

Syllabus – Updated 01/08/2024
CCJ 4700 – Introduction to Research Methods in Criminology
Spring 2024 – Section 0015
Mo/We/Fr 10:40AM-11:30AM
BEL 0116

Instructor: Dr. Nic Swagar

Email: NSwagar@FSU.edu NOTE: Please do not use Canvas messages for communication

Office: 406 Criminology Building

Office Hours: Monday 1:00 – 3:00 or by appointment

Course Objectives

This is a course on the methods of criminological research, focusing on the principles of research design, methods of data collection, survey development, and techniques of data analysis. Special attention will be devoted to adopting the scientific method as a way of thinking and applying these principles to the impartial evaluation and interpretation of existing social research. Students will demonstrate these skills by conducting a literature review of scholarly findings in a topical area of criminological research. Students will also be required to recall terminology from lectures and textbook readings in order to apply research concepts during written exams. Finally, students will write basic computer code in a statistical software package to analyze quantitative data and then interpret the statistical output.

Required Textbooks

Withrow, Brian. 2016. *Research Methods in Crime and Justice*. 2nd Edition. ISBN: 978-1138124233. <https://www.amazon.com/dp/1138124230>

Nichols, Sharon, Paul Shutz, and Sofia Bahena. 2023. *How to Read, Evaluate, and Use Research*. 1st Edition. ISBN: 978-1544361482. <https://bit.ly/4700-2>

The main required textbook is widely available on the used market for less than \$50. The secondary textbook is available for purchase (but may have free previews of the first two chapters) on the publisher's website via the link above. You will need to complete the assigned readings in order to pass the course.

Course Expectations

This is an in-person/on-campus course and is designed to be delivered face-to-face. The course material will not be delivered online or in a hybrid format.

This is a very work-intensive course. For every hour spent in lecture you should expect to spend approximately 3 hours on work outside of class. Students that procrastinate on preparing for exams or completing assignments often find that they are unable to earn a passing grade.

Creating detailed notes from oral presentations is an essential skill for professional workplace readiness and students are expected to hone that skill in this course. Students must write their own, original notes. Lecture *outlines* will be posted on Canvas, but students are responsible for creating their own detailed lecture notes. The slides presented during lectures do not contain all lecture content, are therefore not considered lecture notes, and are not distributed. Do not take photos of the lecture slides; instead, take detailed notes.

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Academic Integrity

Many students major in criminology before applying to competitive programs that require a high GPA for admission such as law school and graduate school. To protect hard-working students from being overshadowed by dishonest students, the academic honor policy will be strictly enforced. Plagiarism, including re-submission of one's own work previously completed for a different course, will be reported. Participation in group chats that facilitate academic dishonesty will be reported. Assignments completed via hired services or artificial intelligence will be reported.

To protect the integrity of exams, students are not allowed to access mobile devices or wear smart watches, headphones/earbuds, hoodies, or other ear coverings during exams.

GRADES

Students can earn a total of 300 points as detailed below.

Course Engagement – 30 points (10%)

Students that miss more than a few lectures typically do poorly in this course and often do not pass. To help motivate students to attend lecture and succeed in this course, attendance is awarded one half point per lecture (approximately 20 points). I consider attending lecture a minimum requirement for students and giving credit for attendance is therefore a “bonus.” This is especially advantageous for students who feel that research methods will be a difficult course for them; these students can earn a portion of their grade by simply showing up. The obvious byproduct of showing up will be better performance on exams and assignments. As an additional bonus, students that miss no more than 3 lectures will have their final grade rounded up to the next level. For example, an 88% (B+) will become a 90% (A-).

Attendance at every scheduled lecture will be recorded via iClicker. Attendance will be recorded at the beginning of class, so be sure to arrive on time. Attempts to have your attendance recorded when not actually in attendance is academic misconduct and will be reported. Students that leave early, use their mobile device or computer for non-lecture purposes, or otherwise distract other students will have their attendance credit docked for that day.

If you miss a lecture (even if excused), you are responsible for learning the missed material by attending office hours or collaborating with other students. The instructor will not provide lecture notes.

The remainder of the course engagement grade (approximately 10 points) will be awarded by the subjective impression you make on your instructor during the semester. Get ready to enter the workforce by pretending that your instructor is your employer. Positive impressions will be earned by thoughtful participation in lectures, office hours, and email exchanges. Having a good attitude and pleasant demeanor will help you be remembered as a positive presence. Avoid making a negative impression by being late, asleep, distracted, bored, or taking photos of slides instead of writing your own detailed notes. Avoid making no impression by not interacting at all.

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Exams (50%)

You are required to take three 50-point exams. These exams will be multiple-choice format. Students that are not in attendance during a scheduled exam will receive zero points for that exam unless they have contacted me ***prior*** to the scheduled exam time with documentation of the extreme circumstances (e.g., a bonified medical emergency). Documentation must include contact information that can be used to confirm the legitimacy of the excused absence. Specifically, the documentation must be signed by a professional qualified to document an emergency (e.g., doctor, police officer, funeral director, etc.) and contain their **name, title, and work phone number**. The professional must clearly state that the emergency definitely precluded the student from being able to write the exam at the scheduled time. I will always contact the professional(s) listed to verify their statement.

In order to ensure the integrity of exams, make-up exams for excused absences will be delivered as in-person, timed short essay questions rather than multiple choice.

Assignments (25%)

You are required to complete one 45-point assignment and three 10-point assignments. The 45-point assignment will be submitted in four separate parts and involve researching a criminological topic using academic journal articles and writing a literature review. The other three assignments (10-points each) will involve conducting statistical analyses on criminological data that will be provided for you.

The last submission uploaded to Canvas will be the assignment graded, so be sure that you check your submission for accuracy (i.e., not blank, an old version, wrong file, unreadable, etc.) Late assignments will have their score reduced by three points for each day late.

Quizzes (15%)

You are required to complete three 15-point quizzes. These quizzes will be written in class and will be based on the three statistics assignments and associated lectures. Students that are not in attendance during a scheduled quiz will receive zero points for that quiz unless they have contacted me ***prior*** to the scheduled quiz time with documentation of the extreme circumstances. The required documentation is described above in the exams section.

Final Grade

This is a required course with a minimum grade of C needed to receive credit. Your grade for this course will be based entirely on the points earned from course engagement, exams, assignments, and quizzes (described above) with a maximum of 300 total points possible. Except for attendance, there will be no extra-credit opportunities. Letter grades will be assigned as follows:

A	100% to 93%	B-	<83% to 80%	D+	<70% to 67%
A-	<93% to 90%	C+	<80% to 77%	D	<67% to 63%
B+	<90% to 87%	C	<77% to 73%	D-	<63% to 60%
B	<87% to 83%	C-	<73% to 70%	F	<60%

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 written excuse. Consideration will also be given to students whose dependent children experience serious illness.

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>)

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 Department of Student Support and Transitions to learn more.

Americans With Disabilities Act

Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should: (1) register with and provide documentation to the Office of Accessibility Services; and (2) request a letter from the Office of Accessibility Services to be sent to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what type; and (3) meet (in person, via phone, email, skype, zoom, etc...) with each instructor to whom a letter of accommodation was sent to review approved accommodations. This syllabus and other class materials are available in alternative format upon request. For the latest version of this statement and 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 University Center A, Room 4100, (850) 644-7161, Available 24/7/365, Office Hours: M-F 8-5 https://dsst.fsu.edu/vap	Counseling & Psychological Services Askew Student Life Center, 2ndFloor, 942 Learning Way (850) 644-8255 https://counseling.fsu.edu/	University Health Services Health and Wellness Center (850) 644-6230 https://uhs.fsu.edu/
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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 contacttutor@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	Week of	Topics	Textbook Chapter(s)	
			Research Methods in Crime and Justice	How to Read, Evaluate, and Use Research
1	Jan 8	Introduction to CCJ 4700 Introduction to research methods	Exam 1	1 & 2
2	Jan 15 Jan 17	MLK day - no classes Research ethics		3
3	Jan 22	Classifying research Literature reviews		4 1 & 2
4	Feb 5	EXAM 1 Causality	Exam 2	5
5	Feb 12	Measurement		6
6	Feb 19	Variables, research questions, and hypotheses		7
7	Feb 26	LITERATURE REVIEW TOPIC APPROVAL DUE Sampling	Exam 3	8
8	Mar 4	EXAM 2 Experimental Design		9
9	Mar 11	Spring break - no classes		10
10	Mar 18	Surveys & Interviews LITERATURE REVIEW WORKSHEET #1 DUE		
11	Mar 25	Non-reactive methods	11	
12	Apr 1	LITERATURE REVIEW WORKSHEETS #2 - #4 DUE LITERATURE REVIEW CRITICAL REVIEW DUE Qualitative & evaluation research	12 & 13	
13	Apr 8	EXAM 3 Univariate statistical analysis		14
14	Apr 15	QUIZ 1 - UNIVARIATE STATISTICS STATS ASSIGNMENT 1 DUE Bivariate statistical analysis		14
15	Apr 22	QUIZ 2 - BIVARIATE STATISTICS STATS ASSIGNMENT 2 DUE Multivariate statistical analysis	14	
16	Apr 29	QUIZ 3 - MULTIVARIATE STATISTICS STATS ASSIGNMENT 3 DUE		

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