

San José State University  
Justice Studies Department  
Fall 2017  
JS 114-03  
Research Methods

Instructor: Sambuddha Ghatak, Ph.D.  
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Office Hours: Tuesday/Thursday 3:00-4:00 p.m.  
Class Days/Time: TR, TR 4:30 - 5:45pm  
Classroom: MacQuarrie Hall 520

### **MYSJSU Messaging**

You are responsible for regularly checking with the messaging system through MySJSU. Course materials including syllabus, notes, assignment, and journal articles can be found on the Canvas website. Additional readings may be assigned at the instructor's discretion.

### **Course Description**

Catalog Description: Introduction to quantitative research methods used in Justice Studies includes exploring relationship of theory to empirical evidence and logic underlying methods of inquiry and ethics in conducting empirical research. Methodological design, operationalization, and data analysis are integral parts of this course.

Prerequisite: JS 10, 12, 25, or FS 11; JS 100W with a grade of "C" or better; JS15 or Stat 95 or equivalent with a "C" or better; Upper Division Standing; Restricted to JS majors and minors. Note: A grade of "C" or better is required for Justice Studies majors. Note that SJSU classes are designed in a way that in order to be successful, it is expected that students will spend a minimum of forty-five hours for each unit of credit (normally three hours a unit per week), including preparation for class, participating in course activities, completing assignments and so on.

This course will cover philosophy of science, fundamental techniques and procedures, research ethics, and methods of data collection and data analysis in criminal justice and criminological research, with emphasis on quantitative analysis.

### **Course Goals**

Students will leave this course with a firm understanding of different research designs in criminal justice and criminological research. In addition, students will be able to initiate and conduct an independent research project, including proposing meaningful research questions, reviewing literature, and conducting data collection and basic analysis. It is useful to think of research methods as tools that can be used to answer questions about the social world. For example, social scientists have relied on statistics to answer questions such as "Do juvenile smokers commit more delinquent acts than nonsmokers?" or "Do higher levels of patrols by law enforcement officials decrease crime?" During this course, you will learn some of these research methods and statistical techniques and how to use them to answer questions commonly confronted by social scientists. As we move through the course material, you will find that an

understanding of a given topic builds on what has been covered previously. Thus, it is in your best interest to stay current on the readings, take detailed notes, and ask questions if you are unsure about a topic.

**Student Learning Objectives are as follows:**

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

SLO 1: Understand why knowledge of research methods is valuable to criminal justice professionals and how to conduct a review of research literature, write a research proposal, design a research project.

SLO 2: Identify and frame a meaningful research question.

SLO 3: Understand causality as opposed to correlation.

SLO 4: Summarize three fundamental features of social science: theory, data collection, and data analysis; describe how theory and public policy can be closely linked.

SLO 5: Recognize how criminal justice research is shaped by ethical considerations.

SLO 6: Understand how the logic of probability sampling makes it possible to represent large populations with small subsets of those populations.

SLO 7: Recognize that public organizations produce statistics and data that are often useful for criminal justice researchers.

SLO 8: Understand the differences between descriptive and inferential statistics. For example, descriptive statistics are used to summarize data under study.

**Required Texts:** Maxfield, M. G., & Babbie, E. R. (2015). Research methods for criminal justice and criminology (Seventh Edition). Cengage Learning.

Additional reading materials will be provided by the instructor

Articles on Canvas

**Required Software:** SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences)

**Course Requirements and Assignments**

Requirements: (1) You are required to read all books, reading materials and articles in advance. (2) Your grade is based on class participation, homework, midterm, research paper, research presentation and final exam.

Homework: There will be weekly homework and those will be posted on Canvas. Homework will be assigned on Thursdays. Completed homework must be submitted online the following Tuesday by 8 am. No late submission will be accepted.

Participation: Success in this class is predicated on regular attendance. If you do not attend regularly, your grade will certainly suffer. The primary format for this course will be lecture and in class practice. Class

time will also be used to go over problem sets and to discuss the results of exams and homework problems.

**Research Paper:** Writing a research paper is a major part of this class. The students are required to select a topic in consultation with the instructor and write a research paper incorporating the skills acquired in this class. The paper will be evaluated on the basis of the necessary components of a research paper such as research question, literature review, theory and hypothesis and research design. The empirical part may consist preliminary analysis of data. The paper is due in parts. A submission schedule will be provided in class. The final draft paper is due on Tuesday, December 5.

**Midterm and Final Examination:** Midterm is scheduled on Thursday, October 5 and Final exam is scheduled on Wednesday, December 13.

**Grading Information:** You will not be able to drop the class after the official DROP Day except when you have medical emergency with your doctor's note. There will be no make-ups for your missed exams. There will be only one exception to this policy. Those students who provide written notice in advance who must miss class for university business will have special tests arranged usually before the scheduled test. A final grade of incomplete (I) will be reserved for emergency situation only with your doctor's note.

#### Final Grade

Class participation and attendance: 15%

(Attendance rate lower than 2/3 = at best "C+", below 1/2 = "F")

Homework: 20%

Mid Term Exam 20%

Final Exam: 30%

Research Paper: 15%

#### Percent to Letter Grade Correspondence

A plus = 100-96%, A = 95-93%, A minus = 92-90%, B plus = 89-86%, B = 85-83%, B minus = 82-80%, C plus = 79-76%, C = 75-73%, C minus = 72-70%, D plus = 69-66%, D = 65-63%, D minus = 62-60%, F = 59-0%

#### Justice Studies Department Reading and Writing Philosophy

The Department of Justice Studies is committed to scholarly excellence. Therefore, the Department promotes academic, critical, and creative engagement with language (i.e., reading and writing) throughout its curriculum. A sustained and intensive exploration of language prepares students to think critically and to act meaningfully in interrelated areas of their lives—personal, professional, economic, social, political, ethical, and cultural. Graduates of the Department of Justice Studies leave San José State University prepared to enter a range of careers and for advanced study in a variety of fields; they are prepared to more effectively identify and ameliorate injustice in their personal, professional and civic lives. Indeed, the impact of literacy is evident not only within the span of a specific course, semester, or academic program but also over the span of a lifetime.

#### University Policies

#### Dropping and Adding

Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drop, grade forgiveness, etc. Refer to the current semester's Catalog Policies section at <http://info.sjsu.edu/static/catalog/policies.html>. Add/drop deadlines can be found on the current academic

year calendars document on the Academic Calendars webpage at [http://www.sjsu.edu/provost/services/academic\\_calendars/](http://www.sjsu.edu/provost/services/academic_calendars/). The Late Drop Policy is available at <http://www.sjsu.edu/aars/policies/latedrops/policy/>. Students should be aware of the current deadlines and penalties for dropping classes. Information about the latest changes and news is available at the Advising Hub at <http://www.sjsu.edu/advising/>.

### **Academic integrity**

Your commitment as a student to learning is evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University. The University Academic Integrity Policy S07-2 at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S07-2.pdf> requires you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development. The Student Conduct and Ethical Development website is available at <http://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/>.

Instances of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Cheating on exams or plagiarism (presenting the work of another as your own, or the use of another person's ideas without giving proper credit) will result in a failing grade and sanctions by the University. For this class, all assignments are to be completed by the individual student unless otherwise specified. If you would like to include your assignment or any material you have submitted, or plan to submit for another class, please note that SJSU's Academic Integrity Policy S07-2 requires approval of instructors.

### **Campus Policy in Compliance with the American Disabilities Act**

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need to make 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 at [http://www.sjsu.edu/president/docs/directives/PD\\_1997-03.pdf](http://www.sjsu.edu/president/docs/directives/PD_1997-03.pdf) requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the Accessible Education Center (AEC) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/aec> to establish a record of their disability.

In 2013, the Disability Resource Center changed its name to be known as the Accessible Education Center, to incorporate a philosophy of accessible education for students with disabilities. The new name change reflects the broad scope of attention and support to SJSU students with disabilities and the University's continued advocacy and commitment to increasing accessibility and inclusivity on campus.

### **Student Technology Resources**

Computer labs for student use are available in the Academic Success Center at <http://www.sjsu.edu/at/asc/> located on the 1st floor of Clark Hall and in the Associated Students Lab on the 2nd floor of the Student Union. Additional computer labs may be available in your department/college. Computers are also available in the Martin Luther King Library. A wide variety of audio-visual equipment is available for student checkout from Media Services located in IRC 112. These items include DV and HD digital camcorders; digital still cameras; video, slide and overhead projectors; DVD, CD, and audiotape players; sound systems, wireless microphones, projection screens and monitors.

### **Learning Assistance Resource Center**

The Learning Assistance Resource Center (LARC) is located in Room 600 in the Student Services Center. It is designed to assist students in the development of their full academic potential and to motivate them to become self-directed learners. The center provides support services, such as skills assessment, individual or group tutorials, subject advising, learning assistance, summer academic preparation and basic skills development. The LARC website is located at <http://www.sjsu.edu/larc/>.

## **SJSU Peer Connections**

Peer Connections, a campus-wide resource for mentoring and tutoring, strives to inspire students to develop their potential as independent learners while they learn to successfully navigate through their university experience. You are encouraged to take advantage of their services which include course - content based tutoring, enhanced study and time management skills, more effective critical thinking strategies, decision making and problem-solving abilities, and campus resource referrals.

In addition to offering small group, individual, and drop-in tutoring for a number of undergraduate courses, consultation with mentors is available on a drop-in or by appointment basis. Workshops are offered on a wide variety of topics including preparing for the Writing Skills Test (WST), improving your learning and memory, alleviating procrastination, surviving your first semester at SJSU, and other related topics. A computer lab and study space are also available for student use in Room 600 of Student Services Center (SSC).

Peer Connections is located in three locations: SSC, Room 600 (10th Street Garage on the corner of 10<sup>th</sup> and San Fernando Street), at the 1st floor entrance of Clark Hall, and in the Living Learning Center (LLC) in Campus Village Housing Building B. Visit Peer Connections website at <http://peerconnections.sjsu.edu> for more information.

## **SJSU Writing Center**

The SJSU Writing Center is located in Clark Hall, Suite 126. All Writing Specialists have gone through a rigorous hiring process, and they are well trained to assist all students at all levels within all disciplines to become better writers. In addition to one-on-one tutoring services, the Writing Center also offers workshops every semester on a variety of writing topics. To make an appointment or to refer to the numerous online resources offered through the Writing Center, visit the Writing Center website at <http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter>.

## **SJSU Counseling Services**

The SJSU, Counseling Services is located on the corner of 7<sup>th</sup> Street and San Fernando Street, in Room 201, Administration Building. Professional psychologists, social workers, and counselors are available to provide consultations on issues of student mental health, campus climate or psychological and academic issues on an individual, couple or group basis. To schedule an appointment or learn more information, visit Counseling Services website at <http://www.sjsu.edu/counseling>.

## **Schedule**

Thursday, August 24, 2017: General Introduction

Tuesday, August 29, 2017: Chapter 1: Crime, Criminal Justice and Scientific Inquiry

- Basic ideas
- Identifying research question

Thursday, August 31, 2017: Chapter 1: Crime, Criminal Justice and Scientific Inquiry

- Designing research
- Homework # 1 assigned

Tuesday, September 5, 2017: Chapter 2: Foundation of Criminal Justice Research

- Deductive and Inductive logic

Thursday, September 7, 2017: Chapter 2: Foundation of Criminal Justice Research

- Hypothesis
- Homework # 2 assigned

Tuesday, September 12, 2017: Chapter 3: Ethics and Criminal Justice Research

Thursday, September 14, 2017: Chapter 3: Ethics and Criminal Justice Research

- IRB

Tuesday, September 19, 2017: Chapter 4: General Issues in Research Design

- Validity

Thursday, September 21, 2017: Chapter 4: General Issues in Research Design

- Unit of Analysis
- Data
- Homework # 3 assigned

Tuesday, September 26, 2017: Chapter 5: Concept, Operationalization and Measurement

Thursday, September 28, 2017: Chapter 5: Concept, Operationalization and Measurement

- Homework # 4 assigned

Tuesday, October 3, 2017: Chapter 6: Measuring Crime

- Examples evaluated

**Thursday, October 5, 2017: Midterm Exam**

Tuesday, October 10, 2017: Descriptive Statistics – Counting data

- Frequency distribution
- Reading: TBD

Thursday, October 12, 2017: Descriptive Statistics – Counting data

- Mean, Median, Mode
- Reading: TBD
- Homework # 5 assigned

Tuesday, October 17, 2017: Chapter 7: Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs

Thursday, October 19, 2017: Chapter 7: Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs

Tuesday, October 24, 2017: Chapter 8: Sampling

- Random Sample
- Sampling Errors

Thursday, October 26, 2017: Chapter 8: Sampling

- Logic of normal curve
- Homework # 6 assigned

Tuesday, October 31, 2017: Chapter 9: Survey Research

Thursday, November 2, 2017: Chapter 9: Survey Research

Tuesday, November 7, 2017: Survey Research - data analysis

- Cross tabs
- Reading: TBD

Thursday, November 9, 2017: Survey Research – data analysis (continued)

- Homework # 7 assigned

Tuesday, November 14, 2017: Chapter 10: Qualitative Interview (Intro.)

Thursday, November 16, 2017: Chapter 11: Field Observation (Intro.)

Tuesday, November 21, 2017: Chapter 12: Content Analysis and Secondary Data

Tuesday, November 28, 2017: Chapter 13: Evaluating Research and Problem Analysis

Thursday, November 30, 2017: Chapter 14: Interpreting data

- Bivariate Analysis
- Univariate Inferences
- Additional Reading TBD
- Homework # 8

Tuesday, December 5, 2017: Chapter 14: Interpreting data

- Multivariate Analysis

Thursday, December 7, 2017: Chapter 14: Interpreting data

- Introduction to OLS

**Final Exam: Wednesday, December 13, 2017: 2:45 – 5 pm.**