

CRIJ 3378.08W
Introduction to Methods of Research
Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology
Spring 2018

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Textbook

Bachman, R. and Schutt, R. K. (2017). *Fundamentals of Research in Criminology and Criminal Justice*. Los Angeles: Sage Publications. ISBN-13: 978-1-5063-5957-1

Course Description

This course is an introduction to the scientific approach to understanding the social world, the relationships between theory and research, research design, and data collection. The course will focus on research aimed at understanding crime and the behavior of the criminal justice system.

Course Objectives

By the end of the semester, students will:

- Understand the social scientific perspective and the relationship between research and theory in criminal justice.
- Understand fundamental concepts in social science research, including causation, reliability, validity, and sampling theory and practice.
- Understand the basic elements of measurement, research design, the primary methods of data collection, and descriptive data analysis.

Course Requirements and Grading

Homework Assignments	20% of final grade
Exams	30% of final grade
Writing Assignments	50% of final grade

This is a writing enhanced course (as are all Research Methods courses) therefore 50% of your final grade will be based on the writing assignments. Homework assignments are given throughout the semester and will compose 20% of the final course grade. Each chapter will have an online homework assignment posted in Blackboard. Three exams will count toward 30% of the final course grade. Exams are not cumulative. Homework, exam, and writing assignment due date are listed below.

There are *NO* extra credit opportunities in this class.

Assignment 1

Instructions: This assignment should be about 1-2 pages double-spaced, typewritten paragraphs and uploaded in a Word document. Use one-inch margins and 12-point Times New Roman type.

Conceptualization and operationalization are two important aspects of the research process. First, discuss each of these concepts in layman's terms so that anyone can understand it. Then, think of a criminal justice issue and provide your conceptualization and operationalization of that concept. More specifically, how do you define your selected concept? How will you measure your selected concept? Please provide specific details.

Assignment 2

Instructions: Assignment #2 should be about 1-2 pages double-spaced, typewritten pages and uploaded in a Word document. Use one-inch margins and 12-point Times New Roman type.

Pick 1 probability sampling technique and 1 non-probability sampling technique. For each sampling technique chosen: 1. Describe the sampling technique in layman's terms so that anyone can understand it, 2. Provide 2 pros and 2 cons to both of the sampling techniques, and 3. Provide an example of when your two selected sampling strategies might be most useful.

Assignment 3

Instructions: This assignment should be about 1-2 pages double-spaced, typewritten paragraphs and uploaded in a Word document. Use one-inch margins and 12-point Times New Roman type.

External and internal validity are important factors to consider when creating a research study. Discuss each of these by first defining them in layman's terms so that anyone can understand it and providing at least 2 examples of how both types of validity can affect a research study.

Assignment 4

Instructions: This assignment should be about 1-2 pages double-spaced, typewritten paragraphs and uploaded in a Word document. Use one-inch margins and 12-point Times New Roman type.

Discuss the difference between qualitative and quantitative research methods in layman's terms so that anyone can understand it. For each method, 1. Provide 2 pros and 2 cons of each approach, and 2. Provide a research example of when each method would be most appropriate.

Assignment 5

Instructions: This assignment should be about 1-2 pages double-spaced, typewritten paragraphs and uploaded in a Word document. Use one-inch margins and 12-point Times New Roman type.

Evaluation research is different than the other types of research discussed thus far in the course. First, discuss this type of research method in layman's terms so that anyone can understand it. Then, select an evaluation research method and talk about how you would use this method to evaluate a program/policy (e.g., get tough policy, alcoholics anonymous, etc.). What are 2 pros and 2 cons to conducting evaluation research?

General Tips on Paper Writing

Formatting

1. Include a title page with the paper title, your name, the class title, and the date. This title page does not count toward the page requirement.
2. Use black ink, double spaced lines, 12 point Times New Roman font, 1" top and bottom, left and right margins, on white letter-size paper (8.5" x 11") paper with portrait orientation.
3. Include page numbers on the bottom center of the page. The first page of the text should be page 1.
4. As a matter in principle, a paragraph should be inserted when you have a shift of one primary idea to another. Generally, paragraphs contain three to six sentences; they take up about one-third to, at most, one half of a page.

Grammar / Tone

5. Do not write in the first person. Do not write "I think" or "I conclude" or "My opinion is" etc. The paper should be impersonal. Similarly, never write "Our next move must be" or "We must" to refer to something that must be done in the world or by a government (in particular, do not refer to the U.S. government or police departments as "we").
6. Do not write "you" either to make something impersonal or as if you are writing a letter to the professor. For example, do not write "If you understand this theory, you can

prevent crime.”

7. Do not use slang unless you are directly quoting another source.
8. Do not use contractions such as “aren’t” and “don’t” – spell them out (i.e. are not, do not).
9. Research papers should have a formal tone like a journal article rather than a chatty tone like a newspaper or an informal letter.
10. Be sure to write whole sentences rather than fragments of sentences.
11. Make sure that your grammar and syntax are correct.
12. Try to improve your writing style. For help with grammar, see *The Elements of Style* by William Strunk, Jr. and E.B. White.

Content / Substance

13. Quality (rather than quantity) is the key to getting a good grade. A quality research paper makes sound arguments that are supported by research findings.
14. Always start with a detailed outline before you begin writing your paper. This outline is your “roadmap” and should break the paper down into substantive sections to keep you “on track” as you write. Continually refer back to this outline to be sure all of the substantive issues have been covered in the paper in a coherent, logical manner.
15. The goal of a research paper is to integrate research findings (or in some cases entire bodies of literature) in a unique and thoughtful manner. With this in mind, be sure that you have at least one thesis statement, or central argument that the paper is structured around. Some research papers will have several propositions or theses, but all research papers must have at least one.
16. It is not appropriate to simply offer opinions or assertions unsupported by research. Express arguments based on logic, or conclusions based upon evidence, with references as appropriate.
17. In research papers, use subheadings to differentiate sections of your paper. These subheadings should be titled according to the content of the material included in that section. Sections of the paper should be differentiated based on substantive changes in the content / arguments of the paper. Use scholarly journal articles as a guide to writing in this format.
18. A research paper should begin with an introduction, sometimes titled “Introduction” in longer papers. It is short and gives an overview of the essay.
19. A research paper typically finishes with a conclusion section, often titled “Conclusion,” which often speculates on policy implications and suggests areas for future research. This

section provides the finishing touch on your research paper and is your last opportunity to make an impression on the reader.

Citations / Referencing (When applicable)

20. Include in-text citations when paraphrasing or using a direct quote from another author. Generally, the author's name and year of publication are required when paraphrasing another author's work. When using a direct quote, include the author's name, year of publication, and page number where the quote can be found. Failure to include appropriate citations is plagiarism.

Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 5th Edition, by American Psychological Association. ISBN: 1-55798-791-2

21. You cannot cite in your article anything that you have not actually read yourself. Do not cite works that the authors you read have cited—unless, again, you have gone to the library and read the works yourself.
22. In general, quotations are fine to use. However, they should be used sparingly. Do not write a paper in which you have one sentence and four lines of a quotation; and then another sentence followed by four lines of a quotation; and so on and so on.

Editing

23. Before submitting your research paper, read it through, and pretend that you are somebody else - read it through their eyes. Then, clarify those sentences that made sense to you earlier but which may be less clear in meaning to someone else.
24. Use a spellchecker.
25. Have someone else read through your essay to make comments on both substance and presentation/grammar. Then read through your essay again.

Class and Attendance Policies

It is important to understand that this is not an entirely self-paced class. There are important deadlines and students are expected to make routine progress. It will very likely be more difficult to learn the material in this class if you devoted only a single day to the class and tried to cram a week's worth of material into a single day. Please make a strong attempt to work on the class material and to log into the class throughout the week. You'll probably learn the material more effectively and you may have a more enjoyable experience with the class.

Regular and ongoing participation in this course is *required*. You are expected to check the course throughout the week. Among other things, this means that exams must be completed during the scheduled time and that assignments must be completed within the specified time. Makeup exams and quizzes will NOT be given unless the student notifies the professor *prior* to the absence. Assignments will not be accepted after the due date unless the student notifies the professor *prior* to the absence. Rare situations arise in which it is impossible to notify the instructor in advance. If this occurs the student must provide the instructor with a typed description of the reason for the absence. This must be provided to the professor within five

school days of the absence. Verbal excuses will not be accepted. Furthermore, if a student wishes to dispute a grade on any assignment or exam, the student must provide the instructor with a typed description of the dispute within five school days of the date on which the assignment was returned to the class.

Attendance is required and critical to your performance in this class. Class attendance requirements will be followed in accordance with Academic Policy Statement 800401 <http://shsu.edu/dept/academic-affairs/aps/aps-students.html>

In all other matters, such as course additions and withdrawals, assignment of “incomplete” grades, and plagiarism, the policies of Sam Houston State University will be followed.

Please refer to the following on-line resources for:

Student Code of Conduct, including Academic Honesty

Disabled Student Policy:

Services for Disabled Students

Student absences on religious holy day policy:

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

TENTATIVE CLASS SCHEDULE

WEEK BEGINS	TOPICS	READINGS	ASSIGNMENTS DUE	DUE DATE
Jan. 17 th	Science, Society, and Criminological Research	Chapter 1	Homework 1	11:59pm on Sunday, January 28 th
Jan. 22 nd	The Process and Problems of Criminological Research	Chapter 2	Homework 2	11:59pm on Sunday, January 28 th
Jan. 29 th	Research Ethics	Chapter 3	Homework 3	11:59pm on Sunday, February 4 th
Feb. 5 th	Conceptualization and Measurement	Chapter 4	Homework 4 & Writing Assignment #1	11:59pm on Sunday, February 11 th
Feb. 12 th	Covers Chapters 1-4		Exam 1 (10%)	11:59pm on Sunday, February 18 th
Feb. 19 th	Sampling	Chapter 5	Homework 5 & Writing Assignment #2	11:59pm on Sunday, February 25 th
Feb. 26 th	Causation and Experiments	Chapter 6	Homework 6	11:59pm on Sunday, March 4 th
Mar. 5 th	Survey Research	Chapter 7	Homework 7 & Writing Assignment #3	11:59pm on Sunday, March 11 th
Mar. 12 th	Spring Break!			
Mar. 19 th	Qualitative Methods and Data Analysis	Chapter 8	Homework 8	11:59pm on Sunday, March 18 th
Mar. 26 th	Covers Chapters 5-8		Exam 2 (10%) & Writing Assignment #4	11:59pm on Sunday, March 25 th
Apr. 2 nd	Analyzing Content:...	Chapter 9	Homework 9	11:59pm on Sunday, April 1 st

Apr. 9 th	Evaluation and Policy Analysis	Chapter 10	Homework 10 & Writing Assignment #5	11:59pm on Sunday, April 8 th
Apr. 16 th	Mixing and Comparing Methods	Chapter 11	Homework 11	11:59pm on Sunday, April 15 th
Apr. 23 rd	Reporting Research Results	Chapter 12	Homework 12	11:59pm on Sunday, April 30 th
May 1 st	Covers Chapters 9, 10, 11, 12		Exam 3 (10%)	11:59pm on Sunday, May 6 th

DISCLAIMER

The class schedule in this syllabus is subject to change. Announcements of any changes to the schedule will be made via email and/or posted in Blackboard. These announcements are considered proper notice of change.