

Introduction to Criminal Justice Research Methods Spring 2009

Professor: Mary Maguire, Ph.D.

Office: Alpine 104

Lecture: TF 7:30pm – 8:45pm, Alpine Hall Room 153

Office hours: TR: 11:00am -12:00pm and T: 1:30pm – 2:30pm and by appointment.

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

As stated in the CSU catalog description, this course provides an introduction to the research methodologies used in the social sciences, with a special emphasis on those methods most often used in the study of police/court systems and correctional institutions, policies and programs. Students will acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to understand, critically analyze and perform basic descriptive and quantitative research studies. Topics include the roles of theory and ethics in research, hypothesis testing, and research design.

The course objectives are

- 1) Use research terminology appropriately and apply research-related concepts to the field of Criminal Justice.
- 2) Understand the relationship between theory and research including familiarity with the issues and process of theory construction.
- 3) Recognize a wide variety of research techniques and design issues that are relevant to the Criminal Justice field.
- 4) Identify ethical obstacles and dilemmas encountered in the process of research and develop an appreciation for ethical research.
- 5) Interpret and critically appraise research literature to develop an ability to discriminate between “good” and “bad” research.

REQUIRED BOOKS:

Maxfield, M.G. & Babbie, E. (2007). *Research Methods for Criminal Justice and Criminology* (5th ed.). Belmont, CA: Thompson Wadsworth.

Additional readings may be assigned throughout the course of the semester.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

(4) Examinations	60%
(8) Quizzes	20%
(1) Paper	20%

■ Examinations & Quizzes

There are four exams and eight quizzes in this course. The purpose of the quizzes is to prepare you for your exams, consequently they carry a lower weight. There will be no make-up exams unless you advise me ahead of the exam day of a valid need to reschedule. There will be no make-up final exams.

Students are expected to take the quizzes and exams when they are scheduled. Some quizzes and exams are given on WebCT which necessitates that each student have a working SacLink account, access to the internet, and familiarity with WebCT by exam day. For in class exams, those who are more than 15 minutes late for a regularly scheduled examination, or those who are excused from a regularly scheduled examination must take a make-up exam. Make-up exams, whether necessitated by an excused or non-excused absence, will be docked ten points to compensate for the additional study time the late exam allowed.

NOTE: There will be no make up quizzes due to technical errors with your computer. It is your responsibility to make sure you are on a computer with a secure connection before you begin the exam. It is also your responsibility to know when the quizzes open and close. There are no exceptions whatsoever to the no make up quiz policy.

■ Paper

The paper for this course is a research proposal, designed by you, to answer a question of interest to you. This paper is designed to help you retain the skills that are learned in Research Methods class. By thinking through your own research proposal, you will apply the concepts learned in each chapter. In doing so, you will strengthen your ability to think critically about criminal justice theory, practice and policy, not to mention the consumer research that you are faced with everyday.

We do not have time in this course to do a full research project. Therefore, you will simply write a proposal. You should use the Research Writer CD that accompanied your text to assist you with this assignment. This project will NOT involve actually collecting or analyzing data. It WILL include all other standard parts of a research paper. **An ungraded opportunity for feedback is available on March 12th.** A detailed explanation of the paper will be discussed in class and an outline is available on WebCT.

GRADING SCALE:

A = 93-100	B+ = 87-89	C+ = 76-79	D+ = 66-69	F= Below 60
A- = 90-92	B = 83-86	C = 73-75	D = 63-65	
	B- = 80-82	C- = 70 - 72*	D- = 60-62	

Grading Rubric: Written work will be graded on both substance and quality of writing. The following grading rubric is generally followed:

A grades are awarded by work that goes above and beyond the required assignment. This includes work that has been carefully edited and contains no grammatical errors, work that uses multiple sources outside of assigned course material, and that provides a solid analysis and synthesis of material in a well organized manner.

B grades are awarded to work of excellent quality. This includes work that is well organized, has few grammatical errors, and that provides a strong analysis of the material studied.

C grades are awarded to average work. This includes work that meets the requirements of the assignment, is organized in a cohesive and acceptable manner and that illustrates a command of the material studied.

D grades are awarded to below average work but work that indicates an attempt was made at a C grade. This includes work in which minimal assignment requirements were almost, but not quite met. This work is completed on time but it appears there was no attempt to edit, leaving it difficult to read.

F grades are awarded for assignments that are not completed; that are not close to meeting the assignment requirements or are not coherent.

Incomplete grades will not be given unless there is a legitimate reason why the student cannot complete the required work during the semester. A failing grade is not considered a legitimate excuse.

CLASS POLICIES AND MISCELLANEOUS SURVIVAL SKILLS:

ATTENDANCE; PARTICIPATION; BEING ON TIME: This course is designed to promote a learning community. To this end, we will strive to build a cohesive learning group in which everyone's perspective is not only welcome but needed. Therefore, it is important that all members of the class can express their ideas in a respectful environment. Any actions that might tend to limit freedom of expression are highly discouraged.

Class participation is an important part of research methods. Participation means you have prepared for class by reading and thinking about the material. **Computers and cell phones are not allowed in class.** Please wait until after class to return your text messages, and if you need to take a call, please put your phone on vibrate and take your call in the hall. **If you miss class, please see a friend to get what you missed.** **Students are expected to be on time for class.**

LATE WORK: Papers must be turned in on or before their due date. If you are going to miss class on an assignment due date it is your responsibility to turn in your paper early. Late papers will be docked five points for every day they are late. On time constitutes the beginning of the class the paper is due.

AMERICAN DISABILITIES ACT: Students with any form of disability requiring academic accommodation must register with the Services to Students with Disabilities, and speak with me about special needs within the first week of class. Official documentation will be required to verify any necessary accommodations. The SSWD web address is: <http://www.csus.edu/sswd/> and the phone number is 916-278-6955.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY: All materials submitted in fulfillment of course requirements must conform to the Academic Integrity Code and to the usual academic standards governing appropriate testing behavior. If you are caught cheating, you will automatically receive a failing grade for this course, among other possible consequences.

TENTATIVE TOPICS AND READING SCHEDULE:

Classes and/or Quizzes in red will be held on WebCT

Week 1:	Jan 27 Jan 29	Welcome and introduction to Research Methods Chapter 1 Maxfield & Babbie (M&B)
Week 2:	Feb 3 Feb 5	Chapter 1 M&B; Complete Ch1 Game; Work on research question (paper hypothesis). Class in Library Room 2024; Quiz (MB chapter 1)
Week 3:	Feb 10 Feb 12	Chapter 2 M&B; Theory construction Chapter 3 M&B; Quiz (MB chapters 1-2)
Week 4:	Feb 17 Feb 19	Exam Review; Film: Quiet Rage Quiz (MB chapters 1-3) Study Groups to meet
Week 5:	Feb 24 Feb 26	Exam One Chapter 4 lecture slides; Quiz Game Ch 4
Week 6:	Mar 3 Mar 5	Chapter 4 Quiz (MB Ch 4) Chapter 5
Week 7:	Mar 10 Mar 12:	Chapter 7 Quiz (MB chapters 4, 5, 7) Paper Draft Due ; Exam Review/Study
Week 8:	Mar 17: Mar 19:	Exam Two Chapter 8 Lecture Slides; Discussion Post
Week 9:	Mar. 24: Mar 26:	Chapter 8 M&B Quiz (MB Chapter 8) Sampling Exercise
Week 10:	Mar 31: Apr 2:	SPRING BREAK SPRING BREAK
Week 11:	Apr 7: Apr 9:	Chapter 9 M&B Quiz (chapter 9) Survey data analysis and presentation; work on paper
Week 12:	Apr 14: Apr 16:	Chapter 10 M&B Field Exercise on Campus
Week 13:	Apr 21: Apr 23:	Chapter 11 M&B Lecture Quiz (chapters 10, 11) Exam review
Week 14:	Apr 28: Apr 30:	Exam Three Article Analysis

Week 15: May 5: Chapter 12 M&B
May 7: **Presentation of Research**

Week 16: May 12: **Final Papers Due; Presentation of research**
May 14: **Exam Four**

Final **Finals Week**
