

KENNESAW STATE UNIVERSITY  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE

**Research Methods in Criminal Justice**  
**CRJU 3301-03 CRN:80320**  
**Fall 2013**

**T, R 5:00 -6:15 PM Room: SSB 3025**  
August 16 – December 11

Professor Gang Lee, Ph.D.

Office: Social Science Building, 4072  
Office Hours: T. 11:00-12:30, W 1:30-3:00 and by appointment  
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*Course Textbook:*

*Required*

The Practice of Research in Criminology and Criminal Justice, 5rd Edition  
Ronet Bachman and Russell K. Schutt 2013 Sage  
ISBN: 9781452258195

*Course Description:*

This course provides an introduction to concepts and techniques of social science research. Students will become familiar with levels of measurement, sampling techniques, research design, and research techniques, and apply these techniques to the study of specific research questions in criminal justice.

*Course Objectives:*

1. Set up research problems, collect data, and measure research concepts.
2. Interpret and evaluate quantitative research methods.
3. Critically evaluate research data supporting assessment tools and intervention strategies.
4. Develop and prepare basic research methods in response to a RFP (Request for Proposal) in Criminal Justice agency.

## *Course Requirements:*

### **Class Participation and Attendance:**

1. Class attendances are mandatory, and students are expected to come to all classes and be on time.
2. Be prepared to discuss the assigned readings, and become familiar with scholarly articles that test theories and evaluate criminal justice programs.
3. Any significant tardy or early departure from class will be figured as an absence.
4. Students who miss the **first two weeks** will be dropped so that others may register for the course. In case of **6 or more unexcused absences**, the instructor reserves the right to assign you a failing grade for the course.
5. Roll will be checked. Use a distinctive signature consistently, and do not print or make other marks on the roll sheet. Above all, do not sign for someone else, as this constitutes a serious offense (cheating), and any suspected cases of it are fully investigated.
6. Classes missed for legitimate reasons, such as illness, temporary duty, are excusable with an official written excuse; however, the student must make up all missed work.

### **D2L Self-Check Quizzes**

There will be 4 self-test style assignments for the semester in the form of a 10 question quiz.

I will post a set of quizzes on D2L. The quiz will be available during the class period (10:30-11:50), but students must answer all questions within **30 minutes**.

The quizzes will insure that students are reading and evaluation the class material in a timely fashion. The quiz will contain a combination of true/false, multiple choice, covering the concepts discussed in the textbook.

There is no make-up quiz in any situations.

### **Group Discussions**

There will be 4 group discussions in the semester. Students will be assigned to groups. Students in the group have the opportunity to discuss your arguments and to offer feedback on each others.

I will post a set of questions on D2L about the readings. After careful reading and analysis of the assigned texts, you must individually write a response to the assigned questions. Each discussion will require students to write at least 100 words in response to a question.

The deadline for initial discussion post is the following Thursday of the week.

Each student will also review all initial post using 1-5 rating scale (1= Need Improvement, 5=Exceptional). The deadline for the peer review is the following day of the initial posting deadline (Friday).

These discussion postings will focus on your ideas about the readings, not on summaries. Discussion postings will be graded according to the following criteria:

- Does the commentary show evidence of having read the material?
- Does the commentary show evidence of thinking about the reading beyond just summarizing it? (This may include extension to new circumstances/other readings, contradictory evidence, internal (in)consistency, and analyses of assumptions.)
- Does the commentary include relevant evidence to support its own argument?

### **Research Proposal:**

The student will write a research proposal on a research problem in criminal justice or criminology. You have the freedom to choose whichever topic you like in criminal justice or criminology. The primary emphasis in the research proposal is on your ability to evaluate existing research and design your own research project.

The proposal must be NO less than 5 pages and No more than 7 pages long. The page length does not include the references and other appendices if you want to attach.

The due date of the proposal is Nov. 27. This assignment is worth 20% of your final grade.

#### Outline of the Proposal

- |     |   |               |
|-----|---|---------------|
| I.  | Introduction  |               |
|     | a. Brief definition of central research question                | 1-2 sentences |
|     | b. Brief justification of why the question is worthy of inquiry | 1 paragraph   |
|     | c. Background review of literature related to the topic         | 1 pages       |
| II  | Theory and Research   |               |
|     | a. Theory outlined in simple, precise terms                     | ½ page        |
|     | b. Outline of specific hypotheses                               | ½ page        |
| III | Research Design and Methods                                     |               |
|     | a. Overall description of the research design                   | ½ page        |
|     | b. Operational definitions of all measurements (variables)      | 1 page        |
|     | c. Description of sampling design and unit of analysis          | 1 page        |
| IV  | References  |               |

The student should provide an overview of the methodological choices. Describe your method of data collection (survey, experiment, etc) and explain why you have chosen to use that method. You should need to demonstrate conceptual definitions of measurements (independent, dependent and control variables). Also, you must identify the sampling design and the size of sample.

### Exams: Two In-Class Exams:

While the assimilation of lecture and text-related material is a basic requirement, rote memorization or "parroting" of stock answers is not the major objective. The examinations will be so devised as to call for *basic understanding* of the material covered in lectures and the reading assignments. There will be two examinations given during the course of the semester, each being worth 30% of the final grade.

The two exams will contain a combination of true/false, multiple choice, fill-in the blank, short answer, and essay questions at a rather high degree of difficulty, and reflects your understanding rather than ability to memorize and/or look up information. The instructor reserves the right to override any disagreement over right answers.

The exams will not be comprehensive (non-cumulative).

Make-up exams will not be given except in truly unusual circumstances. If you have a legitimate reason for missing the exam, you will be expected to take the exam early. Documentation of these circumstances (e.g. a doctor's note) is required. Should you need to request taking an exam early, please submit the reason for this **request in writing** for consideration no less than 72 hours prior to the scheduled date for the exam.

### ***Grading Distribution:***

The final course grade will be determined using the following measurements:

Attendance and Class Participation	15 %
4 quizzes	10 %
4 discussions	15 %
Research Proposal	20 %
First Exam:	20 %
Final Exam:	20 %
Total:	100 %

The following will be used to assign course letter grades:

A: 90-100    B: 80-89    C: 70-79    D: 60-69    F: Below 60

\*If you have an academic reason for missing the exam, you will be expected to take the exam early. Make-up exams will not be given except in truly unusual circumstances. Should you need to request taking an exam early, please submit the reason for this request in writing for **consideration** no less than 72 hours prior to the scheduled date for the exam.

I will not discuss class material, assignments, examinations, and grades over the phone and email.

## **Portable Electronic Devices:**

Please turn off or silence all cellular telephones prior to class time. If you choose to leave class to answer a page or a phone call, do not return to class.

Guideline for the use of wireless laptop computer

- Charge your laptop batteries fully before coming to class.
- Set your laptop volume control to mute or off before coming to class.
- Do not engage in unauthorized communication or entertainment (web surfing, instant messaging, chat room chatting, DVD viewing, music playing, game playing, etc.) during class unless it is part of the lesson.

## **Academic Honesty**

Academic dishonesty is a very serious matter in this course.

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.

The answers of the exams and quizzes must be entirely your own. Both the provider and receiver of cheating on exam are equally at fault and will be equally penalized.

**PLEASE NOTE: The information on this syllabus is subject to change. Any changes (e.g., dates of exams, subjects covered) will be announced in class and/or via email.**

**PLEASE NOTE: Missed classes, missed or late assignments, and missed quizzes can have a significant effect on your overall grade. Exams cannot be made up except in the case of a true emergency. Written documentation is required for an absence on the day of the exam. The final exam will be given *only* at the time scheduled by the university.**

**Please note:**

**This syllabus is available in alternative formats upon request to students with disabilities.**

**Please contact the instructor.**

Any student with a disability that is within the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act must inform their instructor at the beginning of the term of their special needs, including equipment that they feel are essential for completing the requirements of this course. Students with disabilities must self-identify before any accommodations can be made. The instructor will make every effort to provide reasonable accommodations when and where appropriate. Students with disabilities who believe that they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact

Please contact them for more information:

Carmichael Student Center Addition, Second Floor, Suite 267, 770-423-6443

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### Tentative Class Meeting and Examination Schedule:

Date		Topic	Readings
Aug	20	Orientation and Course Introduction	
	22	Science, Society, and Criminological Research	Bachman 1
	27	The Process of Criminological Research	Bachman 2
	29	Problems of Criminological Research	
Sep	3	Ethical Issues Philosophy of Social Research	Bachman 3
	5	<b>(D2L Quiz 1 and Group Discussion 1)</b>	
	10	Conceptualization	Bachman 4
	12	Measurement Tools	
	17	Sampling I	Bachman 5
	19	Sampling II	
	24	Sampling III	
	26	<b>(D2L Quiz 2 and Group Discussion 2)</b>	
Oct	1	Causation	Bachman 6
	3	Research Design	
	8	Experimental Designs	Bachman 7
	10	<b>FIRST EXAM</b>	
	15	Survey Research I	Bachman 8
	17	Survey Research II	
	22	Qualitative Methods and Analysis	Bachman 9
	24	Historical, Secondary, and Content Analysis	
	29	Crime Mapping	Bachman 10
	30	<b>(D2L Quiz 3 and Group Discussion 3)</b>	
Nov	5	Evaluation Methods	Bachman 11
	7	Policy Analysis	
	12	Mixing and Comparing Methods	Bachman 12
	14	Data Analysis I	
	19	Data Analysis II	Bachman 13
	21	<b>(D2L Quiz 4 and Group Discussion 4)</b>	
	26	Reporting Research Results	Bachman 14
	28	<b>Fall Break</b>	
Dec.	3	Review	
	5	<b>FINAL EXAM (1:00 PM)</b>	