

**WILMINGTON UNIVERSITY**  
**COURSE SYLLABUS**

**FACULTY MEMBER:**

**TERM:**

**COURSE TITLE: Research Methods in Criminal Justice**

**COURSE NUMBER: MAJ 6633/MHS 7033**

**Phone:**

**Office:**

**Office hours:**

**Email:**

**Technical Requirements that may be required to utilize technology in this course:**

A headset or microphone.

A webcam.

**I. COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

Students will learn the scientific methods used in the study of issues related to crime and criminal justice. Topics will include the relationship between theory, hypothesis, and empirical research. Various methodological designs including survey research, quasi-experimental research and qualitative research will be explored. The language and terminology used in the interpretation of data will be presented. Issues that govern the research of crime and criminal justice will be discussed including ethics and confidentiality.

**II. RATIONALE:**

Students on the graduate level must have an understanding of the research process and the interpretation of data. The scholarly practitioner in criminal justice agencies must have the tools to critically assess research and determine the type, purpose, steps used, and fallacies of the research project.

**III. COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

**GOAL A:** Students will develop an understanding and appreciation for research.

Learning Outcomes: The student will:

- A-1 Analyze and discuss the nature of scientific inquiry and the importance of research to the field of criminal justice.
- A-2 Analyze and discuss the various errors in personal human inquiry as it pertains to criminal justice research.

- A-3 Identify, discuss and evaluate criminal justice problems and the theoretical perspectives about the suggested causes of these problems.
- A-4 Critique the use of experiments and research in criminal justice.
- A-5 Identify, discuss and evaluate the various research designs (time series, classical experiment, quasi-experimental, etc).
- A-6 Evaluate the relationship between theory and research.

**GOAL B:** Students will develop an understanding and appreciation for the use of the tools related to criminal justice research.

Learning Outcomes: The student will:

- B-1 Analyze and discuss the methods of determining validity, reliability and the weaknesses of validation studies in criminal justice research.
- B-2 Identify and discuss the UCR and NCVS as measurements of crime and their purposes.
- B-3 Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the UCR, NIBR, NCVS, victim surveys and self-report surveys.
- B-4 Analyze and discuss concepts, operationalization and measurement as they relate to criminal justice research.

**GOAL C:** Students will develop an understanding of ethics in criminal justice research.

Learning Outcomes: The student will:

- C-1 Identify and discuss the ethical issues associated with research in the criminal justice field.
- C-2 Identify and discuss deception in the research process and assess when deception may be acceptable.
- C-3 Analyze and discuss the ethical issues associated with informed consent and confidentiality requirements as they pertain to research in the criminal justice field.
- C-4 Evaluate and discuss the rights and regulations issued by the Department of Health and Human Services \*J J U+."KpukwkwqpcnTgxky "Dqctf u"\*K Dα+cu'y gm'cu"qy gt'ngi cri' liabilities and problems.

**GOAL D:** Students will develop and appreciate the process of data collection and sampling.

Learning Outcomes: The student will:

- D-1 Identify and discuss the various types of sampling designs, survey research, survey construction and observational research.
- D-2 Analyze and discuss the various methods of collecting, analyzing, interpreting and reporting research results.
- D-3 Examine studies that make use of these research methods including national crime surveys, sampling of police officer attitudes on a subject, and observation of detention subjects.

- D-4 Identify and critique the various approaches to research including quasi-experimental and experimental designs.

**GOAL E:** Students will develop and understanding of the interpretation of data.

Learning Outcomes: The student will:

- E-1 Construct and read explanatory bivariate tables and multivariate tables.
- E-2 Compare measures of dispersion and central tendency.
- E-3 Analyze and discuss the procedures needed for measurement and reporting of common inferential statistical analyses, frequency distribution, confidence intervals, graphs, charts and statistics (rates, percentages, proportions, ratios).

**GOAL F:** Students will critically read and review a completed research project in an area of criminal justice and demonstrate an understanding of key issues in the finished product of research.

Learning Outcomes: The student will:

- F-1 Identify and discuss the type of research used.
- F-2 Specify the purpose of the research.
- F-3 List the research steps used in the project.
- F-4 Identify possible fallacies in the research.
- F-5 Make suggestions to improve the project.
- F-6 Identify future areas of inquiry based upon the review.

**GOAL G:** Students will demonstrate appropriate written and oral communication skills.

Learning Outcomes: The student will:

- G-1 Use computer technology to resolve research problems presented in class.
- G-2 Utilize professional writing skills to analyze and cite appropriate sources (e.g. APA format) to express and convey empirical research.

#### **IV. METHODOLOGY:**

**A. Teaching Methods:** Our course instructional methods will include online discussion, readings and reviewing web based resources and working one-on-one to build and develop a research proposal. In an online course I cannot see if there are confused faces as I would in a face-to-face class, and as such I encourage frequent use of the discussion boards and emails/office hours if you have questions or need help clarifying terms or ideas from our course.

**B. Evaluation Procedures:** Each week students will make significant progress toward the final draft of their research proposal through planning and drafting exercises as well as reviewing the logic of their proposal with both their instructor and their classmates.

Graded work will include these planning exercises, submissions of drafts, and weekly discussions. Students will also engage in completing research design assignments. Rubrics will be made available for our discussion participation and short writing assignments. Our co

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research proposal part #5- Methods section outline and rough draft</li> <li>• Written application- The impact of sampling on different research designs</li> </ul>
#6	Data Analysis and Drawing Research Conclusions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion- peer-review of predicted results and data analysis</li> <li>• Research proposal part #6- Rough draft of data analysis and conclusions</li> </ul>
#7	Structured External Assignment- Final Draft and Presentations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final Draft- Research Proposal</li> <li>• Oral Presentation</li> <li>• Discussion on peer presentations</li> </ul>

**Grading Scale:**

The following scale