

**San José State University
Justice Studies Department
Fall 2018
JS 202 Research Methods**

Contact Information

Instructor: Yue (Wilson) Yuan Ph.D.
Office Location: MacQuarrie Hall 525B
Telephone: 408-924-2968
Email: wilson.yuan@sjsu.edu
Office Hours: Monday/Tuesday 1:30-4:30 p.m.
Class Days/Time: Monday 4:30-7:15 PM
Classroom: MacQuarrie Hall 529

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.

Course Description

Examination of research methods applied to solving problems and resolving issues in justice-related agencies, organizations and processes. Focuses on the application of the scientific method to problem-solving and program evaluation.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)

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.

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate a basic understanding of quantitative and qualitative research methodology used in criminology and justice related fields.
2. Design and implement the appropriate research methodologies for different research question(s).
3. Use statistical software to conduct analyses on collected data.
4. Present and critically discuss research findings, through written and oral techniques.

Course Format

I will utilize the Canvas Learning Management System as a means for distributing course materials such as syllabus, handouts, lecture slides, assignment instructions, and communications about changes to the course. You are responsible for regularly checking with the messaging system through MySJSU to learn of updates.

The course will require students to obtain a copy of the statistics program SPSS. A license can be acquired and installed on to your computer via the Academic Technology Computer Center, located on the first floor of Clark Hall (room 102). Bring a flash drive and they will provide you with the installer files.

Required Texts/Readings

Frankfort-Nachmias, C., Nachmias, D., & DeWaard, J. (2015). *Research Methods in Social Sciences* (8th Edition). New York, NY: St. Martin's. ISBN13: 978-1429233992.

Fink, A.G. (2016). *How to Conduct Surveys* (6th Edition). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Chris Visscher & Manfred te Grotenhuis, *How to Use SPSS Syntax: An Overview of Common Commands*

Other Readings: Additional readings will be provided via Canvas.

Library Liaison

Silke Higgins (silke.higgins@sjsu.edu), (408) 808.2118. <http://libguides.sjsu.edu/justicestudies>

Course Requirements and Assignments

Critical Discussion (10%): All students are expected to take an active role in each class as both learners and teachers. You are expected to complete the weekly required readings prior to each class. You are going to benefit the most from class discussions, explanations, and activities if you have some knowledge about the concepts studied each week. In each class you should demonstrate that you have read the assigned materials ahead of time, raise and discuss issues, and fully engage with the class. Discussion will focus on both the readings and on your research projects.

Survey Design (10%): Students will have the opportunity to design a survey, to be administered through a convenience sampling method, on a topic of their choice. Your topic does not need to be explicitly "criminological"; the important thing is to find a research phenomenon that interests you, and about which/whom you would like to know more. The more you are sincerely curious about your research, the more enjoyable it will be for you, and the better your eventual report

will be for those who read it. However, your topic, and line of questioning, must be approved by me prior to beginning to design your survey. Options for projects will be discussed in class.

You can include previously validated questionnaires to supplement your survey, however, you will be required to design your own set of questions aimed at answering a specific research question. You will be graded on the proper format and construction of your survey, based on our class and textbook discussions of what makes an effective survey and what you should avoid. Several examples will be provided.

Observational and Qualitative Study Reflection (20%): One of the most common forms of research is observation. In a 6 to 8-page paper, students will discuss some of the problems that arose during the study and how they need to be addressed prior to the conducting of an observation study (or a qualitative study). More details will be provided on Canvas.

Data Analysis Assignment (20%): After view a demonstration of, and completing readings about, SPSS, students will be provided with a dataset and be required to complete several data analyses. Students will submit the syntax and edited dataset, along with the answers to several questions only able to be obtained by correctly completing the data analysis.

Oral Presentation (10%): Students will be required to present the findings of their survey to the class, and department, at the end of the semester (see schedule). The oral presentation provides you with a chance to discuss their projects with the rest of the class and practice public speaking skills. The length of the presentation will be determined later (expect approximately 20 minutes).

Final Examination or Evaluation

University Policy S06-4 states that ‘there shall be an appropriate final examination or evaluation at the scheduled time in every course, unless specifically exempted by the college dean who has curricular responsibility for the course’.

Final Paper (30%): Conducting research is an active process, one that is learned through “doing”. For this reason, students will design and administer their own survey. After collecting and analyzing (univariate and bivariate) data, you will complete a final paper, due during the scheduled final exam period. The paper will be 20-25 pages (excludes appendices, references, figures, and tables), double-spaced, in 12-point font Times New Roman OR 11-point font Arial. The paper is to follow APA format, including bibliography, abstract, cover page, etc. The purpose of this assignment is to learn how to design, administer, analyze, and report a survey. Therefore, your final grade will be based on these factors and NOT on the findings.

Grading Information

- In order to receive a grade for this course, all course requirements must be met and every assignment must be completed. Failure to complete any one assignment may result in a failing grade for this course.
- Late assignments/papers will not be accepted.
- There are no extra credit options available in the course.

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% 0-179		

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

Per University Policy S16-9, university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc. will be available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs' [Syllabus Information web page](http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/>

Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
1	August 27	Introduction
2	September 3	Labor Day
3	September 10	Research Problem (Scientific Approach, Conceptual Foundation, and Elements of Research). <i>Nachmias, Chapters 1 and 2</i>
4	September 17	Elements of Research (Literature and Hypothesis Development) & Ethics (IRB). <i>Nachmias, Chapters 3 and 4</i>
5	September 24	General Issues in Research Design <i>Nachmias, Chapters 5 and 6</i>
6	October 1	Measurement (Conceptualize, Operationalize, Validity, and Reliability) & Sampling (Strategies and Generalizability). <i>Nachmias, Chapters 7 and 8; Fink, Chapter 4</i> Research Proposal Due
7	October 8	Survey Methodology (Survey Types and Questionnaire Construction). <i>Nachmias, Chapters 10 and 11; Fink, Chapters 1 and 5</i>
8	October 15	The Survey (Writing Questions and Practical Concerns). <i>Fink, Chapters 2 and 3</i> Qualtrics Introduction <i>Class Feedback on Draft Survey</i>
9	October 22	Quantitative Research Design (Experiments and Cross-Sectional). <i>Nachmias, Chapters 5 and 6</i> Final Survey Due
10	October 29	Observational Research. <i>Nachmias, Chapter 9</i>
11	November 5	Qualitative Research Design (Field Research, Ethnography, Secondary Data, and Content Analysis). <i>Nachmias, Chapters 12 and 13</i>
12	November 12	Veteran's Day
13	November 19	Learning SPSS <i>Nachmias, Chapter 14; SPSS Text Book</i>
14	November 26	Conducting Data Analysis. <i>Nachmias, Chapters 15, and 16; Fink, Chapter 6</i>
15	December 3	<i>Data Analysis Presentation.</i>
16	December 10	<i>Academic Writing. Nachmias Appendix A; Canvas Readings</i>
17	December 15	Final Paper Due