

CRIM 315 Section 002
Research Methods and Analysis in Criminology

Professor: Dr. Beidi Dong

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Office: Enterprise Hall 344

Class Location: Krug Hall 7

Office Hours: Mondays 1:00 pm – 3:30 pm (email to confirm appointment)

***Please use Mason email for all correspondence

Semester/Year: Fall 2018

Class Day/Time: M/W 10:30 am - 11:45 am

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Course Description

This course introduces students to the multifaceted subject of research methods and shows them why research is important in the field of criminology and criminal justice. We will cover foundations and fundamentals of social research, various research designs, sampling issues, survey construction, interviewing, data analysis, and ethical issues in criminology and criminal justice research. The goals of this course are: 1) to introduce students to the scientific methods of research in criminology and criminal justice and show how they are actually used; 2) to deliver skills necessary to evaluate research done by others and make students critical consumers of information; and 3) to train students to actually do research through real-life application assignments.

Recommended Prerequisite: CRIM 100-Introduction to Criminal Justice

This class is also a *Students as Scholars* Scholarly Inquiry course, which means that you will be learning about the process of conducting research in Criminology, Law and Society through multiple assignments. We will learn how to ask and answer worthwhile research questions using real-life examples. We will also concentrate on how to evaluate, integrate, and use academic literature throughout the class. Specifically, you will meet the following learning outcomes:

- Articulate and refine a research question
- Follow ethical principles
- Apply appropriate scholarly conventions when reporting or performing (using the American Psychological Association (APA) style guide), and
- Situate the scholarly inquiry within a broader context

Students as Scholars is Mason's initiative to give students the opportunity to conduct undergraduate research. Check out OSCAR.gmu.edu or stop by the Office of Student Scholarship, Creative Activities, and Research to learn about the many other programs they offer students. I'll also be sharing additional research opportunities as I hear about them, and I will be happy to meet with you if you have additional questions.

Required Text

Bachman, R.D., & Schutt, R.K. (2017). *The Practice of Research in Criminology and Criminal Justice*. (6th Edition). SAGE Press. Thousand Oaks, CA. ISBN: 978-1-5063-0681-0

Additional readings may be posted on the Blackboard site (Go to: mymason.gmu.edu). Please read each of these required readings prior to attending class each week.

You are also expected to conform to APA Style in your written assignment. You can obtain online APA help from <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/> or <http://www.apastyle.org/learn/tutorials/basics-tutorial.aspx>

Recommended Text:

American Psychological Association. (2009). *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th Edition). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Class Preparation

This course covers an extensive amount of material in 15 weeks. As such, it is extremely important that you keep up-to-date with assigned readings of the text. Any questions you may have about the reading materials should be brought up during class time to facilitate class discussion. **Class time will be a combination of lecture, discussion, and demonstrations. I will frequently ask questions and conduct in-class activities.** Through effective participation, each student contributes to the education of others in the class, as well as to his or her own education. Students who will receive a high grade in this course are those who are willing to actively engage in class activities both inside and outside the classroom. Lectures will cover some material not discussed in the text. The text will cover some material not covered in the lectures. Students are responsible for all material presented in the lecture, and all material covered in the text.

Classroom Etiquette

Students are expected to behave appropriately during class. This class is meant to be an enriching, enjoyable learning experience for all of you. Your behavior should not be disruptive or distracting to the instructor or your classmates. This means the following class rules (not exhaustive):

- Come to class on time and do not “pack up” early
- Turn off cell phones prior to coming to class. If you expect an emergency call please leave the room to talk. No texting.
- Do not “play” on the Internet (e.g. Facebook or Twitter), read outside materials (e.g. magazines or newspapers) or sleep. I cannot focus on the information I am trying to convey if I am worried that I am boring you.
- Talk only when you have been given the floor. Talking with the people next to you is distracting to everyone.
- Acknowledge that we all have different experiences based on race, class, sex, age and sexuality. Be aware that some of your classmates may have been involved in the criminal justice system as victims or offenders. You are encouraged to present your opinions while respecting the opinions of others.

If the instructor finds that you are behaving inappropriately, you will be given one warning. The second instance of inappropriate behavior will result in expulsion from the class for the remainder of the day. If inappropriate behavior continues, further disciplinary action will be taken, including lowering your final grade.

Late Work and Make-Up Policy

Late work will **NOT** be accepted. If you are going to miss class, please hand in your work ahead of time. Work is considered “late” if it is not submitted by the beginning of the class period in which it is due.

Make-up assignments/exams will only be given for religious observances, scheduled University activities, or medical/family emergencies. The student is required to notify the Instructor **before** religious observances or scheduled University activities and will be expected to complete the assignments **earlier**. For emergencies, the student is required to notify the Instructor as soon as practical.

Academic Integrity

George Mason University has an Honor Code, which requires all members of this community to maintain the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity. Students are expected to abide by the GMU Honor Code, which prohibits lying, cheating, stealing, and plagiarizing (see <http://oai.gmu.edu/themason-honor-code-2/> for detailed information). All graded work for this class (including homework assignments and exams) must be completed independently.

Instructors are required to report all violations of the Honor Code to the GMU Honor Committee. Suspected cases of plagiarism may be evaluated using anti-plagiarism software. Please be sure that the work you submit in this class is your own, and that you provide proper citations when referencing another person’s words or ideas. **I will not accept as an excuse that you were unaware that your behavior constituted plagiarism.** Violations of the Honor Code may result in a failing grade for the assignment or exam, a failing grade for the course, or any additional penalties determined by the committee, including dismissal from the university.

Accommodation for Special Needs

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please inform the instructor and contact the Office of Disability Resources at 703.993.2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office. See <http://ods.gmu.edu> for more information.

Course Requirements and Student Evaluation

1) Class Attendance and Participation (10% of final grade): Each student is expected to attend classes and participate in class discussions. Since active and fully prepared participation in

classroom discussion is critical to both the success of the class and your own performance, I expect you to attend all classes. **Over the course of the semester, 5 short-answer quizzes will be given (i.e. each quiz accounts for 2% of final grade).** I will pose a single question for you to answer at the beginning of **5 randomly selected classes**. These quizzes will cover assigned readings and/or materials from previous lectures and will require no more than a paragraph answer. Your response to this question will be graded as “0 = did not complete”, “1 = attended class but incorrect” and “2 = correct”. If you are not present at the start of each class to answer the question you will not receive credit. Unless you fit an exception noted above, these quizzes **cannot** be made up if missed. Students who need to miss class for a legitimate reason should notify me in writing (via email) prior to missing class. In the event of an emergency, I will accept written documentation from a professional that verifies an acceptable reason for missing class. I am the sole judge of what qualifies as written documentation, as a professional source, and as an acceptable reason for missing class. Make-up quizzes will be in the format of short essays—a 500-word summary and analysis paper on a research article.

2) Application Assignments (30% of final grade): The most effective way to learn research methods is by doing research methods. Two application assignments are designed to facilitate your understanding of how to conduct criminological research.

For application assignment #1 (individual essay=15%), you will answer one real-life research question (with several sub-questions). To accomplish the assignment, you will need to conduct online searches and use library resources. The application assignment will be evaluated on how well you have addressed the research question (and sub-questions). I will pay particular attention to how you organize your argument and supporting evidence. **The answer should be 3-4 pages, double-spaced, 12pt. Times New Roman font and following APA format.** Note that 5% of the points possible will be deducted for each day the assignment is late.

For application assignment #2 (group presentation=15%), you will form a group of 3 to 4 people. To accomplish the assignment, you will need to conduct online searches and use library resources. The application assignment will be evaluated on how well you have addressed the research question (and sub-questions) and how effectively you have presented your arguments using PowerPoint. **The presentation should be around 8 minutes (plus 2 minutes for Q&A).** Note that you will need to form your group and inform me through email by 9:00am of Nov. 7, 2018. Otherwise 10% of the points possible will be deducted and you will be arbitrarily assigned to a group by me. Note that you will need to upload your PowerPoint slides by 9:00am of Nov. 28, 2018. Otherwise 10% of the points possible will be deducted.

3) Examinations (60% of final grade): This course has three examinations during the semester. They will consist of multiple-choice questions, true or false questions and short answer questions based on readings from all texts, class discussions and lectures. **Each exam will account for 20% of your final grade.** Unless otherwise announced, the examinations will be held on the dates posted in the syllabus. Students will **NOT** be allowed to use any books, notes, or other aids while taking the examinations. You are expected to take the exam at the scheduled time unless there is an exceptional emergency. If for some legitimate reason you cannot take the exam at the scheduled time, you must notify the instructor **prior to the exam time** and you must **provide written verification of your excuse.**

*****Total points are determined according to weights assigned to the course requirements:**

Exam 1	20%
Exam 2	20%
Exam 3	20%
Application Assignment #1	15%
Application Assignment #2	15%
Participation	10%

*****Final Grading Scale:**

Total points	Grade
93.0 - 100	A
90.0 - 92.9	A-
87.0 - 89.9	B+
83.0 - 86.9	B
80.0 - 82.9	B-
77.0 - 79.9	C+
73.0 - 76.9	C
70.0 - 72.9	C-
60.0 - 69.9	D
59.9 and below	F

Administrative Information

This syllabus is provided for your information and **may change as deemed necessary**. You are responsible for learning all the material contained in this syllabus as well as any modifications that are made to the syllabus during class time. All changes to the syllabus will be announced during class time and will be sent to everyone via Blackboard. If you have any questions about the syllabus or course requirements, please feel free to contact me. I am looking forward to getting to know you, and I encourage you to stop by or email to discuss ideas, questions, and comments you may have about the class or material.

Class Schedule (Subject to Change)

Week	Classes / Dates	Topics / Required Reading	Assignment Due
1	Aug. 27 Aug. 29	Introduction to the Course Foundations for Social Research (Ch.1 and 2)	
2	Sept. 3 (no class) Sept. 5	Labor day (no class) Research Ethics (Ch.3)	
3	Sept. 10 Sept. 12	Conceptualization and Measurement (Ch.4)	
4	Sept. 17 Sept. 19	Sampling (Ch.5)	
5	Sept. 24 Sept. 26	Exam 1: Review & Practice <u>Exam 1 (Ch.1-Ch.5)</u>	
6	Oct. 1 Oct. 3	Causation and Social Science Research (Ch.6)	
7	Oct. 9 (Tuesday) Oct. 10	Experimental Design (Ch.7)	
8	Oct. 15 Oct. 17	Survey Research (Ch.8)	<i>Application Assignment #1 Due (Oct. 17)</i>
9	Oct. 22 Oct. 24	Qualitative Methods (Ch.9)	
10	Oct. 29 Oct. 31	Exam 2: Review & Practice <u>Exam 2 (Ch.6-Ch.9)</u>	
11	Nov. 5 Nov. 7	Analyzing Content (Ch.10)	<i>Group membership Due (Nov. 7)</i>
12	Nov. 12 Nov. 14 (no class)	Evaluation and Policy Analysis (Ch. 11) ASC Meeting (no class)	
13	Nov. 19 Nov. 21 (no class)	Evaluation and Policy Analysis (Ch. 11) Thanksgiving (no class)	
14	Nov. 26 Nov. 28	Mixing and Comparing Methods (Ch.12) Student Presentations	<i>Application Assignment #2</i>
15	Dec. 3 Dec. 5	Student Presentations Exam 3: Review & Practice	<i>Application Assignment #2</i>
	Dec. 12	<u>Exam 3 (Ch.1-Ch.12)</u>	