47: 202: 301 Criminal Justice Research Methods
4 Credits
Fall 2017

Tuesdays
6:00 – 9:00PM, CON 424

I. Course Information

Instructor Information:

Instructor: Danielle M. Shields
Email: danielle.shields@rutgers.edu
Office Hours: By appointment only

Course Overview: This course develops the tools needed for conducting research and writing reports and scholarly papers in criminal justice. Students that take this course will become informed consumers of criminological research, and gain the tools to conduct their own basic research projects. Specific topics include the primacy of design, principles of reliability and validity, sampling theory, survey preparation, and the differences between, and strengths and detriments of, experimental and quasi-experimental designs.

Prerequisite: None

B.S., Criminal Justice Program Learning Goals

Upon completion of the B.S. in Criminal Justice at Rutgers University-Newark, students should be able to:

1) Describe the development and functions of major criminal justice institutions (e.g., police, courts, corrections, and juvenile justice), the activities of actors within these institutions, and how they relate to one another as well as the broader social, political, and economic world.

2) Describe the mechanisms, correlates, theoretical underpinnings, and situational contexts of crime, criminal behavior and opportunity, and techniques for prevention and treatment.
3) Apply and analyze theories related to the policies and practices of the criminal justice system and its major institutions.

4) Demonstrate the ability to gather, explain, and apply empirical research in the field of criminal justice.

5) Obtain a comprehensive knowledge about the process of conducting criminal justice research, and develop the skills to conduct criminal justice research with appropriate methodologies.

Course Learning Objectives:

Learning Goals for Criminal Justice Research Methods

1. Describe common methods of social science inquiry.
2. Understand the linkage between research questions and research design.
3. Explore major debates about research methods, social science, and ethics in research.
4. Critically evaluate social scientific evidence and research.
5. Become better-informed consumers of new reports, political rhetoric, and public discussion about the social world and social scientific research.

Required Readings:


Course Requirements:

Students are expected to complete the assigned reading prior to the class in which the topics are to be discussed to facilitate participation and generate more interesting discussions.

Students are also expected to regularly check Blackboard, as it will be used for course announcements and communication. I will announce changes to the syllabus, readings, and class schedule as well as other information pertinent to the course through Blackboard. Additionally, grades will be regularly updated on Blackboard.

Course Structure:

This course will be conducted in a lecture-based format with the use of PowerPoint presentations. Class discussions and short, in-class writing assignments will also be regularly incorporated throughout the semester. In order to successfully pass this course, students must regularly keep up with the assigned readings and attend class regularly. When class is in session, I expect that you will regularly participate and be ready to discuss the material scheduled on the syllabus and that all electronics will be silenced. When discussions are in progress, please be respectful to your fellow classmates and stay on topic.
If at any point in the semester you have questions or concerns about the course, please reach out to me through e-mail and I will respond within 48 hours.

II. **Course Schedule**

Please note that this schedule is *tentative* in nature. Readings posted on Blackboard are indicated by (BB).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Class Topic</th>
<th>Readings &amp; Assignments Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>Course Overview&lt;br&gt;Introduction to Research Methods</td>
<td>• CITI Access Guide</td>
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<td>9/5</td>
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<td>Week 2</td>
<td>Science, Society, and Criminological Research</td>
<td>• Chapter 1</td>
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<td>9/12</td>
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<td>Week 3</td>
<td>The Process and Problems of Criminological Research</td>
<td>• Chapter 2</td>
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<td>9/19</td>
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<td>Week 4</td>
<td>Conducting Research Ethically</td>
<td>• Chapter 3&lt;br&gt;• Brandt (BB)&lt;br&gt;• Haney et al. (BB)</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/26</td>
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<td>Week 5</td>
<td>Conceptualization and Measurement&lt;br&gt;<em><strong>RUTGERS IRB QUIZ DUE (10/5)</strong></em></td>
<td>• Chapter 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/3</td>
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<td>Week 6</td>
<td>Sampling</td>
<td>• Chapter 5&lt;br&gt;• Senn et al. (BB)</td>
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<td>10/10</td>
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<td>Week 7</td>
<td>Causation and Research Design</td>
<td>• Chapter 6</td>
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<td>10/17</td>
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<td>Week 8</td>
<td><em><strong>MID-TERM EXAM (10/24)</strong></em> Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Research Designs</td>
<td>• Chapter 7&lt;br&gt;• Sherman and Berk (BB)</td>
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<td>10/24</td>
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<td>Week 9</td>
<td>Measurement of Crime and Official Sources of Crime Data</td>
<td>• Mosher, Miethe, and Hart (BB)</td>
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III. **Course Assessment and Grading**

The final grade will be assessed based upon your performance on the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment Description</th>
<th>Linked to SLO</th>
<th>% of Course Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assignment #1</td>
<td>SLO #1-5</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid-term Exam</td>
<td>SLO #1-5</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignment # 2</td>
<td>SLO #1-5</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>SLO #1-5</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment #3</td>
<td>SLO #3</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rutgers Institutional Review Board Quiz</td>
<td>SLO #3</td>
<td>5%</td>
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MID-TERM EXAM (25%): This course will measure knowledge of the outlined topic areas through the administration of a mid-term exam. The exam will be multiple-choice and will be based on a combination of course lectures and assigned readings.

FINAL EXAM (25%): This course will also measure knowledge of the outlined topic areas through the administration of a final exam. The exam will be multiple-choice and will be based on a combination of course lectures and assigned readings. The final exam will not be cumulative.

RUTGERS INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD QUIZ (5%): To demonstrate proficiency with ethical research practices, log on to the Rutgers University Human Subjects Certification Program and complete the online quiz. Once you have completed the quiz, take a screenshot of the certificate that is provided and turn it in through Blackboard.

BIBLIOGRAPHY ASSIGNMENT (15%): In order to build competency with APA format and assess your understanding of it, a bibliography (and later, a response paper) will be created on a topic of your choice. You will be required to search through scholarly databases and identify: 3 books, 6 peer-reviewed journal articles, and 3 contemporary newspaper articles (these can be electronic or print). List these sources correctly and completely in APA format (alphabetically). Sources must pertain to the topic of your choice. Your grade will be dependent on a) whether you followed the assignment’s directions (i.e., you gathered the correct number and type of sources) and b) proper formatting of sources according to APA guidelines.

ARTICLE CRITIQUE RESPONSE PAPER (25%): To familiarize you with the process of examining peer-reviewed research and critically analyzing such work, you will critique two peer-reviewed criminal justice research articles on a topic of your choice (this topic will be the same one that you select for your bibliography). In your critiques, you will directly apply research methodology and design concepts that will be described throughout the semester; for each article, you will be asked to briefly summarize the findings, describe the sampling design, assess the general strengths and weaknesses of the authors’ research technique, and evaluate if the studies offer a substantive, real-world application to criminal justice policy and/or
meaningfully contribute to criminological theory. Response papers should be 6-8 pages in length, double-spaced, 12 point times roman font, and in APA format.

The submission process for the paper will be in two steps. First, you will submit a rough draft of the paper through Blackboard where it will be analyzed by Safeassign to both assess the originality of your paper and identify issues related to citation. After making any necessary corrections identified by Safeassign’s analysis, you will submit a final draft of your paper. The rough draft is due on 11/30 while the final draft is due on 12/15.

PARTICIPATION (5%): Students are expected to engage in a basic level of participation throughout this course. In order to formally assess and track participation, short, in-class writing assignments will be conducted throughout the semester. If three or more of these assignments are missed, your participation grade will be negatively impacted.

Additionally, if students are continually absent, habitually arrive late or leave early, or are otherwise disruptive (e.g., chatting during class, texting, using laptops or other electronic devices for non-academic purposes, being disrespectful to fellow students), their participation grade will be negatively impacted.

The following grading scale will be used for this course:

- A 90–100%
- B+ 85-89%
- B 80-84%
- C+ 75-79%
- C 70-74%
- D 60-69%
- F <60%

IV. Course Policies

Classroom Rules:

It is the intent of the instructor to establish a class environment that is conducive to the exchange of ideas in a mutually respectful manner. Due to the nature of the material that will be discussed throughout this course, it is expected that there will be a variety of perspectives on the general issues of crime and crime control, which is both welcomed and encouraged. However, in the course of discussion, students are expected to be respectful of others’ opinions. Additionally, to ensure that topics for the day are adequately covered, if students wish to discuss an issue in greater detail than time constraints allow, an appointment should be made with the instructor.

Attendance:

Attendance will not formally be tracked for this course. However, students should be aware
that throughout the semester, in addition to participation-based exercises, material will be presented in class not found in the book and students will be held responsible for this information on exams.

**Late or Missing Assignment Policy:**

Unless a student has a documented emergency (e.g., a medical emergency verified by a doctor’s note), make-up quizzes and exams will not be offered and missing a quiz or exam will result in a zero. Eligibility for make-up quizzes and exams will only be considered in extreme circumstances and at the instructor’s discretion. Late assignments will be penalized by one letter grade per day.

**Academic Integrity:**

As a member of the Rutgers University community you are not to engage in any academic dishonesty. You are responsible for adhering to basic academic standards of honesty and integrity as outlined in the Rutgers University Policy on Academic Integrity for Undergraduate and Graduate Students [http://studentconduct.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity](http://studentconduct.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity)

Your academic work should be the result of your own individual effort, you should not allow other students to use your work, and you are required to recognize and reference any material that is not your own. Violations of the university’s policy will result in appropriate action.

**Academic Resources:**

**Students with Disabilities**

Rutgers University is committed to providing equal educational opportunity for persons with disabilities in accordance with the Nondiscrimination Policy of the University and in compliance with § 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. For additional information please visit the website [https://ods.rutgers.edu/](https://ods.rutgers.edu/) or contact the representative for the Newark Campus.

Allen Sheffield
Director of ADA Services and Academic Support
Robeson Campus Center, Suite 352
350 Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard
Newark, NJ 07102
Phone: 973.353.5300
Fax: 973.353.5666
E-mail: kate.torres@rutgers.edu
Website: [https://ods.rutgers.edu/](https://ods.rutgers.edu/)

**Psychological and Counseling Services**

If you experience psychological or other difficulties as a result of this course, or because of other issues that may interfere with your performance in the course, please contact the university’s psychological and counseling service center ([http://www.counseling.newark.rutgers.edu](http://www.counseling.newark.rutgers.edu); 973-
353-5805), which is located in Blumenthal Hall, room 101. The center offers a variety of free, confidential services to part-time and full-time students who are enrolled at Rutgers.

If you are interested in finding out more about
  • Accelerated Master's Program (B.S. /M.A.)
  • Criminal Justice National Honor Society (Alpha Phi Sigma)
Please refer to the School of Criminal Justice website http://rscj.newark.rutgers.edu/

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