

**RESEARCH METHODS IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE**  
**CRJU 301 – Spring 2008**  
**Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice**  
**University of South Carolina**

**Instructor:**

Barbara Koons-Witt, Ph.D.  
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**Teaching Assistants:**

Brianna Hefner (sections 001, 002)  
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Hours: Wednesday, 1:00pm – 2:00pm & by appointment

**Course Description:** This course is designed to introduce students to the language and methods of social science research as applied to the information needs of criminal justice practitioners and policy-makers. Although the primary goal of the course is to help students become informed consumers of criminal justice research, students will conduct a group research project. By completion, students will understand the basics of research design, conceptualization and measurement of theoretical ideas, sampling, data gathering, and interpretation of findings. Students also should be able to critically evaluate research and recognize when research methods are properly and improperly applied. The prerequisite for this course is STAT 201 or an equivalent course.

**Required Text:** Schutt, Russell K. (2006). Investigating the social world: The process and practice of research. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

**Note:** Students will receive handouts at various times throughout the semester and will be responsible for the information contained within them. In addition, there may be supplemental readings put on blackboard.

**Course Requirements:**

- **Exams.** There will be a total of three exams over the course of the semester. You will be responsible for all assigned readings, handouts, and information covered during class lectures and lab sessions. The exams will require you to understand key terms, concepts, and theories, as well as their applications. The exams are not cumulative, **but please note** that some of the material builds upon earlier material.

Make-up exams will not be given unless the student provides a documented (verifiable) excuse, as in a medical emergency or death in the family. You must contact me within 48 hours after the scheduled exam to provide an explanation for your absence. You will need to send an email, call my office number (777-0107), or call the main CJ office (777-7097) to leave a message. Make-up exams may or may not be given in the format of the original exam.

- **Lab Sections & Assignments.** As part of this course, you are expected to attend class lectures on Mondays and Wednesday from 11:15am – 12:05pm and one lab session (during **your registered** lab section

time on either Tues or Wed) during the week. I do reserve the right to meet on Fridays if the schedule and material requires that we do so. In these instances, you would meet on Friday from 11:15am – 12:05pm instead of your scheduled lab section. **It is important that you frequently check Blackboard for any announcements concerning the need to meet on a Friday or other extremely important announcements.**

My teaching assistants will be providing instruction during your lab sections. They will provide additional lectures on relevant topics and assist you will completing assignments throughout the semester. Please treat them as you would any instructor or faculty member.

- **Attendance.** Attendance is not mandatory for my lectures, but it is strongly recommended for doing well in the class. Attendance **is** mandatory for the lab sessions, and you may not miss more than 2 labs during the semester (excused or unexcused). If you miss more than 2 lab sessions, you will be penalized in the Lab assignment portion of your final grade.

**Course Grades:** your final course grade will be calculated using the following breakdown.

Exam 1 .....	25%	Exam 3 .....	25%
Exam 2 .....	25%	Lab Assignments ....	25%

**Grading System:** The following system reflects the calculation of your final grade for the semester.

Grades:			
90-100%	A	70-74.9%	C
85-89.9%	B+	65-69.9%	D+
80-84.9%	B	60-64.9%	D
75-79.9%	C+	0-59.9%	F

**Classroom Conduct:** Late students are very disruptive to both the instructor and other students. Please make sure you are prompt to class. Students who have difficulty making class on time because of schedule conflicts should see me to discuss the matter. Continuous tardiness will not be tolerated. Many students use cell phones and beepers during the course of their day. I expect all students to turn off their cell phones and beepers upon entering the classroom. If your phone or beeper repeatedly rings during class, you may be asked to leave the classroom.

**Blackboard Requirement:** We will be using Blackboard CourseInfo during the semester, so make sure you become familiar with the program. All communication will take place through blackboard. You can access Blackboard from any campus computer or from your home. Please consult the VIP system or see me if you need instructions on how to use Blackboard. Each student is required to have a working E-mail address. ***ALL students should consult the blackboard website for CRJU 301 – section 001 for information about the course and lab sections.***

**Academic Integrity:** In order to make this an enjoyable educational experience for you and a class that is conducive to learning, we will follow the codes and rules as described in the Carolinian Creed in the Carolina Community, USC Student Handbook and Policy Guideline (2002-03). Plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated in my class. If you have any questions feel free to stop by my office hours to discuss it.

## COURSE OUTLINE

WEEK	DATE	READING & TOPIC	LAB SESSIONS
1	01/14 01/16	Introduction and Overview of Class CH 1 Science, Society and Social Research	No labs this week
2	01/21 01/23	No Class - Holiday CH 1 Science, Society, and Social Research	Library Overview (see blackboard for meeting place); Lab #1 distributed
3	01/28 01/30	CH 3 The Process and Problems of Social Research	APA Formatting (see blackboard for meeting place); Lab #2 distributed
4	02/04 02/06	CH 4 Conceptualization and Measurement	How to read research article; Distribute Lab #3
5	02/11 02/13	CH 5 Sampling	Review for Exam 1
6	02/18 02/20	<b>EXAM 1</b>	Design fear of crime survey
7	02/25 02/27	CH 8 Survey Research	Critique Survey
8	03/03 03/05	CH 6 Causation & Research Designs	Writing Survey Questions Distribute final survey Discuss sampling method
9	03/10 03/12	Spring Break - No class	
10	03/17 03/19	CH 7 Experiments	Completed surveys Due Review for Exam
11	03/24 03/26	<b>EXAM 2</b>	Review Codebook Complete data coding
12	03/31 04/02	CH 14 Quantitative Data Analysis	Intro to SPSS Data Entry
13	04/07 04/09	CH 9 Qualitative Methods	Descriptive Statistics & Graphs
14	04/14 04/16	CH 11 Evaluation Research	Measures of Association
15	04/21 04/23	CH 13 Secondary Data Analysis and Content Analysis	Work of final project
16	04/28	Review	No Labs this week
FINALS	WEEK	<b>EXAM 3 – Wednesday, April 30<sup>th</sup> at 9:00am</b>	

**\*\* Please be aware that the schedule outlined above is tentative and changes may be made to it at any time during the course of the semester due to decisions on my part, weather problems, or other necessary but unforeseen reasons. Please consult blackboard for any changes. Good luck with your studies.**