

Research Methods in Criminal Justice
CJUS 4700.002
Spring, 2008



Course Information:

Tuesdays & Thursdays
11:00 a.m. – 12:20 p.m.
Spring, 2008:
January 14th – May 9th
Location: Language Bldg., Room 316

Professor Information:

Dr. Ashley Blackburn
Office: Chilton Hall #273E
Telephone: (940) 369-7682
Email: Blackburn@pacs.unt.edu
Office Hours:
Tuesdays, 2:30-4:30 p.m.
Wednesdays, 2:00-4:00 p.m.
or by appointment

TEXTBOOK:

The assigned text listed below is required for all students enrolled in this class. Reading assignments are noted in the Course Calendar. All students are expected to read the assigned chapters prior to the date specified in the Course Calendar. The assigned readings will serve as a foundation for the discussion of issues in class as well as examination material. Recommended readings are for those students who want to go “above and beyond” in attaining knowledge about methods of research. These are optional, not required, readings for those students who are so inclined.

Required Readings:

Hagan, Frank E. (2006). *Research Methods in Criminal Justice and Criminology* (7th Ed.).
Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Recommended Readings:

Bachman, R. & Schutt, R. (2007). *The Practice of Research in Criminology and Criminal Justice* (3rd Ed.). Los Angeles: Sage Publications.

Pope, C., Lovell, R. & Brandl, S. (2001). *Voices from the Field: Readings in Criminal Justice Research*.
Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning.

Miller, J.M. & Tewksbury, R. (2001). *Extreme Methods: Innovative Approaches to Social Science Research*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Hesse-Biber, S.N. & Leavy, P. (Eds). (2006). *Emergent Methods in Social Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course examines research methodology in criminal justice. Special emphasis is placed on methods and techniques for conducting research in criminal justice, including the relationship between theory and research, the nature of causation, research designs and techniques, conceptualization and measurement, operationalization, sampling, and ethical issues.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

Upon successful completion of the course students should be able to:

- ✓ Understand and discuss the importance of being good purveyors, as well as good consumers, of academic research.
- ✓ Understand and discuss the importance of good academic writing skills and how this applies to all areas of criminal justice, not only to academic criminal justice research.
- ✓ Understand and discuss the historical development of social science research, the general steps of the criminal justice empirical research process, the difference between qualitative and quantitative research, as well as examples of research conducted throughout the field of criminal justice.
- ✓ Understand and discuss ethical considerations when conducting academic research including, but not limited to, the researcher's role, ethics and professionalism, confidentiality procedures, and human subjects approval.
- ✓ Understand and discuss the experimental model of research design and its variations as well as causality and validity as related to research design and methods.
- ✓ Understand and discuss data gathering strategies for academic research including social surveys, participant observation, life histories, case studies, and the FBI's Uniform Crime Reports (UCR).
- ✓ Understand and discuss sampling procedure and self-report survey questionnaire construction as relates to mail surveys, internet surveys, face-to-face interviews, and telephone surveys.
- ✓ Understand and discuss victim surveys in criminal justice including the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), a comparison of the NCVS, the UCR, and self-report surveys, and problems/benefits associated with victim surveys.
- ✓ Understand and discuss the process of participant observation and case studies in relation to criminal justice research.
- ✓ Understand and discuss unobtrusive measures in criminal justice research including secondary data analysis and the use of official statistics.
- ✓ Understand and discuss in detail the concepts of validity and reliability as relates to criminal justice research.
- ✓ Understand and discuss the process of scaling and index construction in relation to measurements of attitudes, crime seriousness, and behavior prediction.
- ✓ Understand and discuss the nature of policy analysis and evaluation research as relates to the criminal justice field.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

The following section lists the required components of this course as well as the points that may be earned toward the final course grade for each component.

Readings:

Students should follow the schedule of reading assignments found on the Course Calendar. The reading assignments need to be read *before* you come to class. This will not only facilitate class discussion, but will also allow you time to formulate questions as we go over the material in class. In addition to the required text, the course will utilize video presentations and additional handouts that concern issues pertinent to research methodology. Information from all sources (textbook, lectures, video presentations, handouts, guest speakers) may be included on course examinations.

Class Exercises

Throughout the course of the semester, there will be five exercises to be completed both inside and outside of class based on course material. Each of these exercises will be worth 10 points towards your final grade. Instruction sheets for these exercises will be handed out by the professor on the day the exercise is assigned. See Course Calendar for the days which these exercises will be assigned/due to be turned in.

My policy on late work: Late exercises will be accepted up to five business days after the due date. However, each day the assignment is late, 2 points will be deducted. Therefore, if the assignment is worth 10 points, once five business days have past, the assignment is worth 0 points.

In-Class Examinations:

There will be (3) in-class exams covering lecture material, the assigned textbook readings, any handouts, and any films shown in class. The final exam will serve as the last of these (3) exams and will not be cumulative. These exams will consist of multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, matching and/or discussion/short answer items and will be completed using a Scantron form provided by the professor. Students should bring a #2 pencil to class on test days. The professor will provide paper for the short answer questions. Please refer to the Course Calendar for the dates of these exams.

****Make-up examinations will only be given in the event of unforeseen emergency circumstances. I must be notified immediately (before class) of these circumstances, and may request documentation of these circumstances. Notification includes, an e-mail, a phone call or message, or a meeting before that class period begins. I also reserve the right to schedule the time and date of the make-up examination at her complete discretion, including during the final week of the term. Further, the make-up examination may be different than the one given in class. In sum, you need to notify me before the examination if you will miss it, not after, and I will decide when and if you can take a make-up examination, not you.**

Research Proposal:

Each student or group (this assignment can be completed individually or in a group with two or three members maximum) will be required to complete an original research proposal. The proposal will be worth up to 100 points towards your final grade. The requirements and instruction for this assignment can be found on the attached page entitled, *Research Proposal*. The due date for the research proposal can be found on the Course Calendar.

TurnItIn.com: TurnItIn.com, a software program, will be used to check written assignments for plagiarism. Each student will be required to turn in both a hard copy (paper) and an electronic version (e-mail or disk) of their research proposal. Please review UNT's Code of Student Conduct and see the professor if you have any further questions as to what academic dishonesty entails and the possible consequences if caught.

GRADE BREAKDOWN:

Test 1	100 points
Test 2	100 points
Test 3	100 points
Exercises (5 x 10 points)	50 points
Research Proposal	<u>100 points</u>
Total	450 points

Final Grade Scale

405 – 450 = A

360 – 404 = B

315 – 359 = C

270 – 314 = D

0 – 269 = F

EXTRA CREDIT:

There *may be* an extra credit assignment given to earn extra points for the semester. This will be up to the professor to decide and, if given, will be available to the entire class, not on an individual basis. However, if you attend each class meeting and keep up with the material, you will not need extra credit.

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

The professor expects that each student regularly and promptly attends class sessions. Attendance will be taken by the professor at some point during each class meeting. Students are allowed a maximum of four absences during the semester. ***There are no excused/unexcused absences. You get four; use them for whatever you feel appropriate.*** If you have more than four absences, the professor reserves the right to reduce your final grade by ten points for every absence after the four allowed. A student who is absent from a class session is responsible for the subject matter discussed during that particular session. It will be extremely difficult for you to obtain an acceptable grade in this course if you consistently miss class.

ACADEMIC HONESTY:

It is expected that each student will do his/her own work. Cheating, including plagiarism, on any assignment will result in a zero for that assignment. This is criminal justice, how could anyone even contemplate cheating when you are studying to work in a system based on trust and honor? All students are **urged** to read the UNT Code of Student Conduct located in the *UNT Policy Manual*. Academic dishonesty will be handled on a case-by-case basis with the final disposition being at the discretion of the professor.

A GRADE OF “INCOMPLETE”

I – Incomplete; a non-punitive grade given only during the last one-fourth of a semester and only if a student (1) is passing the course; (2) has justifiable reason (medical or other emergency circumstance) why the work cannot be completed on a schedule; and (3) arranges with the professor before the end of the semester to finish the course at a later date by completing specific requirements that the professor must list on the grade sheet. All work in the course must be completed within the specified time (not to exceed one year after taking the course). If you do not meet the specifications for this grade, you will need to see the Registrar’s Office about resigning from the University.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY:

My lectures are protected by state and common law and by applicable federal copyright laws. You are not authorized to make any commercial use of them without express prior permission from myself. Persons who do make use of my lecture notes for commercial purposes (i.e. sell your class notes to an internet site or other commercially-related business) will be held legally liable.

ADA STATEMENT:

The Department of Criminal Justice does not discriminate on the basis of an individual’s disability, as required by the American’s with Disabilities Act (ADA). Attempts will be made to accommodate anyone with a documented disability. *Please let me know in advance* of exams or other class requirements so I have enough time to send exams or other materials to ODA. You must provide me with the appropriate exam request forms from ODA prior to the exam in order to take the exam at ODA.

GENERAL CLASSROOM POLICIES:

Cell Phones and Pagers: Please turn all cell phones and pagers to vibrate if you have that setting or silent if you do not. Please do not make a habit of text messaging during class. I understand emergencies arise. If you receive an emergency call that you must take, please leave class immediately and take the call or page.

Laptops: A student may use a laptop or PDA to take notes but the sound must be turned off. If you are using a laptop or other electronic device to take notes, I expect that you will be taking notes, not “surfing” the Internet or working on other course assignments.

Talking During Class: Students should only be talking during class when they are addressing a comment to the class, asking a question, or participating in class discussion. Now, admittedly you will always have one or two things to share with a neighbor or friend in the class. What I am referring to here is engaging in a lengthy conversation or overly loud talking with another person(s) while we are having a class discussion, watching a video, or while I’m lecturing.

Sleeping: Sleeping during class will not be tolerated. If a student is found sleeping, he/she will be asked to leave the classroom immediately. While I understand that you may be extremely tired, laying down and sleeping is not only rude, but distracting.

Children in the Classroom: Due to University policy, liability concerns, and the course material, children are not permitted in this class, no exceptions.

Civility: Students are expected to display tolerance for others’ views and statements given in class. When disagreement occurs, students are to act considerately. All comments and language should be respectful and appropriate for a college community. If you feel you can not act respectfully or appropriately, please exit the classroom and return only when your emotions and language are under control. I understand that every once in awhile a student may need to exit the class early. If you know you will need to leave early, please sit near the door so you do not distract other students when you exit.

Grades: Every semester, at least a couple of students come to my office around **the end** of the semester asking “what can I do to raise my grade?” My policy and statement concerning that question is this:

- If you focus on learning and being responsible (i.e., keeping up with assignments, completing extra credit when given, etc.), your final grade will reflect this.
- I do not give individual extra credit. If and when I offer an extra credit assignment it will be offered to the entire class. I suggest you take advantage of extra credit whenever it is offered.
- Borderline grades will be evaluated on a case by case basis. I will not raise any grades that are not borderline grades. Not all borderline grades will be raised. Grades are not based on how much I like a person. They are based on work and performance, period. The final decision on whether or not to raise a grade is solely at the discretion of the professor.

POSTING GRADES:

As I grade assignments and examinations, I will post the grades on Web CT Vista. You can log on to Web CT Vista to view your grades once I have them entered. Final grades will be posted according to the University schedule. If you ever have a concern about your grade(s) please don’t hesitate to speak with me.

FINAL POINTS:

Please do not hesitate to come to me with any questions, problems, or issues you may have. Do not wait to address these issues until it is too late for you to receive an acceptable grade. I think you will find me to be very approachable and eager to address any problems with you in a professional manner.

COURSE CALENDAR AND TOPICS:

Although we will attempt to adhere to the schedule of topics listed and described below, the course schedule should be viewed as *highly flexible*. I am not interested in covering the material as fast as possible simply for the sake of covering it. Rather, I want to cover the material that we do cover thoroughly, and at a pace that is conducive to *learning* the material instead of simply *covering* the material. Consequently, it is your responsibility to come to class, know where we are in the listing of assigned readings *irrespective of this schedule*, and know the material that we have covered prior to any reading assessment, examination, and/or presentation. Further, there may be additional items added to the calendar throughout the course of the semester (i.e. video presentations and/or handouts). It will be your responsibility to keep up with these as well.

DATE	TOPIC	Readings
Tuesday, January 15, 2008	<i>Introduction to Course</i> Review Syllabus	N/A
Thursday, January 17, 2008	<i>Introduction to CJ Research Methods: Theory & Method</i>	Chapter 1
Tuesday, January 22, 2008	<i>Introduction to CJ Research Methods: Theory & Method</i> Exercise #1 Concepts and Variables (in-class)	Chapter 1
Thursday, January 24, 2008	<i>Ethics in Criminal Justice Research</i> Exercise #2 Human Subjects Certification assigned (to be completed outside class)	Chapter 2
Tuesday, January 29, 2008	<i>Ethics in Criminal Justice Research</i> Exercise #2 Due Video: Milgram Revisited	Chapter 2
Thursday, January 31, 2008	<i>Research Design: The Experimental Model & Its Variations</i>	Chapter 3
Tuesday, February 5, 2008	<i>Research Design: The Experimental Model & Its Variations</i> Review for Test #1	Chapters 1-3
Thursday, February 7, 2008	Test #1	Chapters 1-3
Tuesday, February 12, 2008	Review Test #1 <i>Alternative Data Gathering Strategies</i>	Chapter 4
Thursday, February 14, 2008	<i>Alternative Data Gathering Strategies</i> Exercise #3 IRB Approval (in-class)	Chapter 4
Tuesday, February 19, 2008	Exercise #3 Due <i>Sampling and Survey Research</i>	Chapter 5
Thursday, February 21, 2008	<i>Sampling and Survey Research</i> Exercise #4 Sampling and Survey Research (in-class)	Chapter 5
Tuesday, February 26, 2008	Exercise #4 Due	Chapter 6
Thursday, February 28, 2008	<i>Interviews and Telephone Surveys</i>	Chapter 6
Tuesday, March 4, 2008	<i>Participant Observation & Case Studies</i>	Chapter 7
Thursday, March 6, 2008	<i>Participant Observation & Case Studies</i> Review for Test #2	Chapter 7
Tuesday, March 11, 2008	Test #2	Chapters 4-7
Thursday, March 13, 2008	Video: Quiet Rage: The Stanford Prison Experiment	N/A
Tuesday, March 18, 2008	<i>Spring Break</i>	N/A
Thursday, March 20, 2008	<i>Spring Break</i>	N/A

Tuesday, March 25, 2008	Review Test #2 Discuss <i>Quiet Rage: The Stanford Prison Experiment</i> Extra credit assigned	
Thursday, March 27, 2008	Library day to complete extra credit assignment	N/A
Tuesday, April 1, 2008	Unobtrusive Measures	Chapter 8
Thursday, April 3, 2008	Unobtrusive Measures **Research Proposals Due**	Chapter 8
Tuesday, April 8, 2008	Validity and Reliability	Chapter 9
Thursday, April 10, 2008	Validity and Reliability Exercise #5 groups assigned and research distributed	Chapter 9
Tuesday, April 15, 2008	Exercise #5 Research Critique (in-class)	
Thursday, April 17, 2008	Scaling and Index Construction	Chapter 10
Tuesday, April 22, 2008	Scaling and Index Construction	Chapter 10
Thursday, April 24, 2008	Policy Analysis and Evaluation Research	Chapter 11
Tuesday, April 29, 2008	Policy Analysis and Evaluation Research	Chapter 11
Thursday, May 1, 2008	Review for Test #3	Chapters 8-11
Tuesday, May 6, 2008	Test #3 (Final Exam) 10:30-12:30 Language Bldg., Room 316	Chapters 8-11

Research Proposal Instructions

Requirements:

- Work must be 8 -10 pages typed/word processed, on standard paper with 1.25" margins and a cover page (with paper title, your name, instructor's name, course name and number and semester). Be sure to paginate the paper and have a reference page containing the APA citations for works cited in your proposal (see section entitled Referencing).
- Along with a hard (paper) copy, students must also turn in to the instructor an electronic version of their proposal. This can be completed in two ways. Students can either e-mail a copy of the proposal as an attachment to the instructor by 11:00 a.m. on April 3, 2008 or turn in a copy of the analysis on compact disc or floppy disk along with the hard copy at class time on the due date.
- Students will need to adhere to the deadline. Early assignments will be accepted, however, **NO proposals will be taken after 11:00 am on April 3, 2008.**

Instruction:

(Please also refer to Appendix A: *How to Write a Research Report* on page 442 of the textbook).

Step I. Choose a topic of interest to you in the field of criminology/criminal justice. You may wish to consult old course textbooks, the library, or the internet for ideas.

Step II. Formulate a research problem you would be interested in studying.

Step III. Research your topic thoroughly. Specifically look to see if there have been any research studies already completed in that area and use those as a reference.

Step IV. Begin writing. There will be four sections to your research proposal:

- 1) Introduction and Statement of the Research Problem
- 2) Literature Review
- 3) Proposed Methodology
- 4) Conclusion

The introduction and statement of the research problem should be 1-2 pages in length and should introduce the reader to the overall goals of your proposed research. The literature review will be approximately 3-5 pages in length and should include a compilation of all the research that has been completed on your topic up to this point in time. The proposed methodology section will be 3-5 pages and should discuss how you plan to go about researching your topic. Included in your methodology section should be your theoretical reference (if any), your research questions and hypotheses, your variables, your research design, the population of interest, your sample and sampling procedures, and your data collection strategies. Finally the conclusion should be a discussion of what you expect to find in your research and how these findings will enhance the current collection of criminal justice research. Please refer to Appendix A: *How to Write a Research Report* on page 442 of the textbook for more lengthy explanations on what should be included in the sections of a research report.

General Writing Tips:

See Academic Writing Handout for general writing tips. Also, when doing research, watch out for junk websites. For example, NEVER cite Wikipedia or the like. It is always best to use primary sources (books, journal articles, etc.).

Referencing:

Referencing will be especially important when completing your literature review. When you use another author's thoughts or words (even if put into your own words) you will need to cite that original author. This can be done two ways in the text by using the author's name and date the work was published. When using a direct quote, you must use quotation marks and insert the page number. Try to avoid using direct quotes. If possible, it is always better to put the thought into your own words and then cite the original author for the idea.

Examples of in-text citations:

- 1) According to Johnson and Kinsey (1900) the earth is round.
- 2) As has been proven, the earth is round (Edwards, Murray & Eastham, 2006; Johnson & Kinsey, 1900; Longman, 1945).
- 3) As has been stated before "the earth is most definitely round" (Johnson & Kinsey, 1990, pg. 45).

When you are finished writing, you will need to put together a reference page including all of the sources you cited throughout your paper. What follows are examples of how to cite certain types of text. If you have a source that is not listed here, please refer to the American Psychological Association's (APA) Publication Manual or their website: www.APAStyle.org.

Examples of reference page citations:

Book:

Heffernan, E. (1972). *Making it in prison: The square, the cool, and the life*. New York: Wiley-Interscience.

Chapter in an Edited Book:

Conte, J. (1986). Sexual abuse and the family: A critical analysis. In T. Trepper & M. Barrett (Eds.), *Treating incest: A multiple systems perspective* (pp. 113-126), New York: Haworth Press.

Journal Article:

Alarid, L. (2000). Sexual assault and coercion among incarcerated women prisoners: Excerpts from prison letters. *The Prison Journal*, 80(4), 391-406.

Newspaper Article:

Di Rado, A. (1995, March 15). Trekking through college: Classes explore modern society using the world of Star Trek. *Los Angeles Times*, p. A3.

Government Report:

Beck, A. & Harrison, P. (2006). *Bureau of Justice Statistics, Prison Rape Elimination Act of 2003: Sexual violence reported by correctional authorities, 2005* (NCJ 214646). Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Encyclopedia Article:

Sturgeon, T. (1995). Science fiction. In *The encyclopedia Americana* (Vol. 24, pp. 390-392). Danbury, CT: Grolier.

ERIC Document:

Fuss-Reineck, M. (1993). *Sibling communication in Star Trek: The next generation: Conflicts between brothers*. Miami, FL: Annual Meeting of the Speech Communication Association. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 364932).

Website:

Lynch, T. (1996). *DS9 trials and tribble-ations review*. Retrieved October 8, 2005, from Psi Phi Bradley's Science Fiction Club Website: <http://www.bradley.edu/campusorg/psiphi/DS/ep/503r.html>.

Some other tips:

- **Singlespace** all lines and skip a line in between each reference.
- Arrange the items on your reference list **alphabetically** by **author**, interfiling books, articles, etc.
- Indent the second and following lines 5 to 7 spaces or one half inch.
- Use only the initials of the authors' first (and middle) names.
- If no author is given, start with the title and then the date.
- **Article titles** and **book titles**: capitalize only the first word of the title and subtitle. (Capitalize all significant words of **periodical titles**.)
- **Magazine articles**: include the month (and day) as shown under "Newspapers".
- **Websites**: if the date the page was created is not given, use **(n.d.)**.

(Some examples and tips listed here were taken from: www.liu.edu/CWIS/CWP/library/workshop/citapa.htm).

Please feel free to e-mail me (Blackburn@pacs.unt.edu) or see me during office hours if you have any questions.

Student Information Sheet and Syllabus Contract
Research Methods in Criminal Justice – CJUS 4700.002
Spring, 2008
Dr. Ashley Blackburn

Please fill in the following information, read the text below and sign where indicated. Turn this in before leaving the classroom.

Student Name: _____

Student E-mail Address: _____

Other Method of Contact (in case you do not often check your e-mail address):

Major and Minor Disciplines: _____

Classification: _____

Hometown and State: _____

Career Aspiration: _____

Why did you enroll in this course? _____

I have received a copy of the syllabus for this course, Research Methods in Criminal Justice (CJUS 4700.002). I understand that this course meets Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11:00 am until 12:20 am in Room 316 of the Language Building on the UNT Denton Campus.

I have read the syllabus and understand what is expected of me to pass this course. I understand that if an emergency arises throughout the course of the semester, I am to contact the professor immediately to discuss what actions need to be taken to complete or withdraw from the course. I also understand that I can speak to the professor throughout the semester either after/before class or during office hours concerning my progress in the course.

Signature of Student

Date