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

Saturdays 9:00 am – 12:15 pm
Newark Campus – Room CON-342 (Conklin Hall)

I. Course Information

Instructor: Professor John Vespucci
Office Hours: By Appointment
Phone: 845-393-1620
Email: john.vespucci@rutgers.edu

Course Overview
This course will introduce students to research methods in social science, focusing on examples from criminal justice and criminology. The course will begin by examining the purpose, character and ethics of social scientific research. It will go on to discuss key principles of research design, including issues of validity, causal inference, measurement, and experimental and quasi-experimental designs. It will examine approaches to sampling, data collection, and the interpretation of statistical data. Throughout, there will be an emphasis on the practical application of research methods to the real world, and their role in shaping criminal justice policy and practice.

Prerequisite(s)
None

Learning Objectives
This course is intended to educate students about the purpose and method of social science research. At the end of the course, students should be able to:

• Articulate the fundamental logic of scientific inquiry
• Follow the steps involved in designing research studies
• Conduct data collection and analysis to test hypotheses
• Interpret basic statistical analyses
• Critically evaluate published research
• Assess the efficacy of criminal justice policies in light of research findings

Required Text

Course Requirements
Students are required to read the assigned readings and work on their projects throughout the semester.

Course Structure
This class will be a mixture of traditional lectures, class discussions and student/professor conferences. Students will be required to develop a research proposal throughout the semester with distinct deadlines for specific sections.
II. Course Schedule

(subject to change – Announcements will be posted via Blackboard)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignment(s) Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sep 9</td>
<td>Overview of course requirements. Syllabus Review. <em>Chapter 1 - Science, Society and Criminological Research</em></td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Sep 16</td>
<td><em>Chapter 2 - The Process/ Problems of Criminological Research</em></td>
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<td><em>Chapter 3 - Research Ethics and Philosophies</em></td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Sep 23</td>
<td><em>Chapter 4 - Conceptualization and Measurement</em></td>
<td>CITI Basic Course Topic Proposals</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Sep 30</td>
<td><em>Chapter 5 - Sampling</em></td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Oct 7</td>
<td><em>Chapter 6 - Causation and Research Design</em></td>
<td>Introduction</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Oct 14</td>
<td><em>Chapter 7 - Experimental Designs</em></td>
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<td><em>Chapter 8 - Survey Research</em></td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Oct 21</td>
<td><em>Chapter 9 - Qualitative Methods and Analysis</em></td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Oct 28</td>
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<td>Midterm Exam Annotated Bibliography</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Nov 4</td>
<td><em>Chapter 10 - Analyzing Content – Data Analysis</em></td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Nov 11</td>
<td><em>Chapter 11 - Evaluation and Policy Analysis</em></td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Nov 18</td>
<td><em>Chapter 12 - Mixing and Comparing Methods</em></td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Nov 25</td>
<td>No Class Thanksgiving Break</td>
<td>Methodology Due</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Dec 2</td>
<td><em>Chapter 13 - Quantitative Data Analysis</em></td>
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<td><em>Chapter 14 - Analyzing Qualitative Data</em></td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Dec 9</td>
<td><em>Chapter 15 - Reporting Research Results</em></td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Dec 16</td>
<td></td>
<td>Final Exam Final Research Proposal</td>
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III. Grading

Grade Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Minimum Score</th>
<th>Maximum Score</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>90-100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>85-89%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>80-84%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>75-79%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70-74%</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60-69%</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>&lt;60%</td>
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Grading Policy and Student Assessments

The final grade will be based on the following:

* Attendance
  Participation 10%

* Human Subjects Certification
  5%

* Midterm Exam
  10%

* Final Exam
  15%

Research Topic
  5%

Introduction
  10%

Annotated Bibliography
  10%

Methodology
  10%

Research Proposal
  25%

ASSIGNMENTS

The reading schedule is listed below in the course schedule. You are expected to do the assigned reading before each class. Doing the reading is essential for being prepared for that day’s coursework. The reading also provides students with additional information that we do not have the time to cover during class, but which is essential to a strong understanding of research methods. All assignments must be submitted in APA format and must follow the referencing and citing guidelines of APA style. All assignments must be submitted as a Word or PDF document, size 12 Times New Roman font with 1 inch margins all around. If you have any questions regarding APA format, see the professor. All assignments are to be submitted to Blackboard by 11:59 pm the day they are due. No exceptions.

* Attendance
  Attendance in this class is required. One unexcused absence will be permitted without penalty, however each subsequent unexcused absence will result in a 10-point final grade reduction. Two unexcused late arrivals to class (or late return from a class break) equals one absence. Using a cellphone in class, sleeping or otherwise not being fully attentive to the class will result in the student being marked absent for that class.

* Participation - 10%

  Students are expected to be active participants during class presentations and to complete all written and presentation assignments. As such, students are to be prepared to respond to questions from the instructor about the assigned readings. Class participation is critical to a research methods class as it allows students to discover the pros and cons of various methods, and nuances within core concepts. Because this is a criminal justice class, sensitive and controversial topics may be discussed. With this in mind, students should be respectful of their classmates’ opinions at all times, understanding the difficulty inherent in discussing certain issues. If students ever feel uncomfortable due to classroom discussion, they should bring this to the attention of the professor. Participation in class discussions is essential.

Human Subjects Certification: 5% - DUE September 23rd

  In order to provide students with exposure to ethical issues and to give them real life experience with one of the first steps in the research process, students are required to complete the Rutgers Human Subjects Certification. Once completed, students must submit a copy of their certificate in PDF format to Blackboard. You must pass to receive any credit for this assignment. Late assignments will not be accepted.

  You can access the course by following the steps in this page: http://rbhs.rutgers.edu/hsp/education/index.html Follow the instructions listed under the “Initial Registration for New Learners” at the bottom of the page. Once you are registered for CITI, select “Human Research” and then “Social/Behavioral/Epidemiologic Research Investigators.” There are 16 required modules; you may skip the optional modules.

Midterm: 10% / Final Exam: 15% (cumulative)

  Two exams will be administered throughout the semester. Make up exams will only be allowed in the case of an excused absence, and must be made up by the following class.
Research Topic Proposal: 5% - DUE September 23rd
To practice the research skills and issues that we will cover this semester, each student must prepare a research proposal (discussed later) based on a contemporary issue in criminal justice (ie, gun control, immigration, legalization of marijuana, etc.) Topic choice MUST be approved by the professor before the due date and before you can move forward with the other assignments.

Research Proposal Sections

The following sections are due throughout the semester. You will receive feedback on each section that you can use towards your final paper. ALL submissions must be in APA format including cover page and reference section. No late assignments will be accepted.

Introduction: 10% - Due October 7th
(At least one page)
Introduce your topic (research question) in extensive detail. Be sure to identify the scope of the problem. How much of an issue is it? Who(m) does it affect? Why does it need to be researched? This is an important step to grab the attention of the reader and show the importance of your topic. Citations are essential.

Annotated Bibliography: 10% - Due October 28th
(At least two pages)
An important step in the process of constructing your research proposal is learning more about the topic of your research question. To do so, you will examine academic sources of information, and collect at least five (5) academic peer-reviewed sources that will fully explore the topic of your research question. You should include your research question at the beginning of your annotated bibliography.

- "An annotated bibliography is a list of citations to books, articles, and documents. Each citation is followed by a brief (usually about 150 words) descriptive and evaluative paragraph, the annotation. The purpose of the annotation is to inform the reader of the relevance, accuracy, and quality of the sources cited." (Cornell University Library)
- APA format (see http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/ for an example of how to format an annotated bibliography in APA style)
- You should locate sources that help you to define concepts (for example, legal definitions of a crime), determine your study's measurement tools (for example, by exploring other measurements of your concept, like statistics or existing surveys), and further your knowledge of research that has already been done on the topic (for example, if someone has already researched your original research question, what were their findings, and might your own work seek to replicate this study or expand it in some way?).
- You may only use official and academic sources of information – academic journals, academic books, or organizational/government data. You may NOT use Wikipedia or non-official websites, and your sources should be unbiased.

Methodology: 10% - Due November 25th
(At least two pages)
The methodology section will explain your Independent/Dependent variables along with the research design of your proposal. Will you be analyzing existing studies? Existing data? Or will you be creating a survey to distribute and gather your own data? How do you plan on conducting your research? What is your sample/target population? See the textbook chapters for more information regarding methodology/research design.
Research Proposal - 25% - Due December 16th
(Eight - twelve pages)

A research proposal is a blueprint and justification for a proposed research study. This assignment requires you to think of a social science study, and explain how you would conduct the research. You will use work and feedback from prior assignments to complete this proposal. (Research Topic Proposal, Introduction, Annotated Bibliography and Methodology), along with additional sections including the following:

1. Abstract
2. Introduction
3. Annotated Bibliography/Literature Review
4. Methodology
5. Limitations
6. Ethical Concerns
7. Discussion / Conclusion
8. Policy Implications
9. References

• Paper must meet standard APA formatting guidelines
• You must include all of the sections of a research proposal, as we have discussed in class. Some important components you will need to cover include the following:
  o Explain the prior research on your topic, and how your project intends to fill a gap left by prior research.
  o Explain your methods of research inquiry clearly and fully.
  o Include sections on or reference to hypotheses, research questions, validity, sampling, variables, ethics, units of analysis, operationalization, and the specifics on your type of method selected: e.g. control/experimental groups (if applicable), or survey items (if applicable).
  o You must have at least seven references. You may only use academic sources to reach this quota – books, journal articles, organizational websites. You may NEVER cite Wikipedia or any other non-‘official’ website. You may use newspapers or other media content, but only AFTER your academic source quota has been met. You must cite every source within the text of the paper, and include every source on your reference page.

Late or Missing Assignment Policy
All assignments are to be submitted to Blackboard by 11:59 pm the day they are due. No exceptions. Late assignments will be penalized 10 points for each day that they are submitted past the date the assignment is due.
IV. Course Policies

*Office Hours, Appointments, & Emails*
Please do not hesitate to email me with any questions that you have provided you re-read this syllabus and was not able to find an answer. Put the title of the course in the subject line so that the email stands out. I am available to meet with students before or after class, should you feel you need ‘one on one’ assistance at any time throughout the course.

*Cell Phone and Laptop Policy*
Use of electronic devices at inappropriate times is both disruptive and rude. Cell phone use of any kind is **not** allowed. Laptops, tablets and recording devices may **not** be used during class.

*Blackboard*
This course relies heavily on Blackboard. You are encouraged to check it often, as your grades will be posted throughout the semester. Blackboard will also contain materials that might be helpful to you beyond the class lectures and textbook.

*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.

Kate Torres
Coordinator 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/](http://rscj.newark.rutgers.edu/)