

SS 385-7501 – Research Methods
Fall 2009

Instructor: Heidee McMillin

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Office Hours: Walk in or by appointment.

TEXT: *Research Methods for Criminal Justice and Criminology*. Maxfield, M.G. and Babbie, E. (2008). Thomson Wadsworth Publishers, 5th ed. Additional readings as assigned.

COURSE DESCRIPTION: To develop the student's ability to understand the results of research presented in professional journals and to communicate the meaning of data, research findings, and statistical data to others.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1. Weekly Assignments* (10 points each)	140
2. Journal Article Reviews ** (20 points each)	100
3. 1 st Exam	100
4. 2 nd Exam	100
5. Class Presentation – Research Proposal^	100
6. Weekly Attendance/Class Participation^^	<u>140</u>
TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS	680

*Weekly Assignments: Each week students will be assigned one or more chapter concepts and/or questions to study and provide a report to the class in the following session. These weekly assignments must be typewritten, double-spaced with 1" margins. They are to be used to assist you in class discussions and turned in to me at the end of class discussion days.

**Research Article Reviews: Students must summarize and critique findings from 5 articles during the semester related to criminal justice research. Two of the articles can be from government websites. At least three of the articles must be from scholarly journals found through the LCSC library (see instructions at the end of this syllabus).

The research articles you choose should relate to your selected research proposal topic. For each of the 5 articles, prepare a 2-3 page written summary that includes the following information:

1. What is the **hypothesis** stated by the author(s)?
2. Identify any criminological **theories** the author(s) used in their research.
3. What are the **units of analysis**?
4. Identify the **dependent** and **independent variables**.
5. Summarize the **findings** from the research.
6. Describe the strengths and weaknesses of the study.

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^Research Proposal – Your Research Proposal will be approximately 20 pages and will contain the following items:

1. Title Page
2. Abstract
3. Introduction (Describe the issue, why it is important - 2-3 pages)
4. Review of the Literature (5-7 pages)
5. Method (describes how you will carry out your research – 3-5 pages)
6. References (1-2 pages)
7. Appendix (copy of your survey instrument)

CHECKLIST FOR RESEARCH PROJECT:

1. What are you trying to find out? (What is your research question?)
2. What is the value of the research? (Why is it important to Justice Studies?)
3. What variables will you use to measure your research question?
4. What obstacles will you have to overcome to gain the knowledge?
5. What methods will you use to gain the knowledge?
6. Are the conclusions drawn justified by the data and methods used?

^^Non-preparation or non-participation will be considered non-attendance for grading purposes.

ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE

Lectures will typically be on Thursdays.

Assignments will typically be due Tuesday following the Thursday lecture.

8/25	Introduction, Syllabus and Course Expectation Review <i><u>Part One: An Introduction to Criminal Justice Inquiry</u></i>
8/27	Chapter 1 – “Crime, Criminal Justice, and Scientific Inquiry”
9/1	<i>Barbara Barnes</i> from LCSC Library – How to Find Research Articles
9/3 & 9/8	Chapter 2 – “Theory and Criminal Justice Research”
9/10 & 9/15	Chapter 3 – “Ethics and Criminal Justice Research” <i><u>Part Two: Structuring Criminal Justice Inquiry</u></i>
9/17 & 9/22	Chapter 4 – “General Issues in Research Design”

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ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE (continued)

9/24 & 9/29 Chapter 5 – “Concepts, Operationalization, and Measurement”

RESEARCH TOPICS DUE TUESDAY 9/29

10/1 & 10/6 Chapter 6 – “Measuring Crime”

10/8 Chapter 7 – “Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Design”

10/13 **EXAM 1**

Part Three: Modes of Observation

10/15 & 10/20 Chapter 8 – “Sampling”

10/22 & 10/27 Chapter 9 – “Survey Research and Other Ways of Asking Questions”

10/29 & 11/3 Chapter 10 – “Field Research”

(Advance registration begins next Monday, November 2nd.)

11/5 Chapter 11 – “Agency Records, Content Analysis, and Secondary Data”

11/10 **EXAM 2**

Part Four: Application and Analysis

11/12 & 11/17 Chapter 12 – “Evaluation Research and Problem Analysis”

11/19 Chapter 13 – “Interpreting Data”

11/24 & 11/26 **NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING BREAK**

12/1 & 12/3 Prepare for Research Proposal Presentations

12/8 & 12/10 Research Proposal Presentations

12/14 **Finals Week – no class meetings**

Grading

Your grades are based on the common grading scale (90% = A; 80% = B; 70% = C, etc.). Use your returned, graded assignments to track your grade in the class.

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CODE OF CONDUCT

You are expected to participate in classroom discussions and conduct yourself in a professional manner. Private discussions with other students, passing notes, reading newspapers, disruptive eating, sleeping, and persistently arriving late or leaving early constitute inappropriate classroom behavior. If you demonstrate such behavior you will be verbally warned in class to cease. If you persist in disruptive or distracting behavior, formal action, in accordance with LCSC policy, will be taken.

From the LCSC Student Handbook, Code of Conduct regarding Academic Dishonesty:
<http://www.lcsc.edu/osl/SHB/SHBcodeofconduct.htm>

Cheating or plagiarism in any form is unacceptable. The College functions to promote the cognitive and psychosocial development of all students. Therefore, all work submitted by a student must represent his/her own ideas, concepts and current understanding. Academic Dishonesty includes:

- a) **Cheating**—intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise. The term "academic exercise" includes all forms of work submitted for credit hours.
- b) **Fabrication**—intentional and/or unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or the source of any information in an academic exercise.
- c) **Collusion facilitating academic dishonesty**—intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another to commit an act of Academic Dishonesty.
- d) **Plagiarism**—the deliberate adoption or reproduction of ideas or words or statement of another person as one's own without acknowledgment.

Students with Disabilities

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and Section 504/508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, LCSC-CdA provides services and accommodations to students who experience barriers in the educational setting due to learning, emotional/psychiatric, physical, visual, or hearing disabilities. For more information please contact Lewis-Clark State College, 1000 W. Hubbard Street, Coeur d' Alene, ID 83814 (208) 666-6707.

Please also let your instructor know of any special needs you may have to achieve a successful learning environment.

Sample of Full Text Journals Available online at the LCSC Library

- *Corrections Today*
- *Crime and Delinquency*
- *Michigan Law Review*
- *Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs*

To find these journals:

1. Logon to the LCSC Library website
http://ezproxy.lcsc.edu:2048/login?url=http://infotrac.galegroup.com/itweb/idaho_a_lscsc?db=AONE

Note: Password is generally your 6-digit birth date.

2. Click on "Subject Guide Search"
3. Type in a search term (e.g., "juvenile delinquency")
4. Click on your selection (i.e. "juvenile delinquency")
5. Click the "FULL TEXT" box to see only journals that provide full articles (not just abstracts).

LCSC Student E-Mail Account

According to college policy, your LC student e-mail account is the only e-mail we can use to communicate with you. We send you important information in e-mails that must be viewed in a timely manner. ***Please check your e-mail regularly!*** Another simple option is putting a forward on your LCMail to an account that you check more regularly. To do this:

1. Get logged into your LCMail account
2. Go into your inbox
3. Click on "settings"
4. Click on "Forwarding and POP/IMAP"
5. Click on "Forward A Copy of Incoming Mail to:"
6. Insert your other e-mail address into the blank field
7. Select "Keep LCSC Mails Copy in the Inbox" (if you choose)
8. Scroll to bottom and Save Changes