

**Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology**

**3378:01 – Introduction to Methods of Research**

**Spring 2023**

**George J. Beto Criminal Justice Building, 00C104**

**T/R 3:30 – 4:45 pm**

**3 Credit Hours**

**Professor:** Kristina Block

**Office:** George J. Beto Criminal Justice Center – CL27

**Telephone:** (936) 294-4480

**Email:** [knb083@shsu.edu](mailto:knb083@shsu.edu) (email is the best way to reach me)

# Office Availability: T/R 2:00 – 3:20 or by appointment

# \**Please email me ahead of time so I can be prepared for our meeting*

**COURSE INFORMATION**

**Required Materials:**

1. Rennison, C., & Hart, T. (2022). Research Methods in Criminal Justice and Criminology. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE. ISBN: 978-1-5063-4781-3
2. Additional articles/chapters/excerpts will be provided on Blackboard throughout the semester.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course will introduce students to methods used in criminal justice and criminology research. Students will learn about qualitative and quantitative research including sampling procedures, survey design, ethical considerations, and secondary data. The course will also provide insight into the research process involved in examining criminal justice issues, policies, and interventions. Throughout the course, students will learn how to critically evaluate information within the research setting. Students will also gain a greater understanding of how to conduct criminal justice and criminology related research and identify how these skills can be applied to criminal justice-related careers in an ethical and responsible manner. *This is a “W” course, which means that* ***at least 50%*** *of your course grade will derive from writing activities designed to help you master course objectives.*

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

After successfully completing this course, students should be able to complete the following:

1. Define key concepts and methods related to criminal justice-based research.
2. Locate, critically analyze, and interpret existing criminal justice research.
3. Communicate a proposed research project to others orally and through writing.
4. Apply aspects of research methods in criminal justice careers.

**ATTENDANCE POLICY**

As a student enrolled in this course, you accept the responsibility to attend class, that is why you are here! It is your responsibility to let me, the course instructor know you will have to miss class. Valid absences include absences for religious holy days or university-related absences and medical emergencies. Do not attend class if you are sick. While you will not be graded on your attendance, you will be graded on how well you score on quizzes, which are given in class. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to get the notes and submit assignments on time. If you know you miss a quiz, you need documentation for a valid absence and must email be at least 24 hours before the missed class. If you are unable to come to class due to an illness or emergency on a quiz day, please let me know ASAP so we can reschedule the quiz.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING POLICY**

*Course Requirements:*

1. Weekly quizzes: 100 Points (10 points per quiz)
2. Weekly Written Assignments: 50 points (25 points each – Must complete two of six)
3. Exams: 200 points (100 points per exam)
4. Research Proposal: 150 Points
   1. Paper Draft: 50 points
   2. Final Paper: 100 points

**Track your grade here:**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Assignment | Possible Points | Actual Points | Grading Scale |
| Weekly Quizzes | 100 |  | Percentage |
| Weekly Written Assignments | 50 |  | A = 90 – 100% (450 - 500 points) |
| *Assignment 1* | *25* |  | B = 80 – 89% (400 – 449 points) |
| *Assignment 2* | *25* |  | C = 70 – 79% (350 – 399 points) |
| Exams | 200 |  | D = 60 – 69% (300 - 349 points) |
| *Midterm* | *100* |  | F = Below 60% (0 – 299 points) |
| *Final* | *100* |  |  |
| Research Proposal | 150 |  |  |
| *Paper Draft* | *50* |  |  |
| *Final Paper* | *100* |  |  |
| **Total Points** | **500** |  |  |

1. ***Weekly Quizzes*** *(100 points, 10 points each):* Ten quizzes worth 10 points each will be administered in class throughout the semester and will always occur on Tuesdays in the first 25 minutes of class prior to the lecture. If you are late to class, you will have less time to complete the quiz. These quizzes will be distributed via pencil-and-paper and will be closed book/note. Each quiz will be over the readings required for the previous week from your textbook and class PowerPoints. Quizzes will not be comprehensive, meaning they will only be on the chapter or topic specified on the course schedule. If you know you will miss a quiz due to an excused absence, contact me 48 hours before the quiz date to make arrangements. There will be no make-up quizzes given to the students that fail to contact me before, except if they have a documented illness or emergency.
2. ***Weekly Written Assignments*** *(50 total points, 25 points each):* You will complete two of six total weekly assignments. These assignments are designed to guide you in applying course material to different research-based scenarios. You may choose which two to complete based on your interests and availability. Please note that if you turn in more than two assignments, only the first two you submit will be graded. All assignments will be due on select Thursdays at 11:59 pm CST. Because you have the option of choosing which assignments to turn in, there will be no extensions for these assignments. The six assignments are listed below. Please refer to Blackboard for specific instructions for each assignment and their associated grading rubrics.
   1. Research Ethics Assignment
   2. Mini Literature Review Assignment
   3. Validity/Reliability Assignment
   4. Qualitative Field Work Assignment
   5. Experiment Assignment
   6. Secondary Data Assignment
3. ***Exams*** *(200 total points, 100 points each):* There will be two exams throughout the semester, a midterm and a final. The midterm will be administered during week 8. Questions will be from material covered during the first half of the course (chapters 1-7 unless told otherwise). Questions may come from your quizzes, writing assignments, textbook, or lecture PowerPoints. The final exam will be administered during the last week of classes. This exam WILL BE cumulative but will prioritize material from the last half of the course (chapters 8-11 and 14). Questions may come from your quizzes, writing assignments, textbook, or lecture PowerPoints. Both exams will be administered via pencil-and-paper in class and will be closed book/note. However, you can have one standard (three-inch by five-inch) index card with *handwritten* notes on it to take into each exam. Exam questions will consist of multiple-choice questions, short answer questions, and essay questions. I will tell you what the essay questions are via email one week (7 days) before each exam to give you time to prepare your answers. I do not offer make-up exams. If you know you will be absent on exam day you must notify me at least 48 hours before the start of the exam, provide documentation for an excused absence, and you must take the exam early.
4. ***Research Proposal*** *(150 total points):* As you will be learning about methods used in criminal justice and criminology research all semester, you will get the opportunity to apply these topics yourself by completing a research proposal assignment in an area that interests you. Research shows that students learn and retain material better when they are actively engaged and interested in an activity or assignment. Therefore, you will choose a research area within criminal justice and criminology that interests you and write a research proposal for a hypothetical project. The proposal should be at least five pages in length (excluding the title page and references, double-spaced). Further instructions for all parts of the research proposal assignment can be found on Blackboard. We will review examples of papers in class that you can refer to while writing your own research proposal. I will also post additional examples on Blackboard.

* *Paper Draft (50 total points):* You will turn in components of the paper draft over the course of the semester. This will ensure that you are not rushing to complete the entire draft all at once. After you turn in each section, the instructor will provide comments within one week. You must address these comments when you turn in your final draft. Points for draft components will be based on the completion of the assignment so make sure you turn them in!
* *Final Draft (100 points):* The final draft of your research proposal, with incorporated feedback from the instructor, will be due on **Tuesday, May 9th at 11:59 pm CST.** This final version must be submitted through the “Final Research Proposal” assignment submission located on Blackboard.

**LATE WORK AND MAKE-UP POLICY**

Assignments will receive a 10% deduction for each day they are late. I will not accept an assignment if it is more than 5 days late (120 hours after the deadline). If you have an emergency, you must email me ASAP so we can work something out.

**STUDENT-PROVIDED TECHNOLOGICAL DEVICES POLICY**

Any technology or device, such as a laptop or tablet, is welcome in our classroom if you are using it to learn. Conversely, using it for purposes other than learning is inappropriate (i.e. watching Netflix or scrolling through social media). I expect that you will monitor yourself, but if it consistently interferes with learning (your own or others), you will need to put it away.

**EMAIL POLICY**

If you have any questions about the course material or administrative questions about deadlines, assignments, etc., please let me know as soon as possible either during office hours or via e-mail.

Please check the syllabus to see if your question can be answered before emailing me. You can expect a response within 24 hours on a weekday or within 48 hours on the weekend. Keep in mind that I do not regularly check my email after 5 pm on weekdays, on weekends, or on holidays.

**BLACKBOARD ASSIGNMENT SUBMISSION POLICY**

You must submit all assignments through the course Blackboard page. Additionally, all assignments must be submitted as a Microsoft Word Document. It is your responsibility to ensure that all submitted files are accessible and readable. If I can’t read it, I can’t grade it. I will not contact you to ask for a new version. You will automatically receive a 0.

**GRADE NEGOTIATION**

Grades will not be negotiated or “bumped up” at the end of the semester. Missing the next grade up by a single percent is an issue with which I sympathize, but I will not change my policy. Any emails received on this topic will be ignored.

**EXTRA CREDIT**

Extra credit opportunities will be available throughout the semester and will be posted on Blackboard. All extra credit assignments will be due on May 5, 2023, at 11:59 pm CST. Extra credit opportunities will be available for everyone in the class meaning I will not provide extra credit opportunities on an individual basis.

**REQUIRED POLICIES**

**ACADEMIC DISHONESTY**

All students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. The University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work which is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials. For a complete listing of the university policy, see:

Academic Policy Statement 810213: <https://www.shsu.edu/dept/academic-affairs/documents/aps/students/810213%20Procedures%20in%20Cases%20of%20Academic%20Dishonesty_2018.pdf>

**ABSENCE FOR RELIGIOUS HOLY DAYS**

Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. "Religious holy day" means a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20, United States Tax Code. A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time. For a complete listing of University policy 861001, see:

Academic Policy Statement 861001: <https://www.shsu.edu/dept/academic-affairs/documents/aps/students/861001%20Student%20Absences%20on%20Religious%20Holy%20Days_2017.pdf>

**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES POLICY**

It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance should register with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Lee Drain Annex (telephone 936-294-3512, TDD 936- 294-3786, and e-mail disability@shsu.edu). They should then make arrangements with their individual instructors so that appropriate strategies can be considered and helpful procedures can be developed to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired. SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If you have a disability that may affect adversely your work in class, register with SHSU Services for Students with Disabilities and schedule a time to talk with a counselor. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. NOTE: No accommodation can be made until you register with the Services for Students with Disabilities. For a complete listing of the university policy, see:

* Academic Policy Statement 811006: <https://www.shsu.edu/dept/academic-affairs/documents/aps/students/811006%20Students%20with%20Disabilities_2018.pdf>
* Services for Students with Disabilities (webpage): <https://www.shsu.edu/dept/disability/>
* Contact information: Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) will remain open during its normal hours of 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday. For information regarding appointments and services, please contact the SSD Office at 936-294-3512 (voice), 936-294-3786 (TDD), or [disability@shsu.edu](mailto:disability@shsu.edu).

**VISITORS IN THE CLASSROOM**

Only registered students may attend class. Exceptions can be made on a case-by-case basis by the professor. In all cases, visitors must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance. Students wishing to audit a class must apply to do so through the Registrar's Office.

**MANDATORY REPORTING FOR TITLE IX**

As a professor at SHSU, I am under federal obligation to relay information regarding victimization disclosure to our University’s Title IX Coordinator for the purpose of ensuring appropriate services and accommodations are provided to anyone who has disclosed victimization. It is important that you know, should you disclose ongoing or past victimization in writing assignments, during class, or to me personally, I am legally obliged to relay this information to the Dean of Students’ Office.

**MANDATORY REPORTING OF KNOWN OR SUSPECTED ABUSE OF OTHERS**

Texas law\* says anyone who thinks a child, or person 65 years or older, or an adult with disabilities is being abused, neglected, or exploited must report it to DFPS. A person who reports abuse in good faith is immune from civil or criminal liability. The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) keeps the name of the person making the report confidential. Anyone who does not report suspected abuse can be held liable for a misdemeanor or felony. Time frames for investigating reports are based on the severity of the allegations. Reporting suspected abuse makes it possible for a family to get help. Here is a link to allow for such reporting and for further information: <http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Contact_Us/report_abuse.asp>

**COURSE SPECIFIC POLICIES**

**BEHAVIOR IN THE CLASSROOM**

During this course, we may discuss topics related to different cultural and political perspectives. This sharing is encouraged, as we all gain from learning different perspectives. The field of criminal justice is characterized by a diverse continuum of perspectives, and the university educational experience requires that we examine issues from numerous angles. With this in mind, do not verbally attack another because their position is different than yours. I expect all students to contribute to the shaping of an inclusive, comfortable, and educational setting by honoring the diverse backgrounds, statuses, and experiences of your fellow classmates. Any disrespectful behavior will not be tolerated. All aspects of race, gender, class, sexual orientation, disability, ethnicity, religion, and other individual preferences must be respected at all times. If in violation of this policy, you will be asked to leave the classroom for the remainder of the class period.

**PROOF READING ASSIGNMENTS**

Students are encouraged to come to the course instructor with clarifying questions regarding assignments. Students are also encouraged to talk with their instructor and peers about ideas for their research proposal. However, I will *not* proofread any assignments. It is the student’s responsibility to proofread their assignments for errors and go to the professor with specific questions regarding any parts of a given assignment.

**COURSE NOTES, MATERIALS, AND RECORDING POLICY**

Notes, PowerPoint slides, quizzes, and any written, audio, and video materials developed by the professor or provided to the students may not be sold or distributed to other persons.

**TENTATIVE CLASS SCHEDULE**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Week** | **Date** | **Topic(s)** | **Readings** | **Assignment Due** |
| 1 | Tue 1/17 | Introduction and Syllabus Review | Ch. 1  Ch. 2 (p 62-69) |  |
| Thur 1/19 | Ethics in CJ Research |  |
| 2 | Tue 1/24 | Citing in APA | Ch. 2  (p. 37-62) | Quiz 1: Syllabus and Ethics |
| Thur 1/26 | Identifying a Research Topic, Goal, and Question | Research Ethics Assignment |
| 3 | Tue 1/31 | Introduction and Literature Review | Ch. 3 | Quiz 2: APA Citation and Research Questions |
| Thur 2/2 | Literature Review Cont. | Research Proposal Draft: Topic and Research Question |
| 4 | Tue 2/7 | Two Types of Data; Conceptualization & Operationalization | Ch. 4 | Quiz 3: Literature Reviews |
| Thur 2/9 | Variables & Measures; Validity & Reliability | Mini Literature Review Assignment |
|  | Tue 2/14 | Sampling | Ch. 5 | Quiz: 4 Data Types, Validity & Reliability |
| 5 | Thur 2/16 | Sampling Cont. |  | Validity/Reliability Assignment |
|  | Tue 2/21 | Guest Lecture with Professor Amalfi-Wronski: Qualitative Research | Ch. 6 | Quiz 5: Sampling |
| 6 | Thur 2/23 | No Class!! |  | Research Proposal Draft: Introduction, Literature Review & APA References |
| 7 | Tue 2/28 | Survey Construction | Ch. 7 | Quiz 6: Qualitative Research |
| Thur 3/2 | Survey Distribution | Qualitative Field Work Assignment |
| 8 | Tue 3/7 | Review for Midterm Exam |  |  |
| Thur 3/9 | **Midterm Exam!!!!!** | | |
| **NO CLASS: SPRING BREAK!!** | | | | |
|  | | | | |
| 9 | Tue 3/21 | Causation and Introduction to Experiments | Ch. 8 |  |
| Thur 3/23 | Experiments Cont. |  | Research Proposal Draft: Methodology |
| 10 | Tue 3/28 | Secondary Data (Guest Lecture, Prof. P) | Ch. 9 |  |
| Thur 3/30 | Secondary Data Cont. |  | Quiz 7: Causation and Experiments, Experiment Assignment |
| 11 | Tue 4/4 | Why and When to Use Crime Mapping | Ch. 10 | Quiz 8: Secondary Data |
| Thur 4/6 | Crime Mapping in Practice |  | Secondary Data Assignment |
| 12 | Tue 4/11 | Evaluation Research | Ch. 11 | Quiz 9: Crime Mapping |
| Thur 4/13 | Programs That Don’t Work in CJ |  | Research Proposal Draft: Discussion |
| 13 | Tue 4/18 | Research Methods as a Career | Ch. 14 | Quiz 10: Evaluation Research |
| Thur 4/20 | Catch Up Day |  |  |
| 14 | Tue 4/25 | Workshop: Work on Research Proposals |  |  |
| Thur 4/27 | Workshop: Work on Research Proposals |  |  |
| 15 | Mon 5/2 | Review for Final Exam |  |  |
| Wed 5/4 | **Final Exam!!!** | | |

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| **FINALS WEEK: FINAL DRAFT OF RESEARCH PROPOSAL DUE (TUESDAY MAY 9TH 11:59PM)** |

* The professor reserves the right to make any necessary changes to the syllabus. If any changes are made, I will notify students via email well in advance. Students should follow the course schedule here unless otherwise notified. The instructor, however, does reserve the right to change the course schedule at any time.
* Any additional readings will be provided throughout the course via Blackboard prior to class.