

**47: 202: 301 Criminal Justice Research Methods**  
**3.0 Credits**  
**Fall, 2018**

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**Thursdays**  
**6:30 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.**

**I. Course Information**

**Instructor Information:**

Instructor: Quovella Spruill

Email: [qs76@scj.rutgers.edu](mailto:qs76@scj.rutgers.edu) and [gmspruill@gmail.com](mailto:gmspruill@gmail.com) (Please email both simultaneously.)

Office Hours: By Appointment Only (email to arrange an appointment)

**Course Overview:**

The 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 design. Throughout the course, there is an emphasis on the practical application of research methods to the real world, and their role in shaping criminal justice policy and practice.

**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.

### **Learning Objectives:**

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:**

Required Textbook:

Fundamentals of Research in Criminology and Criminal Justice, 4th edition.

Author: Ronet D. Bachman & Russell K. Schutt

Publisher: SAGE

The book will be available at the Rutgers Bookstore.

**\*Additional required readings will be distributed during class sessions throughout the course.**

### **Course Requirements:**

Students are required to read assigned readings, attend class and participate in classroom discussions in a manner that reflects familiarity with the readings and previous class sessions. Students are required to access the course website (Blackboard) regularly to stay informed about any changes in lecture topics, assigned readings and other course announcements.

Blackboard: The syllabus, outside readings, and grades will be posted via Blackboard. To access this website, please go to:

- <http://blackboard.newark.rutgers.edu/>

- go to “login here”
- enter your Rutgers NetID and password (Pegasus account info)
- your courses should be listed on the right side of the screen
- select course name

**Please update your email information so that you have access to Blackboard. All class updates will be posted onto Blackboard.**

**Course Structure:**

Course content will be a mixture of traditional lectures, class discussions, guest speakers, video presentations, and on-site visits. Additionally, there will be several in-class activities, exercises and assignments.

**II. Course Schedule**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Class Topic</b>	<b>Readings &amp; Assignments Due</b>
<b>Week 1</b> <b>Sept 6</b>	<b>Introduction and Course Overview</b>  <b>Overview of SPSS</b>  <b>Science, Society and Criminological Research</b>	Read Chapter 1
<b>Week 2</b> <b>Sept 13</b>	<b>The Process and Problems of Criminological Research</b>  <b>Introduction to SPSS</b>	Read Chapter 2
<b>Week 3</b> <b>Sept 20</b>	<b>Research Ethics</b>	Read Chapter 3  <b>Topic Proposal Due</b>
<b>Week 4</b> <b>Sept 27</b>	<b>Conceptualization and Measurement</b>  <b>Review for Quiz</b>	Read Chapter 4
<b>Week 5</b> <b>Oct 4</b>	<b>Sampling</b>	Read Chapter 5  <b>Introduction Due</b>

Week 6 Oct 11	Causation and Experimentation	Read Chapter 6
Week 7 Oct 18	Survey Research Mid-Term Exam Review	Read Chapter 7 Annotated Bibliography Due
Week 8 Oct 25	Qualitative Methods and Data Analysis	Read Chapter 8 Mid-Term Exam
Week 9* Nov 1	Qualitative Methods and Data Analysis	Read Chapter 8 SPSS Assignment
Week 10* Nov 8	Analyzing Content: Secondary Data Analysis, Comparing Methods, Content Analysis, Crime mapping and Big Data	Read Chapter 9 SPSS Assignment
Week 11 Nov 15	Analyzing Content: Secondary Data Analysis, Comparing Methods, Content Analysis, Crime mapping and Big Data	Read Chapter 9
Week 12 Nov 20	Evaluation and Policy Analysis	Read Chapter 10 Methodology Due
Week 13 Nov 22	<b>NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING BREAK</b>	
Week 14 Nov 29	Mixing and Comparing Methods	Read Chapter 11
Week 15 Dec 6	Reporting Research Results Review for FINAL EXAM	Read Chapter 12
Week 16 Dec 13	<b>FINAL EXAM</b> Final Research Proposal Due	

### III. Grading

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

• Attendance and Class Participation	15%
• Research Topic Proposal	5%
• Introduction	10%
• Annotated Bibliography	10%
• Methodology	10%
• Final Research Proposal	25%
• Midterm Exam	10%
• Final Exam	15%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>

#### **RESEARCH TOPIC/QUESTION PROPOSAL: (5%)**

Each student will prepare a research question proposal based on a contemporary issue in criminal justice. The topic choices require PRE-approval by the instructor upon submission on the due date specified above.

All written assignments must be typed, double spaced throughout, Times New Roman or Arial font, 12 pt font size, with 1-inch margins, including the required number of pages specified for each assignment, sources must be cited in the proper APA format. **You will be required to attach a cover page and bibliography of these sources at the end of the paper in APA style, this page does not count towards the page requirements.** Papers must be printed and submitted in class on the specified due dates - **NO LATE PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED.**

#### **INTRODUCTION: (10%)**

A one-page minimum requirement of a detailed introduction of your topic, including who, what and why the issue is of concern in the criminal justice community. Why should you conduct research on this topic?

#### **ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY: (10%)**

The Annotated Bibliography should consist of two to three pages containing at least five (5) academic peer-reviewed sources that provide research information about your research question. Be sure to re-state your research question on the first line before 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%)**

The Methodology shall consist of two to three 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.

### **FINAL RESEARCH PROPOSAL: (25%)**

A Research Proposal shall consist of eight to 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

### **MID-TERM EXAM: (10%)**

The final exam will consist of a comprehensive examination of the material provided throughout the course.

### **FINAL EXAM: (15%)**

The final exam will consist of a comprehensive examination of the material provided throughout the course.

### **ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION: (15%)**

Attendance is mandatory and crucial to your success in this course. You are allowed one (1) absence. For every absence thereafter, a one percent (1%) will be deducted from your grade. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to identify missed content (including handouts, schedules,

etc) and turn in assignments. **If you are 15 (or more) minutes late for class, you will receive reduced or no credit for attendance.**

Students are expected to actively participate in the class and to complete all written assignments. Students are required to be prepared to participate by reading all assigned readings. This is a criminal justice course, which may involve controversial topics during discussions. All students should always be respectful of their classmates' opinions.

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%

**Late or Missing Assignment Policy:**

All assignments are due on the scheduled dates. **Late papers will not be accepted. Additionally, if you are late for class, points will be deducted for lateness – 1 point per 15 minutes each class.**

## **IV. Course Policies**

### **Classroom Rules**

All members of this class are required to conduct themselves in an appropriate and professional manner. Laptops are permitted only if disengaged from the internet and other electronic devices should be stored away unless you specifically seek the instructor's permission. In this class, we may have discussions that challenge our taken for granted assumptions about crime and justice. Students should be prepared to engage honestly and openly about this material and perhaps even examine their own beliefs about the issues. While I am hopeful that the course materials will spark interesting discussion, personal insults or other types of demeaning, disrespectful, or threatening comments toward other class members about their experiences, backgrounds, or statements will NOT be tolerated.

### **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>

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/> 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](mailto:kate.torres@rutgers.edu)  
Website: <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>; 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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