

Introduction to Research Methods
CRJU 3213

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Course Description

According to the course definition, CRJU 3213 examines “[m]ethods and techniques of research in the behavioral sciences; historical development of psychological and social research; techniques and problems.” The class format is a combination of lecture and class discussion, emphasis on discussion. Questions are strongly encouraged.

Required Texts

Frank Hagan, “Research Methods in Criminal Justice and Criminology,”

Course Goals

The Student should gain and retain the skills and abilities to integrate and synthesize the basic elements of research methodology and statistics for the purposes of conducting criminal justice and criminological research.

Grading Policy and Weighting System

Research Proposal	20%
Abstract------(10%)	
Literature Review-(45%)	
Methods Design---(45%)	
Exam I	20%
Exam II	20%
Exam III	20%
Class Participation/Attendance	10%
Quizzes	10%
<u>Total</u>	<u>100%</u>

Exam Format

Three exams will be given during the semester and will include multiple choice, true-false and short answer questions.

Research Proposal

A research proposal (a.k.a. research prospectus) is considered to be the “term paper” for the course. The prospectus is a paper asserting how you would perform the research if indeed you were going to do the research. For the purposes of this course, there will be no need to do the actual research, but rather only to formulate the research methodology on the basis of a full literature review of your topic and the textbook readings.

The prospectus consists of three sections: (1) an abstract, (2) literature review, and (3) a research methodology section.¹ As each section of the proposal is completed the student is invited to turn it in to the professor for editorial review. The Student is strongly encouraged, but is not required, to re-write the section for the possibility of an improved grade per the editorial comments made by the professor.

The required referencing style is APA. Guidelines for APA referencing are available at the American Psychological Association website (www.apa.org). Papers should be:

1. Double-spaced,
2. Use Times New Roman,
3. Use 12 point font, and
4. Maintain 1-inch margins.

The proposals will be graded individually by section (i.e., abstract, literature review, and research design sections) and then the total taken for all three sections will be added for the final proposal grade. The abstract will be graded on the ability of the student to succinctly relate the proposal’s content in *less than 250 words* (but more than 100). The literature review section will be graded on the ability of the student to demonstrate to the instructor that s/he has performed a thorough and comprehensive review of the literature regarding the proposal’s topic, utilizes APA referencing, is free of grammatical and spelling errors, and is succinct. The research design section will be graded on the ability of the student to demonstrate that s/he is cognizant of the best method to perform the research, and the limitations thereunto, and can the utilize research terminology to convey to the instructor the research methodology.

Late work is not accepted..

Quizzes

Five (5) quizzes will be given at random intervals during the semester and will test the Student’s ability to recall both basic and in-depth facts about the readings and lecture material covered from the semester’s initiation or from the most recent quiz.

¹ Sample proposals may be distributed in class.

Recording and Other Electronic Devices

Tape recorders and other recording devices are allowed in the class at any time.² However, all material presented by the instructor is copyright protected and the unauthorized reproduction of lecture material outside the class is subject to copyright laws.

Pagers, cell phones, and other communication devices should be turned off during class, with the exception of students whose careers require them to do otherwise.

Class Participation and Attendance

Students are permitted to miss three (3) hours of class with no penalty. Class participation and attendance, like the quizzes, are the difference between an A and a B for the final course grade. Class participation is weighted differently than class attendance. It is expected that Students do not miss a class for any reason other than that approved by the University or the instructor, such as a medical emergency, illness, death in the family, etc. It is further expected that the Student will contact the instructor when a class is going to be missed, lest there be consequences and repercussions. Roll will be taken at random intervals during the semester.

Disabled Student Policy

Students with a disability which affects their academic performance are expected to arrange for a conference with the instructor in order that appropriate strategies can be considered to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired.

Academic Dishonesty

Each student is expected to abide by the rules of academic honesty as defined in the student handbook. Cases of academic dishonesty will result in a failing grade for the course and a letter to the Dean of the College of Health Sciences and Human Services requesting that you be withdrawn from the University. If there are any questions as to whether an action is academically dishonest please consult with the professor.

² The instructor reserves the right to ask that recorders be turned off.

OUTLINE FOR RESEARCH PROPOSAL

Topic / Title

Abstract

Table of Contents

Literature Review

Significance (Importance) of the Topic

Theory Guiding the Research

Related Research

Research Design

Data for the Analysis

Sample and Sampling Plan for the Analysis

Variables for the Analysis

Analysis Procedures

Feasibility

Appendices

Reference List

- I. Topic / Title
 - a. Select a title for the research proposal and state this title, with your name below the title

- II. Significance of the Proposed Research
 - a. Argue the significance (importance) of the topic and planned research
 - i. For theory
 - ii. For adding to knowledge
 - iii. For advancing a methodological design (if relevant)
 - iv. For policy (if relevant)

- III. Theoretical Framework
 - a. Review the literature discussing the theory
 - b. Identify the propositions of the theory
 - c. State the hypotheses that will guide the research

- IV. Review of Related Research
 - a. Perform a comprehensive review of empirical findings relevant to your hypotheses.
 - b. Summarize the findings from past research in the appendix in the text

- V. Data for the Analysis
 - a. Describe the source(s) of data for the analysis (if more than one source, describe separately and tell what information will be gathered from each source)
 - i. Official, self-report, victimization data, observational data, cross-sectional or longitudinal
 - b. Primary or secondary data
 - i. If primary, describe the data collection procedures
 1. who will collect the data
 2. what time periods will be covered
 3. if a survey will it be a questionnaire or an interview
 4. how will the survey instrument be distributed
 - c. Data management
 - i. Who will compute the data if primary data and the amount of time it will take to clean the data (i.e., dealing with missing info)

- VI. Sample for the Analysis
 - a. Describe the population of interest
 - b. Identify the sampling frame
 - c. Describe the characteristics of the targeted sample
 - i. Demographics (race, age, gender, geographic site, etc.)
 - ii. Projected sample size
 - d. Describe the sampling frame

- VII. Variables for the Analysis
 - a. Variables to represent each key concept
 - b. Control variables (if necessary)
 - c. Description of how the variables will be measured
 - i. One-item measures versus summary indexes or scales
 - ii. Indicate the level of measurement of each variable
 - d. Identify independent, intervening (if relevant), and dependent variables
 - e. Table summarizing concepts and variables with corresponding text

- VIII. Analysis Procedures
 - a. Describe the preliminary analysis
 - i. Descriptive statistics
 - ii. Intercorrelations (graphics, if appropriate)
 - b. Refer to hypotheses and levels of measurement to identify appropriate statistical procedure(s)

- IX. Feasibility of the Proposed Research
 - a. Discuss ethical issues
 - i. Append a proposal for approval by the Human Subjects Committee (not necessary for this proposal, but a plus)
 - ii. Draft a proposed letter of permission from the agency personnel and/or parents or subjects, as relevant
 - iii. Refer to this appendix in the text
 - b. Describe access to secondary data (if relevant)
 - c. Estimate the costs of the research
 - d. Do a timeline with dates for each step of the research
 - e. Describe political concerns, if relevant

- X. Appendices
 - a. Summary of articles reviewed (table is preferred)
 - b. Questionnaire or interview instrument or observation checklist (not necessary for this class, but a plus)
 - c. Timeline
 - d. Human Subjects proposal and attachments (not necessary for this class, but a plus)

- XI. Reference List
 - a. Use full and complete references

The proposal should be written in full sentences and paragraphs and as a continuous document. The final draft of the research proposal will be evaluated on the basis of:

1. originality of content
2. significance of the proposed research
3. accuracy of statements
4. completeness
5. organization and continuity of the proposed research
6. style (including referencing, grammar, composition, and appropriate scientific language)

****Do Not Forget to Include****

1. You need to have a control group(s).
2. State your independent and dependent variables and operationalize them.
3. State and discuss your hypotheses to be tested (these should be independent and not intercorrelated).
4. Do not use personal pronouns (e.g., I, we, us, etc).
5. Do not use contractions (e.g., can't, won't, don't, etc.).
6. Do not spend too much time revisiting the literature review.
7. Use the terminology of research methods.
8. Be sure to operationalize all of your concepts, variables, etc.
9. Use the format specified in the syllabus.
10. Use bulleted points.
11. Be consistent with your tenses (e.g., past v. present; was v. is).
12. The abstract, literature review, and research design section should not be considered completely separate document and should flow without separate title pages for each.
13. Do not report any findings in the research design section.
14. Use table and graphs as much as is feasible.
15. Discuss how you will get informed consent.
16. Discuss any ethical issues that are inherent with your design.
17. Discuss issues related to both internal and external validity and reliability.
18. Base your research design in the literature review. This does not mean to copy and paste the literature review, but rather to utilize designs that have been used in previous research. This enhances both validity and reliability.
19. Check for spelling and grammatical errors.
20. Take the finished document to the Academic Enrichment Center (AEC) before turning in the final draft. The AEC is located in the basement of the library.