

**CCJ 3700 Research Methods in Criminology and Criminal Justice
Spring 2009
Building 51 Room 1201
TTH 10:50AM – 12:05PM**

Professor's Contact Information

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Office Hours: Mondays 4:55PM – 5:55PM, Tuesdays and Thursdays 9:45 – 10:45AM
and 12:15PM – 1:15PM

Required Course Materials

Champion, D. J. (2006). *Research Methods for Criminal Justice and Criminology* (3rd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc.

* Additional readings may be posted online in Blackboard and/or handed out in class.

Catalog Description

This course is a general introduction to research methods used in criminology and criminal justice. The course emphasizes the application of theory and research, sampling, measurement, data collection, research designs, and ethics of research. Specific examples from the field of criminology and criminal justice will be utilized.

Expected Learning Outcomes

1. Students will express in writing fluid and direct mastery of core content knowledge while critically assessing and synthesizing its relevance for criminal justice practice.
2. Evaluate and express an understanding of criminological research and methodology through critical analysis and practical application.

Class Attendance

Class attendance is a basic requirement of the course; unexcused absences are not permitted and will hurt your course grade.

There will be a number of in-class assignments for this course. Students must be present to complete the in-class assignments. There are no make-ups for missed in-class assignments.

Attendance will be taken when class presentations begin. Students will be docked 2% of their overall course grade for each unexcused absence. For example, a student that had 94% based on their assignments, presentation, and paper but missed 2 classes will end up with a 90% for their overall course grade.

Class Participation

The success of the course depends largely on your coming to class prepared and ready to discuss the assigned topics. Failure to engage in class discussion will result in unannounced quizzes.

Course Requirements

The assignments for this course include the following:

In-Class and Class Assignments = 100 points (10 assignments, each worth 10 points)

Presentation = 100 points

Paper = 200 points

There are no extra credit opportunities in this course.

Course Grading

Final course grades are calculated based on total points earned across all assignments, the presentation, and paper.

376 - 400 = A	308 - 319 = C+
360 - 375 = A-	280 - 307 = C
348 - 359 = B+	240 - 279 = D
332 - 347 = B	000 - 239 = F
320 - 331 = B-	

Course Policies

Academic Dishonesty – There are no group assignments in this course. Your performance on the exam will be a reflection of your own individual effort. Academic dishonesty of any kind is strictly prohibited and will result in a grade of zero for that particular assignment.

Missed Assignments – Do not miss assignments! If you are absent on exam day and fail to provide a legitimate excuse and documentation (e.g. doctor's excuse) you will not be allowed to take a make-up exam and will receive a grade of zero.

Classroom Etiquette

- Respect the ideas and learning environment of your fellow scholars.
- Arrive for class on time and be prepared. If for some reason you are late, enter the classroom as quietly as possible and take the first available seat.
- Rude and/or inappropriate conduct will not be tolerated.
- Turn off all electronic devices.
- Do not speak while I am speaking. Similarly, do not speak while a fellow scholar is speaking.
- No sleeping during class.
- No reading outside materials during class.
- No texting or instant messaging during class.
- Clean up after yourself. If you bring a drink or snack to class, throw it away or take it with you when class is over.

Academic Integrity

The University of North Florida Academic Integrity Code and other documented policies of the department, college, and university related to academic integrity will be enforced. Any violation of these regulations, including acts of plagiarism or cheating will be dealt with on an individual basis according to the severity of the misconduct.

Special Needs Policy

Students with disabilities who seek reasonable accommodations in the classroom or other aspects of performing their coursework must first register with the UNF Disability Resource Center (DRC) located in Building 10, Room 1201. DRC staff members work with students to obtain required documentation of disability and to identify appropriate accommodations as required by applicable disability laws including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). After receiving all necessary documentation, the DRC staff determines whether a student qualifies for services with the DRC and if so, the accommodations the student will be provided. DRC staff then prepares a letter for the student to provide faculty advising them of approved accommodations. For further

information, contact the DRC by phone (904) 620-2769, email (kwebb@unf.edu), or visit the DRC website (<http://www.unf.edu/dept/disabled-services>).

Class Schedule

DATE	TOPIC AND ASSIGNMENT SUMMARY
T 1/6/09	Topic: Introduction Reading: None
TH 1/8/09	Topic: Library Resources Reading: None ** CLASS WILL MEET IN LIBRARY ROOM 2102A
T 1/13/09	Topic: Research in Criminal Justice Reading: Chapter 1
TH 1/15/09	Topic: Research in Criminal Justice Reading: Chapter 1 Assignment 1 Due
T 1/20/09	Topic: Frames of Reference and Problem Formulation Reading: Chapter 2
TH 1/22/09	Topic: Frames of Reference and Problem Formulation Reading: Chapter 2 In-Class Assignment 2
T 1/27/09	Topic: Research Designs Reading: Chapter 3
TH 1/29/09	Topic: Research Designs Reading: Chapter 3 In-Class Assignment 3

T 2/3/09	Topic: Data Collection – Sampling Techniques Reading: Chapter 4
TH 2/5/09	Topic: Data Collection – Sampling Techniques Reading: Chapter 4 In-Class Assignment 4
T 2/10/09	Topic: Data Collections – Questionnaires Reading: Chapter 5
TH 2/12/09	Topic: Data Collections - Questionnaires Reading: Chapter 5 In-Class Assignment 5
T 2/17/09	Topic: Data Collection - Interviews Reading: Chapter 6
TH 2/19/09	Topic: Data Collection - Interviews Reading: Chapter 6 In-Class Assignment 6
T 2/24/09	Topic: Observational Techniques, Secondary Sources, and Ethics Reading: Chapter 7 and 12
TH 2/26/09	Topic: Observational Techniques, Secondary Sources, and Ethics Reading: Chapter 7 In-Class Assignment 7 and 12
T 3/3/09	Topic: Measurement Reading: Chapter 8
TH 3/5/09	Topic: Measurement Reading: Chapter 8 In-Class Assignment 8

T 3/10/09	Topic: Validity and Reliability Reading: Chapter 9
TH 3/12/09	No Class – Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences Conference Assignment 9 Due
T 3/17/09	No Class – Spring Break
TH 3/19/09	No Class – Spring Break
T 3/24/09	Topic: Data Coding, Presentation, and Description Reading: Chapter 10
TH 3/26/09	Topic: Data Coding, Presentation, and Description Reading: Chapter 10 In-Class Assignment 10
T 3/31/09	Presentations
TH 4/2/09	Presentations
T 4/7/09	Presentations
TH 4/9/09	Presentations
T 4/14/09	Presentations
TH 4/16/09	Presentations Paper Due
Finals Week	No Class

Paper Information

Due Date: The beginning of class on April 16, 2009

Instructions: The paper must be 8-10 double-spaced, typewritten pages (not counting references, which should be placed at the end of the paper). Use *one-inch* margins; 12 point Times New Roman type is preferred. The paper should have a cover sheet with your name and the title of the paper. *Staple* the paper; please do *not* place the paper in a folder. Be certain to *number the pages* in the paper. Finally, in case the paper is misplaced, keep copy on file of what you have submitted.

I. INTRODUCTION (about ½ page)

II. STATEMENT OF THE STUDY TOPIC (1 page)

- State the topic that you plan to study.
- Explain why it is important to study this topic.
- State your study hypothesis.
- Explain how your study will contribute to the existing literature in this area.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW (2-3 pages)

- Provide a review of the literature in this area.
 1. What studies have been conducted on this topic in the past?
 2. What were the findings of these studies?
 3. How were these studies conducted?
 4. Identify any methodological problems with past research.

IV. METHODS (4-6 pages)

- Sample size
- Level of measurement
- Identify the sampling frame
- Explain how your data will be collected. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of collecting the data this way.
- Identify independent and dependent variables and how these variables will be operationalized.
- Identify any control variables that will be used and explain why it is important to control for these factors.
- Discuss the research design and the advantages and disadvantages associated with the design you have selected. Identify any threats to internal and external validity associated with your research design.

- Discuss any ethical considerations that may impact your study and how you plan to overcome these potential problems.
- Include one table that supports your hypothesis. Given that you will not actually collect data for this project, you will need to make up data for this table.

V. CONCLUSION (about ½ page)

VI. REFERENCE SECTION

- A minimum of 5 academic resources is required.

Presentation Information

Your presentation should be 5-8 minutes in length.

- Identify your study topic.
- Explain why you chose this topic.
- Given an overview of any research that has already been conducted on this topic.
- Explain how you propose to study this topic.
- State your hypothesis.
- Identify independent and dependent variables.
- Explain how you will collect data.
- Explain the research design.
- Discuss any potential problems with your proposed study (e.g., threats to internal and external validity, sampling, research design, ethical concerns).

Following your presentation, your fellow scholars and I will take a few minutes to ask you questions about your proposed study.

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

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.