2024FA - CJ RESEARCH METHODS 47:202:301:90
Instructor: Dr. Sara Wakefield
(NOTE: Canvas does not allow for easy export of course webpages. The material below does not include working links but you they are available on the Canvas course page.)

CRIMINAL JUSTICE RESEARCH METHODS

Welcome!

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 chronologically and within a specific time frame but you'll be able to do so in a way that 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 ⤳ 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." You will have 12 days to complete the first two modules to understand how the course operates. The first module is simply the "syllabus" and you must make your way through all of it. The second module will look more like a typical module in the course. Please reach out to us if you have any difficulties or questions; we've given you a longer time window for the first two modules to address any issues that may come up.

After the first two modules, one module will be due every week, but I release them two weeks before the due date so that you can decide your own pacing.

All modules are due at 11:59pm on Sunday nights, though you can submit assignments in open modules anytime you like before the due date. Each module has several components and you need to complete all of them by the due date. I do not offer extensions on any modules or assignments (see more about this in the Course Description and Grading pages).

Your first two modules are due <u>Sunday September 15th at 11:59pm</u>.

Module 1 is the syllabus and includes a syllabus quiz, a getting-to-know-you survey, and a practice assignment on Perusall (the platform we will be using to engage the reading material). 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 complete your first group reading assignment **for practice** on Perusall (you'll find more details on Perusall as you move through these initial course 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 and how social scientists think about research,
- complete a short response to the video you watched.

To start Module 1, click on "About Your Teacher" below. You'll find bios on the professor and teaching assistant along with 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 three assignments (a syllabus quiz, an introductory survey, and a practice 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 September 15th.

Welcome to research methods!

About Your Teacher

Professor

Dr. Sara Wakefield is Professor and PhD Program Director in the School of Criminal Justice at Rutgers University, Newark and a Graduate Affiliate Faculty Member in the Department of Sociology at Rutgers University, New Brunswick. She received her Ph.D. from the Department of Sociology at the University of Minnesota. 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, a series of team-based projects that provide original data on the consequences of contact with the criminal legal system that are not easily captured in available datasets ([PINS], [WO-PINS], and [FamHIS]) and 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]. Her current work is focused on sibling overlap in crime, punishment, and the consequences of criminal legal system contact. Dr. Wakefield teaches courses on research design (undergraduate and doctoral), mixed methods (doctoral), and criminal justice and inequality.

Teaching Assistant

Raven Lewis is a doctoral student at the School of Criminal Justice.

Contact Information/How To Get Help

Email

Click on "Inbox," select the instructor or teaching assistant and we'll reply as soon as we can. Please allow at least 24 hours for a response, in keeping with [SCJ's email policy] .

Drop-In Student Hours

The TA and Instructor will offer drop-in hours at variable times each week. Check the Calendar on Canvas and click "Find An Appointment" for available drop-in hours each week as they will vary by format and location. You can also check the "Syllabus" link on your left and see a list of available drop in hours. Simply sign up and arrive at your appointment on time so all students can be accommodated.

If you sign up for an appointment and cannot make it, PLEASE cancel it. If you don't, you'll be taking up a spot another student could use and your instructor/TA will be sitting on Zoom wondering where you are.

Individual Appointments

If you 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.

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 is set up. '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.

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 so the complexity gets lost, uses weak evidence to make strong claims, or is just 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

CANVAS → MODULES → READ: Perusall → LISTEN/WATCH: Podcasts/Videos → DO: Assignments, Quizzes
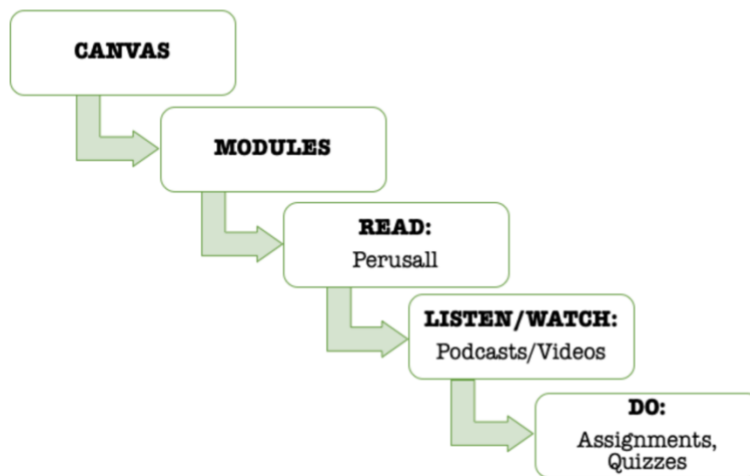
1. Canvas

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 .

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 roughly two weeks in advance of the course cadence and you'll have about one due per week). You must complete them in order as many of them build on each other.

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, 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 and your textbook is open access. Annotations must be completed on Perusall but you may download your own copy of the textbook here ⤴.
- **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.
- Your annotations **MUST BE YOUR OWN REFLECTIONS IN YOUR OWN WORDS**. **Don't copy and paste material from other sources without attribution.** It prevents you from learning and, when offered without citation, constitutes plagiarism and academic misconduct. We spot-check annotations every week and students who are caught plagiarizing annotations will receive a zero on all assignments and all prior assignments will be reviewed and adjusted accordingly.
- **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 assignment-specific link in Canvas to access each assignment.**

You can learn about Perusall [here](#) 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). If you have an emergency that takes you away from the class for more than two modules, please contact the Professor or TA to discuss a solution.
- All assignments are due on their due date. To receive full credit, you must complete all tasks within each module within a specific time window (modules are typically available for two weeks).

Grading.

- I compute a total point score for each student. I then evaluate students who are just above and just below the cutpoints and make adjustments. This is a form of setting a curve that will only improve your grade.
- Students who complete all assignments and readings **adequately** and participate actively on Perusall can expect to receive a grade of B- or better.
- I do not respond to requests for grade changes unless they involve a calculation error once the final assignment has been submitted. This is so that grades are not based on who has the courage to approach a professor to ask and who does not. However, if you see a clear error, tell me before the end of the semester.

Respect, Courtesy, and Support

- Behaving inconsiderately or rudely, especially to teaching assistants who work hard, have other obligations, and are paid very little is ill-advised.
- Treat your peers well. You have no idea what anyone else is going through, so let's support one another.
- Our class goal is to forgive mistakes quickly and offer grace and patience to one another.
- You can also expect your instructor and TA to hold themselves to these standards.

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.

Plagiarism, Academic Misconduct, and AI Tools

Plagiarism, Academic Misconduct, and AI-Assistance. Your Perusall annotations and all Canvas assignments must include your own reflections in your own words, with all sources clearly cited. Do not cut and paste responses from outside sources into Perusall without citation (Perusall will flag them). We spot-check annotations for a portion of the class every week and will re-evaluate all assignments from any student caught using another person's words as their own.

Use of outside sources <u>without attribution</u> (e.g., Wikipedia, Quora, Course Hero, ChatGPT, Bard, etc.) will result in a failing grade in the course.

- Your responsibility is to disclose fully and clearly every source you used to complete your assignments and submit work that reflects your ideas, regardless of the sources you consult.
- My responsibility is to grade your submissions carefully in light of those disclosures.
- Failure to clearly and fully disclose materials that informed your work will result in a failing grade in the course.

You can read more about Rutgers student conduct policies <u>here</u> ⬓. If correctly citing sources is confusing to you, please contact the TA for guidance (it was confusing to me as an undergraduate; we're here to help!).

<u>A Specific Warning About AI for Research Methods:</u>

You should be aware that AI tools are still developing and highly prone to error, especially regarding research methods.

Researchers have found that they include many errors, routinely make up fake citations, and mischaracterize research studies. I used ChatGPT to complete the final assignment in this course, and it made the same errors repeatedly. I am thus likely to spot it if you use it without attribution and you should be aware that it makes things up (↻ <u>see an annotated example when I asked it to do a lit review for a series of papers I am currently writing</u> ⬇ 🖼). You should use extreme caution when using AI to analyze research methods as it will often tell you things that aren't right or outright lie.

If you choose to use AI to assist you in your work despite these warnings, you must cite the sources and tools you used by listing prompts and material produced so I can easily tell where AI stops and your brain begins. I will only grade you on where your brain begins.

Required Readings

1. *PRINCIPLES OF SOCIOLOGICAL INQUIRY -QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE METHODS (Open-Access)*

This is a fairly standard social science methods textbook (they're all pretty much the same). I chose this one because it is available open-access and free to all students.

It has a downside. It references sociology rather than criminology a lot. Sociology (and psychology) have been much better than criminology at building open-access resources for research methods students. I could not find a high-quality social science methods text that is both free to you and grounded in criminology. Happily, it doesn't matter as sociology and criminology use the same methods and research designs. Whenever you read the word "sociology," feel free to insert "criminology" in your head; it will change nothing about the lesson.

While you must complete annotations on Perusall to receive a grade for engaging the readings, you may <u>download the textbook</u> ⬓ if you prefer to print it out and add your annotations on Perusall later. Perusall also offers <u>a variety of settings</u> ⬓ to curate how you access the book (read-aloud, dyslexia settings, etc.).

2. Additional readings will be provided free of charge on Perusall. These readings will include journal articles and supplementary sources to the text.

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 graded 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 or roughly one entire module without it changing your grade. **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 and evaluating a piece of research. We'll release a full description of this assignment later in the course, but you'll have several choices for completing it. The final assignment cannot count as a dropped assignment.
- *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 offer extra credit opportunities, the work will be used to evaluate students who "just miss" a higher grade and will not replace a module assignment or final paper.

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 to be successful. I am _always_ available to discuss how we can better support you in this class, and Rutgers University provides additional sources of support listed below.

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) ⤷. 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 ⤷ Students requesting a letter of verification should submit information using the following link: https://go.rutgers.edu/Verification ⤷.

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 ⤷.

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. Incidents may also be reported by using the following link: https://go.rutgers.edu/RUNReportingForm ⤷.

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: https://go.rutgers.edu/RUNReportingForm ⤷ or emailing careteam@newark.rutgers.edu.

For Psychological Support (Stress, Mood, Family Issues, Substance Use concerns and other personal challenges): The Rutgers University-Newark Counseling Center provides individual therapy and support groups for students dealing with psychological issues. To schedule an appointment, email counseling@newark.rutgers.edu or call (973) 353-5805. Additional support is available through Uwill services:

- Uhelp: Crisis support at 833-646-1526 (available 24/7/365).
- Urise: Wellness-based video collection with a free account.
- Umatch: Teletherapy with flexible scheduling, starting with a free account.

Access Uwill@RUN at https://my.rutgers.edu using your netid. Services are confidential and free.

For emergencies, call 911 or Rutgers University Police Department at (973) 353-5111.