

Course Syllabus



CCJ4700 - Introduction to Research Methods

Tuesday/Thursday 11:35-12:05 -- HCB 314

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course will provide students with an understanding of the methods used to conduct criminological research. It will focus on the principles of research design, methods of data collection, survey development, and introductory techniques of data analysis. Special attention will be devoted to understanding, evaluating, and interpreting social research using existing data. After successfully completing this course, you will be able to:

1. describe the connection between theory and research
2. review the ethical standards that guide criminological research
3. summarize and interpret academic research
4. collect data from a representative sample
5. construct an effective survey
6. evaluate policies and programs
7. analyze data and conduct statistical analysis

INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF

Professor: Dr. Brian Stults

Email: bstults@fsu.edu (<mailto:bstults@fsu.edu>)

Phone: (850) 645-7376

Office: 302A Eppes Hall

Office hours: Tuesday 1:30-5:00 PM

TA: Matthew Vanden Bosch

Email: mvandenbosch@fsu.edu
(<mailto:mvandenbosch@fsu.edu>)

Office: 301C

Office hours: Thursday 9:00-11:00 AM

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK

Bachman, Ronet, and Russell K. Schutt. 2021. Fundamentals of Research in Criminology and Criminal Justice. 5th edition. ISBN: 9781544374055.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Your grade for this course will be based entirely on assignments and exams. Each of these is described in greater detail below. At times this is a very work-intensive class. All assignments will require significant time outside of class, so plan accordingly. Do not procrastinate or you will struggle to keep up. If you miss a class, you are responsible for getting notes from another student. I will not provide my lecture notes. Attendance will not be part of your grade, but *you should not expect to pass the course if you do not attend all class meetings*.

- **Assignments**

You are required to complete four 25-point assignments during the semester. This work will be done outside of class. The first assignment will involve researching a criminological topic using academic journal articles and writing a literature review. The other three assignments will involve conducting statistical analysis using criminological data that will be provided for you. These assignments require the use of a software program called SPSS, which is available via the FSU Virtual Lab. You can access the Virtual Lab from any computer (on or off campus) using your web browser. Detailed instructions for all assignments will be provided in class and on Canvas. All assignments will be submitted on Canvas. ANY late assignments will be marked down. Failure to turn in an assignment will result in zero points being awarded for that assignment.

- **Exams**

You are required to take three 50-point in-class exams during the semester. Make-up exams will be given only under extreme circumstances (such as a medical emergency), and you are required to provide documentation. Failure to take an exam will result in zero points being awarded for that exam. There will not be a final exam during finals week.

GRADING

As described above, your grade for this course will be based entirely on your scores from the three exams and the four assignments. This means there will be a maximum of 250 possible points. There will be no opportunities for extra credit. The following cutoffs will be used to determine your final letter grade:

A	232-250	B	207-216	C	182-191	D	157-166
A-	225-231	B-	200-206	C-	175-181	D-	150-156
B+	217-224	C+	192-199	D+	167-174	F	0-149

ADDITIONAL COURSE POLICIES

- You are expected to meet high standards of academic writing, including proper grammar, formatting, sentence construction, and spelling. Writing quality will be part of your grade. If you need assistance with your writing, I strongly encourage you to make an appointment to speak with someone at the

FSU Reading/Writing Center at fsu.mywconline.com  (<http://fsu.mywconline.com>). At the very least, be sure to carefully review all writing assignments before submitting them.

- You are responsible for learning how to use the various Canvas features. If you have any questions about this, click on the “Help” button on the course home page.
- You are responsible for setting up an FSU e-mail account and routinely checking it so that you receive messages that I send to the class.
- 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 the academic standards of the course while empowering the student to meet the integral requirements of the course.

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.

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 an 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 (<mailto:%20oas@fsu.edu>)

<https://dsst.fsu.edu/oas>  (<https://dsst.fsu.edu/oas>)

- The Florida State University Academic Honor Policy outlines the University's expectations for the integrity of student's 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> ) (<http://fda.fsu.edu/academic-resources/academic-integrity-and-grievances/academic-honor-policy>)

- 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.
- 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>  (<https://dsst.fsu.edu/vap>)

Counseling and Psychological Services

Askew Student Life Center, 2nd floor

942 Learning Way

(850) 644-8255

<https://counseling.fsu.edu/>  (<https://counseling.fsu.edu/>)

University Health Services

Health and Wellness Center

(850) 644-6230

<https://uhs.fsu.edu/>  (<https://uhs.fsu.edu/>)

- I do not expect to make any changes to the course schedule. If necessary, notice of any changes will be provided in class and on Canvas (with e-mails and course announcements), and you are responsible for getting this information.

COURSE SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNED READINGS

Week 1 – January 9 & 11

Topic: Course overview and introduction

Readings: Chapter 1

Week 2 – January 16 & 18

Topic: Theory and Ethics

Readings: Chapters 2 & 3

Week 3 – January 23 & 25

Topic: Conceptualization and Operationalization

Readings: Chapter 4

Week 4 – January 30 & February 1

EXAM 1 TUESDAY 01/30 (CHAPTERS 1-4)

Topic: Discuss literature review assignment

Readings: none

Week 5 – February 6 & 8

Topic: Sampling

Readings: Chapter 5

Week 6 – February 13 & 15

Topic: Causation and Experimental Design

Readings: Chapter 6

Week 7 – February 20 & 22

Topic: Survey Design and Construction

Readings: Chapter 7

Week 8 – February 27 & 29

EXAM 2 TUESDAY 02/27 (CHAPTERS 5-7)

Topic: Qualitative Methods

Readings: Chapter 8

Week 9 – March 5 & 7

Content Analysis and Secondary Data

Readings: Chapter 9

LITERATURE REVIEW DUE THURSDAY 03/07

Week 10 – March 12 & 14

Spring Break – No Class This Week

Week 11 – March 19 & 21

Topic: Evaluation and Policy Analysis

Readings: Chapter 10

Week 12 – March 26 & 28

EXAM 3 TUESDAY 03/26 (CHAPTERS 8-10)

Topic: Discuss statistics assignments

Readings: none

Week 13 – April 2 & 4

Topic: Univariate Analysis

Readings: Chapters 11 & 12

Week 14 – April 9 & 11

Topic: Bivariate Analysis

Readings: Chapters 11 & 12 (cont.)

STATS ASSIGNMENT 1 DUE THURSDAY 04/11

Week 15 – April 16 & 18

Topic: Multivariate Analysis

Readings: Chapters 11 & 12 (cont.)








STATS ASSIGNMENT 2 DUE THURSDAY 04/18

Week 16 – April 23 & 25

Topic: Putting it all together

STATS ASSIGNMENT 3 DUE THURSDAY 04/25

Course Summary:

Date	Details	Due
Tue Jan 30, 2024	 Exam 1 (https://fsu.instructure.com/courses/272631/assignments/2224732)	due by 4:20pm
Tue Feb 27, 2024	 Exam 2 (https://fsu.instructure.com/courses/272631/assignments/2224733)	due by 4:20pm
Thu Mar 7, 2024	 Literature review (https://fsu.instructure.com/courses/272631/assignments/2224735)	due by 11:59pm
Tue Mar 26, 2024	 Exam 3 (https://fsu.instructure.com/courses/272631/assignments/2224734)	due by 4:20pm
Thu Apr 11, 2024	 Statistics assignment 1 (https://fsu.instructure.com/courses/272631/assignments/2224736)	due by 11:59pm
Thu Apr 18, 2024	 Statistics assignment 2 (https://fsu.instructure.com/courses/272631/assignments/2224737)	due by 11:59pm
Thu Apr 25, 2024	 Statistics assignment 3 (https://fsu.instructure.com/courses/272631/assignments/2224738)	due by 11:59pm