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**RESEARCH & EVALUATION**

27:202:522:01 SPRING 2025

THURSDAY 5:00-7:40 CLJ-572

Instructor: Dr. Beth Ellen Adubato

E-mail: badubato@scj.rutgers.edu

Office hours: Tuesday and Thursday at 4:45-5:45 or by appointment (virtual or in person)

Course Overview

This course provides a basic introduction to research design in the social sciences, with an emphasis on criminology and criminal justice applications. Students will learn the steps required for framing an empirical question and be introduced to a variety of research methodologies. The course will provide equal emphasis on causal-explanatory, exploratory-descriptive, and qualitative designs, and students will learn the strengths and weaknesses of each.

Course Structure

This course meets weekly—on Thursday nights. If at any time during the semester we need to switch to remote learning, we will continue to meet at the same time, by Zoom.

# Course Introduction and Goals

This research-based course is an in-depth, critical analysis of a social science topic related to criminology and criminal justice. Each student is expected to select a topic of criminological importance, review the current research literature, complete an original independent research project, and make a presentation about the empirical findings. The ultimate result of this course is the research paper; you are expected to design, conduct a research project, and present your findings in a journal article-style paper.

A Power Point presentation of your findings is also required at the end of the semester. For these presentations, you will be divided into panel groups of three, with an overall theme. This mimics the presentation model of American Society Criminology or Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences conferences.

The instructor’s mission in this course is to provide you with structured guidance through the research and writing process and help you complete meaningful research in criminology. By conducting your own research, you will gain first-hand experience of applying theories and methods to investigate the various aspects of criminal behavior.

Course textbook:

Understanding and Evaluating Research: A Critical Guide

Sue L.T. McGregor

Sage Publications

Other supplementary readings will be provided in class as needed.

APA Style Guide: You MUST use APA style citation for all paper assignments in this course. You can look up APA style guide on the following websites:

* + American Psychological Association (APA) http://www.apastyle.org
  + Consult your textbooks from previous research methods courses.

Grading:

Your final course grade will be computed using the following breakdown. (See the end of the syllabus for short descriptions of each assignment.)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Weight | Major Assignments |
| 15% | RESEARCH METHODS PROPOSAL--Research method proposal (if this is survey research, include survey instrument/list of interview questions—Due February 6th |
| 5% | FIRST DRAFT OF LITERATURE REVIEW—Due February 27th |
| 10% | LITERATURE REVIEWS with reference list—Due March 13th |
| 10% | FIRST DRAFT of the methods, data, and results sections—March 27th |
| 20% | POWERPOINT PRESENTATION (HARDCOPY)—May 1st  All students will present their work with a PowerPoint presentation on May 1st or May 15th but all hardcopies are due on the 1st. |
| 40% | COMPLETE RESEARCH PAPER—May 15th |
| Total 100% | You must earn a minimum of 63% on the 100% scale to pass the course. |

Class Policies

a) ALL DEADLINES ARE STRICTLY ENFORCED. We have a very tight timeline. Once you start to fall behind, it will have a domino effect on the rest of the deadlines. For your own benefit, the deadlines for all assignments will be strictly enforced. A late assignment less than 24 hours late will be accepted with a full letter grade reduction. NO assignment will be accepted after 24 hours from the due date. No extensions beyond 24 hours will be given. If you miss the deadlines twice, you will be subject to a failing grade.

b) ALL ASSIGNMENTS MUST BE TYPED (SIZE 12 FONTS AND 1” MARGINS ALL AROUND), PAGE NUMBERED, AND STAPLED.

\*\*IMPORTANT note on absence during student presentations: All students MUST BE PRESENT for student presentations toward the end of the semester. Each absence during the student presentation classes will incur a 1% course grade reduction.

c) CLASS PARTICIPATION: Keep in mind that we will learn from each other, rather than just from me. You are expected to discuss, give feedback, and support one another’s projects!

d) CHECK YOUR RUTGERS EMAIL TWICE A WEEK (INCLUDING ONCE ON MONDAYS): All announcements will be made through your RUTGERS emails. It is your responsibility to check your RUTGERS email account for updates. Use your RUTGERS account to send any class related emails.

e) USE OF CANVAS: Canvas will be used to post, class documents, assignments, grades, and links to useful websites. Assignments due electronically should be uploaded via Canvas Assignment menu.

The following grading scale will be used for this course:

90-100                                    A

87-89                                      B+

80-86                                      B

77-79                                      C+

70-76                                      C

60-69                                      D

0-59                                        F

Descriptions of Major Assignments

1. HOMEWORK: TOPIC STATEMENT (Submit a hard copy on Blackboard for feedback)

Describe your refined topic in detail. Include in this homework, 1) a working title 2) topic statement, 3) justification of your topic (why is it worthy of investigation?) 4) your tentative research questions or hypotheses, and 5) general ideas of your research design (i.e., type of research, population, some ideas for sample selection, and data collection methods). 2-3 double-spaced pages are expected.

2. HOME WORK: WORKING BIBLIOGRAPHY

A working bibliography is the initial list of books and journal articles you plan to read for your literature review. Through library research, you should compile no less than 12 sources that appear to be most relevant to your topic. To compile a good working bibliography, you must skim through abstracts to evaluate if the source is directly related to your topic. Finding good sources will shape the direction of your literature reviews.

Remember: But this is a “working” bibliography. As a natural part of reading and literature review process, your list of references is likely to be modified. Some sources may turn out to be useless while you may find some new sources. Your research questions also may be modified as your reading progresses. Your references must be scholarly sources (i.e., journal articles or academic books) and the bibliography must follow APA style.

3. ASSIGNMENT #1: LITERATURE REVIEWS WITH REFERENCE LIST

Literature reviews provide an overview of the existing studies on your topic that will situate your own research questions in the field. Literature reviews show how you have arrived at the research questions you are investigating in this study. I expect you to present critical summaries of major issues/questions relevant to your research topic and provide a justification for your research questions/hypotheses. As you review existing studies, try to identify any voids (issues not yet investigated), debates among scholars, conflicting theoretical claims, ways to apply existing studies to different settings/populations, and needs for new data. Once you identify some of these, you will be able to construct your own research questions that will address these needs. Your literature reviews should end with a list of your research questions/hypotheses. Include in this assignment 1) a descriptive title, 2) a draft of introduction (Remember, the introduction of the paper should always be revised after you complete the paper), 3) reviews of existing studies, and 4) a list of your research questions or hypotheses you are investigating in your field research. Approximately 10 pages are expected.

4. ASSIGNMENT #2: METHODS PROPOSAL AND QUESTIONNAIRE (PART I) and IRB FORM AND QUESTIONNAIRE/INTERVIEW GUIDES (Submit as hard copies to on Blackboard and I will submit them to the IRB)

Part I: Methodological proposal is a 3-4 page description of the methodological design of your research. The main contents of the methods proposal include sampling strategy, data collection methods, variables/measures, and limitations of the methods.

5. ASSIGNMENT #3: FIRST DRAFT OF THE FINAL PAPER

You will put together the works you have worked in segment into a draft of the whole paper. The purpose of submitting first draft is to receive my feedback for the completion of the paper. This is a very important process that will greatly improve the quality of your final paper. The first draft of the final paper must have 1) a descriptive title, 2) introduction, 3) complete literature reviews, 4) complete methods sections (NOTE: Methods section is the report of how you conducted your research. Therefore, methods section should be written in the past tense), and 5) a draft of your findings and theoretical discussions. This draft must have at least 85% of the contents of your final paper.

6. ASSIGNMENT #4: COMPLETE PAPER (

The complete research paper should conform to Sociology journal article format and should demonstrate your competence in sociological research and professional writing. The required format (sections) is found in this syllabus page 12. The complete paper must be submitted as electronic copies.

7. ASSIGNMENT #5: POWERPOINT PRESENTATION (In-person presentation plus hardcopy)

Each student is required to make a 10-12 minute PowerPoint presentation of his or her research and Q &A.

THE PROCESS OF SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH

Topic

Theory/Literature Reviews

Reporting Hypotheses

Data Analysis Research Design

Data Collection

REQUIRED FORMAT FOR FINAL PAPER

* Title page
* Abstract (Between 100-200 words)
* Introduction
* Review of the literature
* Methodology
* Data
* Results
* Discussion
* Policy Implications
* Conclusion
* List of references (in APA style format)
* Acknowledgements (if any)
* Appendices (if any)

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.

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/). Contact ODS at (973) 353-5375 or via email at [ods@newark.rutgers.edu](mailto: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) 353-1906 or via email at [TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu](mailto:TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu).

For 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](https://policies.rutgers.edu/1027-currentpdf) 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](mailto: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](https://temporaryconditions.rutgers.edu/).

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) 353-1906 or emailing [TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu](mailto: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>

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](mailto: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](https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?RutgersUniv&layout_id=11) or emailing [careteam@rutgers.edu](mailto: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](mailto:counseling@newark.rutgers.edu) or (973) 353-5805. 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/>, 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.