CRIJ 4345.002 - RESEARCH METHODS IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE
CRIMINAL JUSTICE PROGRAM
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY—CORPUS CHRISTI
Fall 2015

Instructor: Gabriel Ferreyra, PhD
Email: gferreyra@tamucc.edu

Number: 61370
Location: Center for Instruction (BH) 202
Days and Time: MW 2:00-3:15pm

Office: Bay Hall Room 345 (Third floor)
Office Hours: MW 12:50-1:50pm
Tuesdays 1:00-4:00pm

COURSE OVERVIEW: This course aims to be one of the most rewarding and intellectually invigorating of your undergraduate career. You will spend much of the course learning how to critique and conduct social research. Based on your full engagement with the materials and active participation in class, upon completion of this course you should have significantly advanced your understanding of why and how to do social research as well its potential role in advancing justice and/or maintaining the status quo in society. This course will help you get the most out of your other university courses and will develop your overall ability to ask thoughtful questions, to critically assess your own and other people’s arguments, and to be an informed observer of everyday life.

This course covers research design, data collection, and data analysis (not statistics) in crime and justice issues. It is an intensive writing class. Since I have always learned best by doing, I will apply this principle to this course. So the most important lessons you will learn in this course are embodied and embedded in the form of projects – supplemented by lectures. Portions of the class will be fairly abstract (e.g., positivist versus interpretive approaches to social research in crime) and other parts will be specific (e.g., how to design a survey question, conducting interviews). By combining the two, my hope is that you will become skilled at both the theoretical and practical levels of methodological discourse.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES (SLOs): Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Define, critically analyze, and evaluate various methods used in social science research (with an emphasis on issues of crime and criminal justice)
- Identify and understand the reasons for choosing particular data collection methods and techniques related to crime and criminal justice issues
- Recognize the limitations and problems of doing research on human behavior and the caution necessary when drawing conclusions from the results of any one study
- Conduct social science research in the field of criminal justice
Improving their writing skills and analytical thinking regarding research methods in crime and criminal justice

COURSE TEXTS AND REQUIRED READINGS


2. Articles: There will be several required research articles. Each will be available online through E-mail, Tamucc Library and or via Blackboard.

Software requirements: You must be able to access the internet, read PDF documents, view Power Point, use basic word processing (WORD compatible) and spreadsheets (EXCEL compatible), and view streaming audio and video. Contact your personal technical support or TAMUCC IT for assistance or for troubleshooting.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Class participation: You are expected to complete the assigned readings before each class. Lectures will be given with the assumption that you have read the required readings and will not go over basic materials that are adequately covered by the assigned readings. Class participation will count towards your final grade so it is in your best interest to attend all classes. If you are unable to attend for some reason, you should arrange to get class notes from another student. Everything is important. So do NOT email me asking if you missed anything important.

Assignments: There are several assignments that you will be asked to submit. I will provide the instructions for these assignments in class. Many of these assignments are steps in your research project and thus work that you should be doing anyway. I will give you feedback on all assignments related to your research paper.

Exams: There will be three exams in class, closed-book tests. Two mid-terms and one final. These exams will consist of multiple choice questions, short answers, and short essay questions covering material from the readings, lectures, and assignments.

Paper/Research Proposal: There will be one final written proposal (besides the 5 short written assignments) due November 18th, 2015. With no restrictions concerning the topic, method, or data source, this project is an excellent opportunity in which to exercise your academic freedom. All papers will be evaluated based on both the content and the quality of writing. Specific instructions for this assignment will be provided in class.

Extra Credit: Throughout the course of the semester, there may be opportunities offered to earn extra credit points on a class-wide basis.
### Weekly Course Themes

| Week One | Introduction: Science, Society and Criminological Research  
| Aug 26   | (Bachman & Schutt Chap. 1) |
| Week Two | The Process and Problems of Criminological Research  
| Aug/31   | (Bachman & Schutt Chap. 2)  
|          | Handout Instructions for 1<sup>st</sup> Assignment |
| Sept/02  |  |
| Week Three | Research Ethics and Philosophies  
| Sept/7   | Labor Day, no classes  
| Sept/9   | (Bachman & Schutt Chap. 3)  
|          | I. Research Question Assignment Due Sept/09 |
| Week Four | Conceptualization and Measurement  
| Sept/14  | (Bachman & Schutt Chap. 4)  
|          | Handout Instructions for 2<sup>nd</sup> Assignment |
| Sept/16  | Visit to the Library: We’ll meet in Library room 109 (comp. lab) |
| Week Five | Sampling  
| Sept/21  | (Bachman & Schutt Chap. 5)  
| Sept/23  | II. Article Review Assignment Due Sept/23 |
| Week Six | Causation and Research Design  
| Sept/28  | (Bachman & Schutt Chap. 6)  
| Sept/30  | Exam I & Handout Instructions for 3<sup>rd</sup> Assignment |
| Week Seven | Experimental Designs  
| Oct/5    | (Bachman & Schutt Chap. 7)  
| Oct/7    | III. Survey Assignment Due Oct/07 |
| Week Eight | Survey Research  
| Oct/12   | (Bachman & Schutt Chap. 8)  
| Oct/14   | Handout Instructions for 4<sup>th</sup> Assignment |
| Week Nine | Qualitative Methods and Analysis: Observing,  
|          | Participating, and Listening  
| Oct/19   | (Bachman & Schutt Chap. 9)  
| Oct/21   | (Handout Research Paper Rubric)  
<p>|          | IV. Research Topic Assignment Due Oct/21 |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week Ten</th>
<th>Analyzing Content: Historical, Secondary, and Content Analysis and Crime Mapping</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oct/26</td>
<td>(Bachman &amp; Schutt Chap. 10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handout Instructions for 5th Assignment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct/28</td>
<td><strong>Exam II</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week Eleven</th>
<th>Evaluation and Policy Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nov/02</td>
<td>(Bachman &amp; Schutt Chap. 11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov/04</td>
<td><strong>V. Ethnography Assignment Due Nov/04</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week Twelve</th>
<th>Mixing and Comparing Methods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nov/9</td>
<td>(Bachman &amp; Schutt Chap. 12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov/11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week Thirteen</th>
<th>Quantitative Data Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nov/16</td>
<td>(Bachman &amp; Schutt Chap. 13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov/18</td>
<td><strong>Final Paper Due Today in Class</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week Fourteen</th>
<th>Reporting Research Results and Wrap Up</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nov/23</td>
<td>(Bachman &amp; Schutt Chap. 14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov/25</td>
<td>Film: <em>The Experiment</em>—Directed by Paul Scheuring 2010 (Also available through Amazon Instant Video)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week Fifteen</th>
<th>Last Week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nov/30</td>
<td><strong>Final exam</strong> &amp; conclusions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last extra-credit assignment due during the official time of exam</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Questions/Course Concerns:** I strongly urge you to use the class discussion board for general questions regarding the course, technical issues, syllabus, homework, exams, etc. (although sharing answers is academic dishonesty). Your classmates should be your initial point of contact. These questions and answers are open to everyone to read and are archived for future reference.
**GRADING**

1. Class Participation/Attendance  
   10 points
2. Assignments (20 points)
   a. Research Question Assignment  
      3 points
   b. Article Review Assignment  
      3 points
   c. Ethnography Assignment  
      3 points
   d. Survey Assignment  
      3 points
   e. Research Topic Assignment  
      3 points
3. Exams  
   45 points (3 @ 15 points each)
4. Final Research Proposal  
   30 points

**Total: 100 points**

Grading Scale: There is a possible 100 points in this class. Grades will not be curved. Do the work to get the grade you want.

90 – 100 ...... A  
80 – 89 ...... B  
70 – 79 ...... C  
60 – 69 ...... D  
59 or below.....F

**Writing Center:** For help with writing assignment the Center for Academic Student Achievement (CASA) offers assistance with:
- Understanding assignments and organizing ideas
- Drafting and revising papers
- Developing effective writing skills

Walk-in help available anytime during office hours in Glasscock Center room 122 or make an appointment via email to this address: https://tamucc.mywconline.com/register.php
You can also find assistance with computers, including Blackboard, on the TAMUCC website. See TAMUCC Blackboard Resources at http://casa.tamucc.edu/info.php?page=contact

**Academic Integrity:** Please be sure to review the University's policy regarding Academic Integrity at the following website: http://catalog.tamucc.edu/mime/media/7/803/UG+13-14+Full+Catalog+PDF.pdf

Plagiarism is often misunderstood by many students. A good rule of thumb to follow is the following: if someone else wrote it or said it, you need to put quotation marks around it and cite it appropriately if you use the material verbatim, or cite it appropriately if you paraphrase it. In addition, handing in work that is substantially similar to work handed in by another student(s) in this class is also considered plagiarism. While I encourage
collaboration and sharing of resources, it is important to attribute original work properly. Even if unintentional, plagiarism is a serious offense and will, at minimum result in a grade of zero for any assignment and depending on the seriousness of the case, with possibility of reduction in the final course grade, removal from the course, and/or referral for disciplinary action as set out by the University Academic Integrity policy above. If you are in doubt as to what constitutes plagiarism, consult me PRIOR to handing in your written work. If you are having trouble with the course or are feeling lost about the course material, making an appointment with me is a much better option than resorting to plagiarism. I sincerely want to help you understand the material and prepare you for whatever career path you are traveling.

Class Participation: If you participate enough so that I get to know who you are, you will be credit for it and will improve your chances of getting a higher grade if your point total is on the borderline. Do not expect an automatic increase just because you have an 89.45%; you have to deserve the upgrade for some academic reason.

Expectations and Student Behavior: In additional to the expectation of academic integrity (as outlined above), students are further expected to exhibit appropriate classroom behavior. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Turning off all cell-phones, beepers, and other electronic communication devices. These should be placed completely out-of-sight for the entire class period.
- Utilize computers appropriately. They are to be used for note-taking only.
- Be respectful. In addition, do not participate in or encourage disruptive behavior.
- Come to and be engaged in class. Be up-to-date on all readings and assignments.
- Know and follow all university, school, college, unit and class policies, rules and requirements, including those regarding cheating on tests.

Failing to meet these expectations and follow these rules will have repercussions as deemed appropriate by the instructor.

Attendance Policy: Researchers have shown that students who attend class tend to learn and retain far more information than those who do not. Given that this class involves a good deal of interaction and peer review, attendance becomes even more important. I understand that illnesses, deaths, and emergencies happen. If you need to miss class for a university recognized excused absence (i.e., illness with a doctor's excuse, serious family emergency, or official university activities such as athletics), you MUST provide me with a HARD COPY of written documentation for this within one week of the absence for it to count as an excused absence. Excused absences will not hurt your grade. However, unless I tell you otherwise, assume that your absence is unexcused and excessive absences will hurt your participation grade.

Statement of Civility:

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi has a diverse student population that represents the demographics of the state. Our goal is to provide you with a high quality educational experience that is free from ideology and repression. You are responsible for following the
rules of the University, city, state and federal government. The University expects that you will behave in a manner that is dignified, respectful and courteous to all people, regardless of sex, ethnic/racial origin, religious background, sexual orientation or disability. Behaviors that infringe on the rights of another individual will not be tolerated.

Should behavioral disruptions interfere with the business of this online class and the ability of class members to learn, they may be reported to the Office of Student Services as outlined in TAMUCC General Academic Policies and Regulations (http://catalog.tamucc.edu/mime/media/7/803/UG+13-14+Full+Catalog+PDF.pdf).

**Dropping a Class:**

I hope that you never find it necessary to drop this or any other class. However, events can sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. Please consult with me before you decide to drop to be sure it is the best thing to do. Should dropping the course be the best course of action, you must initiate the process to drop the course by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class. November 6th, 2015 is the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” this term. It is your responsibility to adhere to all deadlines set forth in the academic calendar. It is your responsibility to know deadlines and withdrawal dates.

**Academic Dishonesty:**

Students are expected to be above reproach in scholastic activities. Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties. Such scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an exam for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts. Since scholastic dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. If you have any questions about this (especially what constitutes plagiarism), please stop by my office and I would be happy to discuss it. Refer to TAMUCC Academic Honesty for further details on definitions of academic dishonesty and the judicial procedure associated with allegations thereof (http://catalog.tamucc.edu/mime/media/7/803/UG+13-14+Full+Catalog+PDF.pdf).

**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. Degree plans are prepared in the CLA Academic Advising Center. The University uses an online Degree Audit system. Any amendment must be approved by the Department Chair and the Office of the Dean. All courses and requirements specified in the final degree plan audit must be completed before a degree will be granted. The CLA Academic Advising Office is located in Driftwood #203. For more information please call 361-825-3466.
TAMUCC Students with Disabilities:

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation 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 call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall, Room #116.

If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.

Emergency Management Statement:

In case of an emergency, the University’s Emergency Notification System (ENS) will be activated. Students are encouraged to maintain updated contact information using the link on the homepage of the University’s website. In addition, students are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the Emergency Response Protocols posted in each classroom. Detailed information about the University’s emergency management plan can be found at: http://safety.tamucc.edu/S/EMP.pdf

HEOA Compliance Statement:

HEOA Compliance statement: The sharing of copyrighted material through peer-to-peer (P2P) file sharing, except as provided under U.S. copyright law, is prohibited by law. Detailed information can be found at http://www2.ed.gov/policy/highered/leg/hea08/index.html

E-mail Accounts:

The Department of Social Sciences communicates through emails via Blackboard and the Islander’s web service. You can set up your accounts to be forwarded to your personal email account. A TAMUCC email account is the only account our main office uses to initiate contact with students. These emails include information about cancellation of classes or an event, student activities and general information. Your student account also is part of the Blackboard communication system and may be the best way for me to get in touch with you if I need to. Be sure you have your account set up!

Grade Appeal Process:

Students who feel that they have not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in this class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details on the
process of submitting a formal grade appeal, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website http://cla.tamucc.edu/students/studentinfo.html
For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean's Office.

**Late Work Policy:** Late work will NOT be accepted without proper documentation. Make up exams will NOT be permitted without proper documentation.

**Disclaimer:** This syllabus constitutes an agreement between the instructor and the student in accordance with TAMUCC policy and is subject to terms and conditions set forth herein. This syllabus is tentative and subject to revision in whole or in part, in writing at my discretion. Course content may also vary from this syllabus to meet the needs of this particular class. Each revision shall be subject to the terms and conditions set forth above. It is your responsibility to keep up with changes to the syllabus. Any changes will be posted on Blackboard and discussed in class.

______________________________________________
Your Name, Signature, and Date Here