

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY & CRIMINAL JUSTICE
KENNESAW STATE UNIVERSITY**

Web: www.kennesaw.edu/scj

**CRJU 3301/02 Spring 2016
Research Methods in Criminal Justice**

Instructor: Elle Ballard
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Class Times: Tuesday/Thursday
2:00pm – 3:15pm
Social Science Building Rm 3025
Office Hours: By Appointment

TEXTS:

Neuman, W. L. (2008). *Understanding research*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course provides a survey of different research efforts and results in the field of criminal justice. In particular, the course offers an introduction to social science research methods as it applies to criminal justice and how to evaluate and conduct research in the study of crime and criminal justice problems. The course introduces students to the scientific method, its tools, and vocabulary. Various data collection techniques used in criminological and criminal justice research are explored and critiqued both methodologically and ethically. Students will learn how to critically evaluate the quality of research products and their contribution to the fields of criminal justice and criminology, as well as to construct field experiments to investigate their own research problem. The importance of ethical conduct and social responsibility in the research process is emphasized.

COURSE PREREQUISITES:

This course requires successful completion of CRJU 1101.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Knowledge – Students should be able to: 1) define the role of scientific inquiry in crime and justice issues, and identify the interrelationships among theory, methodology, and criminal justice policy.

Comprehension – Students should be able to 2) recognize and summarize the stages of the research process, re-frame research problems into testable research questions and hypotheses, and describe the importance of ethical conduct and social responsibility in the research process.

Application – Students should be able to: 3) demonstrate knowledge of sampling strategies, measurement issues and scaling techniques; and 4) collaborate with a team to construct research proposals.

Analysis – Students should be able to: 5) distinguish the differences among research approaches and discuss their uses in criminological and criminal justice research; 6) identify the underlying and hidden assumptions of published research.

Synthesis – Students should be able to: 7) assemble and synthesize scholarly literature to formulate theoretically guided research questions and hypotheses.

Evaluation – Students should be able to: 8) assess the strengths and weaknesses of various research designs, sampling techniques, and data collection methods, and critically evaluate the scientific quality of published scholarly products.

Note regarding Student Learning Outcomes: Each student is different than the next. Depending on several factors outside of the instructor's control (including individual student proficiencies, study habits, and contextual factors), individual student's success in achieving these outcomes may vary.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1. Regular class **attendance and participation** in class discussions and activities are expected. Students are expected to stay for the entire class. Excessive tardiness (i.e. more than 2) will be counted as absences. Students are permitted three absences. Students will have their final grade reduced by one full letter grade for each absence thereafter, regardless of the reason for their absence. Students who miss six or more classes will receive an automatic failure for the class.
2. **Exams:** There will be a Midterm Exam and a Final Exam. Exams will cover material from in class lectures and discussions, videos, handouts and the textbooks.

Students are expected to be on time for exams and will not be admitted to exam if more than 10 minutes late. Each exam is worth 25% of the final grade.

Make-Up Exams: Make-up exams will only be given when prior arrangements have been made with the instructor. Students must demonstrate a documented cause for missing the examination. Make-up exams are given at the instructor's discretion. All make-up exams must be taken on the day of the final exam immediately following completion of the final exam.

3. **Homework and Labs:** Students will be required to complete four homework assignments and three lab assignments. Detailed instruction will be provided in class. The combined score for all homework and lab assignments is worth 20% of the final grade. Late homework/labs will not be accepted.
4. **Mini Research Projects:** In groups, students will be required to conduct two research mini-projects. Detailed instruction will be provided in class. The combined score for both mini-projects is worth 30% of the final grade (5% will be derived from a review of your contribution completed by your peers). Late projects will not be accepted.

All assignments must be turned in to the appropriate DROP BOX through D2L prior to class time and NOT into the Criminal Justice Department. Likewise, emailed assignments will NOT be accepted. All graded assignments and exams will be returned to students during class time.

GRADING:

The final grade will be assigned as a letter grade, based on the following scale:

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

INSTRUCTOR'S CLASS POLICIES

Check DESIRE2LEARN/Brightspace often. Class cancellations and any important announcements will be posted there.

Absences will only be excused when a valid excuse is accompanied and corroborated by sufficient documentation.

If you miss a class, it is **your** responsibility to get with a classmate to find out what you missed, copy notes, check for any missed announcements, etc. Please do not expect to be provided a private lecture.

No cell phones, laptops, iPads, MP3 players, etc. are allowed in class. All of these devices should be turned to silent or vibrate and stored properly away. If you need to answer a call or text, please quietly step outside. If you have to be asked to store your device more than twice, you will receive an automatic failure for the course.

You are expected to follow the Kennesaw State University's Student Code of Conduct at all times. Side conversations are disruptive and will not be tolerated. Frequent repeat violations will result in the automatic failure for the course.

No extra credit will be afforded to individuals above and beyond opportunities presented to the entire class. If extra credit is offered at a time when you are unavailable, special provision will not be made.

Final Grades are **NOT** negotiable. Rather than waiting until the end of the term, you should be concerned about losing HOPE, other financial assistance, or eligibility for club sports or athletics from the onset of the course. If you think there has been a legitimate mistake, please do not hesitate to ask.

Important Dates and Deadlines:

Last day to withdraw: March 2nd

Spring Break: April 5th and April 7th

Midterm Exam: Feb. 23rd
Final Exam: May 3rd

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic / Reading Assignment</u>
Jan. 12 th	Welcome & Syllabus / Why do Research? (Neuman Chapter 1)
Jan 15 th	Basics Refresher (No Reading Assignment) Assignment: Homework One
Jan. 19 th	Planning a Study (Neuman Chapter 2) Homework One Due
Jan. 21 th	Becoming an Ethical Researcher (Neuman Chapter 3)
Jan. 26 th	Milgram Obedience to Authority / Zimbardo Stanford Prison Experiment Assignment: Homework Two
Jan. 28 th	Experiential Learning – Fulton County Drug Court
Feb. 2 nd	Measuring Social Life (Neuman Chapter 5) Homework Two Due
Feb. 4 th	Measuring Social Life Cont.
Feb. 9 th	Researchable Research Questions (No Assigned Reading) Creating Valid Measures (No Assigned Reading) Assignment: Homework Three
Feb. 11 th	Non-Probability Sampling (Neuman Chapter 4) Homework Three Due
Feb. 16 th	Probability Sampling (Neuman Chapter 4) Assignment: Homework Four
Feb. 18 th	Catch-Up & Review Review for Midterm Homework Four Due
Feb. 23rd	MIDTERM EXAM
Feb. 25 th	Review Midterm / Assign Teams
March 1 st	Experimental Designs (Neuman Chapter 7)
March 2nd	LAST DAY TO WITHDRAW WITHOUT PENALTY
March 3 rd	Experimental Designs Cont.

March 8 th	Assignment: Mini-Project One – Experimental Design Group Work Day
March 10 th	Lab One
March 15 th	Survey Research (Neuman Chapter 6) Mini Project One Due
March 17 th	Survey Research Cont. Lab One Due
March 22 nd	Assignment: Mini-Project Two – Survey Design Group Work Day
March 24 th	Lab Two
March 29 th	Observing People in Natural Settings (Neuman Chapter 10) Mini Project Two Due
March 31 st	Research with Nonreactive Measures (Neuman Chapter 8) Lab Two Due
April 5th	SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS ☺
April 7th	SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS ☺
April 12 th	Nonreactive Measure Cont.
April 14 th	Physical Evidence Exercise Catch-up/Review
April 19 th	Lab Three
April 21 st	Lab Work Day Lab Three Due
April 26 th	Catch-Up
April 28 th	Final Exam Review
May 3rd	FINAL EXAM (ONLINE)

This course syllabus provides a general plan for the course and is for planning purposes only. It is tentative and subject to change at the discretion of the instructor. However, every effort will be made to keep changes to a minimum.