Research Methods in Criminal Justice  
Spring 2016  
CJIR 4345_003  

Instructor: Dr. Wendi Pollock  
Office: Bay Hall 347  
Telephone: 361-825-3061  
Email: wendi.pollock@tamucc.edu  
Class Hours: Tuesday and Thursdays, 11 – 12:15 A.M.  
Classroom: BH 201  
Office Hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays 9:30-10:30 A.M.; Wednesday 9A.M.–Noon, or by appointment.

Required Text:


Course Description:

This course will introduce students to research methods in criminal justice. It will begin with basic intuition and curiosity and will lead students through the process of creating, understanding, and interpreting 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 and 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. Demonstrate the ability to apply professional standards in criminal justice research.
2. Discuss basic concepts and terminology in research methods
3. Explain the research process, research designs, and methods used in social sciences,
4. 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
5. 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.

**Grading:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Grading Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>90 – 100 = A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature Review</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>80 – 89 = B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variables &amp; RQ’s</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>70 – 79 = C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>60 – 69 = D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Project</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>59 &amp; Below = F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

100%

**Writing Assignments:**

You will be writing the individual sections of your research project and turning them in for grading and feedback. Before you write each of these sections, you will receive lecture materials as well as instructions on the requirements for each assignment, in class. Your final project will consist of the revised sections that you will have already written, along with a final section on the results of your survey which you will have administered to your classmates. You will also be required to present a PowerPoint presentation of your final project (See below).
**Presentations:**

We will perform a piece of original research as a class project. You will present your results orally, before the class. A PowerPoint presentation is required. More information on this assignment, including an example presentation format, will be given in class prior to the dates of these presentations.

**Exams:**

The final exam will be multiple choice and comprehensive, primarily focused on research methods terminology. We will review for this exam before you take it. The exam will be multiple choice and true/false. You are responsible for having a #2 pencil and a scantron on the final exam day.

**Make-Up Exams:**

As there is only a final exam, there will be no make-up exams.

**Participation & Attendance:**

You are expected to be in class daily, on time. **Individuals who are more than ten minutes late will not be allowed to enter the classroom.** Though attendance is not an official part of your grade, it will be taken daily for two reasons: (1) the information is reported to the university and can be used against you in future determinations of financial aid allowances, and (2) if you do not attend, you will be responsible for what you miss. Taking attendance allows me to know if you simply need more explanation or if you are asking questions because you were not there when the topic was covered. Please make sure that a classmate will be getting you notes and assignment information before you miss a class. The 10-minute late rule applies every day, so if you are more than 10 minutes late on an exam or presentation day, you will receive a zero for those assessments.

**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.
**Cellphones, Laptops, Ipads Etc.:**

All communication style or general noise making devises should be set to off or silent during class. If you have an emergency situation or if you are on call from a professional position, please let me know before class begins. Some exceptions will, of course, be allowed in these cases. If you decide that, for any reason, you must send or receive a call or text, please leave the classroom to do so. **If you are texting in my class, I consider this rude and I reserve the right to ask you to leave my class.** Because of the capabilities of modern cell phones, **if you have a phone out on your desk for any reason, during an exam, it is assumed that you are cheating on the exam** and will result in a zero on that test.

**Student Behavior:**

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.

**Disability Services:**

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.

**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.
**Grade Appeals 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, cla.tamu.edu/students/studentinfo.html For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean’s Office.

**Class Schedule:**

Please note that this schedule is tentative as we may need to spend more time on some topics than others.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Required Chapters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan 21</td>
<td>- Introduction</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Syllabus</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Start picking topic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 26</td>
<td>- Scientific inquiry in Criminal Justice</td>
<td>Ch 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 28</td>
<td>- Discussion of paper introductions</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- What are they? Why do we need them?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- How do we write them?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 2</td>
<td>- Ethics in criminal justice research</td>
<td>Ch 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 4</td>
<td>- General issues in research design</td>
<td>Ch 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(data types, causation, and inquiry)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 9</td>
<td>- Operationalization and measurement</td>
<td>Ch 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Introductions due</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 11</td>
<td>- Discussion literature reviews</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- What are they? Why do we need them?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- How do we write them?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 16</td>
<td>- Experimental vs. Quasi-experimental</td>
<td>Ch 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Research designs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 18</td>
<td>- Sampling</td>
<td>Ch 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 23</td>
<td>- Survey research</td>
<td>Ch 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 25</td>
<td>- Qualitative research</td>
<td>Ch 8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mar 1 - Qualitative research video example  None

LITERATURE REVIEWS DUE

Mar 3 - Field research  Ch 9

Mar 8 Create Variables and Research Questions  None

IN CLASS ASSIGNMENT - DUE END OF CLASS

Mar 10 - Creating surveys from research questions  None

Mar 14-18 SPRING BREAK  None

Mar 22 - Secondary data analysis  Ch 10

Mar 24 - Program evaluations  Ch 11

Mar 29 - SURVEYS DUE

- Give surveys to classmates in class  None

Mar 31 - Discuss Results Section

Bring your completed surveys!  None

April 5 - Results Section Problem Shooting  None

April 7 - Full paper problem shooting/Final construction  None

April 12 - FINAL PAPER DUE

- In-class discussion

- Presentation Sign-Up  None

April 14 - Presentations  None

April 19 - Presentations  None

April 21 - Presentations  None

April 26 - Presentations  None

April 28 - Presentations  None

May 10 - Final Exam (11 – 1:30 PM)  Ch 1-11

* This syllabus is tentative and subject to revision in whole or in part, in writing, at my discretion.