

Research Methods in Criminal Justice (CJBA 340)
John Jay College of Criminal Justice, CUNY
Spring 2019

Tuesday & Thursday, 12:15-1:30 PM
NB 1.129

Instructor: Max Osborn, MA
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Office: NB 10.63.01
Office hours: By appointment

Course Description: This course applies statistical and theoretical knowledge acquired in previous courses to the design and implementation of original empirical research in criminal justice. Special attention is paid to data collection, levels of measurement, sampling, threats to validity and reliability, and ethical issues and challenges faced by researchers in the field of criminal justice. Students in this course will select a peer-reviewed research article in criminal justice and subsequently proceed through the various steps required to critique the authors' methodological approach and propose new follow-up research that expands on the article's findings.

Learning Outcomes:

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Understand common techniques for conducting research, including both quantitative and qualitative methods.
2. Form clear research questions and hypotheses.
3. Generate research designs to address topics of interest.
4. Interpret and critically evaluate existing published research.
5. Understand and follow ethics guidelines for conducting research.

Course Requirements:

1. **ASSIGNED READINGS:** All readings for each class date must be completed before the class meets. Much of the assigned reading will be from the course textbook, but additional materials will be posted on Blackboard. Be prepared to discuss the materials in class. On days that we discuss scholarly journal articles, it will help to either print the articles and bring in a hard copy, or be prepared to pull up the PDF copy on a laptop or tablet.
2. **CLASS PARTICIPATION:** This is a small class and every student will be expected to participate regularly in discussions about the material. If you do not volunteer, I will still call on you. Please refrain from texting, making phone calls, or using social media during class.

While open discussion and sharing differing viewpoints is encouraged, be respectful of your fellow students. Class participation will make up **10% of the total course grade**.

3. **ARTICLE RESPONSE PAPERS:** Over the course of the semester, students will be asked to submit three short papers (1-2 pages, double-spaced) in response to assigned course readings. The paper should start with a paragraph or two summarizing 1) the authors' research questions and/or hypotheses, and 2) any major findings. Students may elect to describe strengths and weaknesses of the articles, propose follow-up studies that build on an article's findings, discuss additional research questions raised by the articles, or describe ways in which the article's findings might translate into policy or practice in a real-world setting. These do not have to be formal in structure, but should be thoughtful and use correct grammar and spelling. Each of these short papers will constitute **5% of the total course grade**, for a total of **15%**.
4. **MIDTERM EXAM:** There will be an in-class midterm exam (**20% of total course grade**) on Thursday, March 21st. Material for the exam will be based on the textbook, assigned readings, class lectures, and in-class discussions.
5. **FINAL EXAM:** The final exam (**25% of total course grade**) will take place on Thursday, May 16th from 10:30 AM to 12:30 PM. It will follow the same format as the midterm exam, but will be cumulative, meaning that some material from the midterm will be incorporated. However, most of the material will be taken from the second half of the semester.
6. **FINAL ARTICLE CRITIQUE:** Students should choose a scholarly article published in an academic journal and write a 10-12 page (double-spaced) paper in response to it. (Please note that you should send me a copy of your chosen article by **Thursday, February 28th** so that I can make sure it fits the criteria.) Your paper should come in two parts: 1) a critique of the existing research article, and 2) an explanation of a project you would design to follow up on the article's findings. More detailed instructions will be distributed during the semester. Rough drafts of the first part of the paper are due on Thursday, April 4th and rough drafts of the second part are due on Thursday, April 18th. Drafts will not be graded but will be an important opportunity for you to receive feedback that will help you with your final version. The final assignment will be due on Tuesday, May 21st and will constitute **25% of the total course grade**.
7. **CITI CERTIFICATE:** By the end of the semester, students should complete a brief online training on the treatment of human research subjects. Go to www.citiprogram.org and register as a new user. Choose "**City University of New York (CUNY)**" as your organization affiliation and identify yourself as an undergraduate student researcher. Under "Curriculum" choose the **Human Subjects Basic Course**. You must complete and pass the training and show me proof that you have passed (printed or email are both fine). If you have already completed this training for a prior class, you do not need to do it again as long as your certification is still current – just show me a copy of the certificate. This assignment will constitute **5% of the total course grade**.
8. **EXTRA CREDIT (OPTIONAL):** Over the spring break, after our study of the chapter on field observation, students may choose to complete a short extra credit assignment that

involves taking “field notes” on a particular setting and/or observable phenomenon. This assignment will be due on **Tuesday, April 30th** and will offer the opportunity to earn **up to 3 points added to your overall course grade.**

Course Policies

1. **ATTENDANCE:** Attendance is mandatory and will be taken at every class session. No more than 3 unexcused absences are permitted over the course of the semester. Students with 4 or more unexcused absences may have their overall course grade dropped by a full letter grade. If you know in advance that you will be absent, please do your best to notify me ahead of time. Students who miss class are responsible for making up the material covered.
2. **EXTENSIONS ON ASSIGNMENTS:** If a student needs an extension, it is their responsibility to request one. Extensions will be granted at the instructor’s discretion and are not guaranteed.
3. **BLACKBOARD:** This class will use the course-management website Blackboard (<https://bbhosted.cuny.edu>) to disseminate announcements, distribute course materials, post grades, and upload assignments. Students will be responsible for checking Blackboard regularly and uploading their assignments on time. If Blackboard is experiencing scheduled downtime or an unanticipated disruption, please email me your assignments instead.
4. **EMAIL COMMUNICATION:** Students will be responsible for checking their John Jay email addresses regularly to make sure they are receiving necessary information. If you are experiencing any circumstances that may affect your performance in class, please let me know as soon as possible so that we can work together to develop strategies that will address your needs while still fulfilling the course requirements.
5. **COURSE WITHDRAWAL:** The deadline to drop the class without a grade of "WD" (i.e., the class will not appear on your transcript) is Thursday, January 31. The deadline to drop the class without a grade of “W” is Thursday, February 14th. The deadline to drop the class with a grade of "W" is Monday, April 1st.
6. **INCOMPLETE GRADES:** Students will only receive a grade of Incomplete (IN) if they have otherwise been passing the course but missed the final exam or final paper deadline due to extenuating circumstances. Students may be asked to provide written documentation of these circumstances.

Textbook: Maxfield, M. G., & Babbie, E. R. (2015). *Basics of research methods for criminal justice and criminology (4th edition)*. ISBN-10: 1-305-26110-0. ISBN-13: 978-1-305-26110-5.

Since there is no accompanying software or online content, there is no need to purchase the textbook from the publisher. You are free to buy a physical textbook, rent one, or obtain an ebook, whichever you prefer. Amazon.com usually offers semester-long rentals for less than the cost of buying the book. I recommend Abebooks.com as another option for purchasing used textbooks.

All additional course readings will be distributed via Blackboard and/or email.

Grading: The total grade for the course will be broken down as follows:

RESPONSE PAPER #1	5%
RESPONSE PAPER #2	5%
RESPONSE PAPER #3	5%
MIDTERM EXAM	20%
FINAL EXAM	25%
FINAL ARTICLE CRITIQUE	25%
CLASS PARTICIPATION	10%
CITI CERTIFICATE	5%

Grading scale: Final grades will be based on the following standard scale:

A	93-100	C	73-76
A-	90-92	C-	70-72
B+	87-89	D+	67-69
B	83-86	D	63-66
B-	80-82	D-	60-62
C+	77-79	F	59 or less

Plagiarism: According to the CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity:

Plagiarism is the act of presenting another person's ideas, research or writings as your own. The following are some examples of plagiarism, but by no means is it an exhaustive list:

- *Copying another person's actual words without the use of quotation marks and footnotes attributing the words to their source;*
- *Presenting another person's ideas or theories in your own words without acknowledging the source;*
- *Using information that is not common knowledge without acknowledging the sources;*
- *Failing to acknowledge collaborators on homework and laboratory assignments.*

Students who plagiarize will be given a grade of 0 for the assignment in question, and may be referred to the College's Academic Integrity Officer. Plagiarizing a major assignment may be grounds for failing the course, at the instructor's discretion. Please refer to the Undergraduate Bulletin and/or the CUNY website for the full text of the academic integrity policy:

<http://www2.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/legal-affairs/policies-procedures/academic-integrity-policy/>

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Policy: Students with disabilities will be provided reasonable academic accommodations if determined eligible by the Office of Accessibility Services

(OAS). Prior to granting disability accommodations in this course, the instructor must receive written verification of a student’s eligibility from the OAS, which is located in NB L.66.00 in (212-237-8031, accessibilityservices@jjay.cuny.edu). It is the student’s responsibility to initiate contact with the office and to follow the established procedures for having the accommodation notice sent to the instructor.

Title IX, Sexual Misconduct Policy, and Gender- and Sexual-Based Harassment Policy: Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, etc. Title IX’s sex discrimination prohibition also protects students from discrimination based on gender identity or failure to conform to stereotypical notions of masculinity or femininity. If you or someone you know has been harassed, assaulted, or denied services on the basis of sex or gender, you may seek accommodations from the Office of Accessibility (Malaine Clarke, Interim Director of Accessibility Services, 212-237-8031, maclarke@jjay.cuny.edu) or Title IX Coordinator (Silvia Montalban, Office of Legal Counsel, 646-557-4409, smontalban@jjay.cuny.edu).

Writing Center: The Writing Center, located in NB 1.68 (212-237-8569), provides tutoring, writing consultation, and ESL support services to all undergraduate and graduate students at John Jay. Students seeking help are encouraged to make an appointment at the Writing Center and to explore the resources available on their website: <http://jjcweb.jjay.cuny.edu/writing/homepage.htm>.

Class Schedule:

<u>JANUARY</u>	
1/29 (Tuesday)	Overview of course and review of syllabus
1/31 (Thursday)	Introduction to critically analyzing academic research Description of final article critique assignment <i>Reading:</i> Wolff, K. T., Baglivio, M. T., Intravia, J., & Piquero, A. R. (2015). The protective impact of immigrant concentration on juvenile recidivism: A statewide analysis of youth offenders. <i>Journal of Criminal Justice</i> , 43, 522-531. (Blackboard)
<u>FEBRUARY</u>	
2/5 (Tuesday)	<i>Reading:</i> Maxfield & Babbie Chapter 1 (An Introduction to Criminal Justice Inquiry)
2/7 (Thursday)	Continue discussion of Chapter 1
2/12 (Tuesday)	COLLEGE CLOSED – NO CLASS
2/14 (Thursday)	Refresher session on library resources with Kathleen Collins. Meet in the classroom on the 2nd floor of the library.

	<p><i>Reading:</i> Consortium for Political & Social Research (ICPSR), “How to Read a Journal Article” (Blackboard)</p> <p>“Tips for Reading Journal Articles” (Blackboard)</p>
2/19 (Tuesday)	<i>Reading:</i> Maxfield & Babbie Chapter 2 (Ethics & Criminal Justice Research)
2/21 (Thursday)	<p>Continue discussion of Chapter 2</p> <p>Response Paper #1 Due: Lankford, A. (2015). Are America’s mass shooters unique? A comparative analysis of offenders in the United States and other countries. <i>International Journal of Comparative and Applied Criminal Justice</i>, 40(1), 171-183.</p>
2/26 (Tuesday)	<i>Reading:</i> Maxfield & Babbie Chapter 3 (General Issues in Research Design)
2/28 (Thursday)	<p>Continue discussion of Chapter 3</p> <p>Deadline to submit choice of article for final critique</p>
<u>MARCH</u>	
3/5 (Tuesday)	<i>Reading:</i> Maxfield & Babbie Chapter 4 (Concepts, Operationalization, & Measurement)
3/7 (Thursday)	Continue discussion of Chapter 4
3/12 (Tuesday)	<p><i>Reading:</i> Maxfield & Babbie Chapter 5 (Experimental & Quasi-Experimental Design)</p> <p>Reisig, M. D., Mays, R. D., & Telep, C. W. (2018). The effects of procedural injustice during police-citizen encounters: A factorial vignette study. <i>Journal of Experimental Criminology</i>, 14, 49-58. (Blackboard)</p>
3/14 (Thursday)	Continue discussion of Chapter 5
3/19 (Tuesday)	Review for midterm exam
3/21 (Thursday)	MIDTERM EXAM
3/26 (Tuesday)	<i>Reading:</i> Maxfield & Babbie Chapter 6 (Sampling)
3/28 (Thursday)	NO CLASS – INSTRUCTOR OUT OF TOWN
<u>APRIL</u>	
4/2 (Tuesday)	<p>Continue discussion of Chapter 6</p> <p>Response Paper #2 Due: Guadalupe-Diaz, X. (2016). Disclosure of same-sex intimate partner violence to police among lesbians, gays, and bisexuals. <i>Social Currents</i>, 3(2), 160-171.</p>
4/4 (Thursday)	<p><i>Reading:</i> Maxfield & Babbie Chapter 7 (Survey Research)</p> <p>Chu, D. C., & Tsao, C. C. (2014). Attitudes toward women in policing: An empirical inquiry into the gender views of police cadets in Taiwan. <i>Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies & Management</i>, 37(2), 324-339. (Blackboard)</p>

	Draft of first half of final assignment (critique of research article) due
4/9 (Tuesday)	Continue discussion of Chapter 7
4/11 (Thursday)	<i>Reading:</i> Maxfield & Babbie Chapter 8 (Qualitative Interviewing) Michalsen, V. (2011). Mothering as a life course transition: Do women go straight for their children? <i>Journal of Offender Rehabilitation, 50</i> (6), 349-366. (Blackboard)
4/16 (Tuesday)	Continue discussion of Chapter 8
4/18 (Thursday)	<i>Reading:</i> Maxfield & Babbie Chapter 9 (Field Observation) Draft of second half of final assignment (follow-up project design) due
4/23 (Tuesday)	SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS
4/25 (Thursday)	SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS
4/30 (Tuesday)	<i>Reading:</i> Maxfield & Babbie Chapter 10 (Agency Records, Content Analysis, & Secondary Data) Extra credit field observation assignment due (OPTIONAL)
<u>MAY</u>	
5/2 (Thursday)	Continue discussion of Chapter 10 <i>Reading:</i> Slakoff, D. C., & Brennan, P. K. (2017). The differential representation of Latina and Black female victims in front-page news stories: A qualitative document analysis. <i>Feminist Criminology</i> . Advance online publication. (Blackboard)
5/7 (Tuesday)	<i>Reading:</i> Maxfield & Babbie Chapter 11 (Evaluation Research & Problem Analysis) Response Paper #3 Due: Wodahl, E. J., Boman IV, J. H., & Garland, B. E. (2015). Responding to probation and parole violations: Are jail sanctions more effective than community-based sanctions? <i>Journal of Criminal Justice, 43</i> , 242-250.
5/9 (Thursday)	Continue discussion of Chapter 11 Patrick, S. W., Fry, C. E., Jones, T. F., & Buntin, M. B. (2016). Implementation of prescription drug monitoring programs associated with reductions in opioid-related death rates. <i>Health Affairs, 35</i> (7), 1324-1332. (Blackboard)
5/14 (Tuesday)	Review for final exam
5/16 (Thursday)	FINAL EXAM: 10:30 AM-12:30 PM
5/21 (Tuesday)	FINAL PAPERS DUE BY 11:59 PM

The instructor reserves the right to modify the syllabus over the course of the semester as necessary. Students will be notified of any changes.