

CRIJ 3378
Introduction to Methods of Research
Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology
Spring 2021
3 Credit Hours



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Class Hours: ONLINE
Classroom: ONLINE
Office Hours: by ZOOM appointment
FINAL EXAM: Due May 12th

Graduate Assistant:

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Textbook

Bachman, R. and Schutt, R. K. (2020). *The Fundamentals of Research in Criminology and Criminal Justice* 5th Ed. Los Angeles: Sage Publications. ISBN: 9781544374055

~ course will always be based on the latest edition of the text above, however, if you find an earlier edition they will be similar. For example, the current edition is the 5th edition, and if you have the 4th edition they are going to be very similar, yet the further apart your chosen edition is, the less similar it will be.

Course Description

This course is an introduction to the scientific approach to understanding the social world, the relationships between theory and research, research design, and data collection. The course will focus on research aimed at understanding crime and the behavior of the criminal justice system. This course is also different from every other Research Methods course. How?

Gamification!

What is Gamification? Gamification is the application of typical elements of game playing (e.g. point scoring, competition with others, rules of play) to other areas of activity, originally developed as an online marketing technique to encourage engagement with a product or service, gamification techniques have made their way to Universities as a new and exciting development in the world of education. This is the very first course in the Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology to explore the added value of gamification. We will cover all the same material you would cover in the traditional (on campus or online) delivery of this course but with the added twist of gaming elements and a storyline. **The storyline starts at the end of the syllabus, so be sure to look through the entire syllabus before beginning the course.**

Course Objectives

By the end of the semester, students will:

- Acquire knowledge of the social scientific perspective and the relationship between research and theory in criminal justice.
- Learn fundamental concepts in social science research, including causation, reliability, validity, and sampling theory and practice.
- Be able to demonstrate the basic elements of measurement, research design, the primary methods of data collection, and descriptive data analysis.

Course Requirements and Grading

Homework Assignments	20% of final grade (390 total points) 30 Points each
Exams	30% of final grade (600 total points) 300 Points each
Writing Assignments	50% of final grade (1,000 total points) 250 Points each

A = 1,782 Points or more

B = 1,583 to 1,781 Points

C = 1,384 to 1,582 Points

D = 1,185 to 1,383 Points

F = 0 to 1,184 Points

This is a writing enhanced course (as are all Research Methods courses) therefore 50% of your final grade will be based on the writing assignments. Homework assignments are given throughout the semester and will compose 20% of the final course grade. Each module will have three online homework assignments posted in Blackboard (see instructions below). Two exams will count toward 30% of the final course grade. Exams are not cumulative. Homework, exam, and writing assignment due date are listed below.

There are *NO* extra credit opportunities in this class.

Homework Assignments

There are three separate homework assignments in every module: a true/false quiz, a multiple-choice quiz, and a fill in the blank quiz. You are only required to complete one of the three, **but will only one attempt for a score**. However, if you don't like your score or would like to have additional questions to test your knowledge of the subject you are welcome to attempt all three homework assignments. The HIGHEST SCORE of all three for the week will be the score that counts for the week.

In addition to testing your knowledge of the subject, successful assignment completion will allow you to continue to learn about Sam Knott's adventure.

The Writing Assignments

All writing assignments should be about 1-2 pages double-spaced, typewritten paragraphs and uploaded in a Word document through Blackboard. Use one-inch margins and 12-point Times New Roman type. Specific instructions are provided in Blackboard and the deadlines are listed below in the course schedule.

General Tips for Writing Assignments

Formatting

1. Include a title page with the paper title, your name, the class title, and the date. This title page does not count toward the page requirement.
2. Use black ink, double spaced lines, 12 point Times New Roman font, 1" top and bottom, left and right margins, on white letter-size paper (8.5" x 11") paper with portrait orientation.
3. Include page numbers on the bottom center of the page. The first page of the text should be page 1.
4. As a matter in principle, a paragraph should be inserted when you have a shift of one primary idea to another. Generally, paragraphs contain three to six sentences; they take up about one-third to, at most, one half of a page.

Citations / Referencing (When applicable)

5. Include in-text citations when paraphrasing or using a direct quote from another author. Generally, the author's name and year of publication are required when paraphrasing another author's work. When using a direct quote, include the author's name, year of publication, and page number where the quote can be found. Failure to include appropriate citations is plagiarism.

Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 5th Edition, by American Psychological Association. ISBN: 1-55798-791-2

6. You cannot cite in your work anything that you have not actually read yourself. Do not cite works that the authors you read have cited—unless, again, you have gone to the library and read the works yourself.
7. In general, quotations are fine to use. However, they should be used sparingly. Do not write a paper in which you have one sentence and four lines of a quotation; and then another sentence followed by four lines of a quotation; and so on and so on.

Editing

8. Before submitting your work, read it through, and pretend that you are somebody else - read it through their eyes. Then, clarify those sentences that made sense to you earlier but which may be less clear in meaning to someone else.
9. Use a spellchecker.
10. Have someone else read through your essay to make comments on both substance and presentation/grammar. Then read through your essay again.

Class and Attendance Policies

It is important to understand that this is not an entirely self-paced class. There are important deadlines and students are expected to make routine progress. It will very likely be more difficult to learn the material in this class if you devoted only a single day to the class and tried to cram a week's worth of material into a single day. Please make a strong attempt to work on the class material and to log into the class throughout the week. You'll probably learn the material more effectively and you may have a more enjoyable experience with the class.

Regular and ongoing participation in this course is *required*. You are expected to check the course throughout the week. Among other things, this means that exams must be completed during the scheduled time and that assignments must be completed prior to the deadlines. Makeup exams and quizzes will NOT be given unless the student notifies the professor *prior* to the absence. Assignments will not be accepted after the due date unless the student notifies the professor *prior* to the absence. Rare situations arise in which it is impossible to notify the instructor in advance. If this occurs the student must provide the instructor with a typed description of the reason for the absence. This must be provided to the professor within five school days of the absence. Verbal excuses will not be accepted. Furthermore, if a student wishes to dispute a grade on any assignment or exam, the student must provide the instructor with a typed description of the dispute within five school days of the date on which the assignment was returned to the class.

Attendance is required and critical to your performance in this class. Class attendance requirements will be followed in accordance with Academic Policy Statement 800401 <http://shsu.edu/dept/academic-affairs/aps/aps-students.html>

In all other matters, such as course additions and withdrawals, assignment of "incomplete" grades, and plagiarism, the policies of Sam Houston State University will be followed.

Please refer to the following on-line resources for:

Student Code of Conduct, including Academic Honesty

Disabled Student Policy:

Services for Disabled Students

Student absences on religious holy day policy:

<http://shsu.edu/dept/academic-affairs/aps/aps-students.html>

Course Schedule

WEEK	MODULE	TOPICS	READINGS	ASSIGNMENTS DUE	DUE DATE
1	Introduction	Syllabus Course Expectations		Student Survey	11:59pm on Sunday, January 17 th
UNIT 1					
2	Module 1	Science, Society, and Criminological Research	Chapter 1	Level 1 – True/False Level 2 – Multiple Choice Level 3 – Fill in the Blank	11:59pm on Sunday, January 24 th
3	Module 2	The Process and Problems of Criminological Research	Chapter 2	Level 1 – True/False Level 2 – Multiple Choice Level 3 – Fill in the Blank	11:59pm on Sunday, January 31 st
4	Module 3	Research Ethics	Chapter 3	Level 1 – True/False Level 2 – Multiple Choice Level 3 – Fill in the Blank Level 4 – Writing Assignment #1	11:59pm on Sunday, February 7 th
UNIT 2					
5	Module 4	Conceptualization and Measurement	Chapter 4	Level 1 – True/False Level 2 – Multiple Choice Level 3 – Fill in the Blank	11:59pm on Sunday, February 14 th
6	Module 5	Sampling	Chapter 5	Level 1 – True/False Level 2 – Multiple Choice Level 3 – Fill in the Blank	11:59pm on Sunday, February 21 st
7	Module 6	Causation and Research Designs	Chapter 6	Level 1 – True/False Level 2 – Multiple Choice Level 3 – Fill in the Blank Level 4 – Writing Assignment #2	11:59pm on Sunday, February 28 th
8	Exam 1		Covers Chapter 1 - 6	Exam 1	11:59pm on Sunday, March 7 th

UNIT 3					
9	Module 7	Experimental Designs	Chapter 7	Level 1 – True/False Level 2 – Multiple Choice Level 3 – Fill in the Blank	11:59pm on Sunday, March 14 nd
10	Module 8	Survey Research	Chapter 8	Level 1 – True/False Level 2 – Multiple Choice Level 3 – Fill in the Blank	11:59pm on Sunday, March 28 th
11	Module 9	Qualitative Methods	Chapter 9	Level 1 – True/False Level 2 – Multiple Choice Level 3 – Fill in the Blank Level 4 – Writing Assignment #3	11:59pm on Sunday, April 4 ^h
UNIT 4					
12	Module 10	Analyzing Content	Chapter 10	Level 1 – True/False Level 2 – Multiple Choice Level 3 – Fill in the Blank	11:59pm on Sunday, April 11 th
13	Module 11	Evaluation Research	Chapter 11	Level 1 – True/False Level 2 – Multiple Choice Level 3 – Fill in the Blank	11:59pm on Sunday, April 18 th
14	Module 12	Mixing and Comparing Methods	Chapter 12	Level 1 – True/False Level 2 – Multiple Choice Level 3 – Fill in the Blank	11:59pm on Sunday, April 25 th
15	Module 13	Reporting Research Results	Chapter 16	Level 1 – True/False Level 2 – Multiple Choice Level 3 – Fill in the Blank Level 4 – Writing Assignment #4	11:59pm on Sunday, May 2 nd
FINAL EXAM					
		Covers Modules 7-13		Final Exam	11:59pm on Thursday, May 12 th

DISCLAIMER

The class schedule in this syllabus is subject to change. Announcements of any changes to the schedule will be made via email and/or posted in Blackboard. These announcements are considered proper notice of change.

START HERE:



Sam Knott owned a world-renowned private investigation firm. The aptly named “Knotts Private Investigation Services” was the envy of private investigators from Baton Rouge to Bali. So successful, in fact, that local law enforcement agents frequently turned to Sam for help.

It was not unusual for Sheriff Billy Lee Tuttle to stop in before closing and this beautiful evening was no different. The relationship between Sheriff Tuttle and Sam Knott was mutual yet combative; Sheriff Tuttle kept Knott up to date on local police activities and Sam was always ready to listen to the details of Sheriff Tuttle’s open cases. On the rare occasion, Sam would even offer Sheriff Tuttle suggestions drawn from his near unlimited knowledge of criminal investigation. Of course, Sam missed no opportunity to belittle Sheriff Tuttle.

On this particular afternoon, Tuttle and Knott had a droll conversation about the weather. Sheriff Tuttle eventually fell silent and stared out the window.

“What’s on your mind Sheriff?” Knott asked.

“Oh, nothing too peculiar, just a minor case you wouldn’t be interested in.” Tuttle retorted.

“Is that so?” Sam inquired, “Why don’t you give me a try?”

Sheriff Tuttle took a deep breath, “Mr. Knott, have you ever met anyone who hated the man, Sam Houston, so much that they would break any image of him they could find?”

Knott quickly responded “You’re right. This does not interest me.”

“See! That is what I thought. But what if I told you a man committed a burglary in order to break these images of Sam Houston?”

Knott quickly refocused his attention to the conversation, “A burglary. Now that’s more like it!”

Sheriff Tuttle pulled out his phone and brought to Sam’s attention a recent string of vandalisms that had occurred on the campus of Sam Houston State University.

According to Tuttle, the first vandalism occurred in the bookstore located on the college campus. It was late in the afternoon, when the one remaining bookstore worker left the register to restock shelves. Out of nowhere she heard a startling crash. Upon rushing out of the back, the employee found a bust of Sam Houston shattered on the floor in the middle of the store. The worker on duty ran out of the Lowman Student Center to attempt to catch the perpetrator, but it was too late.

“Was the statue of any value.” Sam inquired.

“It was a plaster statue worth no more than a few dollars.” Sheriff Tuttle responded. “However, the second case was much more serious.”

Evidently, a similar event had transpired in the office of a prominent faculty member on campus.

Tuttle continued, “Dr. Barnicot, an esteemed professor of Criminal Justice, just last night reported that a burglary had occurred in his office. He stated that no item was stolen but a gift he recently received had been shattered against the wall outside his office. Care to take a guess as to what that bust was?”

Sam turned to Tuttle, “Don’t insult me. I know it was a statue of Sam Houston.”

Tuttle quipped back, “Your intelligence knows no bounds, Sam. Anyway, he received two statues from the University bookstore. He kept one in his house and one in his office. After completing his lecture, Dr. Barnicot returned to his office to find the door wide open and his belongings strewn about the floor. In the middle of this mess was the statue of Sam Houston”

Sam sat back and stroked his beard.

“This is certainly a unique case but...”

Sheriff Tuttle interrupted, “I haven’t reached the end yet. Could you imagine that to Dr. Barnicot’s amazement, when arriving home, he found an open window and his second gifted Sam Houston statue shattered into a million pieces?”

After a short pause Sam leaned in and fervently asked a series of questions.

“Did the busts come from the same source? What was the motivation behind these acts of vandalism? Was it simply a maniacal hatred of Sam Houston?”

Taken aback, Tuttle responded to the only question he knew the answer to. “The three statues all came from the same mold. They were sitting in the bookstore for quite some time.”

Sam asked himself whether this perpetrator was a zealous anti-Sam Houston vandal out to destroy any likeness of this university’s namesake. Considering that the busts had come from the same source, Sam doubted this theory, as anyone out to destroy the likeness of Sam Houston would undoubtedly start with that monstrosity off the highway. Tuttle doubted this theory as well. He wouldn’t be in here asking for our help otherwise.

While I was just Sam’s assistant, I had become an essential component of the success of our little private investigation business. Sam turned to me as I had quietly been observing the entire exchange.

“Iris, I hope the reading for the first day of your Research Methods class tomorrow can wait,” said Sam. “We have some work to do.”