

## CRM 340-899: Research Methods in Criminology and Criminal Justice

**Professor:** Ethan Amidon, Ph.D.

**Office Hours:** 9 am – 12 pm (Tues -Thurs) or by appointment

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**Office:** Strong Hall 230A

**Fall 2018**

### Course Description

The objective of this course is to examine the basic research methodologies that are used in the field of criminology and criminal justice. Students will learn various research strategies used in quantitative, qualitative, and evaluation research.

### Student Learning Outcomes & Methods of Assessment

The core objectives of this course are described by the following goals and learning objectives. Students who complete this course should be able to:

1. Critically examine the core methodologies used to conduct research in the field of criminology and criminal justice.  
**Assessment Strategy:** Quizzes, assignments, exams, and the final paper
2. Design an appropriate research strategy for the purpose of answering an empirical research question.  
**Assessment Strategy:** Final paper
3. Demonstrate the ability to conduct a literature review of academic research.  
**Assessment Strategy:** The literature review portion of the final paper will be assessed in terms of whether the student: **1)** produces an organized and readable review of the academic literature on their topic, **2)** maintains a scholarly and objective writing tone throughout the literature review, **3)** shows the ability to synthesize multiple readings into a coherent flow, **4)** identifies the core methodological strategies and findings from scholarly sources, and **5)** demonstrates appropriate grammar, spelling, and writing skills for an upper-level student.

### Required Materials

There is one textbook required for this course, and it is available in the MSU bookstore or online (e.g., [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) or [www.half.com](http://www.half.com)):

**Maxfield, Michael G. and Earl Babbie. 2012. *Basics of Research Methods for Criminal Justice and Criminology*. 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning.**

## Grading

Your final grade for this class will be based on your performance on three exams, ten quizzes, one final paper, and ten assignments. The breakdown of your final grade is as follows:

3 Exams	300 points
10 Quizzes	100 points
1 Final Paper	150 points
10 Assignments	100 points
<hr/> Total	<hr/> 650 points

**Exams (~46%):** There will be four exams worth 100 points each given throughout the course. These exams will consist of material covered in the assigned readings, lecture videos and notes, and online assignments. Students' overall exam grade will be determined by their performance on **only three** out of the four exams. A **non-mandatory** cumulative final will be given at the end of the semester that can be used to substitute for the student's lowest test grade.

**Quizzes (~15%):** There will be eleven quizzes given over the course of the semester. These quizzes are worth 10 points each, and they will cover the required reading(s) for the week. **The lowest quiz grade will be dropped.**

**Final Paper (~23%):** The paper assignment will be due on **DECEMBER 5<sup>TH</sup>**. This assignment will require students to design a short 20-question survey and write a 10-15 page paper that explains how their survey questions address their research question. The paper portion of this assignment will consist of students clearly identifying their research question, performing a literature review on the main concepts in their research question, defining the key concepts in their research question, and explaining how the questions in their survey are designed to answer their research question.

**Online Assignments (~15%):** There will be eleven assignments worth 10 points each that will be due throughout the course of the semester. These assignments will consist of short thought papers and exercises that will require students to correctly interpret and apply the core concepts covered in the assigned weekly chapters. Assignments will **generally** be graded in terms of: **1)** the clarity of the student's response (i.e., whether the student clearly articulates their point using proper punctuation and grammar), **2)** the correct identification and application of core methodological concepts, **3)** the quality of the justifications offered for why a specific approach or methodology addresses the problem, and **4)** the overall thoughtfulness of the student's response. Additional grading expectations may be included in the instructions for online assignments. **The lowest assignment grade will be dropped.**

**Make-up Policy and Late Assignments:** Make-up exams or the acceptance of late assignments will only be given/accepted in emergency situations and only when the student has received permission from me prior to the due date. If an emergency situation should arise, please contact me via email before the assignment/exam/paper scheduled due date. **Students who fail to notify me before the due date will not be allowed to make up the course work. Students will also be required to provide documentation regarding their absence.**

**The grading scale for this class is as follows:**

- A = 90% - 100%
- B = 80% - 89%
- C = 70% - 79%
- D = 60% - 69%
- F = Below 60%

### **Course Policies and Expectations**

All of the video lectures, PowerPoints, exercises, quizzes, and assignments will be made available on Blackboard before we are scheduled to cover a particular topic. **I strongly suggest that students cover the assigned readings associated with each topic before watching the video lectures as this will assist with following along with the presentation of the material.** While I will attempt to be as dynamic as possible during these lectures, please note that I will be recording the lectures by myself in my office.

I understand that many students will likely experience some form of anxiety about taking an online course that focuses on research methods. I have taught research methods numerous times in the past, and from my experience, students who do not perform well in this class are those who fail to keep up to date with the readings and assignments. **Therefore, I highly suggest that students view all video lectures and complete all of the assigned readings, quizzes, assignments, and exams by their scheduled due dates.** Furthermore, I strongly suggest that students who experience difficulties with the course material reach out to me for assistance with these issues. I am more than happy to provide additional assistance with learning the course material via e-mail, in-person, or through virtual office hours. **Please remember, I cannot provide assistance to students who don't ask for help.**

**Students are also responsible for ensuring their ability to access and complete all of the requirements associated with this course.** In order to perform well in this class, students will likely need to access Blackboard on a daily basis. **It is the responsibility of the student to make sure they will be able to frequently access a computer with Internet capabilities throughout the semester.** Furthermore, if technical difficulties should arise when using the online component of this class, students will be expected to actively address these issues by contacting the **help desk (417-836-5891)** and myself (either via email or during office hours) for assistance with these problems. **Missing submission dates for online assignments based on either of these issues will rarely be excused.**

### **Non-Discrimination Policy**

Missouri State University is an equal opportunity/affirmative action institution and maintains a grievance procedure available to any person who believes he or she has been discriminated against. At all times, it is your right to address inquiries or concerns about possible discrimination to the [Office for Equity and Diversity](#), Park Central Office Building, 117 Park Central Square, Suite 111, (417) 836-4252. Other types of concerns (i.e., concerns of an academic nature) should be discussed directly with your instructor and can also be brought to the

attention of your professor's Department Head. Please visit the OED website at [www.missouristate.edu/equity/](http://www.missouristate.edu/equity/).

### **Students with Disabilities**

If you are a student with a disability and anticipate barriers related to this course, it is important to request accommodations and establish an accommodation plan with the University. Please contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) (<https://www.missouristate.edu/disability/>), Meyer Library, Suite 111, 417-836-4192, to initiate the process to establish your accommodation plan. The DRC will work with you to establish your accommodation plan, or it may refer you to other appropriate resources based on the nature of your disability. In order to prepare an accommodation plan, the University usually requires that students provide documentation relating to their disability. Please be prepared to provide such documentation if requested. Once a University accommodation plan is established, you may notify the class instructor of approved accommodations. If you wish to utilize your accommodation plan, it is suggested that you do so in a timely manner, preferably within the first two weeks of class. Early notification to the instructor allows for full benefit of the accommodations identified in the plan. Instructors will not receive the accommodation plan until you provide that plan, and are not required to apply accommodations retroactively.

### **Academic Dishonesty**

Missouri State University is a community of scholars committed to developing educated persons who accept the responsibility to practice personal and academic integrity. You are responsible for knowing and following the university's student honor code, *Student Academic Integrity Policies and Procedures*, available at [www.missouristate.edu/assets/provost/AcademicIntegrityPolicyRev-1-08.pdf](http://www.missouristate.edu/assets/provost/AcademicIntegrityPolicyRev-1-08.pdf) and also available at the Reserves Desk in Meyer Library. Any student participating in any form of academic dishonesty will be subject to sanctions as described in this policy. Any student caught cheating or plagiarizing will receive zero points for the assignment.

### **Emergency Response Statement (Required)**

Students should become familiar with a basic emergency response plan through a dialogue with the instructor that includes a review and awareness of exits specific to the classroom and the location of evacuation centers for the building. All instructors are provided this information specific to their classroom and/or lab assignments in an e-mail prior to the beginning of the fall semester from the Office of the Provost and Safety and Transportation. Students with disabilities impacting mobility should discuss the approved accommodations for emergency situations and additional options when applicable with the professor.

For more information go to <http://www.missouristate.edu/safetran/51597.htm> and <http://www.missouristate.edu/safetran/erp.htm>.

## Course Outline

**\*\*\*Please note, for the purposes of the course schedule, each week will begin on Monday and end on Sunday.**

- WEEK 1 (8/20 - 8/26):**      **Introduction to the Course & Online Content**
- WEEK 2 (8/27 – 9/2):**      **Criminal Justice and Scientific Inquiry (Chapter 1)**  
***QUIZ #1***  
***ASSIGNMENT #1***
- WEEK 3 (9/3 – 9/9):**      **Ethics and Criminal Justice Research (Chapter 2)**  
***QUIZ #2***  
***ASSIGNMENT #2***
- WEEK 4 (9/10 – 9/16):**      **General Issues in Research Design (Chapter 3)**  
***QUIZ #3***  
***ASSIGNMENT #3***
- WEEK 5 (9/17 – 9/23):**      **Concepts, Operationalization and Measurement (Chapter 4)**  
***QUIZ #4***  
***ASSIGNMENT #4***
- WEEK 6 (9/24 – 9/30):**      **Exam 1**  
***ASSIGNMENT #5***
- WEEK 7 (10/1– 10/7):**      **Sampling (Chapter 6)**  
***QUIZ #5***  
***ASSIGNMENT #6***
- WEEK 8 (10/8 – 10/14):**      **Survey Research (Chapter 7)**  
***QUIZ #6***  
***ASSIGNMENT #7***
- WEEK 9 (10/15 – 10/21):**      **Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs (Chapter 5)**  
***QUIZ #7***  
***ASSIGNMENT # 8***

**WEEK 10 (10/22 – 10/28): Exam 2**

**WEEK 11 (10/29 – 11/4): Field Research (Chapter 8)**

Sterk, Claire E. 2007. "Tricking and Tripping: Fieldwork on Prostitution in the Era of AIDS."

*QUIZ #8*

**WEEK 12 (11/5 – 11/11): Agency Records, Content Analysis and Secondary Data (Chapter 9)**

Eschholtz, Sarah, Matthew Mallard, & Stacey Flynn. 2004. "Images of Prime Time Justice: A Content Analysis of 'NYPD Blue' and 'Law and Order'."

*QUIZ #9*

*ASSIGNMENT #9*

**WEEK 13 (11/12 – 11/18): Evaluation Research and Problem Analysis (Chapter 10)**

Esbensen, Finn-Aage et al. 2002. "National Evaluation of the Gang Resistance Education and Training (GREAT) Program"

*QUIZ #10*

*ASSIGNMENT #10*

**WEEK 14 (11/19 – 11/25): THANKSGIVING BREAK**

*WORK ON THE FINAL PAPER*

**WEEK 15 (11/26 – 12/2): Introduction to Statistics (Chapter 11)**

*QUIZ #11*

*ASSIGNMENT #11*

**WEEK 16 (12/3 – 12/9): Exam 3**

*FINAL PAPER DUE BY MIDNIGHT ON WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 5<sup>TH</sup>*

**WEEK 17 (12/10 – 12/14): Final Exam**

*THE FINAL EXAM MUST BE COMPLETED BY MIDNIGHT ON FRIDAY, DECEMBER 14<sup>TH</sup>*