

## **Introduction to Research Methods in Criminology**

CCJ 4700—Spring 2024

### ***Main Lecture***

Tuesday 3:05pm-4:20pm/HCB 0314

### ***Discussion Sections***

Thursday 9:45am-11:00am/CRM 0215

Thursday 1:20am-2:35pm/BEL 0116

Thursday 3:05pm-4:20pm/ CRM 0215

### **Professor**

Dr. Cecilia Chouhy

Email: [cchouhy@fsu.edu](mailto:cchouhy@fsu.edu)

Office: 302C College of Criminology and Criminal Justice Building

Hours: Tuesday and Thursday 11:00am-1:00pm

### **Teaching Assistant**

Emily Egan

Email: [eeegan@fsu.edu](mailto:eeegan@fsu.edu)

Office: 107D College of Criminology and Criminal Justice Building

Hours: Tuesday 12:30pm-2:30pm.

### **Course Objectives**

Throughout this course, you will be introduced to the basics of research methods in social sciences. Particular attention will be given to research conducted within the criminology and criminal justice field. The course will cover fundamental notions in research methods and introduce you with the different challenges and decisions faced by social sciences researchers. By the end of the semester, I expect that you will understand the difference between scientific and non-scientific knowledge and be able to distinguish different approaches to scientific inquiry in criminology. You should also become a critical consumer of scientific research in general and criminological research specifically. You will also learn to identify different decisions involved in each stage of research and the basic process of conducting research. Finally, you will be able to perform basic data analysis using SPSS.

### **Course Materials**

The required textbook for this course is:

Maxfield, Michael G., and Earl R. Babbie. (2012). *Basics of Research Methods for Criminal Justice and Criminology*, 3rd Edition. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, Cengage. ISBN 9781111346911

Additional materials will be posted on Canvas.

### **Attendance and Participation**

This course is divided in two types of sessions. Students should attend the main lecture on Tuesday and *one* of the different discussion sessions on Thursday. I encourage you to take advantage of this class format and use both the main lecture and discussion sections to learn about the course contents and ask questions. You will also be able to discuss the assignments and essays and use some of the discussion sections time to work on them. You will be asked to complete several in-class assignments that will be distributed throughout the course. The in-class assignments would require you to participate in in-class discussions or answer a specific question we pose to the class. I am aware that these are difficult times, and that life happens. I usually provide some flexibility and do not expect you to have a perfect attendance record. I will not require documentation for missing a few classes during the semester. Still, I expect you to show up to class regularly. You will be given full credit for attendance/participation if you complete a reasonable number of in-class assignments and attend frequently.

### **University Attendance Policy**

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.

### **Course Policies**

Students are expected to attend to class in-person. Exams will be administered in person, and assignments and essays will be completed and submitted online via Canvas. Lecture notes (in PowerPoint format) covering each of the modules of the course will be posted on Canvas

following the course calendar. The purpose of the lecture notes is to help you understand the readings and give you an overview of how the materials connect to each other. In class, we will review lecture notes and highlight the most important features of the lecture and what you should know. We will also answer questions that you might have about the materials. We encourage you to read the assigned materials before class and show up to the lecture and discussion sections with questions about the contents. Keep in mind that we will not repeat everything that is written in the notes, you should be able to read them and the assigned readings on your own. Study guides for each of the exams will be also posted.

Each week, you should read the corresponding lecture notes and the chapters assigned for the module covered that will be posted at the beginning of the week. Please be aware that you are expected to work for this course every week. You are strongly encouraged not to fall behind and to follow the course schedule. Showing up to class is key, you should be up to date with the readings and timely ask for help if you need clarification regarding any course content. Many of the topics covered are related to each other, so it is very important that you do not fall behind or wait until the exam to do the readings.

You are encouraged to contact us with questions and attend the office hours. We also realize that many of you may still be having a difficult time and face health, family, and work-related hardships. We will do our best to offer flexibility and help you succeed in this course. For that to happen, **we need you to keep an open communication with us**. If something comes up that interferes with you finishing an essay or an exam on time, please let us know as early as possible. If we do not hear from you, it will be harder to find a solution.

### **How to Communicate with the Instructors**

We strongly encourage to reach out to your instructors for questions and clarification regarding the course content. Dr. Chouhy will be available in person during her office hours. She will also be able to meet via Zoom upon request. Emily will be also available in person and accommodate meetings via Zoom. You are strongly encouraged to use these opportunities to ask questions and get help to complete the assignments and exams. We can also be reached via email and will be able to accommodate other times for meetings.

Remember to follow basic email etiquette when addressing instructors via email. Adding a salutation line with our names and a signature with your name at the bottom are some examples of best practices when communicating via email. Here you can find some useful guidelines too: <http://web.wellesley.edu/SocialComputing/Netiquette/netiquetteprofessor.html>.

### **Exams**

You are required to take two exams. Unless otherwise announced in class and posted on Canvas, ***exams will be administered in person.*** Each will be worth 20 points. Exams are not cumulative and will cover the materials from the previous exam to the last day of class before the exam. Make-up exams will be given only in cases of officially recognized excused absences (see University attendance policy above). If you are unable to take the exam due to a legitimate reason, you should contact us prior to the exam date. If you miss the exam due to an unforeseen reason, you must notify us within 24 hours of the exam and provide written documentation. If you do not take an exam you will be awarded 0 points for that exam.

### **Assignments**

You will conduct a basic research project throughout the semester. Working on a research project will familiarize you with the different stages involved in research and the practical decisions faced by scholars when conducting research. I will provide you with a dataset and suggest different topics to investigate with these data. You will complete the different stages of the research project working on two sequential assignments. Working on a research project may seem overwhelming. Keep in mind that you are not expected to complete a major piece of research and that your work in this task only intends to illustrate in practical terms how research works. It is important that you keep your project simple and do not try to cover too much. This is one of the hardest lessons for researchers to learn!

The first assignment will be worth 10 points and the second one 15 points. In the first assignment, you will formulate a research question, conduct a literature review, and formulate a hypothesis. In the second assignment, you will present your research design, analyze the data, and write a brief conclusion. Guidelines for each assignment will be discussed in class and posted on Canvas. You will submit the assignment through Canvas.

Keep in mind that the assignments are cumulative. Failure to complete the first assignment will result in the inability to work on the second. Late assignments will be accepted if a valid written excuse is presented. Late assignments for which no written excuse is presented may be accepted in some circumstances. However, the grade for this assignment might be cut. If you do not turn in an assignment, you will be awarded zero points for that assignment.

You are expected to work on the project throughout the semester outside of class and in some of the discussion sections time. You can work on this project by yourself or in groups of no more than three students. If you decide to work with other students, keep in mind that all the students in a group will be awarded the same grade. The same provisions for missing exams apply to assignments.

### **Essays**

Besides the exams and assignments, you will submit via Canvas two essays during the semester. Each essay will be worth 15 points. The essay instructions will be posted on Canvas and discussed in class. Essays should be submitted by each of their due dates. You should work on the essays individually. The same provisions for missing exams apply to essays.

### **Extra credit**

You will be able to earn 2 extra credit points by completing the learning objectives pre- and post-test quizzes. The purpose of the quizzes is not to grade you but to assess whether the course meets its learning goals. Your grade will not depend on the answers you provide to the quizzes, but on whether you complete them or not.

You will be given a quiz to complete the first week of class (the pre-test quiz). You will be expected to complete the same quiz a second time in the last week of class (the post-test quiz). The quiz consists of 6 multiple choice questions. You do not need to study for this quiz, and I ask you not to consult the course materials. You will receive 2 extra credit points if you complete both quizzes, regardless of whether your answers are correct or not.

### **Grading**

Your grade for this course will be based on your scores from two exams, essays, and

assignments. The maximum number of points will be 100 and will be distributed as follows:

***Participation/Attendance (5 points)***

***Assignments (25 points total)***

Assignment 1 = 10 points

Assignment 2 = 15 points

***Essays (30 points total)***

Essay 1 = 15 points

Essay 2 = 15 points

***Exams (40 points total)***

Exam 1 = 20 points

Exam 2 = 20 points

Final grades will be assigned according to the following point ranges:

|    |        |    |       |    |       |    |       |
|----|--------|----|-------|----|-------|----|-------|
| A  | 93-100 | B  | 83-86 | C  | 73-76 | D  | 63-66 |
| A- | 90-92  | B- | 80-82 | C- | 70-72 | D- | 60-62 |
| B+ | 87-89  | C+ | 77-79 | D+ | 67-69 | F  | 0-59  |

**Recording Class Lectures**

Students are permitted to make recordings of class lectures for a class in which the student is enrolled for personal educational use. A class lecture is defined as an educational presentation delivered by the instructor as part of a university course intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject. Recording class activities other than class lectures, including but not limited to lab or recitation sessions; student presentations (whether individually or part of a group); class discussions (except when incidental to the lecture); clinical practica and presentations involving patient histories and other protected health information; academic exercises involving student participation; test or examination administrations; field trips; and private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty member is prohibited. Recordings may not be used as a substitute for class participation and class attendance and recordings may not be published or shared without the written consent of the faculty member. Failure to adhere to these requirements may constitute a violation of **FSU's Student Code of Conduct** and will possibly have *legal consequences*. Students who record class

lectures are asked to do so in ways that do not make others feel reluctant to ask questions, explore new ideas, or otherwise participate in class. Students must monitor their recording so that they do not include participation by other students without permission. Students with disabilities will continue to have appropriate accommodations for recordings as established by the Office of Accessibility Services.

### **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/academic-resources/academic-integrity-and-grievances/academic-honor-policy>)

### **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>

### **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<br>University Center A, Rm.<br>4100<br>(850) 644-7161<br>Available 24/7/365<br>Office Hours: M-F 8-5<br><a href="https://dsst.fsu.edu/vap">https://dsst.fsu.edu/vap</a> | Counseling and<br>Psychological Services<br>Askew Student Life Center,<br>2nd floor<br>942 Learning Way<br>(850) 644-8255<br><a href="https://counseling.fsu.edu/">https://counseling.fsu.edu/</a> | University Health Services<br>Health and Wellness Center<br>(850) 644-6230<br><a href="https://uhs.fsu.edu/">https://uhs.fsu.edu/</a> |
|---|--|---|

### **Free Tutoring from FSU**

On-campus tutoring and writing assistance is available for many courses at Florida State University. For more information, visit the Academic Center for Excellence (ACE) Tutoring Services' comprehensive list of on-campus tutoring options - see <http://ace.fsu.edu/tutoring> or contact [tutor@fsu.edu](mailto:tutor@fsu.edu). High-quality tutoring is available by appointment and on a walk-in basis.



These services are offered by tutors trained to encourage the highest level of individual academic success while upholding personal academic integrity.

**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.

**Course Schedule\*\***

| Week # | Date    | Topic   | Module        |
|--------|---------|---|---------------|
| 1      | T 01/09 | Introduction  |               |
|        | R 01/11 | Introduction  |               |
| 2      | T 01/16 | Criminal Justice and Scientific Inquiry   | 1             |
|        | R 01/18 | Criminal Justice and Scientific Inquiry   | 1             |
| 3      | T 01/23 | General Issues in Research Design   | 3             |
|        | R 01/25 | General Issues in Research Design   | 3             |
| 4      | T 01/30 | General Issues in Research Design   | 4             |
|        | R 02/01 | Workshop Assignment 1   | 4             |
| 5      | T 02/06 | Concepts, Operationalization, and Measurement<br><i>Assignment 1 Due<br/>Submit Through Canvas by 9pm</i> | 5             |
|        | R 02/08 | Concepts, Operationalization, and Measurement   | 5             |
| 6      | T 02/13 | Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs   | 5             |
|        | R 02/15 | Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs   | 5             |
| 7      | T 02/20 | Review Chapters 1, 3, 4, and 5  | 1, 3-5        |
|        | R 02/22 | <b>Exam 1</b>   | <b>1, 3-5</b> |
| 8      | T 02/27 | Ethics and Criminal Justice Research  | 2             |

|    |                |  |               |
|----|----------------|--|---------------|
|    | R 02/29        | Workshop Essay 2 ( <i>Ethics and Criminal Justice Research</i> )<br><b>Essay 1 Due</b><br><b>Submit Through Canvas by 9pm</b>          | 2             |
| 9  | T 03/05        | Sampling   | 6             |
|    | R 03/07        | Sampling   | 6             |
| 10 | <b>T 03/12</b> | <b>No Class: Spring Break</b>  |               |
|    | <b>R 03/14</b> | <b>No Class: Spring Break</b>  |               |
| 11 | T 03/19        | Survey Research  | 7             |
|    | R 03/21        | Survey Research  | 7             |
| 12 | T 03/26        | Field Research   | 8             |
|    | R 03/28        | Field Research/<br>Workshop Essay 2 ( <i>Probable Causation Podcast</i> )<br><b>Essay 2 Due</b><br><b>Submit Through Canvas by 9pm</b> | 8             |
| 13 | T 04/02        | Secondary Data Analysis  | 9             |
|    | R 04/04        | Secondary Data Analysis  | 9             |
| 14 | T 04/09        | Review Chapters 6-9  | 6-9           |
|    | R 04/11        | <b>Exam 2</b>  | <b>6-9</b>    |
| 15 | T 04/16        | Data Analysis  | 11            |
|    | R 04/18        | Data Analysis  | 11            |
| 16 | T 04/23        | Workshop Assignment 2: SPSS  | Lecture notes |
|    | R 04/25        | Workshop Assignment 2: SPSS  | Lecture notes |
| 17 | R 04/30        | <b>Assignment 2 Due</b><br><b>Submit through Canvas by 9pm</b>   |               |

\*\* Dates and content are subject to change throughout the semester. Important changes will be announced in class and posted on the course website.