



**Introduction to Research Methods Soc 331 Section 1
Fall 2012
SS 310 TR 11:00am to 12:15 pm**

Professor: Dr. Filip Wiecko

Office: SS 204

Email: filip.wiecko@tamuc.edu

Phone: (903) 886-5493

Office Hours: 10am-11am TR and 11am-2pm MW and also by appointment

COURSE INFORMATION

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to introduce you to reading, writing, and conducting research in the social sciences and criminal justice. We will explore the nature of scientific inquiry, theory and ethics of social research, general issues in research design including causation and validity, how to conceptualize a problem, sampling techniques, experimental design, different methods and types of data collection, and learn about evaluation research and policy analysis. We will also learn how to interpret data.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- Understand and gain appreciation for social research and the important role that it plays in criminal justice.
- Learn the skills necessary for conducting basic criminal justice/social research.
- Learn how to critically evaluate data and research findings.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

REQUIRED READING

Available at the bookstore:

Neuman, W. Lawrence (2007) Basics of Social Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches. (2nd ed.) Note: There is a third edition of this text available for your purchase but you may buy the second edition if you wish.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Grades will be determined as follows.

Short Writing Assignments (4x25pts)

Article Reviews (2x30pts)

Exams (3x100pts)

Survey Assignment (1x40pts)

TOTAL of 500 Points

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

- Internet access/connection – high speed recommended (not dial-up)
- Word Processor (i.e. MS Word or Word Perfect)

Additionally, the following hardware and software are necessary to use eCollege:

Our campus is optimized to work in a Microsoft Windows environment. This means our courses work best if you are using a Windows operating system (XP or newer) and a recent version of Microsoft Internet Explorer (6.0, 7.0, or 8.0).

Your courses will also work with Macintosh OS X along with a recent version of Safari 2.0 or better. Along with Internet Explorer and Safari, eCollege also supports the Firefox browser (3.0) on both Windows and Mac operating systems.

It is strongly recommended that you perform a “Browser Test” prior to the start of your course. To launch a browser test, login in to eCollege, click on the ‘myCourses’ tab, and then select the “Browser Test” link under Support Services.

ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

eCollege Access and Log in Information:

This course will be facilitated using eCollege, the Learning Management System used by Texas A&M University-Commerce. To get started with the course, go to: <https://leo.tamu-commerce.edu/login.aspx>.

You will need your CWID and password to log in to the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact Technology Services at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@tamu-commerce.edu.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

Interaction with Instructor Statement:

In this course we will use eCollege to facilitate communication between you and myself. I will do my best to respond to emails within one business day and I will grade your assignments

within two weeks of the due date. My office hours are listed at the top of the syllabus and I will make all reasonable efforts to be available to you. Simply put, my door is always open but, please make an appointment or show up during the scheduled office hours.

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Make-up Policy

Any make-up opportunities are allowed ***only at the discretion of the instructor*** and immediate notification from the student is imperative. Obviously, missed attendance cannot be made up at a later date. Late papers will lose **one letter grade for each day they are late**. Plan accordingly. **Note:** University policy does allow excused absences in certain situations such as: school sponsored events, jury duty, and military service (consult the university catalog for all rules and procedures). All of these excuses require proper documentation. Family emergencies, illnesses, births, deaths, incarceration or other events and calamities are **NOT** excused absences and decisions regarding such absences are left to my discretion.

Academic Integrity and Dishonesty

I take plagiarism and other forms of cheating very seriously. *All the work you do in this course is to be your own*. I encourage you to study with friends, but be sure that everything you turn in is your own, original work. Regarding references, anytime you use someone else's work and do not accompany it with a proper citation to the author, you have committed plagiarism regardless of whether or not you intended to do so. It is also inappropriate to use your own work for multiple classes and any such actions will be treated just like plagiarism. Do not copy anything off the internet, out of books/articles, from friends, or from any other source or person. This includes direct cutting-and-pasting, summarizing or quoting without citing, and changing the original wording just enough so that you think you can pass it off as your own. **If I find that you have engaged in plagiarism, you will receive an F in the entire course and I reserve the right to take further disciplinary action(s) at the university level. Do Not Do It!**

Students with Disabilities:

ADA Statement

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services
Texas A&M University-Commerce
Gee Library 132
Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835
Fax (903) 468-8148
StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu

Statement on Student Behavior

As stated in the student handbook: “All students enrolled at the university shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment.” (See Student Guide Handbook, Policies and Procedures, Conduct, for more information)

COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

Schedule:

This schedule is **tentative** and I reserve the right to modify it, with notice, as needed during the semester. **We will cover approximately one chapter every week in the order they appear in your text.** All alterations to the schedule will be announced in class and it is your responsibility to be aware of these changes. Important dates are listed below:

August 28, 2012	Syllabus, getting to know each other, introduction
September 6, 2012	Short Writing Assignment One Due
September 18, 2012	Article Review One Due
September 20, 2012	EXAM ONE
September 27, 2012	Short Writing Assignment Two Due
October 11, 2012	Article Review Two Due
October 25, 2012	EXAM TWO
November 15, 2012	Short Writing Assignment Three Due
November 22, 2012	Thanksgiving-no class-eat a lot of pie!
November 29, 2012	Survey Assignment Due
December 3, 2012	Short Writing Assignment Four Due
December 8-14, 2012	Final Exam Week-EXAM THREE

Short Writing Assignments (4x25pts)

These assignments will cover pertinent topics we discuss in class and are to be a minimum of 2-double spaced pages, TNR font with 1-inch margins. I will post the topics a week before the assignment is due.

Article Reviews (2x30pts)

I will post two scholarly articles in docsharing in ecollege and you will have to read and interpret them. I will pose specific methodological questions you must answer after reading the articles.

Exams (3x100pts)

Exams will be in-class and will consist of approximately 30 multiple choice, T/F, and short answer questions. It is crucial that you do not miss the exam dates (see make up policy above).

Survey Assignment (1x40pts)

Toward the end of the semester you will be required to construct a short survey (approximately 10 questions). In order to get full credit for this assignment you will have to justify the design of your survey based on class material and your text and point out any potential problems related to validity or reliability of your instrument. I am less concerned with what type of survey you construct but I am very concerned that you understand the basics of survey design.