

Course Syllabus
CRJU 7706 (Advanced Research Methods and Computer Applications)
(Monday, 5 PM – 7:45 PM; Classroom SO 4060)

Instructor: Dr. Sutham Cobkit

Office: SO 4064

Office Hours: Monday 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm
 Thursday 10:00 am – 11:00 am
 Or by appointment

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Prerequisite: Admission to the MSCJ Program or permission of the MSCJ Program Director.

Course description: This course helps students develop familiarity with methods of research, design and analysis in the field of criminal justice. Survey and research design, research and sampling techniques, and statistical and analytical methods will be covered. The course includes intense hands-on computer work using statistical software.

Course Objectives: At the end of this course, each student should be able to:

- 1) Discuss and evaluate all the important concepts in social science research and their meanings pertaining to the practical applications in research techniques.
- 2) Compare qualitative research with quantitative research.
- 3) Discuss research design and the use of appropriate research techniques based on relative strengths and weaknesses.
- 4) Learn basic procedures of data analysis and some advanced analyses using the SPSS program.
- 5) Have the opportunity to write a basic academic research paper.
- 6) Apply the ethical rules in criminal justice research through the Institutional Review Board (IRB).
- 7) Demonstrate how to write an academic research paper conforming to the American Psychological Association style (APA)

Required Text:

Essential Criminal Justice and Criminology Research Methods by Peter B. Kraska and W. Lawrence Neuman. (2011). Prentice Hall, Inc. ISBN 978-0-13-700393-8

Recommended Text:

How to Use SPSS by Cronk, B.C. (2004). Pyrczak Publishing. ISBN 1-884585-42-6

There will be supplemental articles assigned for reading.

Grading Policy:

Grades in this class will be calculated based on an accumulative point system. The total point is 500. The final grade will not be curved, and the final grading scale below will be applied:

A = 90%-100% or 450 - 500 points

B = 80%-89% or 400 - 449 points
 C = 70%-79% or 350 - 399 points
 D = 60%-69% or 300 - 349 points
 F = less than 60% or 300 or fewer points

Grade distribution will be based on the following:

Class Requirement	Sub-Point	Total Point
Journal review		50
- Summary of the article	20	
- Application and discussion	30	
Midterm Exam	-	100
Final Exam	-	100
Research Paper		120
- IRB approval (cover letter and survey)	20	
- Introduction	10	
- Literature review	20	
- Methodology	10	
- Findings and discussions	20	
- Conclusion	10	
- Abstract	10	
- APA format	10	
- Peer-reviewed References	10	
Research Paper Presentation		30
- Preparation	15	
- Organization and clarity	15	
Class Attendance and Participation	-	100
Total		500

Journal Review: You will review your select criminal justice related article. Your review will be 4-5 pages in length (1-2 pages for the summary of the article, including its methodology; 1-2 pages for the relevancy, advantages, and disadvantages of the methods used; and 1 page for conclusion and discussion). The paper will use the Times New Roman font size 12 and be double-spaced with one inch margin on all sides. To strengthen the quality of the paper, you should apply additional information from other refereed articles. The paper must conform to the APA writing style.

Research Paper: You will write a research-oriented paper on a topic of mutual agreement between you and the instructor. The paper will include the sections on introduction, literature review, methodology, and findings, discussion, and conclusion, and references. It will use the Times New Roman font size 12 and be double-spaced with one inch margin on all sides. The paper must conform to the APA writing style. See the guidelines for the research paper at the end.

Research Paper Presentation: You are required to conduct a 15-20 minute presentation on your research paper. The use of handouts and PowerPoint slides are encouraged for the presentation.

Class Attendance and Participation: KSU expects students to attend course lectures on a regular basis. Successful learning and understanding of the class materials require class attendance and active participation in classroom discussions. Note taking in the class is recommended since all readings from the text, handouts, and videos are subject to inclusion on exams. Students will be penalized 20 points for every class missed.

Academic Integrity Statement: Every KSU student is responsible for upholding the provisions of the Student Code of Conduct, as published in the Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs. Section II of the Student Code of Conduct addresses the University's policy on academic honesty, including provisions regarding plagiarism and cheating, unauthorized access to University materials, misrepresentation/falsification of University records or academic work, malicious removal, retention, or destruction of library materials, malicious/intentional misuse of computer facilities and/or services, and misuse of student identification cards. Incidents of alleged academic misconduct will be handled through the established procedures of the University Judiciary program, which includes either an "informal" resolution by a faculty member, resulting in a grade adjustment, or a formal hearing procedure, which may subject a student to the Code of Conduct's minimum one semester suspension requirement.

Note: Section II A of the KSU Student Code of Conduct was modified beginning fall semester 2011 to address problems with the misuse of electronic devices and the resubmission of the same work in two classes. The revised section IIA reads as follows.

II A. Plagiarism and Cheating

No student shall receive, attempt to receive, knowingly give or attempt to give unauthorized assistance in the preparation of any work required to be submitted for credit (including examinations, laboratory reports, essays, themes, term papers, etc.). Unless specifically authorized, the presence and/or use of electronic devices during an examination, quiz, or other class assignment is considered cheating. Engaging in any behavior which a professor prohibits as academic misconduct in the syllabus or in class discussion is cheating. When direct quotations are used, they should be indicated, and when the ideas, theories, data, figures, graphs, programs, electronic based information or illustrations of someone other than the student are incorporated into a paper or used in a project, they should be duly acknowledged. No student may submit the same, or substantially the same, paper or other assignment for credit in more than one class without the prior permission of the current professor(s).

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: KSU provides program accessibility and reasonable accommodations for students defined as disabled under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 or the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. A number of services are available to help disabled students with their academic work. In order to make arrangements for special services, students must visit the Office of Disabled Student Support Services (located on the second floor of the Student Center) and arrange an individual assistance plan.

Writing Center: KSU also offers a free service to all students with the goals of not only helping students write better papers, but also making the students become better writers. I encourage you to visit their office in the Humanities Building (Room 242) and talk to their personnel about your writing assignments. You can also go to their website at <http://www.kennesaw.edu/english/WritingCenter/> and click on the “Make an Appointment” link.

Incompletes: According to the KSU catalog regarding an “incomplete grade (I), a grade of incomplete “will be awarded only when the student has done satisfactory work up to the last two weeks of the semester, but for nonacademic reasons beyond his/her control is unable to meet the full requirements of the course.”

Make-Up Exam Policy: Each student is expected to take all the exams on the scheduled dates. Students with a valid excuse (and hopefully with prior approval from the instructor) for missing a scheduled exam may make up one test. Make-up exams will be given at the end of the semester and may consist entirely of essay questions. Students can make up one exam only.

Reading Assignments

Classroom presentations by the instructor will go beyond the scope of the reading assignments. It will be assumed that students know the concepts and terms presented in the reading materials. Do *not* assume that all of the materials in the text will be presented in the classroom.

	Dates	Topics	Readings
Week 1	Aug. 20	Introduction and class requirements Criminal justice research	Chapter 1
Week 2	Aug. 27	The nature of science and research Philosophical and theoretical foundations The IRB application and process	Chapter 2 Chapter 3
Week 3	Sep. 3	Labor Day (No Class)	
Week 4	Sep. 10	Review the cover letter, the instrument (IRB submission) Survey and interview methods How to write the introduction section	Due: Journal Review Chapter 8

		Library tour (database search)	
Week 5	Sep. 17	Ethics and reviewing the literature How to write the literature review section	Chapter 4 Handouts
Week 6	Sep. 24	Quantitative and qualitative research design Review for midterm	Chapter 5
Week 7	Oct. 1	Midterm Exam	
Week 8	Oct. 8	Quantitative and qualitative measurement and sampling	Chapter 6 Due: -Cover letter -Survey instrument -Introduction section -Lit. Review section & references
Week 9	Oct. 15	Experimental and quasi-experimental crime and justice research How to write the methodology section	Chapter 7
Week 10	Oct. 22	POP Conference – No class (Students work on their assignment)	
Week 11	Oct. 29	The APA format How to write the abstract and conclusion sections	The APA manual Handouts
Week 12	Nov. 5	Nonreactive research: Content analysis Introduction to the SPSS program (English Building, Room# 251—Lab activity)	Chapter 9 SPSS Manual
Week 13	Nov. 12	Crime and justice ethnographic field research (English Building, Room# 251 – Lab activity)	Chapter 10 Bring all the complete surveys and a flash drive
Week 14	Nov. 19	Quantitative and qualitative analysis (English Building, Room# 251—Lab activity)	Chapter 11
Week 15	Nov. 26	Lap: Use of the SPSS program (English Building, Room# 251—Lab activity)	SPSS Manual
Week 16	Dec. 3	Review for final exam Paper presentation	Due: -Methods section -Findings, discussion, and

			conclusion sections -Abstract page
	Dec. 7	Final Take-Home Exam Due	

Note: Oct. 12 – Last day to withdraw without academic penalty.

Some Tips for the Research Paper

- 1) If possible, avoid developing your own questionnaire. Use the questionnaire that has already been tested for its validity and reliability. You are allowed to modify and revise your select questionnaire to meet the requirements of this class.
- 2) Try to read and understand the samples of article given to you so that you have some understanding of what should be included in each section as well as the format of the paper, especially the tables and the citations, both in the text and reference sections.
- 3) Do not use personal nouns in the paper (i.e., I, you, we).
- 4) Do not use the terms V1, V2, V3, and so forth to explain the variables. Be specific and mention the name of each variable.
- 5) Remember that every step of the research paper takes time, so do not procrastinate.
- 6) Examples of appropriate questionnaire topics:
 - 6.1 Public attitudes toward police performance, police traffic enforcement, community policing programs, crime prevention program.
 - 6.2 Public attitudes toward prison overcrowding, rights of inmates in prisons, education program in prison, or other training or rehabilitation programs in prisons.
 - 6.3 Police officers' attitudes toward their promotion system, in-service police training program, pre-service police training program, or disciplinary regulations.

Check Points for Your Term Paper

(Based on my general observations of students' papers in the past)

1. Correct all minor grammatical or spelling errors.
2. Include appropriate (sub)headings in the paper because they make the paper easy to follow.
3. Have an introductory paragraph, which tells readers about the issue addressed in the paper. The paper's direction and topics included in the paper should be mentioned in the last paragraph of the introduction. After reading the introduction, the readers should be able to know

or predict what will be mentioned the rest of the paper. (A paper should consist of an introduction, its body, and a conclusion.)

4. Do not use personal nouns such as I, you, or we.
5. Do not cite direct quotes. If needs be, you should have only a few of them. You then still have to explain what each quote means to you.
6. Use correct citations in the text. In a normal situation, only the last name(s) of the authors and year of publication will be cited. Page number(s) need to be cited only if you cite a direct quote or you cite information from a book.
7. Follow the correct format of the references in the reference section. Need to check the writing manual for proper format such as the APA manual.
8. If you cite a case law in the text, the complete citation of such case law must be included in the reference section.
9. Include citations and references when appropriate. For example, any time the word “a study,” “studies,” “a researcher,” or “researchers” is mentioned, there should be a citation in the text and a reference at the end.
10. Gender bias. Try to use neutral terms (plural forms) like police officers instead of an officer (he or she).
11. Do not be too descriptive in the writing (i.e., just regurgitate the information from the source instead of including some analytical information).
12. Cite appropriate academic/refereed articles as sources of information. This issue indicates the lack of time spent in the library doing the literature search.
13. Use a paper topic related to the class (i.e., criminal justice issues), title being not too board, and title reflecting what are in the paper. This is why some detailed outline of a term paper is necessary and helpful.
14. Do not forget to include page numbers in your paper.
15. Use acronyms appropriately. An acronym should be used only after such a particular phrase has been spelled out the first time.
16. Do not write a paragraph that is too long. Each paragraph should be about half a page.

Guidelines for the Research Paper

The student can choose a topic for his/her own paper, or the student can consult with the instructor for a proper research topic. In case that the student selects his/her own topic, the

chosen topic must be known to and approved by the instructor. The research paper completed on the topic that was not approved by the instructor will not be accepted and will receive a zero for the grade.

For the research paper, the chosen topic must be criminal justice related. Therefore, your topic must be about the function and operation of the main three criminal justice components (i.e., police, corrections, or court). It is appropriate to survey the attitudes of the public toward the operation or any work-related issues of the police, corrections, or court. It is NOT acceptable to survey the public attitudes toward the issues such as drug legalization, euthanasia, or death penalty since these are social issues.

Each student is encouraged to find and use an existing survey questionnaire that deals with a criminal justice issue. Students may use an existing questionnaire or they develop some of their own survey questions, the final products they need for their research paper will consist of two items:

- (1) One-page cover letter for the study
- (2) A survey questionnaire that contains:
 - Fifteen-twenty (15-20) Likert-type scale questions
 - Two (2) open-ended questions
 - Six-eight (6-8) demographic questions

Regarding the format, the paper must:

- be typed, double-spaced with the Times font size 12.
- have one-inch margin on all sides.
- conform to the American Psychological Association (APA) style.
- be error-free regarding grammar and spelling.
- be between 13 to 15 pages in length, excluding the title page, the abstract page, and the references. There must be at least four refereed or peer-reviewed articles cited.

Sections of the Research Paper

The research paper must include the following sections in that order:

- 1) The title page (title of the paper, your name, course number and semester)
- 2) The abstract page (one paragraph between 100 and 150 words)
- 3) The introduction section (no more than 2 pages) (to convince readers that the topic is worth studying). Put the title of the paper on the first page, too.

- Brief history/discussion of the issue (2-3 paragraphs). If possible, some empirical studies' findings and/or statistics should be included in order to support your points.
 - The purpose and benefits/significance of the study and the importance of the study (the last paragraph of the introduction). It also must include 2-3 research questions that your study attempts to answer.
- 4) The literature review section (3-4 pages) (to see what related studies have been conducted up to date).
- Empirical studies (within the past ten years) that were conducted and that are related to the paper topic should be summarized and included. Your main source for these studies must be academic (refereed) journals. Information received from online websites, magazines, newspapers, books, and other non-academic articles alone will be insufficient and will not be credited.
 - At the end of this section (i.e., the last paragraph), you should mention how your study can fill a gap in the literature and contribute to future study in the field. In other words, what your study will examine that has not been studied previously.
- 5) The methodology section (3 pages) (describe 3 aspects: Samples, Instrument and Variables, and Data Collection Process)
- What was your population and samples? (Why did you choose them as your study samples? What were your sampling technique (such as random, convenient, snow ball, or selective) and sampling procedure? Why did you use that sampling technique?
 - Did you have any contact person to collect your data? Did you have a cover letter that explains about your study? Describe them.
 - Either qualitative or quantitative data can be used for your study. Quantitative data also include official data you can find. For survey research, a minimum of 45 samples is required.
 - What were your independent and dependent variables? How did you operationalize (or measure) these independent and dependent variables? For example, you may say that "the Likert-type scale is used to measure the variables with 1 representing strongly disagree, 2 for disagree.....and 5 for strongly agree. Or you might measure the variables using yes/no/don't know answers. Just mention that.

This section must be mentioned in very detailed as to what kinds of variables you want to examine. Basically, the variables come from the questions items in your research instrument unless you use secondary data (i.e., official data). You must mention all of the variables in your study, not just some of them. One of the ways to do this is to break the question items into sub-groups.

- What was your data-collection technique (i.e., interview survey, self-administered survey, telephone interview survey, or using official data)? What were the procedures of this data collection process, including the contact persons and the time spent to get

the data back and how the completed questionnaires were collected? What was the time period of the data collection? What was the response rate?

- What statistical techniques were used to analyze the data? You must at least include descriptive statistics (namely, frequency/percentage and mean scores), and Pearson's correlation (only between dependent and independent variables).

Note: Correlation analysis can be used only for continuous variables such as age, income, education, and length of time. Therefore, dummy coding must be used for categorical variables such as a race, gender, religion, rank, and occupation before you can run the correlation.

You must mention which variables were recoded as dummy variables and how in the methodology section, or you can mention in a note under the correlation table.

Note: In doing real research, the formal letter of support from the agency where the questionnaire will be administered must be attached with the application for the Human Subject Committee (IRB).

6) The findings and discussion sections of the study (3-5 pages, plus the tables)

Under normal circumstances, you are recommended to include 4 tables in the findings section, each of which must be self-explanatory:

1. Table 1 includes the descriptive result (frequency/percentage) of the demographic/independent variables such as age, gender, income, religion, educational level, length of time in the service, and ethnicity. An extra table may be needed for other independent variables other than the demographic ones.
2. Table 2 includes the frequency/percentage of the dependent variables.
3. Table 3 includes the mean scores of the dependent variables.
4. Table 4 includes the respondents' comments from the open-ended question.
5. Table 5 includes the correlation coefficients between five selected dependent variables and five independent variables (i.e., age, education, and race). For the correlation analysis, although all of the data were presented in the table, your interpretation of the results must include three points: (1) which variables are significantly correlated; (2) whether correlation is positive (direct) or negative (indirect); and (3) what such a relationship means.

Each table must be on the same page and must have its specific heading. For the table, you may reduce the font size if needed. You should number each table and put each of the tables immediately following the explanation. Do not leave any space on the page that a table is included; fill them with texts.

Interpretation of results from data analysis (what the data from each table tell you) must be mentioned for all of the variables of each table. For example, if you have 10 question items in

your survey instrument, all of them must be reported. An effective way of interpreting the results is to report them as a group when possible, not one by one.

Note: There must not be any personal opinions or any other information involved. Just interpret what the findings tell you. Before mentioning other results, you should report the highest and the lowest values of the frequency/percentage, mean, and correlation coefficients.

7) Conclusion of the study (3-4 paragraphs)

- The summary of the study's findings.
- Concluding points that you can make based on what the study's findings suggest.
- Any weaknesses of the study. This can be mentioned in the area of sampling used, design of the survey, statistical techniques used, and the (independent and/or dependent) variables examined in the study.
- Some recommended studies for future research based on what your study found.