

2023SP - CJ RESEARCH METHODS

47:202:301:90 Syllabus

(Note this syllabus is drawn from Canvas webpages as the course is set up as an online and fully asynchronous course.)

The course will be run entirely online and "asynchronously" -- this means that there is no group lecture and everyone will be working independently through Canvas. You'll have to complete a series of modules for the class 1) in order and 2) within a specific time frame but you'll be able to do so in a way best suits your life.

The upside? Our world is more complicated than ever so you can work through the course in a way that acknowledges that. The downside? We'll have to work harder to get to know one another, we'll need to be prepared for changes or glitches, and you'll need to pay attention to due dates in the course calendar (HINT: "Calendar" on the red bar to your left and "Syllabus" in the Course options next to it will tell you what is due each week and what's coming up). I strongly encourage you to configure your [Canvas notifications \(Links to an external site.\)](#) to keep up with due dates, announcements, and changes. You will only receive messages from the instructors through Canvas.

Your First Assignment

The course is organized as a series of "learning modules." I will typically release a new module TWO weeks before its due date and all modules are due on Sunday nights (though you can do them anytime you like before the deadline). Each module has several components and you need to complete all of them by the due date. I do not offer extensions (but see more about this in the Course Description and Grading pages).

You may complete modules at any time during the window that it is available but you must fully complete each module before moving on to the next one.

Your first two modules are due Sunday January 29th 2023 at 11:59pm.

Module 1 is the syllabus and includes a getting to know you survey and a practice assignment on Perusall. In order to complete Module 1, you'll need to:

- read all of the course resource/syllabus pages in Canvas,
- complete a quiz on important parts of the syllabus,
- complete a short survey to tell us about yourself,
- and set up Perusall and complete your first group reading assignment for practice (you'll find more details on this as you move through these initial pages).

In order to complete Module 2, you'll need to:

- complete your first Perusall reading assignment for a grade,
- watch a 30 minute video introducing methods, research ethics, and how social scientists think differently than others about social problems,
- complete a short response to the video you watched.

To start Module 1, click on "About Your Teacher" below. You'll find a bios on the professor and teaching assistant along with all the details on how to reach out to us if you need help in class or would like to make a Zoom appointment.

Then, make your way through Module 1 using the "Next" button at the bottom of each screen. Your first two assignments (an introductory survey and a Perusall reading assignment) are embedded at the end of the module.

Then, begin Module 2.

Make sure to complete both Module 1 and Module 2 by January 29th.

Welcome to research methods!

ABOUT US

Professor

Dr. Sara Wakefield

Sara Wakefield received her Ph.D. from the Department of Sociology at the University of Minnesota in 2007. Her research interests focus on the consequences of mass imprisonment for the family, with an emphasis on childhood wellbeing and racial inequality, culminating in a series of articles and book, *Children of the Prison Boom: Mass Incarceration and the Future of American Inequality* (Oxford University Press, with Chris Wildeman). More recently, she is working on several team-based projects that provide information on the consequences of contact with the criminal legal system that are not easily captured in available datasets. The PINS and WO-PINS studies leverage a variety of methods and data sources (surveys, intensive interviews, administrative data, and social network analysis) to examine social relationships while incarcerated and through reentry. The Family History of Incarceration Survey (FamHIS) provides nationally representative estimates of the concentration of incarceration experiences in American families. Finally, recent demographic analyses estimate the number of people in the United States with a felony conviction and the prevalence of termination of parental rights among U.S. children. She teaches courses on research design (undergraduate and doctoral) and criminal justice and inequality.

Teaching Assistant

TBD

Contact Information/How To Get Help

Email

Click on "Inbox," select the instructor and/or TA and we'll reply as soon as we can.

Drop In Student Hours

Each week we'll hold regular drop-in hours. You'll be able to ask questions, meet your peers, and get help. Drop-in hours will happen every week. Click on "Calendar" to see the drop-in hours for each week. These meetings are optional and you are not required to attend. You do not need to make an appointment to attend drop-in hours.

In addition to variable drop-in hours on Zoom, Dr. Wakefield will be available on campus in-person most Mondays from 2pm-3pm in CLJ 579C. Check the Calendar on Canvas for more details.

Individual Appointments

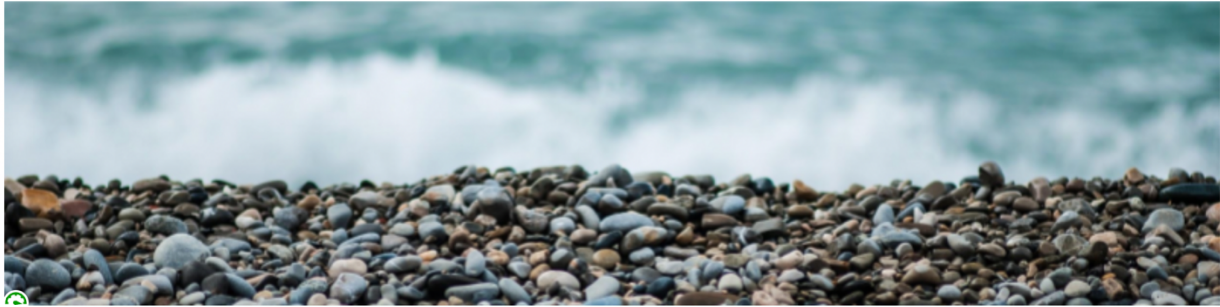
If you would prefer to virtually meet with the instructor or TA privately or cannot make available drop in hours, you may email to request a private virtual meeting. When doing so, please provide a couple of best times or days that would work for you so that we can schedule them quickly.

Who Do I Contact For What?

In general, the teaching assistant will be handling all grade management and administrative work in the course. If you have a technical problem (can't access Perusall or an assignment), you should reach out to the teaching assistant. Similarly, if you see an issue with grades (an incorrect grade, a missing grade, or difficulty with Perusall populating back to the Canvas gradebook), please contact Kennedy Didier.

If you have a question about the course content or concepts included in the lessons each week, feel free to reach out to either one of us (Sara Wakefield or the TA).

CRIMINAL JUSTICE RESEARCH METHODS



How the Course Works

The links below provide material included on a traditional syllabus. The 'Course Description' offers a big picture view of the course content and learning objectives. 'Course Structure' tells you how the course works. 'Expectations and Grading' will allow you to anticipate how you are doing. 'Campus Resources' offers sources for getting help. You must read all of them before beginning the course modules and return to them from the course home page whenever you need. **To proceed, click "Next" and you will move through all of them in order to complete Module 1. You MUST read all of these pages to move on in the course.**



WHY RESEARCH DESIGN?

Course Objectives, Learning Goals, and Organization

Research design teaches you how to evaluate what other people say and how to answer questions for yourself. It allows you to debate with evidence, to make decisions for yourself rather than trust others, and figure out who is arguing in good faith.

Even if you never become a researcher yourself, you're subjected to research translated for the general public every day. Much of this is translated incorrectly (dumbed down so the complexity gets lost), uses weak evidence to make strong claims, or is plain nonsense. This course can help you get better at spotting the nonsense.

Criminal Justice Research Methods is an *introductory* and *intensive* overview of the methods used in our field to answer important questions but the skills you learn here are broadly applicable outside of criminal justice and criminology.

Learning Objectives

If you actively engage and complete this course, you'll learn:

- to *describe* common methods of social science inquiry,
- to *understand* the link between a research question and the research design,
- to *explore* major debates about research methods, social science, and ethics in research,
- to *critically evaluate* social scientific evidence and research,
- to *become* smart consumers of news reports, political rhetoric, and public discussion about the social world and social scientific research.

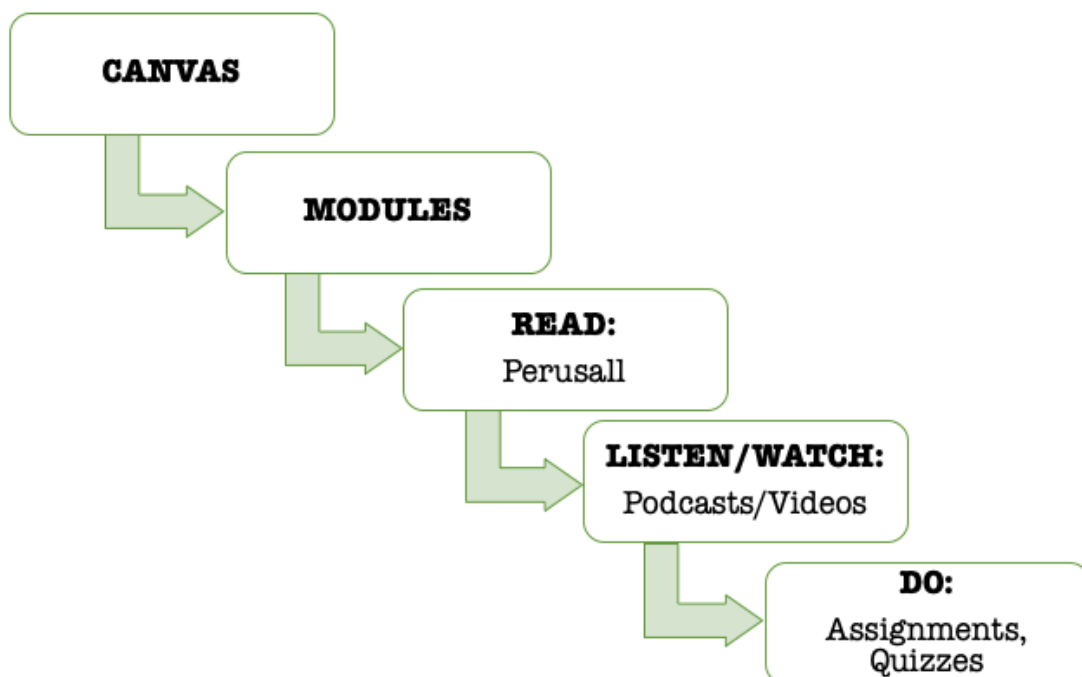
Organization of the Course

The course is designed as a series of modules, each focused on a different topic, and they build on one another until the end of the course. The first third of the course is a big picture introduction to social science (the process, theory and research, and research ethics), the second third introduces specific research methods (experiments, quasi-experiments, surveys, and fieldwork), and the last third is focused on practical applications of social scientific research.

NAVIGATING THE COURSE

Below is a roadmap for this course. Every instructor organizes their course differently. Here's what you need to know for this course.

The Structure



1. Canvas

Canvas is the learning management system (LMS) for this course. It will be the main resource for this class and you should log in to it before starting any work. You will find announcements, any changes to the course or alerts, feedback from the instructor on prior work, your grades, and links to all material requiring completion. All assignments and activities are clearly laid out within Canvas.

You can configure Canvas in any way that you like (for example, you can have course announcements sent to your email or texted to you) and it is worth spending a few

minutes going through a training module on it before you start anything else. If you click on courses (to the left of this screen), you will find a student training module for the Canvas LMS and you may refer to it throughout the course to answer any questions that arise. Additional resources can be found [here \(Links to an external site.\)](#).

2. Modules

On course options to your left, you will see a link called "Modules." This will take you to each module for the course.

You will notice that not all the modules are available at once (I will release them two weeks in advance of the course cadence and you'll have about one per week). You must complete them in order as many of them build on each other. **You will usually have 7-14 days to complete all of the materials in each module after the first week.**

Each module will include a description of the module content and some combination of the following requirements to 1) **Read and Engage**, 2) **Listen/Watch** for more examples, and 3) **Do**.

- **Read and Engage:** For each module, you will read introductory material using the collective reading platform **Perusall** (see below for more details).
- **Listen/Watch** for more examples: After you have completed initial readings on Perusall for each module, you will access 'real world' examples of the method of interest. This might include mini-lectures from Dr. Wakefield, lectures from other social scientists, podcasts, or additional activities for further engagement.
- **Do:** After completing the reading on Perusall and engaging real-world examples of research, you will complete an assignment. Assignments will vary but will often include surveys, quizzes, or activities.

3. READ: Perusall

Perusall is an online social reading platform that 1) ensures students read, 2) encourages good note-taking via annotations, 3) allows students to ask questions and/or teach one another through responses, and 4) eliminates the need for high stakes multiple choice exams that merely test your ability to memorize things.

Reading is important. You can't learn if you don't read. Perusall requires you to and grades you on it so you'll finally get credit for being a responsible student.

Engagement is important. You can't learn if you do it in isolation. Perusall allows students to ask questions, help each other by highlighting important points, and provides a discussion space to engage the course material. It's both a reading platform and a discussion board.

Perusall replaces tests on textbook material because it grades the quality of your engagement with the material. Perusall, rather than a stressful exam, will tell me whether or not you understand the material and have engaged with it throughout the course.

How to Successfully Use Perusall:

- Perusall grades annotations, comments, and responses to peers in terms of quality using an algorithm. The TA and I spot check the grades throughout the course as well.
- You must complete the minimum number of annotations per reading assignment (it's usually about 7 but varies based on the length of the assignment and will be listed within the assignment) in order to receive a quality score for that assignment. That said, simply saying *something* the required number of times will not yield a high score unless what you say demonstrates deep engagement with the material.
- You must complete the minimum number of contributions (annotations, questions, responses, etc) in the assignment in order to receive a grade for that reading assignment but you can complete more annotations if you like. Perusall will grade your "best" annotations to come up with your summary score so if you are looking to improve your score, more high-quality questions, responses, and engagements will help.
- Perusall is free but alas your textbook is not (though I did choose the cheapest one I could find). You must purchase digital codes for the textbook via the Rutgers-Newark bookstore. While the textbook is not free, Perusall allows you to rent the textbook at a much lower cost than buying it outright. All additional readings on Perusall will be uploaded by the instructor and are free to you.
- **Perusall is not an anonymous forum.** Incivilities, bullying of peers, or other inappropriate comments will harm your grade and are immediately visible to the instructor and attached to your name.
- I anticipate an enrollment of about 100 students in this class. Each student will be placed in a randomly-assigned small group of 20 on Perusall for collective reading assignments.
- **You must access Perusall via Canvas in order to receive credit for your work in the gradebook. Do not log in to Perusall separately from the class; instead, click on the Perusall link on Canvas for each assignment.**

You can learn about Perusall [here \(Links to an external site.\)](#) or by watching the video posted below to give you a sense of how it works from the instructor's perspective. You

can read about how Perusall grading works
here: <https://perusall.com/downloads/scoring-details.pdf>

4. LISTEN/WATCH: Podcasts/Videos

Each module may also include a requirement for further engagement. This might involve listening to a podcast, watching a recorded lecture from the instructor or someone else, or reading additional material. The goal for these additional activities will be to move from a 'clean' textbook example of a particular method to a 'messy' example of what research looks like in practice.

5. DO: Assignments/Quizzes

Some modules will require you to complete a version of a method we have learned about, evaluate others who have used the method, or reflect on what you've learned in the READ/WATCH/LISTEN assignments. Some assignments will ask you to 'get your feet wet' with a method and others will ask you to describe the results of a research study. You may also be asked to complete a short quiz. These will vary depending on what we are covering each week.

COURSE POLICIES, READING, AND GRADING

Course Policies

Late Assignments/Missed Modules. **I do not offer extensions.**

I will drop your three lowest grades on module assignments (not including the final assignment, which everyone must complete). The grade drop policy should account for any illnesses or emergencies that arise over the course of the semester. If, however, you have an emergency that takes you away from the class for more than two modules, please reach out to the Professor or TA to discuss a solution.

All assignments are due on their due date. Each module is flexible but not completely (you can't complete them all at once in March, for example). In order to receive full credit, you'll need to complete each module within a specific time window (usually 7-10 days).

We can usually catch a student up if they have had a few bad weeks. We cannot, however, catch students up if they wait to contact us or do not respond until the end of the semester. All this to say, talk to us before things are dire at the end of the semester and we can help. Once grades are submitted, instructors cannot change them for reasons other than a grade calculation error.

Grading. I compute a total point score for each student and make natural cut-points based on the class distribution of point totals (this is a form of setting a curve). *In general (but with some exceptions),* students who complete all assignments and readings **adequately** and participate actively on Perusall can expect to receive a grade of B- or better. Before you ask:

- Opportunities for extra credit, if any, will be offered equally to the entire class. I do not offer them to individual students.
- Grade disputes must be justified, in writing, and will be re-graded anonymously. The result of a re-grade MAY BE a lower grade.
- I do not respond to requests for grade changes unless they involve a calculation error once the final assignment has been submitted. If you see a mistake, tell me before the end of the semester.
 - It's important to me that you know why I don't respond to these requests. I don't respond to requests for grade changes at the end of the semester because my grading scheme is already exceedingly generous but mainly it's because it would be unfair to other students in the class and I study how inequality works for a living. A

student's grade should not depend on whether or not they ask for a grade change. If you're concerned about your grade in the course, please 1) monitor it on Canvas and Perusall and 2) reach out to us before the end of the semester so that we can help you improve or correct any errors. In general, it is very difficult to fail this class if you simply keep up with the modules.

Plagiarism and Academic Misconduct. DO NOT CHEAT. You do not need to cheat to do well in this course. You do not need to steal ideas or words from other people to do well in this course. I'm not even sure it's possible to cheat on most of our assignments but students who figure out a way to do so will be reported and will fail this course. You will notice that SOME assignments in the course are graded according to whether or not you complete them, not whether or not your answers are right. This is a good way to learn through making mistakes but you do have to actually complete the assignments (and all questions in the assignment) in order to receive full credit.

Respect and Courtesy. Behaving inconsiderately or rudely, especially to teaching assistants who work hard, have other obligations, and are paid very little is ill-advised. Please also treat your peers well. No one is doing wonderfully during this stressful time and many people are seriously struggling. Our class goal is to forgive mistakes quickly and offer grace and patience to one another.

Fun? I LOVE research methods. It's okay if you don't. I will do my best to make the course interesting, challenging, and transparent.

Required Readings

1. *The Process of Social Research, 3e.* Dixon, Singleton, and Straits.

This is a fairly standard social science methods textbook (they're all pretty much the same). I chose this one because it was the cheapest on Perusall. The downside to that is it references sociology rather than criminology a lot -- but I figured you had better things to spend your money on and the truth is that sociology and criminology are basically the same with respect to research methods so the label doesn't matter. Feel free to insert "criminology" every time you see "sociology" in the textbook; the same lesson will apply.

In order to access the textbook on Perusall, **you need to purchase a digital code from the [Rutgers-Newark Bookstore \(Links to an external site.\)](#)**. Additional readings will be distributed by the instructor on Perusall at no cost to you.

DO NOT PURCHASE A PHYSICAL COPY OF THE BOOK FROM ANY SOURCE. The vast majority of your grade will come from annotated and group reading assignments on

Perusall using a digital copy of the book. You cannot pass this class without purchasing a digital copy of the book via the bookstore.

Grading

Your grade will be calculated as follows:

- *Completion of Learning Modules: 90%*
 - Each module includes some combination of READ, LISTEN/WATCH, and DO components and all of them contribute to your grade for that module. The modules vary in terms of how much work is associated with each component.
 - While some of the DO assignments may include a short quiz, there will be no midterm or final exams in this course.
 - We'll throw out your three lowest grades on assignments (even if it's a zero) when we calculate your final grade. That means you can miss about one component in any three modules. **This does not apply to the final assignment; everyone must complete the final assignment.**
- *Final Assignment: 10%*
 - Your final assignment will require you to demonstrate competency by engaging with a piece of research and evaluating it. We'll release a full description of this assignment later in the course but you'll have several choices for how to complete it.
- *Extra Credit*
 - Any extra credit opportunities will be offered to the entire class and I do not typically offer extra credit in my courses. If I do offer extra credit opportunities, the work will be used to evaluate students who "just miss" a higher grade and will not take the place of a module assignment or final paper.

GETTING HELP

Instructor Commitment to Your Success

Many inequalities in education arise from disabilities, life circumstances, and a host of other factors. Such inequalities have been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic. My goal, as well as that of Rutgers, is that each and every student has the accommodations they need in order to be successful. I am *always* available to discuss how we can better support you in this class and Rutgers University provides additional supports.

Campus Resources

Accommodation and Support Statement

Rutgers University Newark (RU-N) is committed to the creation of an inclusive and safe learning environment for all students and the University as a whole. RU-N has identified the following resources to further the mission of access and support:

For Individuals Experiencing Disability: The Office of Disability Services (ODS) works with students with medical, physical, and/or mental conditions who encounter disabling barriers in order to determine reasonable and appropriate accommodations for access. Students who have completed the process with ODS and have approved accommodations are provided a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) specific to each course. To initiate accommodations for their course students must both provide the LOA to and have a conversation with the course instructor about the accommodations. This should occur as early in the semester as possible. More information can be found at the [RU-N ODS website \(ods.newark.rutgers.edu\)](https://ods.newark.rutgers.edu) ([Links to an external site.](#)). Contact ODS at (973) 353-5375 or via email at ods@newark.rutgers.edu.

For Individuals who are Pregnant: The Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance is available to assist with any concerns or potential accommodations related to pregnancy. Students may contact the Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance at (973) 353-5063 or via email at TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu.

For Short-term Absence Verification: The Office of the Dean of Students can provide assistance for absences related to religious observance, emergency or unavoidable conflict (illness, personal or family emergency, etc.). Students should refer to [University Policy 10.2.7 \(Links to an external site.\)](#) for information about expectations and responsibilities. The Office of the Dean of Students can be contacted by calling (973) 353-5063 or emailing deanofstudents@newark.rutgers.edu.

For Individuals with temporary conditions/injuries: The Office of the Dean of Students can assist students who are experiencing a temporary condition or injury (broken or sprained limbs, concussions, or recovery from surgery). Students experiencing a temporary condition or injury should submit a request using the following link: <https://temporaryconditions.rutgers.edu> (Links to an external site.).

For Gender or Sex-Based Discrimination or Harassment: The Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance can assist students who are experiencing any form of gender or sex-based discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, relationship violence, or stalking. Students can report an incident to the Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance by calling (973) 353-5063 or emailing TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu. Incidents may also be reported by using the following link: tinyurl.com/RUNReportingForm. For more information, students should refer to the University's Title IX Policy and Grievance Procedures located at <https://uec.rutgers.edu/wp-content/uploads/60-1-33-current-1.pdf> (Links to an external site.)

For support related to Interpersonal Violence: The Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance (VPVA) can provide any student with confidential support. The office does **not** have a reporting obligation to Title IX. Students can contact the office by calling (973) 353-1918 or emailing run.vpva@rutgers.edu. There is also a confidential text-based helpline available to students; students can text (973) 339-0734 for support. Students do not need to be a victim/survivor of violence; any student can receive services, information and support.

For Crisis and Concerns: The Campus Awareness Response and Education (CARE) Team works with students in crisis to develop a plan of support plan and address personal situations that might impact their academic performance. Connect with the CARE Team by using the following link: tinyurl.com/RUNCARE (Links to an external site.) or emailing careteam@rutgers.edu.

For Stress, Worry, or Concerns about Well-being: The Counseling Center has confidential therapists available to support students. Students should reach out to the Counseling Center to schedule an appointment: counseling@newark.rutgers.edu or (973) 353-5805. RUN students also have access to an after-hours counseling service, Protocall, which can be reached via the Center's telephone number (973-353-5805) and provides assistance from a licensed therapist any time the Counseling Center is closed. Alternatively, if students are not quite ready to make an appointment with a therapist but are interested in self-help, check out *Sanvello* for an easy, web-based approach to self-care and support. Visit <https://my.rutgers.edu/> (Links to an external site.), click on Sanvello: Wellness @ RUN, and log in with your netid to begin your journey toward wellness.

For emergencies, call 911 or contact Rutgers University Police Department (RUPD) by calling (973) 353-5111.

COURSE SCHEDULE

(Note: This schedule is tentative and subject to change. All tasks should be done in the order listed below.)

Module	Topic	Tasks	Due Date
1	Course Introduction and Syllabus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Course Webpages (Canvas) • Complete syllabus short quiz (Canvas) • “Tell Us About Yourself” Survey (Canvas) • Practice Round on Perusall (Perusall) 	Sunday, Jan 29 11:59pm
2	Science and Social Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • READ: “Science and Social Research” (Perusall) • LISTEN/WATCH: “A Social Experiment: Social Science and Ethics” (Canvas) • DO: “How Might I Be Wrong?” Reflection (Canvas) 	Sunday, Jan 29 11:59pm
3	Research Ethics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • READ: “The Ethics of Research” (Perusall) • LISTEN: “Exploring the Research-IRB Disconnect” (Canvas) • DO: “Research Ethics: You Be the IRB” Reflection (Canvas) 	Sunday, Feb 5 11:59pm
4	Varieties of Research Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • READ: “Research Designs: It Depends on the Question” (Perusall) • DO: “Practice Quiz on Concepts” (Canvas) • LISTEN: “What is Peer Reviewed Research?” (Canvas) • DO: “Accessing Research” (Canvas) 	Sunday, Feb 12 11:59pm
5	Conceptualization and Measurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • READ: “Measurement: Linking Theory to Research” (Perusall) • READ: “Read/Engage Example: Alienation” (Canvas) • DO: “Measuring Friendship” Quiz (Canvas) • DO: “Reliability and Validity” (Canvas) 	Sunday, Feb 19 11:59pm
6	Sampling and Inference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • READ: Sampling and Inference (Perusall) • READ: “Hard to Reach Populations and Study Retention” (Perusall) • LISTEN: “Sampling” (Canvas) 	Sunday, Feb 26 11:59pm
7	Reading and Understanding Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • READ: “Dr. Rubin’s Reading Guide” (Perusall) • READ: “Mass Imprisonment and Racial Disparities in Childhood Behavioral Problems” (Perusall) • DO: “Reading Guide Completion on Wakefield & Wildeman 2011” (Perusall) 	Sunday, Mar 5 11:59pm

8	Types of Research Designs (Experiments)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LISTEN: "Dr. Khan on Experiments" (Canvas) • READ: "Experiments: What Causes What?" (Perusall) • LISTEN: "GMAC Podcast, Experiments/Audit Studies" (Canvas) 	Sunday, Mar 12 11:59pm
9	Types of Research Designs (Surveys)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • READ: "Surveys" (Perusall) • LISTEN: "GMAC Podcast, Surveys" (Canvas) • DO: "Let's Review Practice Quiz" (Canvas) 	Sunday, Mar 26 11:59pm
10	Types of Research Designs (Interviews and Ethnography)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • READ: "Fieldwork" (Perusall) • LISTEN: "Podcasts, Stuart + GMAC of Your Choice" (Canvas) • DO: "Field Research Reflections" (Canvas) 	Sunday, Apr 2 11:59pm
11	Types of Research Designs (Mixed Methods)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • READ: "Mixed Methods" (Perusall) • LISTEN: "GMAC Podcast" (Canvas) • DO: "Mixed Methods Reflections" (Canvas) • DO: "Review and Preparation for Final Assignment" 	Sunday, Apr 9 11:59pm
12	Additional Readings and Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • READ: "Choose a Perusall Reading Related to Final Assignment Choice" (Perusall) • LISTEN: "Mini-Lectures and Other Resources" (Canvas) 	Sunday, Apr 16 11:59pm
Final Assignment	Describe and Evaluate a Piece of Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete and Turn in Final Assignment 	Sunday, May 7 11:59pm