

Dixie State College of Utah
CJ 3300 Research Methods in Criminology and Criminal Justice
Spring Semester 2012
Monday and Wednesday, 11:00-12:15 am
University Plaza, Building D, Room 102

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Phone: (435) 879-4423
Office Hours: MW 12:15 – 1:30 pm, TR 11:45 am – 1:00 pm
Prerequisites/GE Status: CJ 1010, ENGL1010, & MATH 1040/No GE Status

Each student is expected to read and understand everything outlined in this syllabus. Think of it as a contract that sets out the rules and stipulations of this class. Your enrollment and participation in this class is your signature on this contract, meaning you are in agreement with the terms of this deal. If you have any questions or concerns about what you read, feel free to discuss them with me.

Course Description per the College Catalog

Emphasizes the practical application of basic research practices to tests of criminological theory as well as law enforcement and corrections problems. Students gain the knowledge necessary to interpret pertinent research in their area of interest.

Course Overview

This course is designed to be an introduction to foundational principles used in research. We will cover both qualitative and quantitative research techniques during the course of the semester. In addition to covering the actual methods used in research in criminology and criminal justice, we will discuss how to choose the right research approach, how to write a proper research paper, and how to gauge the ethical ramifications of your research.

Research methods courses are notoriously tedious and mind-numbing. I will do my best to make this course “hands-on”. This means we will take some class time and you will have some homework that asks you to put these tools to use. Moreover, you will be designing your own research project module which will allow you to go through the mental exercises of assembling the proper research methods to address your subject. If

you approach these assignments and projects with the right attitude, I am willing to wager you will not feel as trapped by the perceived “dryness” of this class.

Lastly, Samuel Johnson said that, “*Mankind has a great aversion to intellectual labor; but even supposing knowledge to be easily attainable, more people would be content to be ignorant than would take even a little trouble to acquire it.*” With this in mind, I have labored to make this class effort based. In theory, this means that those who are willing to labor to gain knowledge should be those who receive the greatest reward. This will not be a perfect system, however I hope this class provides those willing to work with a great chance at success. I hope we can help each other stay motivated and excited throughout our time together. Please do not hesitate to ask for my help if it is ever needed. I am more than happy to assist you in any way that I can. I may not have the answer you’re looking for, but I will do my best.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to communicate the scientific pursuit of the causes of criminal behavior, critically think using skills developed in criminology, and apply criminology and the study of criminal justice. These objectives will be shown through the following outcomes:

- A. Understand basic methodological techniques employed in past and current research done on the causes of criminal behavior and the interworkings of the criminal justice system.
- B. Identify and interpret research that illuminates the strengths and weaknesses of current criminal justice policy, as well as research that attempts to reveal the causes of criminal behavior.
- C. Collect and use empirical evidence in drawing conclusions and in practice.
- D. Apply problem solving strategies to create solutions to the many challenges faced by those working in and controlled by the criminal justice system.
- E. Apply proper research methods to varying criminal behaviors or functions within the criminal justice system.

Required Text and Reading (Book is available at the Bookstore)

Creswell, John W. (2009). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. 3rd Edition. Sage Publications. Thousand Oaks, CA.

Reading for this class is NOT optional. You will be held accountable for the reading that is assigned. So my advice is: DO THE READING.

Try and keep up with the reading. This means having read the chapter corresponding to that day's class *before* coming to class. In addition to helping you get more out of each class meeting, this will also help you avoid having to read large chunks of the book all at once. This will help you retain more of the information and will enhance your learning ability. It will also help you plan your studying for the days and weeks of the semester.

Punctuality and Attendance Policies

“Punctuality is the politeness of kings.” – Louis XVIII

Be on time to class. If you arrive late, please be courteous to others by entering as quietly as possible.

Also, please do not pack-up until we have finished our discussion for the day. I promise we will never go over our allotted time. Because of this, please do not start gathering your things and banging around in the classroom until we are finished up for the day. If for some reason you do need to leave early, please sit close to the door, in a spot where you do not need to cut in front of anyone, and when the time comes, leave as quietly as you can. Thank you all in advance for being sensitive to this request.

*“I could never think well of a man's intellectual or moral character, if he was **habitually unfaithful to his appointments.**”* – Nathaniel Emmons

Attendance is required in order to pass this class, no exceptions. To reinforce this, I will conduct random roll calls throughout the semester. I will perform these on random class days and during random class times (i.e. beginning of class, end of class). These random roll calls can potentially affect your grade in two ways:

1. If you miss more than three roll calls due to an unexcused absence, your **final grade will be dropped by 3%** for each additional unexcused absence (i.e. 80% → 77%).
2. If you have missed one roll call or less for the entire semester, **your final grade will be bumped up to the next grade level** (i.e. B → B+).

In short, if you attend class around 90% of the time and are prompt, you have nothing to worry about.

However, I understand that situations outside of your control (untimely illnesses, family deaths, or other crises) arise and may take you away from the classroom for a period of

time. I hope they don't, but if circumstances like these affect your life during the semester, it is **your responsibility** to contact me as soon as possible (this means within a day or two of your return/recovery) to discuss the work and class periods that have been missed. If more than a work week has passed without you contacting me to set new due dates, you will be unable to make up the work you missed and the absence will be counted as unexcused.

To have an absence count as excused, you need to present proper documentation to me within a day or two of your documented time away. To be clear, an excused absence can be because of an illness, a funeral, a birth, etc., as long as the proper documentation accompanies the event. If you miss the bus, forgot to set your alarm, etc., you do not need to let me know as these things are examples of unexcused absences. Remember, you each get three of these built into the policy before they begin to detract from your final grade.

Technology Policy

Please turn off and put away all noise makers when entering the classroom. Cell phones should be silenced or turned off and put away for the duration of the class period. This also includes iPods (or other mp3 players). Laptops and tablets are appropriate to use for taking notes, but they should be silenced as well. If I notice you are consistently making phone calls, sending text messages, or playing/surfing the internet on your mp3 player/tablet/laptop during class time, I reserve the right to deduct up to 10% off your **final grade**. (If you are expecting an important call or text during the time we have class and need to have your phone on, please talk to me about it *before* class so I don't act a fool.) Remember to please be respectful of your classmates; it may bother them even if it doesn't bother you.

Some Other Thoughts

Remember, a diversity of ideas is a blessing. During class discussions, please remember to speak to others with respect. Simply because someone else thinks differently than you do does not make them bad, deficient, or unintelligent. We need to cultivate an environment in which everyone feels safe expressing their ideas. Please do not do anything that would harm our work towards this goal.

One of the secondary goals of this course is to make each one of us a better person for having taken and participated in this class. I hope we may all demonstrate honesty, integrity, accountability, hard work, and patience with one another. And in so doing, I

hope we will push each other closer to excellence both inside and outside of the classroom.

Grades and Assignments

Let me issue a brief caution about grades (I do this so we can get this out of the way and can bypass this conversation in the future). During every semester, there are students who come to me and say, “I am not doing well in this class and I really need to pass, what can I do?” My answer will be a simple, “Nothing.” There is no extra credit or make-up work for unexcused absences in this class. If this class is important to you, then I expect you to approach your studies with the fervor needed to obtain the results you desire from the *beginning* of the semester. Do not come to me looking for help if you decide part way through the semester that you need to exert more effort. Start working hard today as you will only go as far as your effort takes you.

On this same note, please do not come talk to me or send me emails at the end of the semester asking for me to bump up your final grade because you are just short of the grade you need to keep your scholarship, stay in this major, or stay enrolled in the university. Much like in sports, it is not a single play that determines the outcome of the game. By this I mean it is not your performance in one class that determines whether or not you can keep your scholarship or stay in this major, but the accumulation of the results from multiple classes. It is an untenable and unfair position to put me in, so please understand now that, “You earn what you earn.”

The following list shows the assignments you will be required to do during the semester. This list provides very brief descriptions of the assignments. We will discuss each assignment and exam in greater detail during class. Feel free to ask for more thorough descriptions for each paper, if necessary. The due dates can be found on the class schedule. Remember, no late assignments will be accepted. The descriptions of the exams and the expectations for class participation are listed below:

- I. Application Exercises – As I mentioned above, this class is a “hands-on” class. Some of these exercises will be done in class and others will be given as homework. Throughout the course of the semester I will assign four exercises that you are to do on your own time. These will be graded assignments worth 25 points each.
- II. Exams – You will take two exams through the course of the semester as indicated on the class schedule. Each exam will test your knowledge of key terms and concepts relevant to various research methods we discuss. The

exams will be a mixture of multiple choice and fill in the blank questions. Each exam will be given in the testing center.

- III.** Final Exam – The final exam will consist of a few short answer questions. I will provide certain details about a subject and you will be asked to provide the appropriate research design. This exam will be taken in our classroom and the date can be found on the schedule below.
- IV.** Research Module – Each of you will be required to design a research project. However, given the constraints of our class, you will not have to perform the research project. These papers will be an abbreviated version of all we discuss in class. They will include shortened versions of an introduction, literature review, and methods section. Modules are due at the beginning of the class period designated as the due date on the schedule below. Emailed assignments will not be accepted, unless arrangements have been made with me before the day the paper is due. No late papers will be accepted whatsoever, no exceptions. **Please pay attention to the layout of the paper:**

-Separate cover page with name, date, and class title (CJ 3300).

-Typed written, Twelve point, Times New Roman Font, double-spaced with 1 inch margins on the top and bottom and 1 inch margins on both sides. These are the default margins on a Word document.

-The paper must be no less than seven full pages and no more than eight full pages of written text. The title page does not count toward the length of the paper. The writing of the assignment must start at the very top of page one. Do not, I repeat, do not put your name, the date, or any other information at the top of page one. Leave all that information on the cover page. Also, do not space down a line or two and then start writing.

IMPORTANT NOTE: For each requirement not met, an automatic 10 points will be deducted from the total score of the paper.

Point Breakdown

Application Exercise #1	25 points
Application Exercise #2	25 points
Application Exercise #3	25 points
Application Exercise #4	25 points
Exam #1	50 points
Exam #2	50 points

Final Exam	50 points
Research Module	<u>100 points</u>
Point Total	<i>350 points</i>

Grade Breakdown

A	100-94%	C	76-74%
A-	93-90%	C-	73-70%
B+	89-87%	D+	69-67%
B	86-84%	D	66-64%
B-	83-80%	D-	63-60%
C+	79-77%	F	60% or below

Class Academic Dishonesty/Academic Integrity Policy

I believe that most students are honest, and I don't want to punish everyone for the few that aren't. However, I do perform random Google searches on the papers you turn in to check for plagiarism. Let it be clear that I will not tolerate cheating. When I discover that it has occurred, a failing grade will be given for the entire course, no questions asked.

If you need additional detail about what cheating consists of follow this link to the "Student Code": <http://www.dixie.edu/catalog/file/studentcode10.pdf> (Pages 5 and 6).

Other Issues

Although I will try very hard to stick to the attached schedule, changes may be made. Notice of such changes will be made during class (or sent via Dmail if I have to miss class unexpectedly). Students are responsible for getting this information. Because this and other pertinent information will make its way into your Dmail account, make sure you check it daily. If you don't know your user name and password, go to www.dixie.edu and select "Dmail," for complete instructions. You will be held responsible for information posted on blackboard and sent to your Dmail email, so please check it often.

At the risk of sounding like your parent, I recommend you make a friend in this class. I say this in case you unfortunately have to miss class. The notes we use in class will not be posted on blackboard and I will not make copies of my notes for any student. So, make a friend and problem solved.

Dixie State College's Policies and Resources

Disability Resource Center

If you suspect or are aware that you have a disability that may affect your success in the course you are strongly encouraged to contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) located in the North Plaza Building. The disability will be evaluated and eligible students will receive assistance in obtaining reasonable accommodations. Phone # 435-652-7516.

Library Information

The Library has all kinds of information and resources. Visit the Val Browning Library or go to the library website at <http://library.dixie.edu/>.

Testing Center

If you are assigned to take a test in the Testing Center, go to the North Plaza. You can get information on their website at <http://new.dixie.edu/testing/>.

Tutoring Center

If you need help understanding the content of your courses, go to the Tutoring Center located in the Browning Learning Center, Room 105. There is a schedule of what courses have tutors at what times outside the door. You can also visit them online at <http://dsc.dixie.edu/tutoring/>.

Writing Center

If you need help writing papers, go to the Writing Center in the Browning Learning Center, Room 105. You can also visit them online at: http://new.dixie.edu/english/dsc_writing_center.php.

Disruptive Behavior Policy

It is the responsibility of an instructor to manage the classroom environment to ensure a good learning climate for all students. This means not talking when the teacher is talking, following instructions, and speaking and acting respectfully to the professor and fellow students. If your behavior is disruptive, I will first let you know verbally that you are behaving inappropriately. If it continues, I will send you written notice that your behavior must change. As a last resort, I will drop you from the class. For more details, please see the disruptive behavior policy at: <http://www.dixie.edu/humanres/policy/sec3/334.html>.

To learn more about the Reasonable Accommodation Policy, to view the Semester calendar, or to explore any other questions you may have, please visit <http://new.dixie.edu/reg/syllabus/>.

Class Schedule
Spring Semester 2012
CJ 3300 Research Methods in Criminology and Criminal Justice

Week 1

1/09 – Syllabus Review and Class Introductions

1/11 – Chapter 1

Week 2

1/16 – Martin Luther King Jr. Day, **No Class**

1/18 – Chapter 1

Week 3

1/23 – Chapter 2

1/25 – Chapter 2

Week 4

1/30 – Chapter 2

2/1 – Chapter 3, *Application Exercise #1 Due*

Week 5

2/6 – Chapter 3

2/8 – Chapter 4

Week 6

2/13 – Chapter 4

2/15 – Chapter 5

Week 7

2/20 – President's Day, **No Class**

2/22 – Chapter 5

Week 8

2/27 – Review Session

2/29 – *Exam #1*

Week 9

3/5 – Chapter 6

3/7 – Chapter 6, *Application Exercise #2 Due*

Week 10 – Spring Break

3/12 – No Class

3/14 – No Class

Week 11

3/19 – Chapter 7

3/21 – Chapter 7

Week 12

3/26 – Chapter 7

3/28 – Chapter 8

Week 13

4/2 – Chapter 8, *Application Exercise #3 Due*

4/4 – Chapter 8

Week 14

4/09 – Chapter 9

4/11 – Chapter 9

Week 15

4/16 – Chapter 9

4/18 – Chapter 10, *Application Exercise #4 Due*

Week 16

4/23 – Chapter 10

4/25 – Review Session, *Research Module Due*

Finals Week

5/2 – Final Exam, 10:00 am – 12:00 pm