

## Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology

COURSE # 3378.4

Introduction to Methods of Research (Writing Enhanced)

Fall 2017

PROFESSOR: Layne Dittmann

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CLASS HOURS: TR-12:30pm-1:50pm

CLASSROOM: C210

OFFICE HOURS: TR-2:00 p.m. - 4:00 pm (and by appointment)

### TEXTBOOK(S):

- Berg, B. L., Lune, H. (2016). *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences* (Vol. 9). Boston, MA: Pearson. ISBN-10: 0134202139, ISBN-13: 978-0134202136
- Bachman, R., & Schutt, R. K. (2016). *The practice of research in criminology and criminal justice, 6<sup>th</sup> edition*. Sage. ISBN-10: 1506306810, ISBN-13: 9781506306810

### COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Introduction to Research Methods is designed to help students familiarize themselves with different methods of conducting research. This class is meant to teach students how to interpret, report, and design research projects for the purpose of producing knowledge. This course is designed for students who are interested in topics related to criminal justice, how knowledge about these topics is produced through the research process, and how to best analyze, critique, and design research studies that best address research objectives. Given that this class is writing enhanced, this course also focuses heavily on writing skills for the purpose of strengthening students' written communication skills.

### COURSE OBJECTIVES:

1. Students will learn factual knowledge and terminology related to research and methodology.
2. Students will learn generalizations, theories, varying points-of-view, and general principles of conducting research.
3. Students will develop critical-thinking and problem-solving skills in order to explain, analyze, and critique various theories, research designs, data collection methods, data analyses, and research findings.
4. Students will be able to identify and assess ethical concerns and issues that may arise when conducting research related to the social sciences and criminal justice topics.
5. Students will develop further comprehension, communication, and writing skills that will help them more effectively express themselves orally and through their writing.

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

*This is a “W” course, which means that at least 50 percent of your course grade will derive from writing activities designed to help you master course objectives*

The assignments for this course include the following:

Research Proposal = 40% (4 assignments at 10% per assignment)

Exams = 60% (3 at 20% per exam)

### Research Proposal Assignments:

The Research proposal assignments will consist of 4 writing assignments, each worth 10% of your final grade (a total of 40% of your final grade). The purpose of these assignments is to build, over the course of the semester, a mini-research proposal related to a criminal justice topic of your choosing. Assignments 1-3 will each address different components of the proposal. Assignment 4 will combine assignments 1-3 into one document; should incorporate feedback from the previous assignments; and should include a conclusion about what your proposed study might add to the topic of inquiry. These assignments will be due throughout the semester (see course outline for due dates). All paper submissions must meet the following format requirements: double spaced, times new roman font, 12 point font size, 1 inch margins. Expectations for each assignment are provided below:

Research Proposal Assignment 1= Students will be submitting a 1-2 page paper identifying:

- a. A research topic of your interest- identify a criminal justice topic of interest that you would like to examine in your research proposal. Provide some detail as to why this is an important topic to study.
- b. A research question pertaining to your topic- this will include a research question that examines something relevant to the topic of research you have chosen. Provide some detail as to why your research question is important and what could be learned from answering it.

Research Proposal Assignment 2= Students will be submitting a 1-2 page paper identifying:

- a. Whether you will be using qualitative research methods, quantitative research methods, or mixed methods to answer your research question, and why you believe the method you chose is most appropriate for answering your research question.
- b. The unit of analysis, and what your sampling frame will be for your study.
- c. The sampling method you have chosen for your study, and why you believe this is the most appropriate method.

Research Proposal Assignment 3= Students will be submitting a 1-2 page paper identifying:

- a. The type of sampling you will use and why you believe this is the most appropriate type of sampling.

- b. The type of research tool you will use to answer your research question and why you believe that this tool is the most appropriate.
- c. The proposed sample size for your study and why this sample size was chosen.
- d. How long you expect this research project to take you to complete if you chose to conduct the study.

Research Proposal Assignment 4= Students will be combining Research Proposal Assignment 1, 2, and 3 with necessary changes made to their previous assignments that have been identified by me in the feedback that will be given for each previous assignment. Research Proposal Assignment 4 should be 5-6 pages and should include a conclusion that states what your study might add to the topic of inquiry.

#### Exams:

There will be a total of three non-cumulative exams throughout the semester, each of which will account for 20% of your final grade (a total of 60% of your final grade). There will be a total of 50 questions on each exam (worth 2 points each). Exams will include multiple choice questions, true/false, and matching questions. Two extra credit questions will be added to each exam, each worth two points on the exam. You are required to bring your own scantron sheet and No. 2 pencil to class on exam days (SCANTRON FORM NO. 882-E).

#### GRADING:

A=90-100%

B=80-89%

C=70-79%

D=60-69%

F=59% or less

#### MAKE-UP EXAMS:

Make up exams will only be given in cases of emergencies where the student has notified the professor (via email or by office phone) prior to the exam date and time, or if a student misses the exam due to a university approved absence. Make-up exams will occur during office hours.

STUDENT ACADEMIC POLICIES concerning Attendance, Academic Honesty, Disabled Student and Services for Disabled Students, and Absences on Religious Holy days may be found at:

<http://www.shsu.edu/dept/academic-affairs/aps/aps-students.html>

Your presence in class is expected and is very important to your success in this class. If you have to miss class on a day that has an assignment due, it is your responsibility to submit your work on time. There are no exceptions to this rule (unless in the case of emergencies where the student has contacted the professor prior to the due date). In this case, arrangements will be made that accommodate your situation and allow for you to turn in your assignment.

USE OF TELEPHONES AND TEXT MESSAGES IN ACADEMIC CLASSROOMS AND FACILITIES:

<http://www.shsu.edu/dept/academic-affairs/aps/aps-curriculum.html>

Phones are to remain off during class time. The only exception is if you are expecting an important phone-call during classtime. In this case, please notify the professor before class starts, find a seat near the exit door of the class, and quietly step out of the classroom to take your call. Headphones/earbuds are not allowed in the classroom for any reason. Laptops are allowed in the classroom for note-taking only. If you choose to use your laptop during class for other activities not related to taking class note, you will not be allowed to bring their laptops to classes in the future.

ANNOTATED OUTLINE OF TOPICS TO BE COVERED FOR EACH CLASS MEETING:

Course Syllabus			
Week	Date	Readings	Due
1	R-8/24	Introduction	
2	T-8/29	<u>Topic:</u> Science, Society, and Criminological Research  <u>Readings:</u> -Bachman and Schutt - Ch. 1, Berg and Lune-Ch. 1	
	R-8/31	<u>Topic:</u> The Process and Problems of Criminological Research  <u>Readings:</u> Bachman and Schutt - Ch. 2, Berg and Lune Ch. 2 (p. 19-38)	
3	T-9/5	<u>Topic:</u> Research Ethics  <u>Readings:</u> Bachman and Schutt-Ch. 3	
	R-9/7	<u>Topic:</u> Research Ethics  <u>Readings:</u> Berg and Lune-Ch. 3	
4	T-9/12	<u>Topic:</u> Conceptualization and Measurement  <u>Readings:</u> Bachman and Schutt- Ch. 4	
	R-9/14	<u>Topic:</u> Conceptualization and Measurement  <u>Readings:</u> Berg and Lune – Ch. 2 (p. 39-57)	<b>Research Proposal Assignment 1</b>

5	T-9/19	<u>Topic:</u> <b>Exam 1 Review</b>  Chapters: Ch. 1-4, Berg and Lune - Ch. 1-3	
	R-9/21	<u>Topic:</u> <b>Exam 1</b>	<b>Exam 1</b>
6	T-9/26	<u>Topic:</u> Sampling  <u>Readings:</u> Bachman and Schutt- Ch. 5	
	R-9/28	<u>Topic:</u> Sampling  <u>Readings:</u> Berg and Lune Ch. 4	
7	T-10/3	<u>Topic:</u> Causation and Research Design  <u>Readings:</u> Bachman and Schutt – Ch. 6	
	R-10/5	<u>Topic:</u> Causation and Research Design  <u>Readings:</u> Bachman and Schutt – Ch. 6	
8	T-10/10	<u>Topic:</u> Experimental Designs  <u>Readings:</u> Bachman and Schutt – Ch. 7	<b>Research Proposal Assignment 2</b>
	R-10/12	<u>Topic:</u> Experimental Designs  <u>Readings:</u> Bachman and Schutt – Ch. 7	
9	T-10/17	<u>Topic:</u> Survey Research  <u>Readings:</u> Bachman and Schutt – Ch. 8	
	R-10/19	<u>Topic:</u> Survey Research  <u>Readings:</u> Bachman and Schutt – Ch. 8	
10	T-10/24	<u>Topic:</u> <b>Exam 2 Review</b>  <u>Chapters:</u> Bachman and Schutt Ch. 5-8, Berg and Lune Ch. 4	
	R-10/26	<u>Topic:</u> <b>Exam 2</b>	<b>Exam 2</b>
11	T-10/31	<u>Topic:</u> Qualitative Methods  <u>Readings:</u> Bachman and Schutt - Ch. 9	
	R-11/2	<u>Topic:</u> Qualitative Methods  <u>Readings:</u> Berg and Lune – Ch. 7, 8, 10	
12	T-11/7	<u>Topic:</u> Analyzing Content  <u>Readings:</u> Bachman and Schutt – Ch. 10	<b>Research Proposal Assignment 3</b>
	R-11/9	<u>Topic:</u> Analyzing Content	

		<u>Readings:</u> Berg and Lune – Ch. 11	
13	T-11/14	<u>Topic:</u> Evaluation and Policy Analysis  <u>Readings:</u> Bachman and Schutt – Ch. 11	
	R-11/16	Guest Speaker	
14	T-11/21	<u>Topic:</u> Evaluation and Policy Analysis  <u>Readings:</u> Bachman and Schutt – Ch. 11	
	R-11/23	<b>Thanksgiving Holiday (No Class)</b>	
15	T-11/28	<u>Topic:</u> Reporting and Research Results  <u>Readings:</u> Bachman and Schutt Ch. 15	
	R-11/30	<u>Topic:</u> <b>Final Exam Review</b>  <u>Chapters:</u> Bachman and Schutt Ch. 9, 10, 11, 15; Berg and Lune 7, 8, 10, 11	<b>Research Proposal Assignment 4</b>
16	T-12/5	<b>Final Exam 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.</b>	