

San José State University
Department of Justice Studies
JS 114, Research Methods, Sec 01, Fall 2021

Course and Contact Information

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| Instructor: | Judith Randle |
| Office Location: | MH 508; classroom link |
| Telephone: | (408) 924-8126 |
| Email: | judith.randle@sjsu.edu |
| Office Hours: | T/R 10 - 11am https://sjsu.zoom.us/j/6570524029 |
| Class Days/Time: | W 9:00 -11:45am |
| Classroom: | DMH 163 |

Course Description

Introduction to quantitative research methods used in Justice Studies. Includes relationship of theory to empirical evidence; logic underlying methods of inquiry; ethics in conducting empirical research; and methodological design, operationalization, and data analysis.

Note: Must achieve a grade of "C" or better to fulfill Justice Studies major requirements.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)

CLO 1: Demonstrate a detailed understanding of the quantitative research methods commonly utilized to conduct empirical research in the areas of social and criminal justice.

CLO 2: Understand core concepts and competencies in criminological and justice research including ethical research, empiricism, problem identification, hypothesis formation and testing, sampling, observation, measurement, data analysis, causality, and report writing.

CLO 3: Write a research report in the area of social or criminal justice that applies proper research methodology.

CLO 4: Students should read, write, and contribute to discussion at a skilled and capable level.

Required Materials

Textbooks

Rennison & Hart (2019). Research Methods in Criminal Justice & Criminology. Sage Publications. ISBN 9781506347813

- Available for free [online](#) and on CANVAS as a PDF

Other Readings

Journal articles, news articles and book excerpts are listed on the Course Schedule below and posted on the CANVAS website.

Campus Resources

CASA Student Success Center

The Student Success Center in the College of Applied Sciences and Arts (CASA) provides advising for undergraduate students majoring or wanting to major in programs offered in CASA Departments and Schools. All CASA students and students who would like to be in CASA are invited to stop by the Center for general education advising, help with changing majors, academic policy related questions, meeting with peer advisors, and/or attending various regularly scheduled presentations and workshops. If you are looking for academic advice or even tips about how to navigate your way around SJSU, check out the CASA Student Success Center. Location: MacQuarrie Hall (MQH) 533 - top floor of MacQuarrie Hall. Contact information: [408.924.2910](tel:408.924.2910). Website: <http://www.sjsu.edu/casa/ssc/>. The CASA Student Success Center also provides study space and laptops for checkout.

Department's Reading and Writing Philosophy

The Department of Justice Studies is committed to scholarly excellence. Therefore, the Department promotes academic, critical, and creative engagement with language (i.e., reading and writing) throughout its curriculum. A sustained and intensive exploration of language prepares students to think critically and to act meaningfully in interrelated areas of their lives—personal, professional, economic, social, political, ethical, and cultural. Graduates of the Department of Justice Studies leave San José State University prepared to enter a range of careers and for advanced study in a variety of fields; they are prepared to more effectively identify and ameliorate injustice in their personal, professional and civic lives. Indeed, the impact of literacy is evident not only within the span of a specific course, semester, or academic program, but also over the span of a lifetime.

Course Requirements and Assignments

Your grade is derived from work in four (4) categories:

Homework Assignments -- Homework assignments (HW) help enhance your learning of the week's topic by: reviewing key information, learning new details about a topic, practicing the application of a rule, and/or making connections among concepts and readings. Homework assignments are completed at home and are

designed so that you can complete them without having attended lecture. You must bring a hard copy to class on the assigned due date and upload an electronic copy to CANVAS before midnight on the assigned date. If you do not attend lecture, you must upload the homework to CANVAS by 12pm on the due date. Electronic-only submissions will incur a 10% penalty. Late submissions will incur a 10% penalty for each day late; after 12pm on the due date counts as day one. Each homework is worth approximately 12 points.

Class Exercises -- Class Exercises (CE) are designed to help enhance your learning of the week's topic by reviewing key information, learning new details about a topic, practicing the application of a rule, and/or making connections among concepts and readings. They include activities such as listing facts or concepts and completing charts and tables. Class Exercises are distributed and completed in class on the scheduled lecture period. If you do not attend lecture, you cannot receive credit for the assignment. While you can receive and complete the in-class assignment later for study purposes, you cannot make up these lost points. Each in-class assignment is worth approximately 10 points. (CLOs 1, 2, 3)

Quizzes (3) -- Quizzes test your comprehension of a topic and typically consist of a mix of short answer (less than one paragraph), multiple choice, true/false, and fill-in-the-blank questions. You are permitted to reference your Homework Assignments and In-class Assignments during each quiz. There is a quiz at the ends of Units 1, 2, and 3. Please contact me ASAP if you have school, work, or other obligations, or experience an emergency, and need to reschedule an exam. You will have to provide proof of interference and you may take an alternative version of the exam given in class. Each quiz is worth approximately 25 points. (Quiz 1 – CLOs 1 & 2; Quiz 2 – CLO 2; Quiz 3: CLOs 2 & 3)

Mini-Projects (4) -- Mini-projects are 5-7 page sections of larger research projects. Each mini-project focuses on a distinct stage of a larger research project: writing a literature review, operationalizing variables, gathering data, and analyzing data. Each mini-project is worth 50 points.

Grading Information: Point and Percentage Values (Approximate and Subject to Minor Changes)

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| Weekly Discussion Post | |
| Homework | |
| In-Class Assignments | |
| Quizzes | |
| Mini-Projects | |
| Total | (100%) |

Grading Scale (Percentages)

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| A-plus: (98 – 100) | B-plus: (88 – 89) | C-plus: (78 – 79) | C-minus: (72 – 70) | D: (63 – 67) |
| A: (93 – 97) | B: (83 – 87) | C: (73 – 77) | D-plus: (68 – 69) | D-minus: (60 – 62) |
| A-minus: (90 – 92) | B-minus: (80 – 82) | | | F : (≤59) |

Classroom Protocol

Attendance -- You must attend lecture in order to complete all assignments. Your grade will suffer if you do not attend lecture.

Communication outside of class -- Check your university email account at least once daily for messages related to the course. I encourage regular communication with me over email and in office hours to clarify and enrich your understanding of the course material. **To ensure confidentiality, I am required to communicate with you using only your university account.**

University Policies

Per University Policy S16-9, university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc. will be available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs' [Syllabus Information web page](http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/>"

JS 114 Sec 03/ Research Methods / Fall 2021 Course Schedule

* The schedule is subject to change with fair notice by the Announcements section on the website and emails to your University account.

| Week | Date | Topics, Materials, and Homework Assignments, and In Class Assignments *View materials in the order they appear | Discussion Questions & Key Terms for lecture |
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| 1 | Aug 19 | <i>This is going to be a fun semester!</i> | |
| 2 | Aug 24 & Aug 26 | <p><u>Tues: The Scientific Method and the Research Process in Justice Studies</u></p> <p>Reading: Textbook Chapter 1</p> <p><u>Thurs: Values and Limits of Practicing Research</u></p> <p>Video: North Sentinel Island: Home to the World's Most Isolated People (15 mins) Video: Body of American Killed by Tribe Should be Left on Island, Advocates Say (3 mins) Reading: Protecting Isolated Tribes Reading: A Season of Regret for an Aging Tribal Expert in India Video: The Stanford Prison Experiment (29 mins) Video: Milgram's Obedience to Authority (6 mins) and/or this one (7 mins) Video: Henrietta Lacks, the Tuskegee Experiment, and Ethical Data Collection (11 mins)</p> <p>Discussion Post: Self-reflection</p> | <p><i>What are different ways of gathering knowledge? What is distinct about the knowledge gained from the scientific method?</i></p> <p><i>What value is there (or absent) in conducting research?</i></p> <p>Human Subjects, IRB, Positivism, Empiricism</p> <p><i>What is your objective?</i></p> <p>Inductive/Deductive Descriptive/Experimental Hypothesis testing Exploratory/explanatory</p> |
| 3 | Aug 31 & | <u>Tues: Formulating Research Questions & Framing Research Proposals</u> | <i>What makes a strong research question?</i> Falsifiability, Feasibility, Specificity, |

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| | Sept 2 | <p>Reading: Textbook Chapter 2 Optional Reading: I need help choosing a topic Optional Reading: I need to turn my topic into a research question (watch the video on concept mapping) Video: How to Develop a STRONG Research Question (4 mins) Video: Tutorial: How to Read a Scientific Article (5 mins) Video: How to Read a Scholarly Journal Article (5 mins)</p> <p><u>Thur: Criminological Theory and the Scientific Method</u></p> <p>Reading: Criminological Theory & Corrections</p> <p>Discussion Post: Criminological Theory In-Class Assignment: Formulating Research Questions</p> | <p>Relevance</p> <p><i>How can('t) and does(n't) social scientific research influence the practice/professions of law, policing, forensics, corrections, and social work?</i></p> <p><i>What is a social theory and what is its relationship to research?</i></p> <p>Induction/Deduction Correlation/Causation Criminology Penology</p> |
| 4 | Sept 7 & Sept 9 | <p><u>Tues: Legal Realism, Sociological Jurisprudence, & the Sociology of Law</u></p> <p>Reading: The Need of a Sociological Jurisprudence Reading: What am I? A Potted Plant?</p> <p><u>Thur: Writing a Literature Review Part 1: Finding Sources</u></p> <p>Reading: Textbook Chapter 3 to page 172 (stop at "Writing the Literature Review") Video: The Structure of a Literature Review (10 mins) Reading: What Works? Questions and Answers about Prison Reform</p> <p>Discussion Post: Potted Plants and Room for Discretion in Law In-Class Assignment: Find Five Sources -- Moved to following week</p> | <p><i>How are the social scientific study of crime (criminology) and the professional/academic study of law different from the social scientific study of law?</i></p> <p>Sociology of law Sociological jurisprudence Legal Formalism/Legal Realism Law on the Books/Law in Action</p> <p><i>What is the role of past research in our current research project?</i></p> <p>The Gap Literature review</p> <p><i>Where do socio-legal scholars find past studies to inform their current projects? What are the strengths and weaknesses of different sources?</i></p> <p>Peer-reviewed research Scientific/Scholarly Journal Research Databases Primary/Secondary sources Meta Analysis</p> |
| 5 | Sept 14 & | <p><u>Tues: Evaluation Research and Policy Analysis</u></p> <p>Reading: Skim Textbook Chapters 11 & 13</p> | |

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| | Sept 16 | <p>In-Class Assignment: Find Five Sources (part 1)</p> <p>Thur: Writing a Literature Review Part 2: Summarizing the Literature</p> <p>Reading: Textbook Chapter 3 page 172 (start at “Writing the Literature Review”) to end</p> <p>Due: Completed Find Five Sources (part 1)</p> <p>In-Class Assignment: Outline a literature review (part 2)</p> | |
| 6 | Sept 21 & Sept 23 | <p>Tues & Thur: Choosing a Research Design</p> <p>Video: Qualitative vs. Quantitative Research: the Differences Explained (4 mins)</p> <p>Video: How to Create a Strong Research Design: 2-Minute Summary (2 mins)</p> <p>Video: Research Design: Choosing a Type of Research Design (5 mins)</p> <p>Video: Research Design: Defining Your Research Aims and Approach (5 mins)</p> <p>Due: Literature Review Draft</p> <p>In-Class Assignment: Research Designs</p> <p>Quiz 1: The Social Scientific Study of Crime and Law (Sept 20)</p> | <p><i>How will you meet your research objective?</i></p> <p>Qualitative/Quantitative Cross-Sectional/Longitudinal Non-/Quasi-/True/Experiment Causation Correlation</p> <p><i>How do you choose a research design?</i></p> <p><i>What is the relationship between research design, data collection, and statistical analysis?</i></p> |
| 7 | Sept 29 | <p>Tues: Conceptualization</p> <p>Reading: Textbook Chapter 4 to p. 247 (stop at “The Role of Validity”)</p> <p>Thur: Levels of Measurement</p> <p>Due: Literature Review - Final</p> <p>In-Class Assignment: Concepts & Measurements</p> | <p><i>How do researchers define and measure social phenomena?</i></p> <p>Concept Level of measurement Nominal/Ordinal/Interval/Ratio Discrete/continuous Likert Scale Dependent/Independent Variable Mutual exclusivity Exhaustiveness</p> |
| 8 | Oct 6 | <p>Tues: Validity</p> <p>Reading: Textbook Chapter 4 p. 247 to end (start at “The Role of Validity”)</p> <p>Reading: Textbook Chapter 7 pp. 411 - 422 (“Designing Your Own Survey - “Survey Administration”)</p> <p>Thur: Reliability</p> <p>See above</p> <p>Discussion Post: Having confidence in what we measure</p> | <p><i>How do we know we are measuring the concept we intend to measure?</i></p> <p>Validity Face Validity Criterion Validity Double-barreled question</p> <p><i>How do we know we are consistently measuring our data points?</i></p> <p>Reliability Inter-rater reliability</p> |

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| | | In-Class Assignment: Operationalization Exercise | Matrix question |
| 9 | Oct 13 | <p><u>Tues: Finalize Variables & Instruments</u></p> <p><u>Thur: Sampling Procedures</u> Reading: Textbook Chapter 5 Reading: Textbook Chapter 7 - skim the rest</p> <p>Due: Operationalization Draft In-Class Assignment: Finalize Variables & Instruments</p> | <p><i>Whose data do we gather?</i></p> <p>Sample/Sampling Random/systematic/stratified/ cluster/convenience/snowball Population Census Unit of Analysis Ecological/Individualistic Fallacy</p> |
| 10 | Oct 20 | <p><u>Tues: Data Gathering</u></p> <p><u>Thur: Discussion</u></p> <p>In-Class Assignment: Gather data! Due: Data set (Oct 22) Due: Methods Section Draft (Descriptive) (Oct 22)</p> | |
| 11 | Oct 27 | <p><u>Tues: Causation and Experimental Design: Overview</u></p> <p>Reading: Textbook Chapter 8 beginning - p. 479 (stop at "Beyond True Experiments")</p> <p><u>Thur: True Experiments</u></p> <p>Reading: See above</p> | <p><i>How do researchers isolate the causal relationships between variables?</i></p> <p>Pretest-posttest Control/treatment group Dependent/Independent/Control Variable Causation Temporal ordering Association Spurious relationship Confounding factor Intervening variable Negative/positive correlation Random assignment Threats to validity</p> |
| 12 | Nov 3 | <p><u>Hour 2: Quantitative Data Analysis</u> Due: Methods Section (Descriptive) - Final</p> | |
| 13 | Nov 10 | <u>Hours 1 & 2: True Experiment Exercise</u> | |
| 14 | Nov 17 | <p><u>Hour 1: Quasi-Experimental Designs</u></p> <p><u>Hour 2: TBD</u></p> <p>Due: Draft Methods Section (Experimental)</p> | |

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| (15) | (Nov 24) | <i>Rescheduled holiday; no lecture</i> | |
| 16 | Dec 1 | | |
| FINAL EX AM | | | |