

CRM 705: Applied Research in Criminal Justice

Professor: Ethan Amidon, Ph.D.

Office: Strong Hall 230A

Office Hours: 10 am – 1 pm (Mon - Wed) or by appointment

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Course Description

This course provides graduate students with the background and skills necessary to conduct practical research in their professional fields and to successfully navigate academic research relevant to guiding and improving criminal justice policy and practice. The applied nature of this course will require the completion of a number of hands-on and scenario-driven exercises.

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. Demonstrate an understanding of the core methodologies used to conduct criminal justice research.
2. Understand the processes involved with conceptualizing and operationalizing criminal justice concepts.
3. Interpret key statistical concepts when reading technical reports and academic journal articles.
4. Perform statistical-based techniques using SPSS to address criminal justice-based research questions.
5. Conduct statistical techniques to determine whether variables are reliable and valid.

All of these learning objectives will be assessed using course assignments and exams.

Course Materials

There is no required textbook associated with this course. All required course readings and articles will be provided by the professor on Blackboard.

As part of this course, students will be required to complete take-home assignments using SPSS software. There are two potential avenues available to students in terms of gaining access to this software. First, SPSS is available to download through the MSU Computer Services Help Desk (<http://helpdesk.missouristate.edu/software-for-home.htm>). If students are interested in downloading the software to their personal computer, I would suggest purchasing the **Standard Grad Pack 25** for \$58.99 (6-month rental). Second, for those students who live within close proximity to the University, SPSS is available for free in computer labs located on campus. Students will need to determine which of these avenues fits best with their schedule.

Grading

Your final grade for this class will be based on your performance on two exams and eight assignments. The breakdown of your final grade is as follows:

| | |
|---------------|-------------------|
| 2 Exams | 120 points |
| 8 Assignments | 80 points |
| Total | 200 points |

Exams (60%): There will be two exams worth 60 points each given during the semester. These exams will require students to apply their knowledge of the core methodological concepts and analytic procedures used in criminal justice research. Students will also be required to perform statistical analyses using SPSS and to accurately interpret the results from these procedures. The final exam **will not** be cumulative.

Exam Dates

Midterm exam: **Week 10 (3/19 – 3/25)**

Final exam: **Week 17 (5/7 – 5/13)**

Assignments (40%): There will be eight assignments worth 10 points each distributed throughout the course. These assignments will require students to apply the core concepts or statistical procedures covered in the tutorials. The purpose of these assignments is for students to strengthen their understanding of the key methodological concepts used in criminal justice research and to practice applying statistical procedures designed to address CJ related research questions.

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 due date. **Students who fail to notify me before the due date will not be allowed to make-up the course work.**

The grading scale for this class is as follows:

| | |
|---|--------------|
| A | = 90% - 100% |
| B | = 80% - 89% |
| C | = 70% - 79% |
| F | = < 69% |

Course Policies and Expectations

I will post video lectures on Blackboard for each of the major topics covered in the course. These lectures are designed to both conceptually introduce the weekly topics and to demonstrate the appropriate SPSS procedures associated with each topic. **I strongly suggest that students cover**

the assigned readings associated with each topic before watching these videos 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 graduate-level course that focuses on research methods and statistics. I have taught a number of methods and statistics-oriented courses in the past, and from my experience, students who do not perform well in these classes 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 and assignments 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 (I will provide more information about virtual office hours in my introductory video). **Please remember, I cannot provide assistance to students who don't ask for help.**

All of the course readings, articles, PowerPoints, tutorials, and assignments will be made available on Blackboard before we are scheduled to cover a particular topic. Please make sure you are able to consistently check Blackboard throughout the week in order to prepare appropriately.

Students will be 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 frequently access Blackboard. **It is the responsibility of the student to make sure they will be able to access a computer with Internet capabilities throughout the semester.** Furthermore, if technical difficulties should arise, students will be expected to actively address these issues by contacting the **help desk (417-836-5891)** and myself (via email, phone, or during office hours) for assistance with these problems.

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/.

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 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.

Cell Phone Policy (Required)

Finally, as a member of the learning community, each student has a responsibility to other students who are members of the community. When cell phones or pagers ring and students respond in class or leave class to respond, it disrupts the class. Therefore, the [Office of the Provost](#) prohibits the use by students of cell phones, pagers, PDAs, or similar communication devices during scheduled classes. All such devices must be turned off or put in a silent (vibrate) mode and ordinarily should not be taken out during class. Given the fact that these same communication devices are an integral part of the University's emergency notification system, an exception to this policy would occur when numerous devices activate simultaneously. When this occurs, students may consult their devices to determine if a university emergency exists. If that is not the case, the devices should be immediately returned to silent mode and put away. Other exceptions to this policy may be granted at the discretion of the professor.

Emergency Response Statement

For information about emergency response policies at Missouri State University, please review this link: <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 at midnight on Sunday.

- WEEK 1 (1/15 – 1/21): Introduction to the Course
- WEEK 2 (1/22 – 1/28): Conceptualization & Operationalization
Assignment #1
- WEEK 3 (1/29 – 2/4): Putting the Research Process Together
Assignment #2
- WEEK 4 (2/5 – 2/11): Data Entry & Frequency Distributions
- WEEK 5 (2/12 – 2/18): Measures of Central Tendency, Measures of Variability, & Recoding Variables
Assignment #3
- WEEK 6 (2/19 – 2/25): Statistical Significance
- WEEK 7 (2/26 – 3/4): Correlation
- WEEK 8 (3/5 – 3/11): Review for the Midterm Exam
Assignment #4
- WEEK 9 (3/12 - 3/18): NO CLASS: SPRING BREAK
- WEEK 10 (3/19 – 3/25): Midterm Exam
- WEEK 11 (3/26 – 4/1): Cross Tabulations & the Chi-square Test of Independence
Assignment #5
- WEEK 12 (4/2 – 4/8): Bivariate Regression
- WEEK 13 (4/9 – 4/15): Multiple Regression
Assignment #6
- WEEK 14 (4/16 – 4/22): Logistic Regression
Assignment #7
- WEEK 15 (4/23 – 4/29): Reliability & Validity
- WEEK 16 (4/30 – 5/6): Review for the Final Exam
Assignment #8
- WEEK 17 (5/7 – 5/13): Final Exam