CRJU 3301/03 Spring 2016  
Research Methods in Criminal Justice

Instructor: Elle Ballard  
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Office: Social Science Building Rm 3025  
Office Hours: By Appointment

Class Times: Tuesday/Thursday  
5:00pm – 6:15pm

TEXTS:


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

INSTRUCTOR’S CLASS POLICIES

Check DESIREE2LEARN/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 2\textsuperscript{nd}
- Spring Break: April 5\textsuperscript{th} and April 7\textsuperscript{th}
Midterm Exam: Feb. 23rd
Final Exam: May 3rd

## TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic / Reading Assignment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 12th</td>
<td>Welcome &amp; Syllabus / Why do Research? (Neuman Chapter 1)</td>
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<td>Jan 15th</td>
<td>Basics Refresher (No Reading Assignment)</td>
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<td>Assignment: Homework One</td>
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<td>Jan. 19th</td>
<td>Planning a Study (Neuman Chapter 2)</td>
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<td><strong>Homework One Due</strong></td>
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<td>Jan. 21th</td>
<td>Becoming an Ethical Researcher (Neuman Chapter 3)</td>
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<td>Jan. 26th</td>
<td>Milgram Obedience to Authority / Zimbardo Stanford Prison Experiment</td>
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<td>Assignment: Homework Two</td>
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<td>Jan. 28th</td>
<td>Experiential Learning – Fulton County Drug Court</td>
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<td>Feb. 2nd</td>
<td>Measuring Social Life (Neuman Chapter 5)</td>
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<td><strong>Homework Two Due</strong></td>
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<td>Feb. 4th</td>
<td>Measuring Social Life Cont.</td>
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<td>Feb. 9th</td>
<td>Researchable Research Questions (No Assigned Reading)</td>
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<td>Creating Valid Measures (No Assigned Reading)</td>
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<td>Assignment: Homework Three</td>
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<td>Feb. 11th</td>
<td>Non-Probability Sampling (Neuman Chapter 4)</td>
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<td><strong>Homework Three Due</strong></td>
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<td>Feb. 16th</td>
<td>Probability Sampling (Neuman Chapter 4)</td>
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<td>Assignment: Homework Four</td>
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<td>Feb. 18th</td>
<td>Catch-Up &amp; Review</td>
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<td>Review for Midterm</td>
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<td><strong>Homework Four Due</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Feb. 23rd</strong></td>
<td><strong>MIDTERM EXAM</strong></td>
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<td>Feb. 25th</td>
<td>Review Midterm / Assign Teams</td>
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<td>March 1st</td>
<td>Experimental Designs (Neuman Chapter 7)</td>
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<td><strong>March 2nd</strong></td>
<td><strong>LAST DAY TO WITHDRAW WITHOUT PENALTY</strong></td>
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<td>March 3rd</td>
<td>Experimental Designs Cont.</td>
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March 8th    Assignment: Mini-Project One – Experimental Design
Group Work Day
March 10th    Lab One
March 15th    Survey Research (Neuman Chapter 6)
**Mini Project One Due**
March 17th    Survey Research Cont.
**Lab One Due**
March 22nd   Assignment: Mini-Project Two – Survey Design
Group Work Day
March 24th   Lab Two
March 29th   Observing People in Natural Settings (Neuman Chapter 10)
**Mini Project Two Due**
March 31st   Research with Nonreactive Measures (Neuman Chapter 8)
**Lab Two Due**

April 5th    SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS 😊
April 7th    SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS 😊
April 12th   Nonreactive Measure Cont.
April 14th   Physical Evidence Exercise
Catch-up/Review
April 19th   Lab Three
April 21st   Lab Work Day
**Lab Three Due**
April 26th   Catch-Up
April 28th   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.