



**SAN JOSÉ STATE
UNIVERSITY**

**Research Methods in Justice Studies, JS 114
Spring 2018: Online
JS Competency Area: B**

Instructor: Megan Schlegel, PhD
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Office Hours: Online via Google Hangouts (done through your SJSU email account); Monday 1-2pm or by appointment

Prerequisite: 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.

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. The goal of this course is to introduce students to research methods in the justice studies. In this course, students will explore the underlying theoretical assumptions about social research and the ethical and social implications of doing research with human subjects in a variety of social settings. Students will learn the basic skills necessary to collect, process, and analyze social phenomena using both qualitative and quantitative methods, including descriptive and inferential statistics, and simple measures of association. To do this, students will conduct basic data analysis, review literature, and summarize their findings in a short research paper.

Section Specific Description: My learning objectives are modest: to train students to observe, interpret, and interact with the world through the lens of a research scientist. 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.
4. Students should read, write, and contribute to discussion at a skilled and capable level.

Student Learning Objectives:

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

SLO 3: Recognize how criminal justice research is shaped by ethical considerations.

SLO 4: Understand how the logic of probability sampling makes it possible to represent large populations with small subsets of those populations.

SLO 5: Understand that survey research involves the administration of questionnaires in a systematic way to a sample of respondents selected from some population

SLO 6: Recognize when to use qualitative interviewing as a data-gathering tool.

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

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

SLO 9: Understand that tests of statistical significance make assumptions about data and methods that are rarely satisfied completely in social science research.

Instructor's Narrative: This is a course on how to collect and properly evaluate information that criminologists and other social researchers use to discover facts about, and patterns of activity in societies. Special focus is on using large survey data sets--the dominant paradigm in our field. This course encourages and facilitates learning some of the methods and skills that are required to make discoveries and test knowledge in justice studies.

Social research covers a complex topic: human behavior in groups. Determining why people act and think as they do, both individually and collectively, is not easy. It requires being disciplined and systematic in ways that are not instinctive. The skills required must be learned from a mentor. Indeed, the quality of research in a given society is the product of the quality of scientific education its citizens received. To become skilled researchers, students must participate in multiple research methods and statistics courses--like JS 114--and they must have practice actually doing research in methodical ways.

This course provides students a chance to learn the scientific process by engaging in it—students are responsible for generating a primary research paper that includes statistical analysis of real data. Students learn *how* researchers generate the kind of information that is the centerpiece of JS topics courses. After learning about this process, students should see that what they are taught in their curriculum has merit. For example, when professors teach that persons who kill white Americans are more likely to be sentenced to death than those who kill nonwhites, the claim is valid because it was generated by rigorous scientific research.

After completing the course, students should be able to intelligently discuss the research process, understand and be critical of others' research, and carry out research on their own. In addition, students should be capable of determining when commentators, politicians, preachers, "know-it-alls," pseudo-scientists, journalists, and others are making things up out of ignorance or to fool others. Finally, students will have learned skills that will be very attractive to graduate programs and/or future employers.

Faculty Web Page and MYSJSU Messaging:

Course materials such as syllabus, handouts, notes, assignment instructions, etc. can be found on Canvas Learning Management System course login website at <http://sjsu.instructure.com>. You are responsible for regularly checking with the messaging system through MySJSU at <http://my.sjsu.edu> (or other communication system as indicated by the instructor) to learn of any updates.

JUSTICE STUDIES 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.

Library Liaison for Justice Studies:

Silke Higgins Silke.Higgins@sjsu.edu (408) 808-2118.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADES

SJSU classes are designed such 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 per unit per week), including preparing for class, participating in course activities, completing assignments, and so on. More details about student workload can be found in [University Policy S12-3](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-3.pdf) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-3.pdf>.

Learning in this online section of JS 114 is accomplished primarily through reading assigned material and PowerPoint presentations, and by writing a research paper. Everything except the textbook and SPSS is acquired and/or turned in via the course website on Canvas.

Work in this course is centered on two things: 1) Lessons about data collection strategies and data analysis, and 2) A research paper that is written incrementally over the semester. The first focus is assessed primarily through quizzes and exams. The second is assessed by grades for written assignments. To be successful, students should balance their work between these two substantially different course foci.

Required Texts/Readings/Computer Software/Website:

- *Making Sense of the Social World, Fifth Edition*, by Daniel F. Chambliss and Russell K. Schutt (ISBN 978-1-4522-1771-0)
- Online readings from the course website
- SPSS—it is a statistics software package. A copy of this software may be purchased at the Student Success Center in Clark Hall – please pick this up ASAP!
- Course website is accessed via Canvas

Canvas Website: This course is located on Canvas—enrolled students automatically have access through their SJSUOne account. All course material except the book and SPSS will be acquired and/or turned in via that website. Class participation (Discussion Boards), timed quizzes, exams, and all work and feedback on the projects and course papers will be located on that medium.

Online courses typically restrict contact between students and with the instructor. That is problematic because **research methods are best learned through discussion, practice, and learning from inevitable mistakes**. One way that this course prompts contact is by providing practice, feedback, and opportunities to learn from mistakes through its paper-writing exercises. Students must get approval for their work at two points, and each assigned project and the final paper must be turned in as drafts prior to being submitted as finalized documents.

Online Discussions: Another way to get information, insight, and feedback in this course is by participating in discussions in the course website's Discussions section. On the website, students are encouraged to post in the

preset appropriate topic area for each question or comment that they have. If an appropriate topic is not available, they are encouraged to create a new one.

In addition, students are encouraged to answer other students' questions, or to add to the questions in previous students' posts. The instructor monitors the Discussions section and provides guidance over the course of the semester. Discussions sometimes prompt the creation of new documents that better explain course material to students.

Posting to the discussion board should be the first step taken by students when they have questions about course matters. This will be the most effective way for students to get answers about the course as the instructor will monitor the discussions and provide guidance over the course of the semester.

The instructor also has virtual office hours, but students should first attempt to get answers via discussion. **The value of the discussion platform is so immense that students may be rewarded with up to five (5) extra credit points on the final grade for the quality of their engagement there.** The instructor will assign extra credit by subjectively evaluating the overall quality of each student's contributions to the board.

Timed Quizzes: Course reading materials (book, online, and PPT) form the cornerstone of this online course. Reading should be completed in a timely manner by the dates indicated on the course schedule (page 7). To encourage students to read and keep up with the course, there will be **8 short timed quizzes (the two lowest scores will be dropped when grading). The top-6-quiz average will be 20% of the final grade.**

The quizzes will consist of questions that are intended to gauge whether students understand key aspects of the readings that precede them on the syllabus. Poor performance on a quiz is an indicator that more studying is needed for the topics that the quiz covered.

Quizzes will open a day before they are due, and they should be completed before midnight of the date assigned on the course schedule. **Read all book, online, and PowerPoint material before starting a quiz.** *Quiz time limits were established to prevent students from looking up answers in the book and the notes.* This is because the quizzes are intended to encourage students to read at a proper pace. Nonetheless, the amount of time given to take the quiz is about three times as long as the typical student will need.

CAUTION: Students who do not check in with this course on a daily basis often do poorly on or miss quizzes because they forget the assigned dates. The resulting low scores that result from rushing to take a quiz before the deadline or getting a zero from missing the quiz (one cannot make them up) can severely lower the final grade.

Projects and Research Paper: Research is an active process that is learned through "doing," and that culminates in a written document. For this reason, students will create a research paper over the term. The paper-writing process includes completing two (2) "approval forms" and two (2) written projects. The approval forms must be completed and approved prior to writing the projects. This structure is literally intended to help students out--It prevents them from doing futile work that cannot be used in the paper.

Project 1: Project 1 helps students understand ways to build a research-based argument that results in hypotheses. It leads to writing an introduction, literature review, and references. The Variable Approval Form must be completed prior to doing this project.

Project 2: The second project helps students conduct statistical tests of their hypotheses. This work leads to writing methods, results, and conclusions. The Analysis Approval Form must be completed prior to doing this project.

Final Paper: When doing the projects, students are also writing the final paper. Pieced together and revised according to feedback, the two projects form the final paper.

The projects and paper form an integral strand of the learning process in this course. The instructor has learned over the years that to do well, students must approach the projects and paper with a determined and untiring attitude. Students should expect to work on the projects and paper for a few hours each day, even when the course schedule (p. 7) does not prompt it.

Approval form, project, and ungraded project draft due dates are on the course schedule. **Each project will be worth 10% of the final grade and the final paper will be worth 30% of the final grade.** The assigned grade for each of these may be affected by quality demonstrated in approval forms and drafts. Forms, projects, and the research paper must be turned in using the online “submit” function associated with each one.

Students may work in groups of two or three persons on the projects and paper. Students are allowed to change group membership (or work alone) at any point in the semester. Group members are required to send a pledge of equitable contribution, and consent to take the assigned grade, each time an assignment is turned in. **Substantiated complaints against a group member for violating the pledge will result in a grade reduction for the violator.** Each group member will receive a grade based on each product turned in. That grade is final, except for those deemed violators; their grade will be reduced.

Exams: There will be two exams. **Each will contribute 15% of the final grade.** These will be completed online. *The second exam may not be taken early for any reason.*

Final Grade: The final course grade will be based on weighted contributions for each section of grades: Projects, Paper, Quizzes, and Exams. The final scale adds to 100 points. Extra credit from participation will be applied after calculating the final grade. **There will be NO other opportunities for extra credit, per Departmental policy.** The course grade is not curved, so it is theoretically possible for everyone to earn an A.

The instructor will not assign ‘I’ grades except in the most extreme emergencies or grave unforeseen circumstances, and 75% of the graded material must have been turned in. Missing a quiz deadline results in a grade of zero regardless of the reason. Exams and papers may only be turned in late when there is a documented University or medical excuse. Otherwise, missing deadlines is severely penalized. If students encounter a technological problem while submitting papers or taking quizzes or exams, they should contact the instructor immediately via email or some other channel of communication. While he cannot fix technical issues (contact Academic Technology), he can make adjustments to work around them.

The grading scale is:

A+ 100 - 97	A 96 - 93	A- 92 - 90
B+ 89 - 87	B 86 - 83	B- 82 - 80
C+ 79 - 77	C 76 - 73	
Not acceptable in JS:	C- 72 - 70	
D+ 69 - 67	D 66 - 63	D- 62 - 60
F 59 and below		

Grades are based on:

Project 1	10 points
Project 2	10 points
Final Paper	30 points
Top 6 Quizzes	20 points
Midterm Exam	15 points
Final Exam	15 points

CASA Departments and Schools. All CASA students and students who would like to be in CASA are invited to stop by the Center for general education advising, help with changing majors, academic policy related questions, meeting with peer advisors, and/or attending various regularly scheduled presentations and workshops. Looking for academic advice or maybe just some tips about how to navigate around SJSU? Check out the CASA Student Success Center! It's also a great place to study, and students can check out laptops.

Location: MacQuarrie Hall (MH) 533 – top floor of MacQuarrie Hall. Contact information: [408.924.2910](tel:408.924.2910).
Website: <http://www.sjsu.edu/casa/ssc/>.

SJSU Writing Center: The SJSU Writing Center is available to help students improve their writing. It is located in Room 126 in Clark Hall. It is staffed by professional instructors and upper-division or graduate-level writing specialists from each of the 7 SJSU colleges. The writing specialists have met a rigorous GPA requirement, and they are well trained to assist all students at all levels within all disciplines to become better writers. The Writing Center website is located at <http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/>.

Peer Connections: The Learning Assistance Resource Center (LARC) and the Peer Mentor Program have merged to become Peer Connections. Peer Connections is the new campus-wide resource for mentoring and tutoring. Our staff is here to inspire students to develop their potential as independent learners while they learn to successfully navigate through their university experience. Students are encouraged to take advantage of our services which include course-content based tutoring, enhanced study and time management skills, more effective critical thinking strategies, decision making and problem-solving abilities, campus resource referrals, and to speak with a peer who has been trained to assist other students going through the college experience.

Services: In addition to offering appointments for small group and individual tutoring (same day appointments are often available) 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 college success related topics. A computer lab is also available for student use in Room 600 of the Student Services Center (SSC).

Locations: They are located in SSC 600 (the 10th Street Garage on the corner of 10th and San Fernando St.), at the 1st floor entrance of Clark Hall, and in the Living Learning Center (LLC) in Campus Village Housing Building B. The peer connections website is located at <http://peerconnections.sjsu.edu>.

Accommodation to students' religious holidays

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.

Dropping and Adding: Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drops, academic renewal, and so forth. Students should also be aware of the current deadlines and penalties for adding and dropping classes. Policies for adding classes are available at <http://info.sjsu.edu/web-dbgen/narr/catalog/rec-1800.html>. Policies for dropping classes are found at <http://info.sjsu.edu/web-dbgen/narr/catalog/rec-1809.html>, and information about late drops is available at <http://www.sjsu.edu/aars/policies/latedrops/>. Finally, deadlines for adding and dropping classes are listed on the registration calendar available at <http://www.sjsu.edu/registrar/calendar/>.

JS 114, Research Methods, Sec 80, Spring 2018

Week	Dates	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines (PPT Lectures Online; C&S-Textbook; Assignments; Quizzes/Exams)
1	1/24-1/26	Introductions; Syllabus Introductions to Research Methods and SPSS C&S: Chapter 1, Chapter 12, and Appendix A; PPT: #1
2	1/29-2/2	Introduction to Research and Ethics C&S: Chapters 2-3; PPT: #2 Quiz #1**
3	2/5-2/9	Experimental Design and Scientific Thinking C&S: Chapter 6; PPT: #3 Variables Approval Form Due Quiz #2
4	2/12-2/16	Concepts and Measurement C&S: Chapter 4; PPT: #4 Quiz #3
5	2/19-2/23	All you ever wanted to know about surveys C&S: Chapter 7; PPT: #5 Quiz #4
6	2/26-3/2	Sampling C&S: Chapter 5; PPT: #6 Project #1 Due
7	3/5-3/9	Data Analysis Part 1 – Analysis, Tables and Writing Results C&S: Chapter 8; PPT: #7 Quiz #5
8	3/12-3/16	Data Analysis Part 2 – Statistical Tests C&S: None (can you believe it??); PPT: #8 Quiz #6
9	3/19-3/23	Midterm Exam*** Readings – Methods section in online GSS codebook
10	3/26-3/30	SPRING BREAK – No Classes – Enjoy a well deserved break!!!
12	4/2-4/6	Readings – Selected pages in GSS 2012 codebook (available on course website) Analysis Approval Form due Quiz #7
13	4/9-4/13	Evaluation Research C&S: Chapter 11; PPT: #9 Quiz #8 Project #2 due
14	4/16-4/20	Meetings with Professor for Final Paper review (to be scheduled by students)
15	4/23-4/27	Final Exam Review (available on Canvas)

Week	Dates	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines (PPT Lectures Online; C&S-Textbook; Assignments; Quizzes/Exams)
16	4/30-5/4	Meetings with Professor for Final Paper review (to be scheduled by students)
17	5/7-5/11	Final Paper Due
18	5/16-5/22	Final Exam (Exact dates to be released once the University schedule is out)

*Notes about the course schedule: I reserve the right to change the due dates listed above, but only in a manner that benefits students (e.g., due dates can only be pushed back, never moved forward). This is because I want to make sure everyone is understanding the material and is able to move forward with the class.

**Notes about quizzes – Quizzes are based on the reading material that is due the week of the quiz. For example, Quiz #1 will be based on Chapters 2&3 and PPT #2. You will have approximately 2 days to complete a quiz (the quizzes will open every Wednesday at 8am and close on Thursday at 11:59pm). If you have an extenuating circumstance as to why you cannot make a quiz, it's okay. You get to drop your 2 lowest scores!

***Notes about exams – The exams in this course are cumulative, meaning all of the material learned prior to the midterm is fair game for the exam. All material learned throughout the semester is fair game for the final. You will have 4 full days to complete an exam (the first exam will open on a Monday at 8am and close on Thursday at 11:59pm; the final exam will open on a Thursday at 8am and close on Sunday at 11:59pm). If you need any accommodations, please speak to me ASAP.