

Criminal Justice Research Methods (Crim 4401)

Fall 2006

Instructor: Richard M. Gray, Ph.D.
richard_gray@fdu.edu

Office: 201—692—2577

Office Hours: M, F 11:00 to 12:30PM
<http://richardmgray.home.comcast.net>

Tinyurl.com/rickgray

Class Hours M, F 2:25 to 3:40 PM

Room 204

An introduction to research design and methodology within the frame of criminal justice studies. Hypothesis development, experimental design, surveys, testing, and the gathering and presentation of information are covered. Participants will develop facility in using the library's on-line databases. They will critically analyze theoretical materials and review bibliographic information. Using written assignments, participants will be expected to hone their logical, analytical and grammatical skills through the course.

Intended Learning Outcomes:

1. Participants will comprehend the role of science as a principle avenue of human understanding. They will understand the foundations of Social Science, the purposes of research and the relationship between ethics and Criminal Justice Research.
2. Participants will come to understand the role of theory as a guide to exploration and evaluation in Criminal Justice Research.
3. Participants will understand the ethical dimensions of research and review significant historical controversies. They will become familiar with the nature of plagiarism and the University's academic integrity policy.
4. Participants will gain an understanding of causation as it is understood in the social sciences. They will be able to assess the various dimensions of validity and reliability and the conditions for making causal inferences. They will comprehend and be able to assess units of analysis and appropriately deal with the issues of temporal sequence.
5. Participants will be able to differentiate between conceptions and concepts. They will make informed choices regarding the operationalization of variables and set criteria for measurement quality.
6. Participants will familiarize themselves with general issues in criminological measurements. They will differentiate between crimes known to police, crimes measured through victim surveys, surveys of offending, drug surveillance systems, and measuring crime for specific purposes.
7. Participants will be able to differentiate between and design classical experiments and quasi-experiments. They will be able to express the link between experimental evidence and causal inference.
8. Participants will understand sampling including the three sources of data, and general issues in data collection. They will explore the logic of probability sampling theory, sampling distributions, populations and sampling frames, types of sampling designs. They will apply these insights to the understanding of two national crime surveys.
9. Participants will understand the nature of surveys and topics appropriate to survey research. They will understand the guidelines for asking questions. They will differentiate between self-administered questionnaires, in-person interview surveys,

telephone surveys and compare the three methods. Participants will be able to express the strengths and weaknesses of survey research.

10. Participants will recognize those topics that are appropriate to field research and the various roles of the observer. They will familiarize themselves with techniques for asking questions, gaining access to subjects, recording observations, linking field observations and other data.
11. Participants will be able to identify topics appropriate for investigation through agency records and will identify types of agency records. They will alert themselves to the importance of disparities in units of analysis in various contexts. The issues of sampling, reliability and validity will be applied to content analyses and secondary analysis. Latent and manifest content will be differentiated.
12. Participants will learn to apply the basic insights of research methodology and scientific inquiry to evaluation research and policy analysis.
13. Participants will gain basic experience in the use of online scholarly resources.
14. Participants will refine their logical skills, critical thinking and analytical capacities through the preparation of three research papers. In the course of creating those papers they will be required to:
 - a. Follow written instructions for the logical construction of the papers.
 - b. Apply theoretical knowledge from their readings and lecture materials to the chosen research problem.
 - c. Learn to analyze reference citations for further topic development.
 - d. Use APA citation style.
 - e. Take personal responsibility for grammatical construction logical flow and correct spelling.
15. Participants will learn to use the skill of Mind Mapping to enhance their capacity to organize understand and remember information.

Required Textbooks

Maxfield, Michael G. and Babbie, Earl R. (2005). Basics of Research Methods for Criminal Justice and Criminology. Belmont, Ca: Wadsworth Thompson Learning.

Huff, Darrell and Geis, Irving. (1993). How to Lie with Statistics. New York: W.W. Norton.

Buzan, Tony and Buzan, Barry. (1996). The Mind Map Book: How to Use Radiant Thinking to Maximize Your Brain's Untapped Potential. Plume Books.

Perrin, R. (2003). Pocket Guide to APA Style. NY: Houghton Mifflin.

Ethics Emphasis.

All students will be required to complete the Tutorial: Protecting Human Research Participants at <http://phrp.nihtraining.com/users/login.php> each student is responsible to complete the training and **submit a copy of their certificate by September 25.**

Grading

Grades are designed to measure and reflect a student's effort, acquired knowledge and understanding of the course material and the intended learning objectives. Grades for the course will be based upon two tests, three research papers, Mind Maps and class participation. Grades will be based upon standard grading scales consistent with the criteria established by the University.

One-half of the class participation grade (5% of the total grade) will be satisfied by attending the library orientation during the first several weeks of class.

No make-up tests/exams are provided. Assignments are due the day of class: late assignments will not be accepted unless specific arrangements have been made with the instructor. Assignments must be submitted as hard copy.

Testing

Tests will be offered as follows:

Mid-Term	20%
Final Exam	20%

Research Papers

As this is a research methods class, primary emphasis will be placed upon the student's ability to understand and use the materials, tools and techniques relevant to the Criminal Justice Professions. There are three papers, together they account for 40% of your grade.

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE PAPERS ARE CUMULATIVE. Each builds upon materials gathered for the previous papers.

Research Papers

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I. The first paper will identify a field of interest, find and review a recent article associated with the topic, and assess the authors' constructs, hypotheses, independent and dependant variables, working definitions and operationalizations. **The article must state one or more testable hypotheses and a plan of scientific research to test them.** Find this article using Proquest, Jstor, PsychArticles or some other reliable scholarly database (<http://library.fdu.edu/databases.html>). Do not choose an article that is more than ten years old. The article must be from a juried, professional journal. Students will indicate what databases and search terms they used for the research and will provide a brief discussion of the evolution of their search criteria. A form will be provided for this paper. Students will be required to make a brief presentation on their topic and the data from this assignment.

II. Using the journal article identified in I, above, this paper will center on one seminal article covering the chosen topic. **The article must state one or more testable hypotheses and a plan of scientific research to test them.** Find this article using Proquest, Jstor, PsychArticles, PubMed or some other reliable scholarly database. **Do not choose an article that is more than ten years old. The article must be from a juried, professional journal.** Obtain the article, read the text and bibliography of that article and summarize the article. Now, use the references or citations section of that article to find three or more articles (written by someone other than the original author) that are fundamental to the author's argument. Obtain three of those articles and review them. Summarize each, noting their relevance to the topic. Having read those three articles, use the bibliography at the end of these articles to identify three other articles or books (from each source) that are central to their argument. From those same source documents (again in the reference section), identify three other documents that may contradict or provide alternate explanations from that in the root article. Next, identify three or more documents that are cited in all four of the sources that you have read. List them. This will result in a list of 25 documents: the original document (with summary), three secondary documents (with summaries), a list of nine supporting works, a list of nine works providing alternate definitions and three more cited by all four of the summarized articles. Please note the three most cited authors in each of the four bibliographies. List the authors. Finally, use the authors' last names in in one of the on-line databases noted above

(<http://library.fdu.edu/databases.html>) to find at least two other articles that cite these same authors. List them.

Having completed these lists, return to the original article. Examine the authors' constructs, hypotheses, independent and dependent variables, working definitions and operationalizations in terms of the challenges to validity and reliability discussed in your textbook. Critique his position and offer corrective views. Use data from the four base articles and as many of the other citations as necessary to support your position. Ten pages.

III. The third paper will put forward a research plan for a reinvestigation of the topic. It will begin with a statement of the problem and a review of the literature found in the first two papers. Based upon that research, the paper will state the concepts involved and how they relate to the data that you have researched. What is the unit of analysis? What is your population? Define the dependent and independent variables. How are they operationalized? What kind of research methods will be used and why? How will your research be relevant to the field? Will it replicate old research (that's OK) or explore new ground? Use data from the four base articles and as many of the other citations as necessary to support your position. 15 Pages.

Papers must be submitted in standard APA format (Go to my website tinyurl.com/rickgray and navigate to the FDU page. There is a link there to several APA cheat sheets.). All papers must be submitted with a title page including student name, class title and section, contact information and the title of the paper. Summarize papers two and three in an abstract of no more than 100 words on the first page of the text. Page counts are exclusive of the title page.

Papers which display significant errors in understanding, logical structure, spelling and / or grammar will be returned for correction. They must be returned to the instructor with corrections within one week or the student will receive an F for the paper.

After the first week of class, basic templates will be distributed for each of the papers. Topics must be approved by the instructor.

MindMaps

MindMaps represent an innovative approach to learning and organizing material. Creating the MindMap will ensure that participants have reviewed the relevant chapters before class and will be fully prepared to participate in class discussions. Students are expected to submit the MindMap for the appropriate chapter(s) at the start of the first class session in which the chapter readings are assigned (typically on Monday). The MindMaps will count towards 10% of the grade. MindMaps must reflect a minimum of 3 levels of information in order to receive credit. *There is a brief and cheesy instructional video on my website. Go to the FDU page and click on the Mind Maps link. Watch the video.*

Attendance

For every unexcused absence, a student's final grade will be reduced by 1 point. 2.5 of the ten points allotted for attendance and participation will be awarded for attendance at the library orientation. This orientation is mandatory and missing it will cost you 5% of your total grade.

Credit SummaryNB: If other work or attendance is incomplete or does not warrant an advanced grade, the instructor reserves the right to limit the amount of credit given for mind-maps and attendance.

Task	Percent of grade
Tests	35
Mind Maps	10
Papers	35
Attendance / participation	10
PHRP Certificate	10
Total	100

Grading Scale

A	96—100	B+	85—89	C+	75—79	D	60—69
A-	90—95	B	80—84	C	70—74	F	<59

Academic integrity

Plagiarism is defined as the unattributed use of someone else’s material. If an idea is not yours, you must cite the source; even if it is not a direct quote. Paraphrases must change a minimum of 20% of the material (that means the substantive language—the hard part); they must still include a source citation. Direct quotes require a citation with a page number.

Any student who is found cheating on a test, plagiarizing written material, reusing a term paper, or submitting a paper that they have not written, will be dealt with in accordance with University policy.

Weekly Readings, Assignments and Due Dates

(Topics are subject to change)

Week of September 4	<u>General introduction, class requirements and grading. How to read new material.</u> <u>Diagnostic essay.</u>
Week of September 11	<u>Sept 11: Mandatory orientation at the Weiner Library, please meet at the front desk during the regular class session.</u>
Week of September 14	<u>Sept 14: Research topic Generator and discussion of First Term Paper</u> <u>Sept. 14 & 18: Chapter 1 Crime, Criminal Justice, and Scientific Inquiry</u> Two Realities, The Role of Science, Human Inquiry; Errors in Personal Human Inquiry, Foundations of Social Science, Purposes of Research, Differing Avenues for Inquiry, Ethics and Criminal Justice Research. <i>Root Concepts:</i> Aggregate, Attributes, Binomial variable, Deduction, Dependent variable, Empirical, Idiographic, Independent variable, Induction, Nomothetic, Replication, Variables

<p>Week of September 21</p>	<p><u>September 21: Research paper topic due</u> Chapter 2 Theory and Ethics in Criminal Justice Research The Creation of Social Science Theory, Theory in Criminal Justice, Ethical Issues in Criminal Justice Research, Promoting Compliance with Ethical Principles, Two Ethical Controversies. <i>Root Concepts:</i> Fact, Grounded theory, Hypothesis, Hypothesis testing</p> <p><u>Sept. 25: Ethics Certificate (Online Course) due.</u></p>
<p>Week of September 28</p>	<p><u>Sept. 28: Research Paper Work Sheet due (Paper I.)</u> <u>Class Presentations</u></p> <p><u>Oct. 2:</u> Huff, Darrell and Geis, Irving. (1993). <u>How to Lie with Statistics.</u> New York: W.W. Norton. QUIZ?</p>
<p>Week of October 5</p>	<p><u>Oct. 5: Chapter 3 General Issues in Research Design</u> Causation in the Social Sciences, Validity and Causal Inference, Idiographic and Nomothetic Models, Necessary and Sufficient Causes Units of Analysis, The Time Dimension, How to Design a Research Project, The Research Proposal. <i>Root Concepts:</i> Construct Validity, External Validity, Internal Validity, Statistical Conclusion Validity, Validity, Validity Threats, Interchangeability of Indexes.</p> <p><u>Oct. 9: Research paper II, review of questions</u></p>
<p>Week of October 12</p>	<p>Chapter 4 General Issues in Research Design Conceptions and Concepts, Operationalization, Criteria for Measurement quality Measuring Crime, Composite Measures. <i>Root Concepts:</i> Cohort study, Conceptualization, Construct validity, Cross-sectional study, Deduction, Ecological fallacy, External validity, Idiographic, Induction, Internal validity, Longitudinal study, Nomothetic, Operationalization , Panel study, Probabilistic, Prospective approach, Reductionism, Retrospective research, Scientific realism, Statistical conclusion validity, Trend study, Units of analysis, Validity, face Validity, Criterion-related validity, Content validity, and Construct validity. Validity threats. Concept, Conception, Conceptual definition, Conceptualization, Construct validity, Content validity, Criterion-related validity, Dimension, Face validity, Interval measure, Nominal measure, Operational definition, Operationalization, Ordinal measure, Ratio measure, Reification, Reliability, Typology, Validity.</p>
<p>Week of October 19</p>	<p><u>Oct. 19: Review for exam</u> Chapter 4 General Issues in Research Design Continued</p> <p><u>Oct. 23: Mid Term examination: Chapters 1-4</u></p>

<p>Week of October 26</p>	<p><u>Oct. 26: Exam review</u> Chapter 5 Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs The Classical Experiment, Experiments and Causal Inference, Variations in the Classical Experimental Design, Quasi-experimental Design. <i>Root Concepts:</i> Case study, Case-oriented research, Classical experiment, Construct validity, Control group, Dependent variable, Experimental group, External validity, Generalizability, Hypothesis, Hypothesis testing, Independent variable, Internal validity, Quasi-experiment, Randomization, Statistical conclusion validity, Validity, Validity threats, Variable-oriented research.</p> <p><u>Oct. 30: Research Paper II due.</u> Class Presentations of topics and research experience.</p>
<p>Week of November 2</p>	<p><u>Nov. 2: Review of Paper III Assignment.</u> Chapter 5 Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs Continued</p> <p><u>Nov. 6: Chapter 6 Overview of Data Collection and Sampling</u> Three Sources of Data, General Issues in Data Collection, The Logic of Probability Sampling, Probability Sampling Theory and Sampling Distribution, Populations and Sampling Frames, Types of Sampling Designs, Two National Crime Surveys, Nonprobability Sampling. <i>Root Concepts:</i> Cluster sample, Confidence interval, Confidence level, Disproportionate stratified sampling, Equal probability of selection method (EPSEM), Focus group Small groups (of 12 to 15), Nonprobability sample, Population, Population parameter, Probability sample, Purposive sample, Quota sample, Representativeness, Sample statistic, Sampling distribution, Sampling frame, Sampling units, Simple random sample, Snowball sampling , Standard error, Stratification, Systematic sample</p>
<p>Week of November 9</p>	<p>Chapter 11 Interpreting Data Univariate Description, Multiple Variables, Inferential Statistics. <i>Root Concepts:</i> Distributions, Central Tendency, Dispersion, Rates, Statistical Significance.</p>
<p>Week of November 16</p>	<p>Chapter 7 Survey Research and Other Ways of Asking Questions Topics Appropriate to Survey Research, Guidelines for Asking Questions, Self-administered Questionnaires, In-Person Interview Surveys, Telephone Surveys, Comparison of the Three Methods, Strengths and Weaknesses of Survey Research, Should You Do It Yourself? <i>Root Concepts:</i> Case-oriented research, Closed-ended questions, Computer-assisted interviewing, Focus group Small groups (of 12 to 15), Open-ended questions, Questionnaire, Randomization, Reliability, Self-report survey, Confidentiality, Victim survey.</p>
<p>Week of November 23</p>	<p>Chapter 8 Field Research Topics Appropriate to Field Research, The Various Roles of the Observer, Asking Questions, Gaining Access to Subjects, Recording Observations, Linking Field Observations and Other Data, Illustrations of Field Research,</p>

	Strengths and Weaknesses of Field Research. <i>Root Concepts:</i> Confidence interval, Environmental survey, Longitudinal study, Reductionism, Snowball sampling, Stratification	
NOV 25 THANKSGIVING RECESS		
Week of November 30	Nov 30: Chapter 10 Evaluation Research and Policy Analysis Topics Appropriate for Evaluation Research and Policy Analysis, Getting Started, Designs for Program Evaluation, Policy Analysis and Scientific Realism, The Political Context of Applied Research. <i>Root Concepts:</i> Case study, Evaluation research, Impact assessment, Policy analysis, Problem <u>Dec 4: Review of final issues on Paper III.</u>	
Week of December 7	<u>Dec. 7: Paper III Due. Class Presentations of topics and research experience</u> <u>Dec 11:</u> Class discussion on analysis of the use of references to guide further research. Review of class content.	
Week of December 14	Last class Last day of class Retrospective . Review for final exam	Reading / Snow day
Dec 16-22 finals		
Week of December 22	Dec 22 last day of finals	