
RESEARCH METHODS IN CRIMINOLOGY

Florida State University
CCJ 4700 • Fall 2023

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Course Description

This course will introduce you to the fundamentals of research in criminology, criminal justice, and social science more generally. My overarching goals are to help you become an informed consumer of social science research and to give you scientific tools that will help you in your career as a practitioner, researcher, or academic.

Upon successfully completing this course, you will know the following:

- The purposes of social science research
- The difference between causation and association (and how to tell which you have)
- The key modes of observation in social science
- The major sources of crime statistics and data
- Some basic statistical methods for describing social science data

You will be able to:

- Think scientifically about social problems
- Recognize signs of strong and weak social science research
- Interpret basic descriptive and inferential statistics

Required Materials

Textbook. Hagan, F. E. (2018). Research Methods in Criminal Justice and Criminology. Pearson. ISBN: 9780134558912

Please complete all readings prior to the date for which they are assigned.

Important: This course participates in the Follett Access program. You are automatically enrolled to receive your textbook and will be charged through your FSU portal. If you would like to opt out or opt back in to receiving the discounted materials, visit the link below. For more information, click [here](#) or contact the bookstore at follettaccess@fsu.edu. All student questions should be directed to follettaccess@fsu.edu.

Opt Out/In Portal: <https://ACCESSPortal.follett.com:443/0208>

Calculator. You will need a basic calculator. The one on your phone or computer is fine.

Course Activities and Requirements

Pretest and Posttest. Please help the College assess student learning outcomes by completing the research methods pretest and posttest. You won't receive a grade or any credit for these; that is, they won't count towards or against your course grade. They are solely to provide us with feedback on how well we are meeting our teaching goals. We appreciate your help!

Practice Quiz Attendance. You will complete three in-class practice quizzes. These quizzes are designed to help you prepare for the exams. You will take them during the first part of the class period, and will review them as a class during the second part of the period. You can take the quizzes home with you for use as study aids. You will receive 2 points for attending each quiz.

Assignments. You will complete three written assignments, each worth between 10 and 12 points. Each assignment should be 2-3 pages long (double-spaced). Please number your answers. Submit each assignment to Canvas before the due date and time. Grades will be based on:

- Accuracy: Has the course material been applied correctly?
- Insight: Has the material been paraphrased and explained in a way that demonstrates understanding?
- Completeness: Has each element of the prompt been addressed? Have sufficient elements of the course material been included?
- Mechanics: Does the assignment meet the length requirement and contain no spelling errors? Assignments that are markedly too long or short will lose some credit!

Please use these assignments to show off what you have learned. Would a typical reader think that you had mastered all relevant elements of that assignment's topic (i.e., that you could tutor someone else on the topic)? If so, you will likely receive a high score. Does it look like you have been following along with the course, but have not thought about the material in depth? Those assignments typically receive somewhat lower scores. Do you seem confused about parts of the material? Those assignments will lose more credit. Have you skipped questions or failed to answer them all in full? Those assignments will lose points proportional to what was skipped.

Exams. You will take three multiple-choice exams in this course, each worth 20 points. The exams are not cumulative, though you will need to know some basic methods terminology for all three of them. They will feature information from the lectures and the readings. The exams are open book, and you are free to use the slides and notes. I recommend that you do not use outside materials for the exams because different authors use different terminology for the same concepts. Please submit your own work and do not consult each other as you work on the exams; I am invoking the honor system here.

Course Grades

Practice quiz attendance	3 X 2 points	= 6
Assignments 1 and 3	2 X 12 points	= 24
Assignment 2	1 X 10 points	= 10
<u>Exams</u>	<u>3 X 20 points</u>	<u>= 60</u>
Total		100 points (%)

Grading scale

94%-100%	A	80%-83%	B-	70%-73%	C-
90%-93%	A-	77%-79%	C+	60%-69%	D
87%-89%	B+	74%-76%	C	Below 60%	F
84%-86%	B				

I round according to conventional mathematical rules.

Course Communication

How we will contact you. Please check Canvas regularly for course announcements and changes. I strongly recommend that you set your Canvas notification preferences to ensure that you receive emailed versions of the course announcements as well.

How you should contact us. Please email us with any questions about the course material, requirements, or policies. Monday through Friday, we will respond to your email within 24 hours. We will try to respond promptly to emails sent on weekends and holidays, but may not be able to respond until the next business day.

Course Policies

Syllabus Change Policy. Except for changes that substantially affect implementation of the evaluation (grading) statement, this syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice.

Attendance. I expect you to come to class. Attendance and grades are strongly positively correlated. If you absolutely must miss a class meeting, please get the notes from another student.

Missing and late work. Missing or late work will receive 0s unless (1) you are unable to complete or submit the item due to an excused absence (per the University attendance policy below) and (2) notify me within 48 hours of the due date. When you email me, please include any documentation of your absence (e.g., a doctor's note, a jury duty summons). Forgetting about the post, assignment, or exam, needing to work late, being unable to get to a computer, and having an undocumented illness will not qualify as excused absences, so please plan accordingly and do not procrastinate. The only exception to this policy is noted below.

The University attendance policy is as follows: Excused absences include documented illness, deaths in the family and other documented crises, call to active military duty or jury duty, religious holy days, and official University activities. These absences will be accommodated in a way that does not arbitrarily penalize students who have a valid excuse. Consideration will also be given to students whose dependent children experience serious illness.

You are allowed ONE undocumented absence in this course. This equates to a free extension on a single course requirement. Please contact the instructor within 48 hours of the requirement's due date to make arrangements for makeup work.

Technology. When you submit an assignment or exam, it is your responsibility to ensure that the submission was successful. If you experience internet or Canvas problems while you are submitting an assignment or exam, please email the instructor immediately. If the trouble relates to a written assignment, please attach your assignment. It is important that you contact us before the due date and time so that we know you did the work on time. You have a one hour grace period to contact us about technology-related problems. If you do not successfully submit an assignment or exam by the due date and time and we do not hear from you within an hour of that date and time, that assignment or exam will receive a 0.

TurnItIn. This course will use Canvas's TurnItIn anti-plagiarism tool. Assignments receiving high similarity scores will be investigated according to College procedures.

Academic Success. Your academic success is a top priority for Florida State University. University resources to help you succeed include tutoring centers, computer labs, counseling and health services, and services for designated groups, such as veterans and students with disabilities. The following information is not exhaustive, so please check with your advisor or the Dean of Students office to learn more.

Americans with Disabilities Act. Florida State University (FSU) values diversity and inclusion; we are committed to a climate of mutual respect and full participation. Our goal is to create learning environments that are usable, equitable, inclusive, and welcoming. FSU is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities in a manner that is consistent with academic standards of the course while empowering the student to meet integral requirements of the course.

To receive academic accommodations, a student:

- (1) must register with and provide documentation to the Office of Accessibility Services (OAS);
- (2) must provide a letter from OAS to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what type; and,
- (3) should communicate with the instructor, as needed, to discuss recommended accommodations. A request for a meeting may be initiated by the student or the instructor.

Please note that instructors are not allowed to provide classroom accommodations to a student until appropriate verification from the Office of Accessibility Services has been provided.

This syllabus and other class materials are available in alternative format upon request.

For more information about services available to FSU students with disabilities, contact the:

Office of Accessibility Services
874 Traditions Way
108 Student Services Building
Florida State University
Tallahassee, FL 32306-4167
(850) 644-9566 (voice)
(850) 644-8504 (TDD)
oas@fsu.edu
<https://dsst.fsu.edu/oas/>

Academic Honor Policy. The Florida State University Academic Honor Policy outlines the University's expectations for the integrity of students' academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of those expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty members throughout the process. Students are responsible for reading the Academic Honor Policy and for living up to their pledge to "...be honest and truthful and...[to] strive for personal and institutional integrity at Florida State University." (Florida State University Academic Honor Policy, found at <http://fda.fsu.edu/Academics/Academic-Honor-Policy>) I expect you to uphold this pledge. *All work that you submit for this class must be your own.* Do not cheat (use unauthorized material or study aids in any exercise), plagiarize (knowingly represent someone else's words or ideas as your own), fabricate (invent the information you submit), or assist in anyone else's academic dishonesty.

Confidential Campus Resources. Various centers and programs are available to assist students with navigating stressors that might impact academic success. These include the following:

Victim Advocate Program
University Center A
Rm. 4100
(850) 644-7161
Available 24/7/365
Office Hours: M-F 8-5
<https://dsst.fsu.edu/vap>

University Counseling
Center
Askew Student Life
Center, 2nd floor
942 Learning Way
(850) 644-8255
<https://counseling.fsu.edu/>

University Health Services
Health and Wellness
Center
(850) 644-6230
<https://uhs.fsu.edu/>

Frequently Asked Questions

My assignment is shorter/longer than the length requirements. Is that okay? We are fine with assignments that are a little too short or long. But please don't write an assignment that is double the requested length. Also, please don't submit assignments that are 1/3 page or more too short (with normal spacing and margins). This last guideline is to protect you; if your assignment is markedly too short, you are probably missing key content.

Why did I lose points on my assignment? If you'd like more detailed feedback on your grade, please contact your grader. The most common reasons that people lose points are not answering the question(s) in full and not incorporating enough course material. Next time, consider sending us a draft of your assignment early so that we can tell you whether you are on track.

I got stuck at work/my car broke down/my loved one is ill and I missed the assignment deadline. What do I do? You get one free extension in the course. To use it, simply email the instructor to let them know that you will be turning your assignment in late. You will receive a one week extension. After you use this freebie, to gain extensions on additional assignments, you will need documentation that those absences were excused under the policy described above.

I am having trouble with Canvas and can't submit my assignment! Or, I swear I submitted it but it is not showing up! Help! If it's before the deadline or within the grace period, please email it to us! If you believe that you submitted it but we have no record of that, contact Canvas Support at (850) 644-8004 and tell them that your instructor needs a log of your Canvas activity

on the date that you submitted the assignment. Also, make sure that you can provide us with a version of your assignment that was last saved before the assignment deadline. Then contact us to discuss this further.

What is my current grade? Can I still earn a __ in this class? To calculate your current percentage grade, add up the total number of points you have earned so far, and divide that by the total number of possible points so far. To determine how many more points you must earn to achieve a target final grade, look at the grading scale to see how many points you must earn to make that grade, and then subtract your total points earned from that number. If the result is less than the number of points remaining, then yes, you can still earn that grade!

Can I complete an extra credit assignment to boost my grade? Sorry, but there is no extra credit in this course. Your best bets for maximizing your grade are attending all class meetings, contacting us early to ask any questions that you have about the material or assignments, submitting drafts of your assignments early for feedback, and participating in the practice quizzes and review sessions.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week	Tuesday	Thursday
1	8/29 Chapter 1 (key terms)	8/31 Chapter 2 (ethics)
2	9/5 Chapter 2 (ethics)	9/7 Chapter 3 (causality)
3	9/12 Chapter 3 (internal validity)	9/14 Chapter 3 (experiments)
4	9/19 Chapter 3 (quasi-exper.)	9/21 Chapters 1 and 3 review
5	9/26 Practice quiz 1	9/28 Review for Exam 1 Assignment 1 due
6	10/3 EXAM 1	10/5 Chapter 4 (sampling)
7	10/10 Chapter 4 (sampling)	10/12 Chapter 4 (NIBRS/UCR)
8	10/17 Chapter 5 (surveys)	10/19 Chapter 6 (surveys)
9	10/24 Chapter 9 (validity/reliab.)	10/26 Chapter 7 (qualitative)
10	10/31 Practice quiz 2	11/2 Review for Exam 2 Assignment 2 due
11	11/7 EXAM 2	11/9 Chapter 8 (second. analysis)
12	11/14 ASC Conference; no class	11/16 ASC Conference; no class
13	11/21 Chapter 11 (program eval.)	11/23 Thanksgiving; no class
14	11/28 Chapter 12 (statistics)	11/30 Chapter 13 (statistics)
15	12/5 Practice quiz 3	12/7 Review for Exam 3 Assignment 3 due
Finals week	EXAM 3	