

COURSE SYLLABUS*

SOCI 3700 RESEARCH METHODS IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Tuesdays and Thursdays
11:00 A.M.-12:15 P.M.

Fall Semester 2009
Baldwin Hall 114A

PROFESSOR: Elaine Lunsford Weeks, Ph.D.

OFFICE HOURS: 2:00-4:00 P.M. Tuesdays & Thursdays; other times by appointment

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TEXTBOOKS: *Research Methods for Criminal Justice and Criminology*, Fifth Edition by Michael G. Maxfield and Earl Babbie, 2008, Belmont CA: Thomson/Wadsworth

Using SPSS for Social Statistics and Research Methods, Second Edition by William E. Wagner, III, bundled with SPSS Version 17.0 CD-ROM, 2010, Los Angeles CA: Pine Forge Press

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to provide students with knowledge of basic principles and understandings fundamental to the practice of scientific social research. It will cover considerations involved in research design and the relationship of theoretical perspective to selection of research methods. Through the use of real-life research examples and exercises, students should develop an appreciation of challenges often encountered in the research process and of the important role methodology plays in helping us understand the social world. We will examine issues involved in measurement and sampling, along with various sources of data and methods of data collection. Students will become familiar with both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection and analysis to include experimental and quasi-experimental designs, surveys, and field research, as well as the use of secondary data. Students will also learn about evaluation research and policy analysis. We will study commonly used techniques of data analysis and statistics used for interpreting results.

CLASS EXPECTATIONS

Students are expected to read the texts and any other material assigned by the instructor. You should come to class each day prepared to discuss reading assignments, ask questions, make comments, and participate actively in assessing and mastering material. Each student should feel free to express opinions and ideas; to facilitate this, we should listen when someone else is speaking and treat each other with respect even if we disagree with another's views. Private conversations while others are speaking are distracting and rude, as is reading newspapers or other activities unrelated to the class; you are expected to refrain from such behavior. Cell phones **MUST** be turned off and put away during class. Use of computers in class is permitted **ONLY** for note taking or class related purposes. Considerable time and effort will be required outside of class for reading and preparing day-to-day assignments and preparation of a research proposal. All assignments must be completed on time; late work **WILL NOT** be accepted so you will receive no credit unless assignments are in by the specified time.

ATTENDANCE

Class attendance is required and is governed by University policy which is: "Students are expected to attend class regularly. A student who incurs an excessive number of absences may be withdrawn (WF) from a class at the discretion of the professor." Attendance is necessary since the material covered in class and on the exams will not come entirely from the assigned readings. And since various topics are interrelated and sometimes cumulative, absences impede one's ability to properly integrate the material. Absences also preclude one's participation in classroom discussions, which is a vital part of the learning process. Absences also tend to be associated with failure to complete assignments on time, which as stated previously, is unacceptable. Students are expected to be in class on time each day and to remain in class for the entire class period. Coming into class late or leaving early is disruptive not only for other students, but for the instructor as well; therefore, students should schedule necessary appointments at a time that does not overlap with the class period.

EVALUATION PROCEDURES

Three examinations will be given on the dates shown below. They will reflect material from the textbook and any other assigned readings, class lectures and discussions, videos, handouts, guest speakers, and any out-of-class assignments. The format of the exams will be mixed, with some objective questions (primarily multiple choice or matching) and some short answer and essay questions. Since exam dates are announced at the beginning of the semester, students are expected to be present at all examinations. **No make-up exams** will be given without official written documentation of exceptional reasons for absence beyond the student's control (e.g., physician's note for illness). In such extraordinary cases, make-up exams will be given at the end of the term during the final exam period and may vary in format from those taken on schedule in class. In addition to exams, students will be given several out-of-class assignments and will be required to prepare a research proposal on a topic of one's choice to be submitted near the end of the term.

Final course grades will be calculated using the following weighting:

TYPE OF EVALUATION	DATE	PERCENT OF FINAL GRADE
Exam #1	October 1	18%
Exam #2	November 10	18%
Exam #3	December 11 (noon - 3:00 PM)	18%
Assignments	TBA	18%
Research Proposal	December 1	28%

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

DATE	TEXT	TOPICS
Aug. 18 & Aug. 20	Chapter 1	Introduction to Social Science Research
Aug. 25 & Aug. 27	Chapter 2	The Relationship of Theory and Research
Sept. 1		Literature Reviews & Citation Formats
Sept. 3 & Sept. 8	Chapter 3	Ethical Issues in Conducting Research
Sept. 10 & Sept. 15	Chapter 4	Issues in Research Design
Sept. 17 & Sept. 22	Wagner	Introduction to SPSS
Sept. 24 & Sept. 29	Chapters 5 & 6	Issues in Measurement
Oct. 1		Exam #1
Oct. 6 & Oct. 8	Chapter 7	Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs
Oct. 13 & Oct. 15	Chapter 8	Principles of Sampling and Data Collection
Oct. 20 & Oct. 22	Chapter 9	Survey Research
Oct. 27 & Oct. 29	Chapter 10	Field Research
Nov. 3 & Nov. 5	Chapter 11	Using Secondary Data
Nov. 10		Exam #2
Nov. 12, Nov. 17 & Nov. 19	Chapter 13 and Wagner	Analysis and Interpretation of Data and SPSS Assignment
Dec. 1 & Dec. 3	Chapter 12	Evaluation Research and Policy Analysis
Dec. 11		Friday - Exam #3, noon - 3:00 P.M.

*The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.

ACADEMIC HONESTY: Honesty in all matters pertaining to this class is a presumption. Academic dishonesty (cheating and/or plagiarism) will not be tolerated on any exam or assignment. Any student suspected of academic dishonesty will be confronted with the charge and referred to the Office of Judicial Programs. All academic work must meet the standards in *A Culture of Honesty*. Students are responsible for informing themselves about those standards before performing any academic work. The link to more detailed information about academic honesty can be found at: http://www.uga.edu/honesty/ahpd/culture_honesty.htm

INCOMPLETES: The grade of "I" indicates a student was doing satisfactory work, but for *non-academic* reasons beyond her or his control, was unable to meet full requirements of the course. University policy states that incompletes are to be used sparingly and that an "I" must not be assigned prior to the mid-point of the term or for the purpose of allowing a student to repeat a course. An "I" will not be given without a written agreement with the instructor outlining terms, conditions, and deadlines for course completion.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES: All students should know that the Department of Sociology has a Human Rights Committee for the resolution of student grievances. Any student registered for a sociology course at The University of Georgia who feels that he or she has not been treated in a fair and professional manner by an instructor is advised to follow these procedures:

1. The student should discuss her or his problems with the instructor of the course, unless extenuating circumstances prohibit this.
2. If that discussion does not resolve the grievance, the student should then discuss the problem with the Head of the Department of Sociology.
3. If that discussion does not resolve the grievance to the satisfaction of the student, the student may request activation of the Human Rights Committee by submitting a letter to the Chairperson of the Human Rights Committee, Department of Sociology, University of Georgia.

The Human Rights Committee will have the responsibility of investigating all charges in accordance with procedures on file in the Sociology office, copies of which are available to students. The Committee will also have the responsibility of making recommendations in writing to the Head, copies of which will be made available to the student complainant and the instructor involved. The Department Head will review the recommendations and make a decision in writing, with copies to the student complainant and the instructor or staff member involved. Any appeal of that decision must be made to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.