Syllabus for Research Methods in Criminal Justice  
CRIJ 4345, Spring 2012

Instructor: Kristen Welch  
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Class Hours: TR, 2:00 p.m.-3:15 p.m.  
Classroom: TBD  
Office Hours: T/R 3:30-5; W 2-4 p.m., or by appointment

REQUIRED READINGS


Any handouts provided or assigned by the instructor and independent readings.

RECOMMENDED READING


COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to help students gain a working understanding of the research process with direct application to criminal justice research. Attention will focus on various aspects of the research process including quantitative and qualitative methods. Students will complete literature reviews, create research proposals, conduct observations/interviews, and construct surveys in addition to various assignments and activities. Prerequisite: CRIJ 1301 or CRIJ 1313.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES & OUTCOMES

The course objectives are:

1. To improve students’ basic understanding of research methods and familiarize them with key concepts and terminology in the field.
2. To provide students with an overview of the fundamentals in research methods.
3. To encourage and assist students to become competent and discerning consumers of research by expanding their interest and ability to read and fully comprehend scholarly, journal articles in the field.
**Learning Outcomes** - By the end of the course, *the student* should be able to:

1. Discuss basic concepts and terminology in research methods
2. Explain the research process, research designs, and methods used in social sciences,
3. Process and discuss professional literature in the field of criminal justice and criminology, while identifying scholarly sources and determining the quality of the articles based on their methodology, and
4. Read an academic journal article and write a discerning abstract of the article, and research and write an academic paper in the field of criminal justice and criminology.

**ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Attendance is highly important because discussion groups, and in class assignments will be assessed throughout the session. The student is expected to attend all classes and actively participate in class discussions. Because of this, students **must** complete the assigned readings **PRIOR** to the scheduled class meeting to contribute to meaningful class discussions.

Class attendance is mandatory and attendance requirements will be followed in accordance with University Policy. Attendance will be recorded pursuant to University policy. Penalties for absences will be governed by rules promulgated by the University. A student may be penalized for more than three hours of absence at the discretion of the instructor. It is the responsibility of the student to monitor number of absences.

Accordingly, the instructor will deduct points from the **FINAL COURSE GRADE** based on the following scale:

- 4 unexcused absences = 10 point reduction in final grade
- 5 unexcused absences = 20 point reduction in final grade
- 6 + unexcused absences = 30 point reduction final grade

**Student Absences on Religious Holy Day Policy**

Section 51.91 (b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observation of a religious holy day, including travel for the purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence. University Policy 861001 provides the procedures to be followed by the student and instructor.

A student desiring to absent himself/herself from a scheduled class in order to observe (a) religious holy day(s) shall present to each instructor involved a written statement concerning the religious holy day(s). This request must be made within the first fifteen days of the semester or the first seven days of a summer session in which the absence(s) will occur. The instructor will complete a form notifying the student of a reasonable time frame in which the missed assignments and/or examinations are to be completed.
GRADES

GRADING POLICY: (100 Points Possible)

A = 90-100 points
B = 80-89 points
C = 70-79 points
D = 60-69 points
F = Below 60 points

1. 3 Exams: 15 Points each; 45 points total
2. Quizzes: 5 points
3. Research Proposal: 20 Points
4. Primary Article Abstracts: 20 Points
5. Participation & Homework: 10 Points

Exams (45%): Three exams will be given on the dates listed in the course outline. Each exam will be worth 15 points. Exams will be composed of multiple choice, true false, short answer and essay questions. Questions will come from class notes and the required readings. Students are strongly encouraged to utilize the study guide to prepare for exams and to enhance their understanding of the materials.

Quizzes (5%): Quizzes will be given throughout the semester to ensure that students are keeping up with the required readings and to help prepare students for the exams. Quizzes may be composed of multiple choice, definitions, short answer, essay questions, or a combination of each.

Writing Assignments (40%): Students will complete 3 short writing assignments, including 2 primary article abstracts (10 points each) and 1 research proposal/application paper (20 points) during the semester for a total of 40 points.

Class Participation (5%): Students will receive grade based upon attendance, participation in class discussions, participation in small group discussions, and completion of in class assignments. Students are expected to have read the chapters and any additional readings assigned prior to class lecture/discussion so that any questions may be clarified and meaningful class discussion may be conducted.

Homework Assignments (5%): In addition to class participation, students are required to complete any homework assignments which may be assigned. Homework assignments may include completion of short answer or essay questions, research of assigned topics, chapter outlines, or written article summaries (primary article abstracts). Failure to complete, submit, and/or present assignments on time will result in a 5 point deduction from the final grade.

MAKE UP EXAM POLICY

Students are required to take the examinations on the dates indicated in the course schedule. Any scheduling difficulties should be addressed the first week of class. If an emergency arises, students should notify the instructor as soon as possible before the absence. Notifications after the absence are not acceptable, barring extreme circumstances. If you miss an examination without prior approval from the instructor, the grade recorded will be a zero. If it is not possible to discuss the absence prior to the exam date due to an emergency, it is the student’s responsibility to contact the instructor as soon as possible after the emergency. Appropriate documentation of the nature of the absence must be provided to the instructor.
ACADEMIC HONESTY

The Faculty of the College of Liberal Arts expects students to conduct their academic work with integrity and honesty. Acts of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and can result in the failure of a course and dismissal from the University. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating on a test, plagiarism, collusion – the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing work offered for credit, the abuse of resource materials, and misrepresentation of credentials or accomplishments as a member of the college.

DISABLED STUDENT POLICY

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Disability Services Office at (361) 825-5816 or visit the office in Driftwood 101. Students with a disability which affects their academic performance are expected to arrange for a conference with the instructor in order that appropriate strategies can be considered to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired.

GRADE APPEAL PROCESS

Grade Appeal Process: As stated in University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal.

A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. If the problem cannot be resolved at this level, the student may take the steps below.

1. Presentation of grievance to instructor. (This step must be taken within fourteen calendar days after the beginning of the next term.)
2. Appeal to department chair or area coordinator.
3. Written appeal to the University Academic Standards Grievance Committee.
4. Preliminary review and advising by an ombudsman appointed by the Provost.
5. Submission of file by department chair to the chair of the University Academic Standards Grievance Committee.
6. Review of file by committee chair and submission of case to committee.
7. Proceedings of the University Academic Standards Grievance Committee. (Committee holds hearing, reviews data, presents findings to all parties, and makes recommendation to Provost.)
8. Decision by Provost.
9. Final appeal in writing to the Provost if student or instructor thinks appropriate procedures have not been followed.

For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, and University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade
Appeal Procedures. These documents are accessible through the University Rules Web site at http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.htm. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Office of Student Affairs.

**ADDITIONAL IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

**Extra Credit:** In general, extra credit opportunities will not be given, but may be offered at the instructor’s discretion. However, if an extra credit opportunity is extended to one student, then all students will be given the opportunity to complete the same assignment for extra credit.

**Confidentiality:** If you would like to discuss your course performance, an appointment with the instructor may be made at a mutually agreeable time. In order to protect student confidentiality, it is against TAMU-CC policy for an instructor to discuss grades by telephone or through email. Any discussions on student’s course performance must be conducted with the instructor in person.

**Academic Advising:** The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. The Academic Advisor will set up the degree plan which must be signed by the student, a faculty mentor, and the department chair. If you are majoring, or planning to major in a field taught in the College of Liberal Arts, and if you have not yet obtained a signed degree plan, you should see you Academic Advisor immediately. Degree plans are important and useful to successful progress toward graduation. The College’s Academic Advising Center is located in Driftwood 203E, and can be reached at 825-3466.

**Late Work:** Late work will NOT be accepted without appropriate documentation of an excused absence, such as a physicians note.

**CLASS CONDUCT**

**General Conduct**
All students are expected to be respectful to others and the instructor at all times. Class discussions may include controversial topics. Students should be respectful of others’ viewpoints and opinions, even those that they may not agree with. Any conduct deemed by the instructor to be disruptive to the class may result in the student’s removal from the class. The removal will count as an unexcused absence. Excessive tardiness (2+) without a legitimate excuse may be counted as an absence at the discretion of the instructor.

**Tobacco Products**
No tobacco products allowed in the classroom at any time. Violations will result in the student’s removal from the class and the removal will count as an unexcused absence.

**Use of Electronic Devices in the Classroom**
- Turn off all cell phones, pagers, iPods, and any other distracting device prior to class. This means no text messaging during class!
- Laptops may be used in class, for class purposes only (no email or IM services may be accessed) with prior approval from the instructor.
- Students are encouraged to use electronic resources outside of class for discussion forums and to access reading materials on class topics.
# Course Schedule

The anticipated schedule of lectures, readings, and examinations is as follows:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>Readings:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 12</td>
<td>Introduction to Class</td>
<td>Intro &amp; Chapter 1 (M&amp;B)</td>
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<td>Part I (P,L,&amp;B)</td>
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<td>Chapter 5 (P,L,&amp;B)</td>
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<td>Jan. 24-26</td>
<td>Theory in Criminal Justice Research</td>
<td>Chapter 3 (M&amp;B)</td>
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<td>Chapter 12 (P,L,&amp;B)</td>
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<td>Jan. 31-Feb.2</td>
<td>Ethics in Criminal Justice Research</td>
<td>Chapter 4 (M&amp;B)</td>
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<td>Feb. 7-9</td>
<td>Review &amp; Primary Abstract I due</td>
<td>Chapter 4 (M&amp;B)</td>
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<td><strong>EXAM I</strong></td>
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<td>Feb. 14-16</td>
<td>Overview of the Research Design and the Research Process</td>
<td>Chapter 16 (P,L,&amp;B)</td>
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<td>Feb. 21-23</td>
<td>Validity in Research Designs</td>
<td>Chapter 5 (M&amp;B)</td>
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<td>Feb. 28-Mar. 1</td>
<td>Concepts, Operationalization, &amp; Measurements</td>
<td>Chapter 6 (M&amp;B)</td>
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<td>Reliability and Validity of Measures</td>
<td>Handouts</td>
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<td>March 7-9</td>
<td>Measuring Crime: Crime Statistics in the United States</td>
<td>Chapter 7 (M&amp;B)</td>
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<td>Part II (P,L,&amp;B)</td>
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<td>March 13-15</td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
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<td>March 20-22</td>
<td>Experimental and Quasi Experimental Designs</td>
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<td>March 27-29</td>
<td>Review &amp; Primary Abstract II Due</td>
<td>Chapter 8 (M&amp;B)</td>
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<td><strong>EXAM II</strong></td>
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<td>April 3-5</td>
<td>Data Collection and Sampling</td>
<td>Chapter 9 (M&amp;B)</td>
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<td>Part III- 4&amp;6 (P,L,&amp;B)</td>
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<td>April 10</td>
<td>Asking the Right Questions: Survey Research</td>
<td>Chapter 10 (M&amp;B)</td>
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<td>Part IV (P,L,&amp;B)</td>
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<td>April 12</td>
<td>Field Research</td>
<td>Chapter 11 (M&amp;B)</td>
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<td>Chapters 10, 11, &amp; 17 (P,L,&amp;B)</td>
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<td>April 17-19</td>
<td>Records, Content Analysis, and Secondary Data</td>
<td>Chapter 12 (M&amp;B)</td>
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<td>Part VI: 13-14 (P,L,&amp;B)</td>
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<td>April 25-27</td>
<td>Evaluation Research &amp; Policy Analysis</td>
<td>Chapter 15, 18, &amp; Epilogue</td>
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<td>(P,L,&amp;B)</td>
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<td>May 1</td>
<td>Class wrap-up and Final Exam Review</td>
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<td>Research Proposal Due</td>
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<td>May 3</td>
<td><strong>FINAL EXAM</strong></td>
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