


RUTGERS School of Criminal Justice

CJ 202:301: Criminal Justice Research Methods

Spring Semester 2025

Tuesday and Thursday 2:30 PM - 3:50 PM

Location: WRN-311

I. Course Information

Instructor Information

Name: Pilar Larroulet, Ph.D.

E-Mail Address: pilar.larroulet@rutgers.edu

Office Hours: Thursday, 12:00-13:00 (Center for Law and Justice, Rm 557) or by appointment

TA Information

Name: Logan Distasio

E-Mail Address: ljd155@scarletmail.rutgers.edu

Course Overview

This course develops the tools needed for conducting research and writing reports and scholarly papers in criminal justice. Students taking this course will become informed consumers of criminological research and gain the tools to conduct their basic research projects. Specific topics include the primacy of design, principles of reliability and validity, sampling, survey preparation, and the differences between, and strengths and detriments of, experimental and quasi- experimental designs.

Prerequisites: None

B.S., Criminal Justice/ B.A., Social Justice Studies 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 Goals

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:

- Describe common methods of social science inquiry.
- Discuss the linkage between research questions and research design.
- Explore major debates about research methods, social science, and ethics in research.
- Understand the attributes, strengths, and weaknesses of various approaches to research.
- Critically evaluate social scientific evidence and research.
- Become better-informed consumers of new reports, political rhetoric, and public discussion about the social world and social scientific research.

Course Requirements and Structure

Students are required to read assigned readings and participate in class discussions in a manner that reflects familiarity with the readings and previous class sessions.

Course materials will be posted on the Canvas learning site including course updates and announcements. Students are required to access the course website regularly to stay informed about any changes. All assignments must be submitted through the Canvas site also. The site address is here:

<https://rutgers.instructure.com/courses/343986>

Required Textbook

The following text is **required** for this course:

Maxfield, M.G. and Babbie, E. (2018). *Research Methods for Criminal Justice and Criminology*. 8th Edition. Cengage Learning. ISBN-13: 978-1-337-09182-4

NOTE: Previous editions of the same text are acceptable and are cheaper, as is the eBook version. However, please note that all specified page numbers and chapters relate to the current edition. Previous editions may also contain slightly different text in certain chapters.

Supplemental reading articles will be assigned and made available to students on Canvas.

II. Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topic	Read BEFORE Class
1	21-Jan	Introduction to Research Methods	-
	23-Jan	Science and CJ Research	Chapter 1
2	28-Jan	Science and CJ Research	Bačák, V., Lageson, S. E., & Powell, K. (2020). "Fighting the Good Fight": Why Do Public Defenders Remain on the Job? <i>Criminal Justice Policy Review</i> , 31(6), 939-961.
	30-Jan	Theory, Concepts and Questions	Chapter 2
3	4-Feb	Theory, Concepts and Questions	
	6-Feb	Theory, Concepts and Questions	Hashimi, S., Wakefield, S., & Apel, R. (2021). Sibling Transmission of Gang Involvement. <i>Journal</i>

			<i>of Research in Crime and Delinquency</i> , 58(5), 507-544.
4	11-Feb	Research Ethics	Chapter 3 Wooten, T. (2022). "If it don't kill you, it'll take away your life": Survival strategies and isolation in a long-running gun conflict. <i>Criminology</i> , 60(4), 581-605. READ: Introduction and Section 3.1 Ethnography.
	13-Feb	<i>Workshop 1: from a topic to a question</i>	
	16-Feb	Research Task 1: Topic, justification, and research question	
5	18-Feb	Operationalization and Measurement	Chapter 5
	20-Feb		Lee, J. G., Gillespie, L. K., Slocum, L. A., & Simpson, S. S. (2020). Better together? Intimate partner effects on offending women. <i>Journal of Developmental and Life-Course Criminology</i> , 6, 499-523. READ: Introduction, Present Study, Dependent and Independent Variables.
6	25-Feb	General Issues in Research Design	Chapter 4
	27-Feb		Beck, B., & Holder, E. (2022). Proximity and police departments: spatial dynamics of the misdemeanor arrest decline. <i>Socius</i> , 8. Geller, A., & Fagan, J. (2019). Police contact and the legal socialization of urban teens. <i>RSF: The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences</i> , 5(1), 26-49. READ: Introduction and Methods/Data and Analytic Strategy
7	4-Mar	Validity and reliability in research	
	6-Mar	Experiments	Chapter 7
8	11-Mar	EXAM I	
	13-Mar	Reading Research and Building a Literature Review	Dr. Rubin's guide (Canvas) The research process in 7 steps: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OSsgH0FqWg4
March 17-March-21 SPRING BREAK			
9	25-Mar	<i>Workshop 2: Reading Research</i>	
	27-Mar	Sampling	Chapter 8
	30-Mar	Research Task 2: Summary of research articles	
10	1-Apr	Intro to type of data/modes of observation	Lindsay, S. L. (2022). Damned if you do, damned if you don't: How formerly incarcerated men navigate the labor market with prison credentials. <i>Criminology</i> , 60(3), 455-479. Apel, R., & Sweeten, G. (2010). The impact of

			incarceration on employment during the transition to adulthood. <i>Social Problems</i> , 57(3), 448-479. READ: Introduction, Methods, Discussion
	3-Apr	Administrative data	Chapter 12
11	8-Apr	Survey design	Chapter 9
	10-Apr	Survey design	
12	15-Apr	Focus groups	Chapter 10
	17-Apr	Interviews	
13	22-Apr	Ethnography	Chapter 11
	24-Apr	<i>Workshop 3: Building a research Plan</i>	
14	29-Apr	Review-Catch up day	
	1-May	EXAM II	
	9-May	Research Task 3: Research Plan	

III. Course Assessment and Grading

In-class Exam (2 exams worth 150 points each, 30% of final grade)

Students are required to complete two exams throughout the semester (not cumulative). The exams will be comprised of multiple choice, true/false questions, and short essay questions that cover the lectures and required materials for the course.

Attendance and Participation (300 points, 30% of final grade)

Each week, students are required to attend and actively participate in the course meetings. It is recommended that students complete all required reading prior to class in order to have an informed discussion on the materials. It is important to know that these 30% are given not only for attendance but also for mental participation. Specifically, this grade will be based on the exercises and activities we will do during classes, and that you will need to submit through Canvas at the end of the session. No assignments will be accepted through email, or by those who did not attend the class. Throughout the semester, we will have at least six different exercises and three workshops, all of which require coming to class prepared with the assigned material. The exercises will be based on class material and readings, while the workshops will be focused on your Research Tasks.

Exercises done in class cannot be rescheduled. So, if you fail to come to class, you will get a zero in the exercise. However, we all know that sometimes things come up: illness, childcare problems, or other emergencies could happen. That's why, at the end of the semester, I will drop out the two activities with your lowest grade (even if it's zero).

Research Proposal Tasks (40% of final grade)

You will be required to complete three assignments that are key steps in building a research proposal.

- Task 1: Topic, justification, and research question (100 points, 10%)
- Task 2: Research articles summaries (150 points, 15%)
- Task 3: Research plan (150 points, 15%)

Specific instructions for each assignment will be distributed through Canvas. The completed Tasks will be submitted through Canvas, by 11:59 on the assigned day. No assignments will be accepted through email.

Grading

Your course grade will be determined by the following weights:

Assignment	Raw Points	% Final Grade	Due Date
Exam 1	150	15%	March 11 th
Exam 2	150	15%	May 1 st
In-class exercises	300	30%	Ongoing
RP Task 1 (Question)	100	10%	Feb 16 th
RP Task 2 (Articles)	150	15%	March 30 th
RP Task 3 (Research Plan)	150	15%	May 9 th
TOTAL	1,000	100%	

The following grading scale will be used for this course:

A	Outstanding	4.0	90-100%
B+		3.5	87-89%
B	Good	3.0	80-86%
C+		2.5	77-79%
C	Satisfactory	2.0	70-76%
D	Poor	1.0	60-69%
F	Failure	0.0	<60%

Note: Rutgers University–Newark Undergraduate Schools do not give out "minus" grades (such as "A-" or "B-"). A grade of C or better is usually required for Major or Minor courses, while General Requirement courses must be passed with a D or better. More details here: <https://myrun.newark.rutgers.edu/viewing-grades>

Late or Missing Assignment Policy

All assignments must be submitted on the dates outlined above. I understand that extenuating circumstances and emergencies do happen. So, with that in mind: for each research proposal tasks, each student/group is granted **one** 48-hour extension, no questions asked. There is a catch – **you must notify me and Logan prior** to the deadline (even if that means sending me an email at 11:58 PM when it is due at midnight). Late assignments will be penalized 5% per day or portion of day late.

If you have a problem on the day of an exam, email me **immediately** (i.e., BEFORE the exam). Makeup exams will only be given in cases of excused absences which always require 1) prior written notice to the start of the exam and 2) documentation to determine if your absence was excused. Travel plans are not valid reasons for needing to reschedule an exam. Rescheduled exams may not be identical to those offered during the primary exam period but will be similar in content and structure.

As already stated, **exercises done in class cannot be rescheduled**, but I will drop the worst two in-class exercises, which include getting 0 points for not being there. However, if you are failing to

show up in more than one class, please reach out to me in person or via email. Overall, be sure to keep up with the course as it progresses: **Your grade is non-negotiable at the end of the semester.**

Grade Disputes

If you have a concern about a grade on an exam or assignment and believe that I should review it, you must submit a written request over email that describes your concern in detail. Upon receiving your email, I may ask you to meet with me in person to further discuss your concern. You have **three days** after the assignment/exam grade is posted to submit a grade dispute.

IV. Course Policies

Classroom Rules

Please be respectful to other students while engaging in discussion of our course materials – read carefully and respond thoughtfully with supporting evidence from our course materials.

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.

General University information

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:

Disabilities: As stated in the Manual for Students and Coordinators of Services for Students with Disabilities (<http://disabilityservices.rutgers.edu/docs/studentmanual.pdf>), 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.” Students with disabilities should review the manual.

The Office of Disability Services (ODS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate **accommodations** for students who encounter barriers due to disability. Once a student has completed the ODS process (registration, initial appointment, and submitted documentation) and reasonable accommodations are determined to be necessary and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be provided. The LOA must be given to each course instructor by the student and followed up with a discussion. This should be done as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found at ods.rutgers.edu. Contact ODS at (973)353-5375, via email atods@newark.rutgers.edu or by contact the Student Disability Coordinator, Nelitha Wilson-Michael (nmichael@andromeda.rutgers.edu; 973-353-5300), who is located in room 352 in the Robeson Campus Center.

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.

Pregnancy: 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.

Absence Verification: The Office of the Dean of Students can provide assistance for absences related to religious observance, emergency or unavoidable conflict (e.g., illness, personal or family emergency, etc.). Students should refer to University Policy 10.2.7 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.

Temporary conditions/injuries: The Office of the Dean of Students can assist students who are experiencing a temporary condition or injury (e.g., 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>.

English as a Second Language (ESL): The Program in American Language Studies (PALS) can support students experiencing difficulty in courses due to English as a Second Language (ESL) and can be reached by emailing PALS@newark.rutgers.edu to discuss potential support.

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. Incidents may also be reported by using the following link: tinyurl.com/RUNReportingForm. For more information, students should refer to the University's Student Policy Prohibiting Sexual Harassment, Sexual Violence, Relationship Violence, Stalking and Related Misconduct located at <http://compliance.rutgers.edu/title-ix/about-title-ix/title-ix-policies/>.

Interpersonal violence: The Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance can provide any student with confidential support. The office is a confidential resource and does not have an obligation to report information to the University's Title IX Coordinator. Students can contact the office by calling (973) 353-1918 or emailing run.vpva@rutgers.edu. There is also a confidential text-based line available to students; students can text (973) 339-0734 for support.

Crisis and Concerns: The Campus Awareness Response and Education (CARE) Team works with students in crisis to develop a support plan to address personal situations that might impact their academic performance. Students, faculty and staff may contact the CARE Team by using the following link: tinyurl.com/RUNCARE or emailing careteam@rutgers.edu.

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. If you are not quite ready to make an appointment with a therapist but are interested in self-help, check out TAO at Rutgers-Newark for an easy, web-based approach to self-care and support: <https://tinyurl.com/RUN-TAO>.

Emergencies: Call 911 or contact Rutgers University Police Department (RUPD) by calling (973) 353-5111.

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/>

Follow us, to stay up to date! @SCJ_apps