Called the Student Academic Computer Center or something like that.) Bring a flash drive and this really expensive program is yours for free.

Recommended Technology:

A copy of EXCEL (supported) or another spreadsheet (non supported) may come in handy for you. If, by chance you find yourself actually getting into statistical analysis and you own a Mac I cannot recommend more highly the single greatest software program ever created, TextWrangler from the good people of Barebones software. Download it – free, absolutely free from:

<http://www.barebones.com/products/textwrangler/>

Windows users – I simply don't know of a comparable program.

As much as I would like to require a portable computer, I cannot. But I highly, and I mean highly recommend that you bring one to class every day. The best way to learn research methods is by doing, and you'll be able to do much more efficiently with my guidance.

Distribution of Course Material:

Most, possibly all, course material except quizzes and exams will be posted to Canvas. For the first time in years, I am distributing, I can't bring myself to say it exactly, so I'll refer to them as Study *****s for this course. "What do I have against Study *****s?" I often am asked. Just this: Some, well, most students equate being on the Study ***** as being "important" or even worse as "all that I need to

know.” Nonsense. Think about it this way: There are dozens of textbooks that I could have assigned for this class, many of which are full of material that I consider unimportant, irrelevant, or mistaken. But I didn't assign you one of those; instead I chose a textbook that, while I am not in 100% agreement with all aspects of its content, exposition, and organization, I feel is the best choice for the course. Unless specifically stated in the Study ***** you are responsible for all the material in the chapter. I use the Study ***** to explain aspects that students have had difficulty with in the past, to provide background on the development of the material, to extend the material into areas that the text does not, and, on occasion, a disagreement with the author regarding conclusions or interpretations of theoretical or empirical material.

Course material will be found in Modules. Modules will be numbered corresponding to the assigned chapters and I will do my best to open up modules well in advance of the assigned week. I may use other sections of Canvas, but not many and do not pay any attention to grades nor depend on its announcement section for notifications. The course schedule is found in the greensheet and any changes, other than a one day change in a quiz date, will be announced and an updated greensheet distributed. Please **do not** use the “Conversation” feature as I will rarely check it and use my sjsu.edu e-mail.

Course Requirements

The course grade is determined equally by testing (50%) and assignments (50%). A minimum of 10% and a maximum of 50% of the course grade will be determined by the grades earned in group projects. In anticipation of common questions: 1) No, there is no explicit provision for awarding participation points. It is my belief that, to a much greater extent than in other types of courses, participation is absorbed into and reflected by the grades received in the assignments and exams. Put another way, to learn the concepts and modes of thinking for research methods requires active engagement with the material. Some, a few, perhaps, will do just fine by themselves. More power to ya. The second question concerns extra-credit. In general, I find extra-credit of little academic merit in most courses and can see absolutely none in a research methods course. Offering to solve a calculus problem in the place of understanding a standardized score would only convince me that you are not trying hard enough to understand how to calculate and interpret and standard score. I could go on, but this is basic stuff – I don't mean basic as in easy but basic as in that without at least a passing understanding of the ideas and language of research methods, you'll have no hope of successfully completing our degree program.

Group Work

All students in a group receive the same grade. The first set of assignments, “Survey” is strictly a group project with a minimum of three and a maximum of four persons per group. You are free to form your own group of three to four persons or a partial group of two to be filled by ungrouped persons. The Research Paper related assignments (hereafter RPRAs) may be done individually or by a group of two or three persons. Participation in a group does not bind an individual to the group for subsequent assignments. Extensive instructions on the requirements for RPRAs will follow, but note the following as you consider individual or group participation: Research Paper Project Part II and the Research Paper shall require, at a minimum, two independent variables if an individual or two person group and a minimum of three independent variables if a three person group.

Assignments

At a minimum all assignments must be typed and include complete and accurate course / assignment / author information. Additional requirements will be specified in the instructions for each of the three assignment types.

Quizzes and Exams

The quizzes and exams will consist of short answer type questions. Some type of reference material will be allowed for during testing. I haven't decided on the exact format yet beyond that of only paper material being allowed.

Course Weighting of Material:

Survey Assignments	2 X 5%	= 10%
Research Paper Parts	2 X 10%	= 20%
Research Paper	1 X 20%	= 20%
Quizzes	3 X 5%	= 15%
Mid Term Exam	1 X 15%	= 15%
Final Exam	1 X 20%	= 20%

Grading Policy and Correspondence:

A curve is usually applied to quizzes and exams and occasionally to assignments. When returned, there will be an indication of points / points possible and the percentage. If a curve is applied, you will have to make the calculation yourself, to determine your grade, but rest assured the curved score has been recorded in the gradebook. If a curve is applied, approximately 20 to 25 percent of the class will receive an A- or better on that exam. All assessment materials are graded on a percentage basis, and correspond to the following letter grades.

Percent to Letter Grade Correspondence

Minimum Percent to Letter Grade Correspondence											
A+	96%	A	93%	A-	90%	B+	86%	B	83%	B-	80%
C+	76%	C	73%	C-	70%	D+	66%	D	63%	D-	60%
F	Less Than 60%										

Synthetic ID Grade Posting

I don't anticipate distributing grades en masse in this course, but on the off chance that it does occur, a synthetic ID number lists student grades. To create the synthetic ID number, multiply the first five digits of your SJSU student ID number by the last four digits of your SJSU student ID number. The last four digits of the product is the synthetic ID number.

EXAMPLE: SJSU ID number is 004199408

First five digits are: 00419

Last four digits are: 9408

Multiply = 3941952

The last four digits, 1952, is the Posting ID number.

Late Test and Assignment Policy: No to full credit depending on circumstance. The possible combinations of circumstance are damn near infinite and thus an attempt to assign specific penalty weights a truly Herculean task. Instead, the following are the factors I consider, along with examples of good, OK, and bad excuses.

Dimension	Good	OK	Bad
Notification:	Notification delivered in class at least one class meeting prior to absence	Note in mailbox / e-mail day of exam.	Five weeks after assignment due date.
Reason:	Work-related travel. Getting married, personal illness, serious illness of a close relative, death of a close relative.	Too much coursework/job stress. Relationship troubles, ceremonial participation.	Hung over, forgot, getting married more than once, weekly participation in ceremonies of death or other.
What Missed:		Quizzes and Mid-Term Exam.	Assignment, Crime Portfolio, Final Exam.
Documentation:	Newspaper, Dr./Clinic appointment, receipt for automotive repair, court summons	Note from Mom.	Insultingly bad forgery.
Made up by:	Next Class Meeting or Prior to Due Date.	Two Class Meetings	Final Exam Week.
Attendance:	I can match name to face.	Pretty sure that you are, or were, in one of my classes.	Couldn't pick you out of a lineup for \$100,000.

It is your responsibility to notify me of your need to take a make-up exam or quiz and to arrange a time that accommodates my schedule. Except under extraordinary circumstances, if an exam has not been taken within two weeks or a quiz within one week, of its administration to the class, you will forfeit that quiz/exam and receive a zero.

Communication / Interaction:

I'm usually available outside of my office hours, though with an extremely heavy workload this semester, I won't be as available as much as I prefer. If you need to talk and see me in the hallway or outside the buildings, or in my office, just walk up and say hi. If my office door is closed, go ahead and knock. 95%+ of the time I'll be more than happy to talk to you about just about anything. Once in a great while, I'll be too tired, cranky, distracted, or busy to chat, and I'll just tell you that straight-out.

If the conversation is institution-related (course advising, graduation requirements, etc.) I'll be able to help you much more efficiently if you take the time to do a little prep work. If you need course advising, I need to know what courses you have taken, where taken, if you are a transfer student, and the grades you received. If you get an incomprehensible bureaucratese letter, bring it and any documents that relate to the letter.

My general rule on servicing students is first-come, first-served. Having notified me of intent to stop by and being a current rather than a former student are used as tie breakers. That said, I will sometimes engage in a form of triage, serving students who arrive later before others who have been waiting in line. A common example is a student coming by to pick up a paper who arrived after a student seeking an academic advising session.

e-mail: If you have a course-procedural or course-content question, it should be brought up in the class as it's a good bet that other students have the same or similar questions. If further clarification is needed, then see me outside of class. Matters that are to remain confidential should be communicated in-person. As students are expected to, though are not required to, attend scheduled class meetings (University Policy F69-24: <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/f69-24.htm>) I will not, except in the most unusual of circumstances accept e-mailed assignments for grading. An e-mailed assignment, in conjunction with

appropriate documentation / explanation, will be used as proof of timely completion of the material, but only printed material will be accepted for grading.

Now, if you find something that you think I'd find interesting or amusing, by all means, send me an-email. Or if you would like my judgment on whether a particular website has solid information or not, feel free to e-mail me.

Phone: Good for contacting me on Tuesday or Thursday. I'm much more likely to answer if I'm not teaching a class at the time. If you leave a message, it's best to follow it with an e-mail.

Recording and Distribution of Course Material: The following is reproduced from SJSU Policy S12-7.

Common courtesy and professional behavior dictate that you notify someone when you are recording him/her. You must obtain the instructor's permission to make audio or video recordings in this class. Such permission allows the recordings to be used for your private, study purposes only. The recordings are the intellectual property of the instructor; you have not been given any rights to reproduce or distribute the material.

- It is suggested that the greensheet include the instructor's process for granting permission, whether in writing or orally and whether for the whole semester or on a class by class basis.
- In classes where active participation of students or guests may be on the recording, permission of those students or guests should be obtained as well.

Course material developed by the instructor is the intellectual property of the instructor and cannot be shared publicly without his/her approval. You may not publicly share or upload instructor generated material for this course such as exam questions, lecture notes, or homework solutions without instructor consent.

So, talk to me if you need to make a recording in class. Just as a reminder "Audio recording without consent in private settings is prohibited by California Penal code 630-635 (SJSU Policy S12-7).

Mandatory Statements

Academic Integrity: In the long run academic dishonesty hurts only you. Academic dishonesty can also cause pain in the short run, see Academic Senate Policy S07-2: <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/S07-2.htm>. Other publications concerning student rights and responsibilities can be found at: http://sa.sjsu.edu/judicial_affairs/index.html.

Accessibility: "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 the Accessible Education Center (AEC) to establish a record of their disability (from Academic Senate Policy F06-2)."

Common-Sense: "Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of forty-five hours over the length of the course (normally 3 hours per unit per week with 1 of the hours used for lecture) for instruction or preparation/studying or course related

activities including but not limited to internships, labs, clinical practica. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus.”

Religious Accommodation: [Included under protest as appears to be a violation of the 14th (Equal Protection) Clause.]

“San José State University shall provide accommodation on any graded class work or activities for students wishing to observe religious holidays when such observances require students to be absent from class. It is the responsibility of the student to inform the instructor, in writing, about such holidays before the add deadline at the start of each semester. If such holidays occur before the add deadline, the student must notify the instructor, in writing, at least three days before the date that he/she will be absent. It is the responsibility of the instructor to make every reasonable effort to honor the student request without penalty, and of the student to make up the work missed.”

Note: I will continue to use my long-standing and far more liberal notification requirement specified above.

Miscellaneous Items and Some Repeating:

Material will usually be distributed via Canvas. Be sure that MySJSU has your current e-mail address.

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE SCHEDULED CHAT SESSIONS!

In brief, you are responsible for yourself. If you miss an exam or quiz, you must contact me in order to arrange a time to make it up. If you are absent or arrive late on a day when I am returning assignments, you will have to come by my office to pick it up. If you didn't receive an assignment that means you were either absent or late when I distributed the assignment. Check with your classmates or ask me at the beginning of class if an assignment had been distributed the previous class meeting.

Attendance is strongly encouraged, as some of the material on the exams will be presented only in class. Turn off your cellphones, smartphones, dumbphones, PDAs, PMDs, beepers, and heart monitors. Just kidding about the last one.

As a courtesy to your classmates, do not munch during class. Liquids are OK, as long as you dispose of the container properly. In fact, treat the classroom as if it were a wilderness area: Pack in, pack out.

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE SCHEDULED CHAT SESSIONS!

Assignments are returned in class when I have finished grading and recording them. I only bring each set of papers to class once, so if you are late or miss the day that I hand them back, its your responsibility to come to my office and pick them up. Quizzes and exams are not returned, though you are welcome to review yours in my office.

If a substantial change in due dates or assignments is required, I will distribute an updated greensheet via Canvas or e-mail and announce the new version number in the following class. A quiz may be postponed for one meeting without creating a new schedule.

Have I mentioned to

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE SCHEDULED CHAT SESSIONS?

Do so.

To get started on the semester: It's in the greensheet.

This greensheet, like all greensheets is subject to revision.

Justice Studies 114

Spring 2015

Course Schedule

The schedule for JS 114 is very detailed and I decided to make it in landscape mode. It is the file JS 114 Spring 2015 Schedule. Changes to the schedule that have no change in other aspects of the course will be noted with by a letter suffix (i.e. V1_0b) matches up with greensheet V1_0 but is different from the original schedule of V1_0.). Substantive changes to the course will result in a change in the decimal place of the version (i.e., V1_1 replaces V1_0).