

CCJS 610 -Research Methods in Criminology & Criminal Justice
Course Syllabus
Spring 2015
Wednesday 4-6:45pm

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Office Hours: Wednesday, 1-3pm (or by appointment)

Course Description: Introduction to the basic methods of criminological research; overviews of philosophy of science and research ethics; research design issues such as sampling and measurement; and methods of data collection, including survey, experimental, and evaluation research.

Course Objectives: Students will leave this course with an understanding of the various research designs available for criminological and criminal justice inquiry. In addition, they will be exposed to the major data collection strategies used in the field and have a sense of when it is appropriate to utilize each of those particular strategies. Students should understand that the appropriateness and defensibility of potential research approaches depends on the relative validity and reliability of particular methods in given contexts.

Prerequisite: I expect that you (a) have had an undergraduate course in research methods and are fairly knowledgeable about the topic and/or (b) can review an undergraduate methods text (e.g., Maxfield and Babbie) and become proficient relatively quickly. If you have questions about this, be sure to speak to me as soon as possible.

Grading Schema:

Class Participation (20%): The course will be driven by class discussion of assigned readings and their implications for carrying out research in practical situations. On occasion, I will lecture on particularly relevant topics, but you should come to class prepared to discuss the readings in depth, ask questions, and consider applications of our discussion points.

Leading Class Discussion (15%): Each student is expected to summarize the reading and lead discussion for one class session during the semester. We'll choose the various topic areas for presentation in the first class. This task will consist of three main parts:

1. Thoroughly read and outline the class material as if you are summarizing it for your classmates. You should highlight key points and develop discussion questions.

2. Provide me with a one or two page single-spaced summary (via email) of your understanding of the readings and the points you wish to highlight during class by 2pm Tuesday of the week for which you are scheduled.
3. Lead part of the class session for a particular week. This entails highlighting the key points in the reading and proposing/offering discussion questions to the group for our consideration. Essentially, you will be “second in command” for that particular class and I will lean heavily on the work that you’ve done in moving the discussion along. You will not have to stand in front of the class and recite what you know for the entire class period, however. Again, I don’t expect that you’ll “get” every last detail of the assigned reading, but you should be able to summarize key points and present informed questions to the class.

Research Proposal (65% in total, though this will be comprised of several submission stages): The final paper will be a research proposal. I recommend that you select the same topic that you are pursuing for your final paper in CCJS 620. Dr. Dugan’s class requires you to analyze a secondary data set; for this paper, you must propose how you would conduct a study that uses original data collection (within the context of practical constraints).

Overall, you should provide the background for the research problem in which you’re interested and how addressing it would provide a contribution to the discipline; a clear indication of your research question (s); a statement about your expectations, hypotheses, and aims; a thorough discussion of your research design and plan (e.g., sample, data collection strategy, and analytic plan); any anticipated problems with your strategy; and the potential implications of your study in terms of policy development, program enhancement, or theoretical contribution. You will be evaluated on your ability to convey your research plan to readers, so be sure that your proposal is well-written and thoroughly checked for spelling, grammar, etc.

February 4 by 4pm – Topic Selection/Paper Part 1 (no grade)

Please submit a brief paragraph (each) on two possible research topics.

March 11 by 4pm – Literature Review of Proposal/Paper Part 2 (15%)

In no more than 8 double-spaced pages, please clearly identify the research topic you will work on for the remainder of the semester. This section of the proposal should state the topic and the theoretical and practical importance of studying it, as well as make a case for how it is a contribution to the discipline. It should also identify and review the major studies that have examined this issue in the past. What are their methodological strengths and weaknesses? State the major hypotheses that your study will test. Identify the major independent and dependent variables and the unit of analysis, as part of your front end.

April 22 by 4pm – Research Plan/Paper Part 3 Sampling & Research Design (20%)

In no more than 12 double-spaced pages, indicate clearly the type of sampling design you will use, your research design, and the measures you will use in your proposed research.

In your sample design section, be sure to include your rationale for selecting this type of sample. In your discussion, clearly indicate the population to which your hypothesis applies and how you will select the sample. Pay particular attention to practical issues, such as sample size, potential attrition, and access. Provide a justification for the decisions you make.

You should also clearly indicate the type of research design you will use to test your hypothesis. How does this design allow you to test your hypothesis (i.e., justify your design and provide a rationale for it)? Don't be vague in your design, such as saying you will conduct an experiment or a survey. Be specific – will your survey be a panel design? How many data collection points? Why? What will be the lag or time between surveys/interviews? Why? Will you survey or interview? Why?

Finally, discuss your measurement plan. What are the key variables you need to measure in order to test your hypothesis? Indicate precisely how you will measure them and consider/defend their validity and reliability.

May 14 by NOON – Complete Proposal (30%)

This final paper should address all comments and suggested revisions provided throughout the semester. The paper should be double-spaced, in 12-point Times New Roman, with 1-inch margins and in *Criminology* format. A 20-25 page limit (not including references) will be strictly enforced.

Class Policies:

- **Attendance:** Unexcused absences will detrimentally affect your participation grade. Except during a Major Scheduled Grading Event, students may be excused from a single lecture one time per course per semester for a medically necessitated reason. The student should make a reasonable attempt to inform the instructor of his/her illness prior to the class, and present his or her instructor with a self-signed note attesting to the date of his or her illness. This note must include an acknowledgement: (a) that the information provided is true and correct, and (b) that the student understands that providing false information to University officials is a violation of Part 9(h) of the Code of Student Conduct. Any more absences will be not be excused unless the student provides documentation of a medical or family emergency, which the professor will verify. In cases of extended absences, the student must meet with the professor in order to

arrive at a plan that will address the missed material and his or her participation grade.

- **Disability Support:** I will make every effort to accommodate students who are registered with the Disability Support Services (DSS) Office and who provide me with a University of Maryland DSS Accommodation form which has been updated for the Spring 2015 semester. This form must be presented to me no later than February 4, 2015. I am not able to accommodate students who are not registered with DSS or who do not provide me with documentation that has not been reviewed by DSS after February 5, 2014.
- **Missed Deadlines/Late Assignments:** Extensions for papers or leading class discussions will not be given except in cases of a medical or family emergency. Accompanying written documentation, such as hospital admission papers or a physician's note (which the professor will verify), is required. If a *complete* assignment is late without my prior approval, it will lose one letter grade for every 24 hours that is past the due date.
- **Academic Integrity:** Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated in any form and any violations will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct. Academic dishonesty includes cheating, fabrication of information used in assignments, plagiarism, and knowingly facilitating the academic dishonesty of another.

REQUIRED COURSE READINGS

Becker, H.S. (2009). How to find out how to do qualitative research. *International Journal of Communication*, 3: 545-553.

Blumstein, A., Cohen, J., & Farrington, D.P. (1988). Longitudinal and criminal career research: further clarifications. *Criminology* 26:57-74.

Braga, A., Kennedy, D.M., Waring, E.J., & Piehl, A.M. (2001). Problem oriented policing and youth violence: an evaluation of Boston's Operation Ceasefire. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency* 38: 195-225.

Boman, J. H., Stogner, J. M., Miller, B. L., Griffin, O. H., & Krohn, M. D. (2012). On the operational validity of perceptual peer delinquency: Exploring projection and elements contained in perceptions. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, 49(4), 601-621.

Cantor, D., & Lynch, J. (2000). Self-report surveys as measures of crime and criminal victimization. In Duffee, D. (Ed.), *Measurement and Analysis of Crime and Justice* (pp. 85-138). Washington, DC: US Department of Justice.

Carr, P.J., Napolitano, L., & Keating, J. (2007) We never call the cops and here is why: A qualitative examination of legal cynicism in three Philadelphia neighborhoods. *Criminology*, 45: 445-480.

Cohen, J. (1983). The cost of dichotomization. *Applied Psychological Measurement*, 7: 249-253.

Fowler, F.J. (2008). *Survey Research Methods*, Fourth Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Geddes, B. (1990). How the cases you choose affect the answers you get: Selection bias in comparative politics. *Political Analysis*, 2: 131-150.

General Accounting Office. (1993). *Developing and Using Questionnaires*. Washington, DC: US General Accounting Office. Available at www.gao.gov

Geerken, M. (1994). Rap sheets in criminological research: considerations and caveats. *Journal of Quantitative Criminology* 10: 3-21.

Gottfredson, M., & Hirschi, T. (1987). The methodological adequacy of longitudinal research on crime. *Criminology* 25: 581-614.

Harrison, L. (1997). The validity of self-reported drug use in survey research: An overview and critique of research methods. *NIDA Res Monogr* 167 (1997): 17-36.

Huizinga, D., & Elliott, D. (1986). Reassessing the reliability and validity of self-report delinquency measures. *Journal of Quantitative Criminology* 2: 293-327.

Inciardi, J. (1993). Some considerations on the methods, dangers, and ethics of crack-house research, Appendix A. In Inciardi, J., Lockwood, D., & Pettieger, A.E. (Eds), *Women and Crack Cocaine* (pp. 147-157). New York, NY: Macmillan.

Jacob, H. (1984). *Using Published Data: Errors and Remedies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Kalton, G. (1983). *Introduction to Survey Sampling*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Kuhn, T.S. (1996). *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Third Edition. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago.

Krueger, R.A. (1994). *Focus Groups: A Practical Guide for Applied Research, Second Edition*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Ludwig et al. (2010). What can we learn about neighborhood effects from the Moving to Opportunity Study? *American Journal of Sociology*, 114: 144-188.

- Mastrofski, S. & Ritti, M. (1992). You can lead a horse to water...: a case study of a police department's response to stricter drunk-driving laws. *Justice Quarterly* 9: 465-491.
- Maxwell, J. A. (2012). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach* (Vol. 41). Sage.
- Menard, S.W. (2002). *Longitudinal Research*, 2nd Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Miller, J. & White, N.A. (2003). Gender and adolescent relationship violence: A contextual examination. *Criminology*, 41: 1207-1248.
- Monahan, J. Applebaum, P., Mulvey, E., Robbins, P.C., & Lidz, C. (1993). Ethical and legal duties in conducting research on violence: lessons from the MacArthur risk assessment study. *Violence and Victims* 8: 387-396.
- Patton, M.Q. (1990). *Qualitative Evaluation Research Methods, Second Edition*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Pawson, R., & Tilley, N. (1997). *Realistic Evaluation*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Rutter, M. (1988). Longitudinal data in the study of causal processes: some uses and some pitfalls. In Rutter, M. (Ed.), *Studies of Psychosocial Risk: The Power of Longitudinal Data* (pp. 1-28). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Sampson, R. (2010). Gold standard myths: Observations on the experimental turn in quantitative criminology. *Journal of Quantitative Criminology*, 26: 489-500.
- Sampson, R. & Laub, J. (2005). Seductions of method: Rejoinder to Nagin and Tremblay's "developmental trajectory groups: fact or fiction?". *Criminology*, 43: 905-913.
- Sampson, R., & Raudenbush, S. (1999). Systematic social observation of public spaces: a new look at disorder in urban neighborhoods. *American Sociological Review* 105: 603-651.
- Shadish, W.R., Cook, T., & Campbell, D.T. (2002). *Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs for Generalized Causal Inference*. Boston, MA: Houghton-Mifflin.
- Schaeffer, N & Presser, S. (2003). The science of asking questions. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 29: 65-88.
- Thornberry, T., & Krohn, M. (2000). The self-report method for measuring delinquency and crime. In Duffee, D. (Ed.), *Measurement and Analysis of Crime and Justice* (pp. 33-84). Washington, DC: US Department of Justice.

Weisburd, D., & Green, L. (1995). Policing drug hot spots: the Jersey City drug market analysis experiment. *Justice Quarterly* 12: 711-735.

Welch, M., Fenwick, M., & Roberts, M. (1998). State managers, intellectuals, and the media: a content analysis of ideology in experts' quotes in feature newspaper articles on crime. *Justice Quarterly* 15: 219-241.

Widom, C.S. (1989). Child abuse, neglect, and adult behavior: research design and findings on criminality, violence, and child abuse. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 59: 355-367.

Wilt, S.A., & Gabriel, C.S. (1998). A weapon-related injury surveillance system in New York City. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* 15: 75-82.

Course Topics, Schedule, and Assignments:

| <u>Date</u> | <u>Topic (s)</u> | <u>Readings</u> | <u>Assignments</u> |
|--------------------|---|--|----------------------------|
| Jan 28 | Introduction and Paradigms, The Philosophy of Science and Its Process | Sampson & Laub Kuhn (2-4, 6, 8-9, 13) | |
| Feb 4 | Cause and Validity; Theory and Method Experiments I | Pawson & Tilley (1-3) Shadish et al. (1) | <u>Paper Part 1</u> |
| Feb 11 | Experiments II | Shadish et al. (8) Weisburd and Green Ludwig et al. Sampson | |
| Feb 18 | Experiments III, Quasi- Experiments and Alternatives | Braga et al. Pawson & Tilley (4-5); Shadish et al. (4-6, 10, 14) Widom | |
| Feb 25 | Cross-Sectional and Longitudinal Research | Blumstein et al. Menard (pp1-49) Gottfredson & Hirschi Rutter | |

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| Mar 4 | <i>NO CLASS MEETING – ACJS Conference</i> | | |
| Mar 11 | Measurement; Validity and Reliability I | Huizinga & Elliott Shadish et al. (2-3) Thornberry & Krohn | <u>Paper Part 2</u> |
| Mar 18 | <i>NO CLASS MEETING – Spring Break</i> | | |
| Mar 25 | Measurement; Validity and Reliability II, | Harrison Cohen Schaeffer & Presser Boman et al. | |
| Apr 1 | Sampling: Probability and Nonprobability Based Approaches | Kalton (all) Fowler (2-3) | |
| Apr 8 | Sampling continued and Data Collection I | Geddes Wilt & Gabriel Cantor & Lynch GAO 1993 (4-6) | |
| Apr 15 | Data Collection II | Krueger (pp. 16-38, 74- 98) Patton (pp. 277-320) Sampson & Raudenbush | |
| Apr 22 | Data Collection III | Geerken Jacob Mastrofski & Ritti Welch et al. | <u>Paper Part 3</u> |
| Apr 29 | Qualitative Research | Maxwell (Chapters 5- 6) Becker Miller & White Carr et al. | |

May 6 Ethics; Conclusion

Inciardi
Monahan et al.
Watch the Stanford
Prison Experiment

May 14

Final Paper
