
RESEARCH METHODS AND ANALYSIS IN CRIMINOLOGY

CRIM 315-009

SPRING 2019

1. INSTRUCTOR

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2. COURSE INFORMATION

Class meeting time and location: Friday 10:30 PM – 01:10 PM/**Innovation Hall 129**

Office hours: Friday, 01:30 PM – 02:30 PM in **Enterprise Hall #334** or by appointment (confirm by e-mail)

Credits: 3

Recommended Prerequisite: CRIM 100.

Class add/drop: **January 29, 2019** is the last day to add classes. **February 5, 2019** is the last day to drop with a 100% tuition refund. **February 12, 2019** is Final Drop Deadline with no tuition refund.

3. COURSE DESCRIPTION

Welcome! This course is an introduction to research design, methods, and analysis in the field of criminology. The primary goal of this course is to help students critically analyze criminal justice research; however, students will also learn how to conduct basic research studies. The course covers the foundations of social science, research design, data collection and data analysis. We will also discuss evaluation research, ethical issues involved with social research, and the uses of research.

This class is identified as a *Students as Scholars* Scholarly Inquiry course, where students learn about the recursive process of scholarly inquiry either through studying previous scholarship or as preparation for participating in an original scholarly project. To learn more about *Students as Scholars*, visit oscar.gmu.edu. In this Scholarly Inquiry course, students will: (1) articulate a question, problem, or challenge that is generally relevant and appropriate in scope (2) identify some relevant ethical issues; demonstrates some attention to ethical principles at some stages of the inquiry process, and (3) communicate knowledge from a scholarly or creative project through writing, presenting, or performing, employing some conventions appropriate to the audience and context.

4. COURSE OBJECTIVES

At the completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Understand the scientific approach to research;
2. Know how to read and critically analyze criminological research;
3. Be aware of the ethical issues associated with criminological research;
4. Understand the different approaches and techniques to design criminological research studies, and the strengths and weaknesses of each design;
5. Know the basics of theory-based research design, conceptualization and measurement of theoretical ideas, sampling, and data collection;
6. Interpret research data and results; and,
7. Effectively communicate research design and findings to an audience.

5. REQUIRED TEXT

- Maxfield, M. G., & Babbie, E. R. (2018). *Research methods for criminal justice and criminology*. Cengage Learning. ISBN-13: 9781337091824.

Any additional required weekly reading assignments will be uploaded on Blackboard.

Please note that, I reserve the right to modify the syllabus. In such an instance, the modification will be announced on Blackboard and via e-mail and the updated syllabus will be uploaded on Blackboard.

6. BLACKBOARD

The course syllabus and important announcements will be posted on Blackboard. Students will submit their assignments via Blackboard. To login to Blackboard go to <http://mymason.gmu.edu/>, click on the Courses tab, and locate the link to CRIM 315 in the course list. For technical assistance with Blackboard, go to <http://course support.gmu.edu/Students/>.

7. COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION

Students will be graded based on the following criteria:

- 40 points -- Quizzes (4 points each x12 quizzes, the lowest two scores will be dropped)
- 10 points -- Completion of Citi Training
- 10 points -- Class participation

40 points -- Final research proposal (x1)

5 points -- Extra credit for attending one of the following OSCAR proposal writing workshops.

The maximum points you can get from the above is 105 points. The grading scale that will be used for the final semester grades is as follows:

A+ 97-105	B+ 87-89.9	C+ 77-79.9	D 60-69.9
A 93-96.9	B 83-86.9	C 73-76.9	F 59.9 or less
A- 90-92.9	B- 80-82.9	C- 70-72.9	

7.1. Quizzes (Up to 40 points)

- There will be 12 quizzes in the course of the semester.
- Each quiz will be 4 points.
- You will take a quiz on required reading(s) of the week every week with the exception of Week 1 (Introduction), Week 8 (Spring Break) and Week 15 (last day of class).
- You will complete each quiz by Thursday midnight (for instance for Week 2, you should complete Quiz 1 by January 31st, midnight)
- Quizzes consist of true/false, multiple choice and/or short essay questions.
- Quizzes will be made available and must be answered through Blackboard.
- Quizzes are open book, and will be posted Monday morning for every week they are due.
- From the 12 quizzes, I will drop the lowest 2 grades, and the remaining 10 will be calculated into your final grade.

7.2. Completion of Citi Training (10 points for completion)

All investigators (faculty, staff and students) are required to complete the CITI Program training in human subjects protection prior to conducting research using human subjects. The CITI Program is an on-line training program and can be found at www.citiprogram.org. This training requirement applies regardless of whether such research receives external funding, and it applies to all academic levels. This training does not expire. Contact irb@gmu.edu with any questions about on-line training. You will complete the CITI Human Subjects Ethics Training Basic Course online by **February 8th** before class and submit me your completion certificate/report via Blackboard.

7.3. Participation (Up to 10 points)

Students are expected to attend class and actively participate in discussions.

Participation will be evaluated on the extent to which you:

- prepare for and actively engage in class discussion and activities;
- raise informed discussion points;
- connect the discussion to other readings, topical issues, and experiences;
- ask questions; and,
- contribute to maintaining a lively, respectful discussion by actively listening to other viewpoints and sharing the floor with others.

7.4. Final Research Proposal (40 points)

Every student will be asked to draft a research proposal on a social/criminal justice topic of their choosing in accordance with the [guidelines](#) for writing research proposals by the **GMU Undergraduate Research Scholars Program (URSP)**. The proposal sections and length will be explained in greater detail throughout the course of the semester. The research proposal, in accordance with the URSP guidelines, will include the following sections.

- **TITLE:** A descriptive statement of the project.
- **SHORT COVER LETTER (5 points):** A personal statement to the review committee summarizing the proposed project and your personal goals and expectations. Why are you interested in this project?
- **INTRODUCTION (10 points):** Explain your scholarly question and provide a rationale for your project. Include a narrative review of appropriate literature with in-text citations. What is your question and why is it significant?
- **PROCESS (10 points):** Describe your project design and methods. Include a description of materials and equipment necessary to complete the project. What will you do to answer your question?
- **TIMETABLE (5 points):** Provide a detailed plan for your time during the semester. Although subsequent funding is not guaranteed, you may extend the timeline beyond the semester as needed. How will you schedule your time?
- **EXPECTED OUTCOMES (5 points):** Describe the anticipated outcomes, products and/or results of your project and its contribution to the scholarly community. What will you produce? How will your results be disseminated in your field?
- **BUDGET (5 points):** Standard allocation is up to \$1000 for students and \$500 for faculty; you may budget funds according to your project needs. How will these funds be spent?

For fulfilling the requirements of this course, students will submit their final research proposals via Blackboard by May 3, Friday and hand in 1 copy during the last day of class.

Students who will be enrolled in GMU in the Fall 2019 semester and who wish to conduct the research idea proposed in these proposals in the Fall 2019 semester, will also have the option to submit their proposal to the Undergraduate Research Scholars Program (URSP) award at the end of the semester (the deadline is May 29). This program provides research funding up to \$1,500 during Spring, Fall, and Summer and up to \$5,000 for intensive study in the Summer term (please see details of the program, the application guidelines, and eligibility [here](#)).

URSP, a competitive research award program, is designed to give undergraduates an authentic research, creative, or scholarly experience under the guidance of a mentor. Applications are reviewed by the Student Scholarly Activities committee, which is comprised of faculty and students from a variety of academic units at Mason. Applications that communicate a clear vision that is understandable to a diverse range of disciplines, while also demonstrating the greatest potential for student success, will be selected. See [here](#) for a list of undergraduate award recipients and their project titles (you can ask to see some example (successful) proposals if you contact the OSCAR office). It is very important to submit a proposal with a clear vision and execution plan and a topic that might be of particular interest to many people.

Why Should You Consider Applying to URPS?

If your research proposal gets selected to be funded, in addition to the research award you will get, you will have priority to receive local, national or international travel support through the [Undergraduate Student Travel Fund](#) to present the results of your research at a scholarly meeting, conference, exhibition, etc. Yes, you can be proud of completing a meaningful research project and travel to your favorite places to present your results if you can find a conference in a city you like! One of the many beauties of being a researcher is the freedom to travel to new places for data collection and engaging with your audience (see American Society of Criminology's meeting locations [here](#), this is where some of your criminology professors disappear right before Thanksgiving happily every year!).

In addition to monetary support, you will receive professional development support through the URSP seminar that you will attend the first semester you are in the program if your research proposal is selected (so you will reap the benefits of your work in this course even after the end of the course). You will receive advanced notification of OSCAR events, undergraduate opportunities, and other news as part of OSCAR. Students who participate in the URSP are also potential nominees to become OSCAR Fellows, outstanding undergraduate research leaders who represent OSCAR to other students, faculty, parents, and the community. Finally, participation in this program is an honor and an opportunity. You are being recognized as a budding scholar in your field, so you are able to include the program on your resume and CV as a competitive fellowship award. More importantly, you are gaining professional and personal skills in creative problem-solving, working professionally with colleagues, and communicating effectively that will enrich your Mason experience and your post-graduation life!

7.5. Extra Credit (5 points)

If you would like receive extra credit and get tips on how to write better research proposals please attend one of the following workshops by OSCAR on January 30th or February 14th and bring me a signature from the workshop provider confirming your attendance.

- [URSP Proposal Writing Workshop](#) on January 30, 2019 1:00 pm
- [URSP Proposal Writing Workshop](#) on February 14, 2019 4:00 pm

7.6. Attendance Policy

Per University's attendance policy outlined in the Academic Policy Section of the [University Catalog](#): "Students are expected to attend the class periods of the courses for which they are registered. In-class participation is important not only to the individual student, but also to the class as a whole". Absence, tardiness, or early departure will be accepted as de facto evidence of

nonparticipation. Because this is a once a week class, attendance is very important. Two or more undocumented absences (i.e., without a note from a doctor or communication of absence due to religious observation or a note from student services) absences will be reflected in participation grade and may result in getting a failing grade (F).

8. TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

Week	Contents	Assignments
Week 1: Jan 25	Introduction	<i>None</i>
Week 2: Feb 1	Chapter 1: Crime, Criminal Justice, and Scientific Inquiry Chapter 2: Foundations of Criminal Justice Research	Quiz #1: Chapter 1 & 2
Week 3: Feb 8	Chapter 3: Ethics and Criminal Justice Research	Quiz #2: Chapter 3 Citi Training is due
Week 4: Feb 15	Chapter 4: General Issues in Research Design	Quiz #3: Chapter 4
Week 5: Feb 22	Chapter 5: Concepts, Operationalization, and Measurement	Quiz #4: Chapter 5
Week 6: Mar 1	Chapter 6: Measuring Crime	Quiz #5: Chapter 6
Week 7: Mar 8	Chapter 7: Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs	Quiz #6: Chapter 7
Week 8: Mar 15	SPRING BREAK!	None
Week 9: Mar 22	Chapter 8: Sampling	Quiz #7: Chapter 8
Week 10: Mar 29	Chapter 9: Survey Research	Quiz #8: Chapter 9
Week 11: Apr 5	Chapter 10: Qualitative Interviewing	Quiz #9: Chapter 10
Week 12: April 12	Chapter 11: Field Observation	Quiz #10: Chapter 11
Week 13: April 18	Chapter 12: Agency Records, Content Analysis, and Secondary Data	Quiz #11: Chapter 12
Week 13: April 25	Chapter 13: Evaluation Research and Problem Analysis	Quiz #12: Chapter 13
Week 14: May 3	Chapter 14: Interpreting Data	Final Research Paper due on Blackboard (bring 1 copy to class)

9. TECHNOLOGY POLICY

Cell phones and smart devices must be silenced while in class. You are encouraged to use your smartphones, other smart devices, and laptops in class for learning purposes. Excessive text messaging and communicating via social media is not allowed and will result in being marked as “absent” for the day.

10. MISSED ASSIGNMENTS

I understand that emergencies can arise. I will discuss assignment deadline extension on a case-by-case basis. I expect you to contact me as soon as possible. If you have a problem, please be honest about your situation, and do everything you can to meet the deadlines or requirements before requesting any special consideration.

11. ACCOMMODATIONS & DISABILITY

Any student who suspects they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the professor privately to discuss the student's specific needs and provide written documentation from Disability Services. If the student is not yet registered as a student with a disability, they can contact Disability Services. For more information, view the office's website at <http://ods.gmu.edu>.

12. ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

The English Language Institute offers free English language tutoring to non-native English speaking students who are referred by a member of the faculty or staff. For more information, please visit their website at <http://eli.gmu.edu>.

13. COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES (CAPS)

[Counseling and Psychological Services](#) provide a wide range of free services to students, faculty, and staff. Services are provided by a staff of professional clinical psychologists, social workers, counselors, learning specialists, and psychiatric providers. Our individual and group counseling, workshops, and community education programs are designed to enhance students' personal experience and academic performance. See below links to learn more about the services of

CAPS:

- [Psychological Services](#)
- [Learning Services](#)
- [Multicultural Commitment](#)

Emergency Contacts:

[Online Crisis Chat](#)

Crisis Text Line: Text 741-741

CrisisLink: 703-527-4077

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 800-273-8255

Veterans Crisis Line: 800-273-8255, Press 1

Mason Sexual and Intimate Partner Violence Crisis Line: 703-380-1434

TrevorLifeline: 866-488-7386

Trans Lifeline: 877-565-8860

Non-Emergency Contacts:

Counseling and Psychological Services: 703-993-2380

Student Support and Advocacy Center: 703-993-3686

Mason Police: 703-993-2810

14. LYNDA.GMU.EDU

Mason has partnered with lynda.com to provide free and unlimited online training to Mason students, faculty, and staff. An online subscription library, lynda.com offers more than 4,000 videos and courses on a broad range of subjects. Access the lynda.com library 24/7 using your Mason NetID and Patriot Pass password.

Learning Paths & Certification Prep Courses

lynda.com also offers users the opportunity to develop skills through an offering called “Learning Paths.” The company has curated courses and videos for over 50 job titles. Click here to learn more about [lynda.com learning paths](#). For a list of certifications that lynda.com can help you prepare for, [please click here](#).

15. LIBRARY RESOURCES

Mason Libraries' workshops, events, and exhibits offer research and cultural opportunities for students, faculty, and staff on all Mason campuses throughout the year including periodic **Introduction to Mason Libraries** workshop that will help you navigate the library website and many other workshops (such as how to use Zotero, Tableau, ArcGIS online)

16. CIVILITY CODE

This course will explore sensitive subject matters; it is, therefore, expected that students will engage with one another in a respectful manner even when they do not agree with one another.

17. ACADEMIC CONDUCT & HONOR CODE

Student are accountable to the following Honor Code: “To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the student members of the University Community have set forth this: Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, and/or lie in matters related to academic work.”

18. PLAGIARISM & HONOR COMMITTEE

Students are prohibited from: (a) knowingly permitting another student to plagiarize or cheat from one's work, and (b) submitting the same assignment in different courses without consent of the professor. Should you have any questions about what it means to cheat, plagiarize, steal and/or lie, please consult the website: <http://oai.gmu.edu/understanding-the-honor-code/> Students should review: "Student Strategies for Preventing Violations" link on the Office for Academic Integrity's website: <http://oai.gmu.edu/preventing-violations/student-strategies-for-preventingviolations/>. Any student found violating the tenets of the Honor Code will be reported to the Honor Committee for review.

19. SEXUAL MISCONDUCT AND INTERPERSONAL VIOLENCE

George Mason University is committed to providing a learning, living and working environment that is free from discrimination, and we are committed to a campus that is free of sexual misconduct and other acts of interpersonal violence in order to promote community well-being and student success. We encourage students who believe that they have been sexually harassed, assaulted or subjected to sexual misconduct to seek assistance and support. University Policy 1202 Sexual Harassment and Misconduct (<http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/sexual-harassment-policy>) speaks to the specifics of our process, our resources, and the options available to you.

Confidential student resources are available on campus at the Student Support and Advocacy Center (<http://ssac.gmu.edu>), Counseling and Psychological Services (<http://caps.gmu.edu>), and Student Health Services (<http://shs.gmu.edu>).

All other members of the University community (including faculty, except those noted above) are not considered confidential resources and are required to report incidents of sexual misconduct to the University Title IX Coordinator. For a full list of resources, support opportunities, and reporting options, contact Dr. Jennifer Hammat, Title IX Coordinator, at <http://diversity.gmu.edu/title-ix>, at 703-993-8730, or in the Compliance, Diversity, and Ethics office in the Aquia Building, Suite 373.

20. ENROLLMENT STATEMENT

You are responsible for verifying your enrollment in this class. Schedule adjustments must be made by the deadlines established each year in the Schedule of Classes, available from the Registrar's website (<http://registrar.gmu.edu>)