

Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice
CRIJ 3378.07 (Writing Enhanced) Introduction to Methods of Research
Fall 2017

Professor: Matthias J. Woeckener

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Email policy: I will usually only respond to emails between 8 am and 8 pm during the week, and sparingly on the weekends. I will do my best to respond to emails as quickly as possible, but I cannot guarantee I will respond within 2 hours if you send me an email on the weekend or late at night/early in the morning.

Class Hours: MWF 12:00-12:50

Classroom: A201

Office Hours: Monday 9-11 and Thursday 10-12 (or by appointment)

Required Textbooks

Withrow, B. L. (2016). *Research Methods in Crime and Justice*. Routledge: New York.

Strunk Jr, W., & White, E. B. (2000). *The Elements of Style*. Pearson: New York.

Course Description: Introduction to Methods of Research is designed to provide an overview of the basics of research in Criminal Justice, including terminology, methodologies, and the process ethics involved in studying criminological phenomenon. Topics such as conceptualization and operationalization, sampling, and measurement validity and reliability will be discussed throughout the semester. Research is important to all fields of Criminal Justice, as it helps inform policy and guidelines in various local, state, and federal departments.

Course Objectives

Throughout the course of the semester it is expected that you will

1. Learn common terminology used in Criminal Justice research
2. Be able to identify the different kinds of Criminal Justice research
3. Learn all of the different parts of a Criminal Justice research proposal
4. Learn how to write a Criminal Justice research proposal
5. Improve your writing ability

Course Requirements and Grading

Note: 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.

Final course grades will be calculated based on the percent earned at the end of the semester.

A = 90-100%

B = 80-89%

C = 70-79%

D = 60-69%

F = <59%

Assignments

Quizzes: 5%

Midterm: 15%

Final Exam: 20%

Research Proposal

Research topic and research question: 5%

This is simply the selection of a research topic and explaining why it is of interest. Also come up with a question you would like your research proposal to answer. Length: ½ to a full page

Annotated Bibliography: 5%

For this portion of the paper you will find at least 10 sources relevant to your research topic and cite them properly using the APA citation style. After finding your sources you must summarize each of them separately. You should include these things in your annotations: research question(s) and hypotheses, independent variable, dependent variable, main results, how the study adds to the research, and how the study is relevant to your proposal. Examples will be provided in class.

Length: Approximately ½ page per source.

Literature Review: 10%

A literature review is a written synopsis of the relevant literature to your research topic. It explains what has been done and how previous research ties into your own research. Ensure that you are properly citing your sources.

Length: 3-5 pages

Hypotheses: 5%

After completing the literature review, you should have an idea of the expected outcome of your research. You will write at least one hypothesis, and explain why you would expect your hypothesis to be supported by your study.

Length: ½ to a full page

Methodology: 15%

The methodology comes directly from previous research, as it will serve as a guide for how you will conduct your study. Being a research methods course, this is the most important aspect of your proposal, and is weighted as such.

Length: 4-6 pages

Final Research Proposal: 20%

Put all of the aspects of the paper together, and ensure you integrate the comments or changes that I made on each section.

Length: 8-10 pages plus references and a title page

Extra credit: There will be 3 opportunities for 1 point each on your final grade. They will be due at the end of September, October, and November (as indicated on the schedule). Because of this, there will be **no grade rounding at the end of the semester**. If you have an 89.99% at the end of the semester you will get a B as your final grade. I will make no other extra credit opportunities available.

For each assignment, the most you will be able to receive is 1 point on your final grade, but by no means is the whole point guaranteed. I expect quality writing, thoughtful submissions, and for you to treat this like a regular assignment. As with the other writing assignments I will provide feedback.

- 1) Your first extra credit assignment will be to write at least a 3 page paper where you discuss two things: why you are in college and why you are interested in doing something within the criminal justice system.
- 2) Your second extra credit assignment involves you finding at least 2 research articles and providing a summary of their methods and results. In addition to the methods and results, I would like you to discuss the strengths and weakness of each article, and talk about what you would do improve the articles. Note: this is not an opinion, as you must be able to justify why you would improve the article. **Articles must be approved by the professor at least a week in advance of the due date.**
- 3) Your third extra credit assignment will be to discuss (in no less than 3 pages) the top things you learned in class that you believe are essential to your chosen career field, and explain why they are essential. I would also like you to reflect on what you liked the most about the class, and what you disliked the most about the class. Please be courteous and thoughtful in your responses.

Peer review: There will be an option to engage in a peer review process for your papers. If you decide to participate, you will review a classmate's paper after they have been submitted to me and help improve your classmate's paper throughout the year. After you have reviewed the paper, you will give a grade for that paper (letter grade, not a point-based grade), which I will take into consideration when grading the paper. This will be done for every part of the proposal, including the final proposal. This is completely voluntary. Peer review's purpose is to enhance your understanding of the writing process and improve your writing.

Study Groups: I understand it is highly likely that people will want to do study groups outside of class to prepare for the exams. If anybody is interested in getting together with fellow students to prepare, you are welcome to contact me. I would be happy to put study groups together. Also, if anybody decides they want to participate in a study group, I would be willing to come at the end of the session(s) to answer any questions or clarify any of the material. Note: **there will be no class time devoted to preparing for the exams.**

Plagiarism: It is a form of cheating, and will not be tolerated. If I find out that any student's assignment was plagiarized then that student will receive a 0 on the assignment and will have to schedule a meeting with me to discuss the infraction. I reserve the right to impose more serious sanctions if the infraction is egregious. When in doubt, cite the source of the information and use

direct quotes. If you have any questions regarding citations do not hesitate to ask me. If you are struggling with meeting the due dates of the assignments please contact me so we can figure out how best to move forward.

Make-up Exams: There will be no make-up exams unless the student has communicated with the professor beforehand or there was an unavoidable emergency that inhibited attendance for the exam. If an unavoidable emergency happens proper documentation is required.

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>

USE OF TELEPHONES AND TEXT MESSAGES IN ACADEMIC CLASSROOMS AND FACILITIES: <http://www.shsu.edu/dept/academic-affairs/aps/aps-curriculum.html>

The professor reserves the right to change the syllabus at any point in time. If this happens, the professor will contact the class via email to outline the changes.

Course Schedule

Date	Topic	Readings/Assignment due dates
August 23	Syllabus and introduction	None
August 25	Basic rules of usage	Strunk and White
August 28	Commonly misused words and expressions	Strunk and White
August 30	Why do research?	Withrow Ch. 1
September 1	How is research used?	Withrow Ch. 1
September 4	Labor Day!	
September 6	The research process	Withrow Ch. 2
September 8	Principles of ethical research	Withrow Ch. 3; Research topic/1 st quiz
September 11	Minimizing ethical dilemmas	Withrow Ch. 3
September 13	Paradigms and purposes of research	Withrow Ch. 4
September 15	Varieties of research	Withrow Ch. 4
September 18	Causality	Withrow Ch. 5
September 20	What is spuriousness?	Withrow Ch. 5
September 22	In class activity	Annotated Bibliography/2 nd quiz
September 25	Conceptualization and operationalization	Withrow Ch. 6
September 27	Validity and reliability	Withrow Ch. 6
September 29	In-class activity	1 st extra credit
October 2	Variables	Withrow Ch. 7
October 4	Hypotheses	Withrow Ch. 7
October 6	In-class activity	Literature Review
October 9	Probability sampling	Withrow Ch. 8
October 11	Non-probability sampling	Withrow Ch. 8
October 13	Midterm	
October 16	Experimental design	Withrow Ch. 9
October 18	Experimental research process	Withrow Ch. 9
October 20	In-class activity	Hypotheses /3 rd quiz
October 23	Survey research	Withrow Ch. 10
October 25	Interview research	Withrow Ch. 10
October 27	In-class activity	2 nd extra credit
October 30	Non-reactive research methods	Withrow Ch. 11
November 1	Non-reactive research process	Withrow Ch. 11
November 3	In-class activity	4 th quiz
November 6	Types of qualitative research methods	Withrow Ch. 12
November 8	The qualitative research process	Withrow Ch. 12
November 10	In-class activity	Methodology
November 13	In-class activity	
November 15	In-class activity	5 th quiz
November 17	Final proposal question and answer session	
November 20	Types of evaluation research	Withrow Ch. 13
November 22	Thanksgiving Break!!!	
November 24		
November 27	Evaluation research methods	Withrow Ch. 13/3 rd extra credit
November 29	Data analysis	Withrow Ch. 14
December 1	In-class activity	Final Proposal
December 4	Final Exam 1:00-3:00	