

CRIM 517—RESEARCH PRACTICUM IN JUSTICE POLICY & PRACTICE Fall 2020

Dr. Charlotte Gill | Department of Criminology, Law and Society, George Mason University
Thursdays 4:30–5:45pm | Online Hybrid

✉ cgill9@gmu.edu | ☎ (703) 996-9403 | 🖥 Virtual office hours by appointment

Course Description and Learning Outcomes

This research practicum is the capstone course for the Master of Science in Criminal Justice program. You will work with a justice organization to plan, conduct, and write up a research project that focuses on a problem or issue relevant and useful to the organization. You will present your findings in a policy-oriented white paper and a final presentation. You will also reflect on lessons you have learned from criminal justice leaders from the MS Speaker Series during your time in the program. The goal of this course is to synthesize what you have learned about the translation of criminal justice research into policy and practice in justice organizations by directly experiencing the translation process.

On completion of this course you will have:

- Created an original research project
- Communicated knowledge from an original research project
- Engaged in scholarly inquiry by
 - Articulating and refining a research question
 - Following ethical principles
 - Gathering evidence appropriate to the question
 - Assessing the validity of key assumptions and evidence
- Synthesized knowledge on criminal justice research, policy, and practice in order to effectively translate the findings of your research project to your partner agency.

Course Format

This course will be delivered online in a hybrid format. Hybrid means that you are expected to participate in a synchronous (real-time) online class session via Zoom during the class time posted at the beginning of this syllabus. The remainder of the course will involve independent activities or work on your research project. **Note that we will not have a synchronous session every week later in the semester.** Classes in the first part of the semester will focus on developing your research question, identifying appropriate research methods, and developing your writing and presentation skills. Later in the semester I will schedule individual meetings with you to ensure you are making progress on your project.

When synchronous class sessions are scheduled, you are expected to attend and provide updates on the status of your project, as well as participate in discussion and small-group activities. See the [Course Schedule](#) starting on page 2 for more details about the class sessions and topics.

Assignments and Grading

See Blackboard for full details of each assignment.

- **White paper:** 50%. Final paper describing your research question, literature review, research methodology, findings, and policy recommendations. The paper will be 20 to 25 pages (minimum 5,000 words) and will include a one-page executive summary. Full instructions will be posted in the Assignments section of Blackboard.
- **Research proposal presentation:** 10%. You will record a 5-minute video presentation introducing your research question, why you chose it, and how you plan to conduct the research. We will discuss the presentations in class and give collaborative feedback. You will also conduct a preliminary literature search for your topic area. Full instructions will be posted in the Assignments section of Blackboard.
- **Final presentation:** 20%. You will give a 5-minute policy-focused presentation on your key findings during the final live class session on **December 3**. Full instructions will be posted in the Assignments section of Blackboard.
- **Paper on MS Speaker Series:** 10%. You will prepare a brief (500-750 words) paper synthesizing insights and information gained from attending the MS Speaker Series during your time in the program. Full instructions will be posted in the Assignments section of Blackboard.
- **Weekly research journal:** 10%. You will keep a weekly research journal documenting the time you spent working on your project, what you were doing, what you accomplished, and questions/ideas you have while working. Full instructions will be posted in the Assignments section of Blackboard.

Letter grades for this course will be based on the following points breakdown, according to the Graduate Regular scale:

A+	97-100	A	93-96.9	A-	90-92.9
B+	87-89.9	B	83-86.9	B-	80-82.9
C	70-79.9	F	< 70		

Course Schedule

Live sessions will be held on Zoom each week from 4:30 - 5:45pm, unless stated below. The weekly schedule is subject to change. Any changes will be announced on Blackboard and via email. All readings and resources will be posted in the Course Content section of Blackboard.

Required readings and other assignments and activities will be posted on Blackboard. You should complete the readings/activities for each week *before* coming to that week's live session. Note that while there are fewer assigned readings in this class than you may be used to, you will also be expected to research and read for your chosen topic area.

Class	Dates	Content & Deadlines
1	Aug 27	Course introduction
2	Sep 3	Writing a research question
3	Sep 10	Presentation skills
4	Sep 17	Asking questions: Surveys and observation
5	Sep 24	Asking questions: Interviews and focus groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research proposal presentation video due on Blackboard by 11:59pm

Class	Dates	Content & Deadlines
6	Oct 1	Discussion of research proposals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This live class session is scheduled from 4:30-7:10pm (we may not need the full time)
7	Oct 8	Data collection and management
8	Oct 15	Data analysis
9	Oct 22	Report writing
10	Oct 29	Individual check-ins <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only students scheduled for check-ins need to attend class at your individually scheduled time
11	Nov 5	Individual check-ins <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only students scheduled for check-ins need to attend class at your individually scheduled time
12	Nov 12	Individual check-ins <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only students scheduled for check-ins need to attend class at your individually scheduled time
13	Nov 19	Individual check-ins <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only students scheduled for check-ins need to attend class at your individually scheduled time
	Nov 26	NO CLASS (Thanksgiving Day)
14	Dec 3	FINAL PRESENTATIONS DURING CLASS TIME <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This live class session is scheduled from 4:30-7:10pm (we may not need the full time)
	Dec 14	FINAL PAPER DUE ON BLACKBOARD BY 11:59PM <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No live class session on this date

See Blackboard for full syllabus, including links to readings and assignment instructions, course policies, and student resources.

Acknowledgments

This syllabus draws heavily from prior syllabi for this course developed by Professor Laurie Robinson. The course learning objectives are based on learning objectives for undergraduate courses designated as Research and Scholarship Intensive by George Mason University's [Office of Student Scholarship, Creative Activities, and Research's \(OSCAR\) Students as Scholars](#) initiative.