

San José State University
Department of Justice Studies
JS 266: Applied Research Methods & Statistics
Fall 2018

Course and Contact Information

Instructor:	Dr. Bryce Westlake
Office Location:	Health Building 211
Telephone:	408-924-2743
Email:	Bryce.Westlake@sjsu.edu
Office Hours:	Monday & Wednesday 12:00 pm to 1:30 pm Tuesday 10:00 am to 12:00 pm
Class Days/Time:	Canvas

Course Description

This course introduces research concepts, methodology, design, qualitative and quantitative data analysis, interpretation, and SPSS use for understanding crime and evaluating criminal justice issues, policies, and agency practices.

Extended Description

This course will introduce students into conducting research through a historical examination of controversial experiments, participation in conducting observational research, and creating a research study. Students will learn the importance of ethical research, how to formulate research questions and select the appropriate quantitative or qualitative methodology to correctly answer their question. Finally, students will be exposed to common statistical analyses that can be used to describe collected data and general associations between data.

Course Learning Outcomes

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

- (CLO 1) Understand and critically discuss 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.
- (CLO 2) Develop a comprehensive research project, from design, to implementation, to analysis.
- (CLO 3) Write and present a detailed research report in the area of social or criminal justice.

Required Texts/Readings

Frankfort-Nachmias, C., Nachmias, D., & DeWaard, J. (2015). *Research Methods in Social Sciences (8th Edition)*. New York: St. Martin's. ISBN13: 978-1429233002.

David L. Streiner & Souraya Sidani. (2010). *When Research Goes Off the Rails*. New York: The Guilford Press. ISBN13: 978-1606234105.

Course Assignments

Online Discussion (25%): Each week, two to three discussion questions will be posted on Canvas focusing on an element of that week's topics. These questions will primarily aid in developing your final research proposal and provide you with the opportunity to receive feedback on the components of a research project from the professor and your classmates. Students are expected to contribute to *all* discussion questions throughout the semester. This involves providing an answer to the question, as outlined, and providing feedback, suggestions, and recommendations to classmates' answers. This assignment will specifically address CLO's 1 and 2.

Facilitating 'Off the Rails' Discussion (15%): Connecting the theoretical, discussed in the textbook, to the real-world, each student will lead a discussion on a different chapter within *When Research Goes Off the Rails*. Students will develop three to five questions focused on the methodological concepts and issues they feel were pertinent within the chapter and require more critical discussion. Students are encouraged to connect the chapter to multiple topics discussed throughout the course in previous weeks, as each step of research impacts every other step. This assignment will specifically address CLO 1.

Presentation of Research Proposal (20%): The purpose of this assignment is for students to demonstrate their ability to communicate their research proposal to an audience. Students will give a maximum 15-minute presentation on their research proposal, introducing their topic, clearly outlining the importance of the topic, describing the relevant literature, and providing an appropriate research question. Students will then explain a suitable methodology for answering their research question, along with appropriate details about the population, measurements, and statistical data analyses. Students will conclude by identifying the potential policy implications linked to their anticipated results. This assignment will specifically address CLO's 2 and 3.

Research Proposal (40%): Prior to conducting any research, it is important to have a game plan for how the research will be carried out. The culminating assignment for this course will be a 20 to 25-page paper where students will propose a research project, outline how the study would be conducted, and what issues would need to be addressed. More details about the requirements of this assignment will be provided on Canvas. This assignment will specifically address CLO's 2 and 3.

Grading Policy

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 the course. Late assignments/papers will not be accepted for full credit (without extenuating personal circumstances due to own or family health; or other university recognized excuse). In such cases, appropriate documentation must be shown to the instructor. **Late assignments/papers will lose 10% for every calendar day that they are late, including weekend days.**

The final course grade will be based on a 100-point scale. Since the grade is based on mastery of the material, it is theoretically possible for everyone to earn an A.

A plus = 98.0 to 100.0

A = 94.0 to <98.0

A minus = 90.0 to <94.0

B plus = 85.0 to <90.0

B = 80.0 to <85.0

B minus = 75.0 to <80.0

C plus = 70.0 to <75.0

C = 65.0 to <70.0

C minus = 60.0 to <65.0

F = <60.0

Note that "All students have the right, within a reasonable time, to know their academic scores, to review their grade-dependent work, and to be provided with explanations for the determination of their course grades." See [University Policy F13-1](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F13-1.pdf) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F13-1.pdf> for more details.

Class Expectations

This course is a graduate seminar. In a seminar, students meet regularly (online) to report and discuss an area of research under the guidance of a professor. The professor's role in this course is to guide your conversations, steer your thinking in intellectually sound directions, and to evaluate your work. The professor will not carry the conversation. Instead, the role of a seminar is to make students expert in an area of study. As a scholar, you should approach this course with the mentality that the group has the burden of educating itself. Since participation is a key element in this class, I would advise not taking this course if you anticipate being unable to contribute significantly to online discussions.

University Policies

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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/>"

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. For additional resources and updated information, follow the Writing Center on Twitter and become a fan of the SJSU Writing Center on Facebook.

SJSU Counseling Services

The SJSU Counseling Services is located on the corner of 7th 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](#).

APPLIED RESEARCH METHODS & STATISTICS

FALL 2018, COURSE SCHEDULE

This course schedule is subject to change with fair notice, at the instructor's discretion. All reading assignments listed should be completed prior to class on that date. Additional readings may be assigned.

Week	Date	Topics	Readings
1	10/14/18	What is Research & Conducting Research	<i>Research Methods in Social Sciences</i> Chapter 1: The Scientific Approach Chapter 2: Conceptual Foundations of Research <i>Off the Rails</i> Introduction (pg. 1-15) Chapters 25 & 29
2	10/21/18	Elements of Research Ethics & Research Design	<i>Research Methods in Social Sciences</i> Chapter 3: Elements of Research Chapter 4: Ethics in Social Science Research Chapter 5 & 6: Research Designs <i>Off the Rails</i> Chapters 2, 11, & 27
3	10/28/18	Measurement & Sampling	<i>Research Methods in Social Sciences</i> Chapter 7: Measurement Chapter 8: Sampling & Sampling Design <i>Off the Rails</i> Accessing Participants (pg. 53-55) Recruitment & Retention (pg. 97-99) Chapter 12, 31, & 32
4	11/04/18	Observational & Qualitative	<i>Research Methods in Social Sciences</i> Chapter 9: Observational Methods Chapter 12: Qualitative Research <i>Off the Rails</i> Chapter 7, 30, & 37
5	11/11/18	Content/Secondary Survey/Questionnaire & Program Evaluation	<u>For Content/Secondary</u> <i>Research Methods in Social Sciences</i> Chapter 13: Secondary Data Analysis <i>Off the Rails</i> Chapters 8 & 9 <u>For Survey/Questionnaire</u> <i>Research Methods in Social Sciences</i> Chapter 10: Survey Research Chapter 11: Questionnaire Construction <i>Off the Rails</i> Chapters 19, 24, & 32 <u>For Program Evaluation</u> <i>Readings: TBD</i>
6	11/18/18	Data Preparation & Analysis	<i>Research Methods in Social Sciences</i> Chapter 14: Data Preparation & Analysis <i>Off the Rails</i> Chapters 26 & 38

Week	Date	Topics	Readings
7	11/25/18	<p style="text-align: center;">Univariate & Bivariate Statistics</p>	<p><i>Research Methods in Social Sciences</i> Chapter 15: The Univariate Distribution Chapter 16: Bivariate Analysis <i>Off the Rails</i> Chapters 33 & 34 Presentation Due 12/02/2018</p>
8	12/02/18	<p style="text-align: center;">Presenting Research</p>	<p><i>No Readings</i> Final Paper Due 12/10/2018</p>