
CRJU 703, Sec 001:

RESEARCH METHODS IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE

COURSE MEETS: M 5:00 – 7:30 PM, SPRING TERM 2008

ROOM: CURRELL 204

PROFESSOR: ERIC L. SEVIGNY

OFFICE HOURS: 210 CURRELL COLLEGE: M 1:00-4:00 PM & BY APPOINTMENT

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Course Description

This course introduces students to scientific methods of research in criminology and criminal justice. Students will gain knowledge and experience concerning the basic practices of social research, including how to review prior research and develop pertinent research questions, incorporate theory and ethics into the research process, and develop sound measures and sampling strategies. Students will also learn about the most important methods of data collection, including experiments, surveys, and qualitative methods. Finally, students will learn ways to effectively enhance, analyze, and report the results of research. Another important goal of this course is to develop and strengthen student research skills through practical exercises and the process of writing a research proposal. The ultimate aim is to prepare students with the necessary skills and abilities to develop a quality M.A. thesis proposal.

Course Requirements

Texts. The first text below is required for the course. The second text is only recommended, but you will likely find it a highly valuable reference book for your graduate career. It is one of the best books for planning and preparing thesis proposals that I have found, and I will refer to it regularly during the course.

- Ronet Bachman and Russell K. Schutt. 2007. *The Practice of Research in Criminology and Criminal Justice*, 3rd Edition. Los Angeles: Sage Publications.
- Lawrence F. Locke et al. 2007. *Proposals that Work: A Guide for Planning Dissertation and Grant Proposals*, 5th Edition. Los Angeles: Sage Publications.

Other readings will be made available on through Blackboard. Please access the course site on Blackboard frequently, as it will be used to distribute electronic materials, update the syllabus, and communicate about assignments and deadlines.

Course Grade. Your course grade will consist of assignments for developing the research proposal, a peer review exercise, the final research proposal, and an oral presentation/defense of your proposed research.

Assignments. There will be five assignments during the semester that develop parts of your final research proposal, such as the research questions, literature review, sampling plan, data collection method, and analysis strategy. Details of each assignment will be provided at the appropriate time. Each assignment is worth 10 points each (for a total of 50 points), and together make up 25% of your final grade.

Peer Review. Each student will be responsible for reviewing the proposal of a peer. The review is to be constructive and comprehensive and will follow a rubric provided by the instructor. The review is worth 25 points (12.5% of final grade).

Oral Presentation. Students will present their proposed research to the class using PowerPoint. Students are expected to present all components of their research and be prepared to defend their decisions and plans. The presentation is worth 25 points (12.5% of final grade).

Final Research Proposal. A final research proposal of approximately 20 pages in length is required for the course. The final product will incorporate feedback from assignments, peer review, and oral presentation. Specific guidelines and criteria will be provided in class or through Blackboard. The proposal is worth 100 points, or 50% of the final grade.

From a possible 200 points, your final grade will be based on the following scale:

Grade	Minimum Points Required	Corresponding Percentage
A	180	90.0-100%
B+	170	85.0-89.9%
B	160	80.0-84.9%
C+	150	75.0-79.9%
C	140	70.0-74.9%
D+	130	65.0-69.9%
D	120	60.0-64.9%
F	0	0.0-59.9%

Course Notes

Use of Blackboard. Blackboard will be used to communicate and distribute materials in this course. Please check and monitor the course site regularly.

Academic Integrity. You are expected to practice the highest possible standards of academic integrity. Any deviation from this expectation will result in a minimum of your failing the assignment, and may result in additional, more severe disciplinary measures up to and including referring you to the Office of Academic Integrity. Violations of the University's Honor Code include, but are not limited to improper citation of sources,

using another student’s work, and any other form of academic misrepresentation. For more information, see the Carolina Community Student Handbook.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 require USC to provide academic adjustments or accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Students seeking academic adjustments or accommodations must self-identify with the instructor and with the Office of Student Disability Services prior to requesting an accommodation.

Course Schedule

The schedule and readings are subject to change. Additional assigned readings that are not from required texts will be distributed electronically through Blackboard.

WEEK	TOPICS & ASSIGNMENTS	READINGS
Jan. 14	Course Introduction; Criminological Research	Chs. 1-2
Jan. 21	<i>No Class in Observance of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day</i>	
Jan. 28	Conceptualization and Measurement; Sampling <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Preparing the Research Proposal: Proposed Topic, Questions and Hypotheses, and Statement of Significance</i> 	Chs. 3-4
Feb. 4	Causation and Research Design; Experimental Designs	Chs. 5-6
Feb. 11	Survey Research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Preparing the Research Proposal: Annotated Bibliography and Identification of Key Variables</i> 	Ch. 7
Feb. 18	Qualitative Methods	Ch. 8
Feb. 25	Analyzing Content: Historical, Secondary, and Content Analysis, and Crime Mapping	Ch. 10
Mar. 3	Course Catch-up and Review; Proposal Q & A <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Preparing the Research Proposal: Measurement Operations and Sampling Plan</i> 	TBD
Mar. 10	<i>Spring Break—No Class</i>	
Mar. 17	Evaluation Research and Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Preparing the Research Proposal: Data Collection Method(s) and Human Subjects Issues</i> 	Ch. 11
Mar. 24	Qualitative Data Analysis	Ch. 9
Mar. 31	Quantitative Data Analysis	Ch. 12
Apr. 7	Preparing the Proposal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Preparing the Research Proposal: Analysis Plan</i> 	TBD
Apr. 14	Reporting Research Results <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>First Complete Draft of Proposal Due</i> 	Ch. 13
Apr. 21	Student Presentations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Peer Review of Proposals Due</i> 	
Apr. 28	Course Wrap-up <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Final Proposals Due</i> 	