

California State University Sacramento
Division of Criminal Justice
Spring 2009

CRJ 100 Introduction to Research Methods in Criminal Justice

Instructor Contact Information:

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(you may leave a message but email is the best way to contact me quickly)

Section 2: MW 1:30-2:45 Douglass Hall 107

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.
Prerequisite: CRJ 001.

Course Objectives

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

You can purchase the following textbooks at the Hornet Bookstore.

Research Methods for Criminal Justice and Criminology, Fifth Edition, by Maxfield, Michael G. and Babbie, Earl. Thomson Wadsworth, Publishers, 2008.

A copied collection of research articles that will be used as mandatory supplementary reading throughout the semester will also be available at the Hornet Bookstore. Please bring this text to class each day.

SacCT 6.0 Information

You are required to have a Saclink account for this course. If you do not have one, please get one by the next class meeting. ALL of the assignments, including lecture notes/power point presentations and course information will be posted on SacCT version 6.0. Please add it to your Favorites or Bookmark it so that you can access the correct version of my course. CE6: <http://online.csus.edu>

Course Requirements:

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|---|--|
| (1) Midterm | 50 points |
| (1) Final Exam | 50 points |
| (2) Quizzes | 20 points (10 points each) |
| (1) Research Paper | 50 points |
| (3) Assignments For Research Paper (1) Printed references with intro paragraph (2) Outline of body of research paper (3) Rough Draft due | 30 points total (10 points) (10 points) (10 points) |
| (1) Survey Assignment | 30 points |
| In-class work | 20 points |
| (2) Web Assignments | 10 points |
| Total | 260 points |

From the total number of points, a percentage will be derived for your final letter grade as follows:

Grading Range

| | |
|------------|------------------|
| A = 93-100 | C = 75-73 |
| A- = 90-92 | C- = 72-70 *** |
| B+ = 86-89 | D+ = 66-69 |
| B = 83-85 | D = 63-65 |
| B- = 82-80 | D- = 60-62 |
| C+ = 76-79 | F = 59 and below |

*****IMPORTANT NOTE:** CRJ 100 is a core course so CRJ majors must earn a grade of C- or better to avoid having to re-take it.

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.

Examinations & Quizzes

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

The first exam consists of multiple choice and short essay questions based on the first chapters in the text and the research articles. The final exam consists of multiple choice type questions based on the research articles and other knowledge learned in the course. The quizzes are generally short answer and fill-in-the-blank.

Students are expected to take the quizzes and exams when they are scheduled. Do not expect to take the quiz if you miss that day of class unless I am advised of a valid reason (i.e., you are in sports and have a note from the coach that you have a game that day) before the day of the quiz. If you are ill on the day of the exam or the quiz, I will expect a call or email before the exam or quiz alerting me to your illness and I will expect a doctor's note validating your illness if you expect to reschedule.

Papers and Assignments:

All assignments to be written in APA Style. All assignments must have page numbers. I only accept hardcopies of papers (no emailed copies).

Note: You will not do as well on the papers if you do not come to class. I review requirements for the papers in class. In addition, I give “helpful hints.”

Research Paper

The Research Paper will be accomplished over the entire course of the semester. There are three assignments leading up to the final version. You are expected to include all previous work when turning in each assignment, including the final version.

- 1) Pick a topic within criminal justice. Try not to make too broad.
- 2) Locate 6 articles on the topic. Four of the articles MUST be from peer-reviewed journals. If you are not certain if your articles are appropriate, have them screened by me.
- 3) Once you have gathered your articles, print out the first three pages of each. Write the introductory paragraph of your paper and turn in for assignment #1.
- 4) For assignment #2 write a complete outline of your paper: the entire body of the paper and conclusion. Turn in with printed references and intro paragraph.
- 5) For assignment #3 write an entire rough draft (6-8 pages; no shorter than six pages and no longer than 8 pages). Include your prior two assignments with the rough draft. Make sure to use APA style (author, year) to cite your article. Instructions regarding APA style are posted on SacCT.
- 6) When turning in the final research paper (incorporating comments from the rough draft), include the rough draft and copies of your articles.

Sample topics:

What programs for female inmates are currently being used in prison settings and do they work?

What has the state of California done recently to reduce violent crime and is it working?

What programs reduce domestic violence?

What programs reduce substance abuse?

What leads to juvenile crime?

What leads to inmate suicide or how can prisons avoid high suicide rates?

What is a current policing technique and does it work?

Survey Assignment

1. Create a 10-item survey based on the lecture and book chapter (9) on creating survey questions. It does not have to be on a criminal justice topic, but should be appropriate for a Sacramento State student population. A draft of the survey must be approved first.
2. Administer your survey to your classmates on one of two designated data collection days. Administration procedure will be explained in class.
3. Create a data table displaying the results of each of your survey questions. Each question should be represented clearly with information presented and labeled clearly via a table or graph delineating the information as the data collected from that question. Include how many subjects answered the question and any other relevant information such as gender, etc. The question should be included (or a shortened version) along with answers for each table or graph. If I see “Question 1: a=3, b=4, c=12, d=1” know that this is a D-level answer.
4. Write two paragraphs: One that talks about your hypotheses and what your survey measured and one that talks about your results. Do not just present numbers in this overview, but talk about the broader implications of your results (i.e., what the results might mean, what they were overall).

5. **Make sure to turn in a clean copy of your survey**, the data tables or graphs for each question, and the two paragraphs to receive full credit for this assignment. Each section is worth 10 points.

In-Class Work

Approximately every other class period I will have you all complete an in-class task, which can only be completed in class on that particular class day. You will need to bring your booklet of articles to class each day, as you will be required to break into small groups, address a part of the article, and then present your part of the article to the class. You will receive credit for participation if you are in class that day. It is also very helpful to read the articles prior to class. The articles are in order in the packet, so you can read the next one each time. Please make sure you always have your article booklet with you, as we may have the in-class task on any particular class day in lieu of lecture. It is important for you to be very familiar with all of the articles because you will present the articles in class and then, as you will be tested on the articles, you will be allowed to bring the articles (with your notes written in the margins) to the exams. There will be two Web CT assignments that you will get in-class points for completing.

SacCT Assignments

Will be posted and will take the place of two classes during the semester as indicated in the weekly schedule. The Web Assignments are due as indicated for pass/fail credit.

Other 'Expected' Requirements

Participation:

In addition, all students are encouraged to become active participants in the class discussion. If you want this experience to be challenging, dynamic, and fun, I *strongly* encourage you to come to class ready to actively participate.

Attendance:

Excessive absences will affect your performance on exams and on course assignments. Even on days that do not contain course participation, I DO NOT lecture straight from the books, so doing the readings alone will not provide you with enough information to be successful in this course. In addition, I give a lot of information on how to do well on each of the research assignments. Finally, the participation activities are often part of exam questions.

Readings:

As with most classes, this class contains the main text as well as the assigned weekly articles. Failure to read the assigned materials will greatly hinder your ability to participate in class discussions and may prevent you from learning the material as well you are able. If you are not able to participate in the in-class activity regarding the weekly article, it is HIGHLY advised that you read the article during the week during your own time. In addition, it is advised that you read the weekly class notes and the chapter assigned in order to understand the class material. This class is extremely difficult and has many challenging concepts. Students that miss classes and do not keep up with the readings do not do well in this class.

Grading Policy:

There will be *no incomplete grades* given for this course except in the most severe circumstances. A grade of Incomplete is usually assigned only when a student has completed more than 50% of the

required coursework, is receiving a “C” or better, and has had an unexpected crisis (family, medical, mental health, etc.) arise during the semester or session and cannot complete the rest of the term. Written documentation will be **required** for any request for an incomplete grade, and if something occurs, please speak with me immediately so that I can ensure that your grade will not be jeopardized.

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.

I will be glad to **update you on your progress** throughout the course. However, please do not call me to find out how you did on a test or a paper, as I do not give grades over the phone. I will make results available to the class as soon as I reasonably can or you may see me personally or e-mail me with grade information requests.

If you ever feel that you have been graded unfairly, you may appeal your grade to me **in writing**. By providing me with a written appeal, you have the opportunity to present your case for a better grade fully, clearly, and concisely, and I have the opportunity to reflect carefully on your arguments. However, I need to let you know in advance that it is best to keep up with your grade during the semester. If you have a hard time with the midterm, **please come and see me immediately**. I can work with you during the semester to raise your grade. If you contact me late in the semester or **after your final grade has been posted for the semester** there is a great likelihood that I will have no way of helping you raise your grade at that time.

Help and Special Needs:

If you have a disability and require accommodations, you need to provide disability documentation to SSWD, Lassen Hall 1008, (916) 278-6955. Please discuss your accommodation needs with me after class or during my office hours early in the semester.

Academic Integrity and Honesty Issues:

Each student is required to adhere to the University’s Academic Dishonesty Policy that includes both cheating and plagiarism. This policy is available on the CSUS web site and you may talk with me if you have any questions about these policies. It is very important to always cite any author’s thought or words when included in your own work. If you are caught cheating or plagiarizing, the following will occur: zero credit for the assignment, a probable failing grade in my course, and a potential referral to the University administrator responsible for handling student discipline. Familiarize yourself with the Student Tutorial on how not to plagiarize: <http://library.csus.edu/content2.asp?pageID=353>. By citing any author’s work diligently, you will help to avoid plagiarizing without realizing that you are doing so. Use the APA style guide posted on SacCT and make sure to use proper quotations and citing (cutting and pasting from other authors’ work without the above constitutes plagiarism). Note that I appreciate any and all questions regarding citation and the papers prior to their due date. Once turned in, there are no second chances for those who plagiarize, so be aware of the policy and how to avoid this issue.

Other Important Information

Classroom Etiquette Issues:

Cell Phones, Pagers, and Computers: Out of courtesy and respect for all of us in the classroom, I am requiring that **all cell phones and pagers be turned off** while class is in session. If a cell phone "goes off" during class, I will ask that you turn it off immediately. If the problem persists, you will be

asked to leave. In addition, you are asked **not to surf the web or to be on your computer unless you are taking notes. Offenders will be asked to turn off their computer.**

Be on Time! I have noticed that students have been coming late to class and/or leaving early. I certainly understand if you must do this out of necessity (i.e., a doctor's appointment; traffic issues; etc.). If you know ahead of time that you will be arriving no more than 15 minutes late and/or leaving early, please inform me in a timely manner. If you arrive late or must leave early, please sit by the door. It is simply rude and disruptive to me and the entire class to have you walk in front of class to find a seat.

Eating in Class: I do allow students to have food and drink during the class session. However, use your common sense and be quiet about it. Opening a bag of chips during lecture, for example, would not be a wise choice.

Sleeping in Class: If you feel you need to nap during class, go home and take a nap. **Please do not do it in my classroom.**

Final Comments & Teaching Philosophy

Open your mind and be respectful of points of view that differ from your own! I encourage lively debate, but be courteous and professional in your demeanor towards others.

In this course, I expect students to actively participate and contribute to classroom discussions. In fact, I firmly believe that the success of this class depends upon your contributions. By "success," I mean dynamic, exciting, and fun, yet challenging. Although I do encourage open discussion and contribution of all varieties of opinions and comments, I also require that students respect one another. Please remember and respect the fact that everyone is entitled to have his or her opinion be heard in an environment of open discourse.

Although this course will involve a strong commitment on your part to the completion of the readings and assignments as well as attendance and participation in class discussions, I feel that this course can be an enjoyable learning experience for you. Therefore, my overall teaching philosophy encompasses both of these goals: learn as much as you can but have fun while doing it. I am also very responsive to suggestions during the course of the semester. If there is something that I can do to help you to learn or to appreciate the material in a more comprehensive manner, please do not hesitate to let me know what I can do to make your learning experience more effective.

Tentative Topics and Reading Schedule: Most weeks will include a research article supplemental reading.

Week 1: January 26 and 28
Introduction to Research in the field of Criminal Justice
Chapter 1: Crime, Criminal Justice, and Scientific Inquiry
Chapter 2: Theory and Criminal Justice Research

Week 2: February 2 and 4
Chapter 3: Ethics and Criminal Justice Research
February 4th – Report to Library 2024 at class time for a presentation on how to search data bases to find peer-reviewed journal articles by Ben Amata (Criminal Justice Librarian). This is a very helpful presentation, so please attend.

- Week 3: February 9 and 11
 Film: "Human Behavior Subjects"
 Chapter 4: General Issues in Research Design
- Week 4: February 16 and 18
 February 16: Chapter 9: Survey Research and Other Ways of Asking Questions
 February 18: No Class; work on a draft of your survey
- Week 5: February 23 and 25
 Chapter 5: Concepts, Operationalization, and Measurement
 Chapter 7: Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Design
- Week 6: March 2 and 4
 March 2nd: draft of survey due/ Class participation
 March 4th: Meet at Library 2024 for help with finding Research Articles
- Week 7: March 9 and 11
 March 9th: Quiz #1
 Research Paper assignment #1 due March 9th
 Chapter 8: Overview of Data Collection and Sampling
- Week 8: March 16 and 18
 Midterm March 16th (Chapters 1-9 minus Chapter 6)
 March 18th: No class; Web Assignment #1 posted
- Week 9: March 23 and 25
 March 23rd: No class: Web Assignment #2 posted
 March 25th: Chapter 10: Field Research
 (I will email the class if I am still on jury duty on the 25th)
- Week 10: March 30 and April 1st
 Spring Break
- Week 11: April 6 and 8
 Due: Web assignments #1 and #2; Research Paper assignment #2 due
 Chapter 11: Agency Records, Content Analysis, and Secondary Data
 1st Day of Data gathering for survey: Bring 35 copies of your survey marked with your number.
- Week 12: April 13 and 15
 April 13th: 2nd and last day of Data gathering for survey.
 April 15th: Class Participation
- Week 13: April 20 and 22
 Chapter 12: Evaluation Research and Policy Analysis
 April 20th; Quiz #2 and Research Paper Assignment #3 (Rough Draft due)
- Week 14: April 27 and 29
 Chapter 13: Interpreting Data
 April 27th Survey Assignment Due

Week 15: May 4 and 6
Class Participation exercises
Return of Rough Draft of Research Paper

Week 16: May 11 and 13
Class time on May 11th: Write your final draft of research paper on your own; consult with me in my office during class time.
May 13th: Final draft of research paper due with rough draft and articles attached
Review for Final Exam

Final Exam: Section 2: Monday, May 18th 12:45 – 2:45