

47: 202: 301:61 Criminal Justice Research Methods
3 Credits
Fall 2018

Tuesday & Thursday
6 p.m. -7.20 p.m.

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Office Hours: 4-5 p.m. every Tuesday and Thursday or by appointment

Course Overview

Develops rudimentary tools needed for conducting research and writing reports and scholarly papers in criminal justice. 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, etc. Among other topics, we 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

830:302 OR 920:301

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

The main objective of the course is to educate students about the purpose and method of social science research. At the end of the course, students should be able to:

- 1) Articulate the fundamental logic of scientific inquiry
- 2) Identify and describe research problem and get “social facts” clear
- 3) Design survey instrument for specific research problem
- 4) Conduct fieldwork and interpret qualitative findings
- 5) Critically evaluate published research
- 6) Identify and articulate important concepts (e.g., validity, reliability) and procedures (e.g., sampling) that are germane for development of any research study
- 7) Develop proficiency in different types of research methodologies

Required Readings

Bachman, R., & Schutt, R. K. (2017). The practice of research in criminology and criminal justice. 6th Edition. Sage. Other readings will be distributed via blackboard on a week to week basis.

Course Requirements

Classroom learning is a group activity that depends upon everyone’s full participation in order to succeed. I expect students to: be prepared to begin class on time, silence or turn off and put away cell phones and other electronic devices, read and be prepared to discuss homework, submit assignments on time, and assist your classmates. You can expect that I will: be on time and prepared for every class, be available via email and appointments to answer questions, make every class engaging and valuable, and respect your contributions to class. Students are required to access the Blackboard regularly to stay informed about any changes in lecture topics, assigned readings and other course announcements. All course documents, reading materials, assignments, and announcements will be posted on Blackboard during the semester.

Course Structure

The course will incorporate diverse learning activities including lectures, group discussions, and writing assignments. You will also engage in a group project conducting fieldwork off-site (off or on campus) and writing up a report that combines observations of all members. I will lecture on all class topics as provided in the course schedule (see below) and we will have three discussion sessions devoted to the four articles that you will use for your final paper.

I. Course Schedule

Date	Class Topic	Readings & Assignments Due
Week 1	Introduction – Syllabus	

(9/04 & 9/06)	Errors in Reasoning and Social Research Philosophies	B&S: Chapter 1
Week 2 (9/11 & 9/13)	Types of Research Questions and The Research Circle	B&S: Chapter 2
	Research Ethics	B&S: Chapter 3 9/20: Assignment #1 DUE – Crime Rate
Week 3 (9/18 & 9/20)	Research Ethics cont.	
	Conceptualization and Measurement	B&S: Chapter 4
Week 4 (9/25 & 9/27)	Validity and Generalizability	
	Sampling	B&S: Chapter 5
Week 5 (10/02 & 10/04)	Sampling cont.	
	Causality	B&S: Chapter 6
Week 6 (10/09 & 10/11)	Midterm Exam Review	
	Experimental Designs	B&S: Chapter 7
Week 7 (10/16 & 10/18)	MIDTERM	
	Discussion: Experiments	Pager (2003) – Blackboard
Week 8 (10/23 & 10/25)	Quasi-Experimental Designs	
	Survey Research	B&S: Chapter 8
Week 9 (10/30 & 11/01)	Survey and Focus Groups	
	Discussion: Quasi-Experiments & Surveys	Melde & Esbensen (2011) – Blackboard
Week 10 (11/06 & 11/08)	Qualitative Methods: Ethnography	&S: Chapter 9 11/06: Assignment #2 DUE -Survey Design
	Qualitative Methods: Interviews	
Week 11 (11/13 & 11/15)	GROUP PARTICIPANT OBSERVATIONS – NO CLASS	
	GROUP DISCUSSION– NO CLASS	
Week 12 (11/20) *Thanksgiving Day	Discussion: Qualitative Methods	Jacob & Wright (1999) & Stuart & Benezra (2017) – Blackboard
Week 13 (11/27 & 11/29)	Qualitative Data Analysis	B&S: Chapter 14 11/27: Assignment #3 DUE – Participant Observations
	Quantitative Data Analysis	B&S: Chapter 13
Week 14 (12/04 & 12/06)	Analyzing Content and Evaluation Research	B&S: Chapter 10 & 11
	Mixed Method Research	B&S: Chapter 12
Week 15 (12/11)	Final Exam Review	12/11: Final Paper Due
FINAL EXAM	December 19th	

*Note: This syllabus/course schedule is subject to change. Any changes will be announced in class or on blackboard.

II. Course Assessment and Grading

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

Assignment #1 (10%): Crime Rate (to be completed by the 20th of September)

Using your hometown (wherever you grew up) and another town or city, find the total crime rate for each place in 2015. The crime rate is the amount of crime per 100,000 people in each place. The crime rate is a KNOWN number and I can find it for any city and town in America! You should cite your source and provide a short narrative (+/- 1 page). Detailed instructions will be provided on the 6th of September (Week 1).

Assignment #2 (10%): Survey Design (to be completed by the 6th of November)

For this assignment you should assume the role of a researcher who wants to conduct a brief survey, delivered via a web questionnaire, to victims of sexual assault who have received treatment from Program XYZ (that delivers comprehensive psychological treatment) to assess their psychological symptoms post-treatment. You are required to construct 10-item questionnaire that tap into how victims of sexual assault have dealt with their victimization 1-year later. Detailed instructions will be provided on the 25th of October (Week 4).

Assignment #3 (15%): Participant Observation (to be completed by the 27th of November)

For this assignment you will break into groups of 3-4 people and as a group choose one location to conduct your observations (I will provide suggested options). During the class time (13th of November) you will observe and write fieldnotes for 20 to 30 minutes. You will need to observe simultaneously but separately! Spend the rest time of the class time to consolidate your notes. Individually, write up your narrative. Meet with your group on the 15th of November during the allocated class time to discuss and compare your experiences. As a group, write up your final report. You are required to submit your field notes, your individual narrative (+/- 3 pages), and your group narrative (+/- 3 pages). Detailed instructions will be provided on the 8th of November (Week 10).

Final Paper (25%) – 11th of December at 11.55 p.m. via Blackboard

The final paper is based on the four articles we will be reading and discussing throughout the semester. These articles exemplify different research methodologies (experiment; quasi-experimental survey design; ethnography; in-depth interviewing). First, you will describe, summarize, and evaluate the evidence presented in each of the four articles; then discuss strengths, weaknesses, and limitations of each research design; and finally come up with a research question and describe a research design you would likely use to answer it. Your final paper should be (+/- 6 pages) with in-text APA citations and APA reference list. Detailed instructions will be provided on the 18th of October (Week 7).

Midterm (20%) – 16th of October (Week 7)

A 30 multiple-choice & 2 open-ended questions exam will be administered in class based on topics studied through Weeks 1-5.

Final Exam (20%) – 19th of December

A 30 multiple-choice & 2 open-ended questions exam will be administered in class based on topics studied through Weeks 6-14.

Extra Credit* (5%): Human Subjects Certification

For this extra-credit assignment you are required to complete the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) Education Basic Course and upload a PDF version of their “Completion Report” on Blackboard under “Extra-Credit” Assignment. Access to the certification course online can be found online (<https://www.citiprogram.org/>). The instructor will review instructions on registering on the first or second day of class. You can complete extra-credit assignment at ANY point during the course of the semester before the final paper submission.

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

Assignment Description	Linked to SLO	% of Course Grade
Assignment #1 (Crime Rate)	SLO #2	10%
Assignment #2 (Survey Design)	SLO #3	10%
Assignment #3 (Participant Observation)	SLO #4	15%
Final Paper	SLO #1 & #5	25%
Midterm	SLO #1 & #6	20%
Final Exam	SLO#1 & #7	20%

ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION (-2% for every class missed after 1 absence):

Attendance:

Regular attendance is expected, and I will be tracking it for every class session. YOU WILL BE MORE SUCCESSFUL IF YOU ATTEND! You are allowed to miss ONE class session and it will not affect your grade (Things happens, I completely understand). After one absence, I will deduct 2 points from your final grade for each missed class unless you can provide documentation of your illness.

I will be taking attendance at the beginning of each class. If you are late past 10-minute time, you will be marked absent.

If you miss class, you are still responsible for anything assigned for the next class or classes, including obtaining any handouts given in the class you missed. It is YOUR RESPONSIBILITY to catch up.

Participation:

Students are expected to actively participate in class discussions and exercises. Participation in classes will be taken into account in awarding final grades.

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:

If you submit your assignment after the articulate due date, I will deduct 10% of your grade per day unless you can provide documentation of your illness. If you are not sick, but something REALLY major happened in your life that precluded you to submit your work on time, I will make a decision on the case-by-case basis.

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. There is no eating in the classroom, but you can have your drink (coffee, water, etc.) during the class time.

Examinations:

Examinations are to be taken during their scheduled times. Students who fail to take examinations on the prescribed dates WILL NOT be permitted to take the examinations unless extenuating circumstances exist. Proper documentation for the circumstance MUST be provided before the student is able to take a make-up examination.

IMPORTANT: Every grade will be posted on Blackboard.

Any issues regarding an assigned grade must be brought to my attention before the date of the final examination. Do not wait until the last minute! You will know exactly what your final term grade should be before it is assigned because you will know the grades of every assignment/examination/etc. The syllabus also states the value of each assignment towards your final term grade. Absolutely **NO CONSIDERATION FOR GRADE CHANGES** will be made on or after the date of the final examination. Grades are assigned objectively. You will get the grade that you earn.

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.

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.

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Robeson Campus Center, Suite 352
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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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