Course Syllabus

CJ576-01W Research Methods in Criminal Justice

CJ 589 if taken as an independent study

Instructor: Dr. Filip Wiecko, Ph.D.
Virtual Office Hours: Virtual MW 10:00-11:00am – 12:00 Noon to 4:00 pm
Office Phone: 903-468-5493
Office Fax: 903-886-5330
University Email Address: filip.wiecko@tamuc.edu

COURSE INFORMATION

Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings

Required Reading

Bachman, R., & Schutt, R.K. (2011). *The practice of research in criminology and criminal justice*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage. ISBN: 978-1-4129-7875-0.

Optional

Other materials/readings as assigned and posted in DocSharing in eCollege.

Course Description/Explanation

This course is the second part of the two-part research method sequence. This course covers the basic techniques and procedures used in the process of criminal justice research. Topics include: survey design, qualitative and quantitative methods, policy evaluation, and content analysis.

Prerequisites

Please note that prerequisites for this course include CJ 501, CJ 530, CJ 531, and CJ 568. Students who are registered for this class and who do not meet the prerequisites should contact Dr. Melinda Schlager, the Director and Advisor of the MS in Applied Criminology program.

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Think critically about important issues in criminal justice research methodology
2. Understand how to conduct criminal justice research
3. Problem-solve solutions to methodological problems
4. Enhance communication skills and reading/research/writing acumen

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Instructional Methods/Activities/Assessments

This course will provide a variety of activities and assessments to assist you in achieving the outcomes/objectives for the course. You will work toward achieving these outcomes through discussions/comments, assignments, and tests. Below is an explanation of each course requirement including due date, assignment instructions, and other requirements.

Introduction/Discussion Posts *(SLO)*

The **Introduction** is a chance for you to 'meet' your colleagues (although most of you likely know each other by now) in the class and an opportunity to introduce yourself to your professor. You will also be required to answer a course-related question. Specific instructions on what to post are available when you click on Introduction in Week #1. The Introductory post is due on **Wednesday of Week #1** of the course.

1 Introduction = 50 points

The **Discussions** are directly related to the assigned readings. Upon completion of the assigned readings, you are expected to engage in an **ongoing** discussion/debate with your classmates. Your contributions to the discussion forums will be graded for **quality** and a **detailed analysis** linking the material to a critical appraisal of theory, policy, and practice. The introduction of outside materials in not mandatory (unless otherwise noted in the discussion topic assignment), but is highly recommended. In all cases, students must cite in-text and provide a full bibliography/works cited at the end of their post for all citations mentioned in the post (See information later in the syllabus for more information on citing utilizing APA citation format. Also see the 'How to Cite' FactSheet in the CJ 500 Orientation Course).

These posts should be **the equivalent of 1 page in length or a minimum of 250 words**. The specific discussion assignment is located in each unit Week by clicking on the Discussion link.

4 discussion posts @ 100 points each = 400 course points

Posts are due by 11:00PM CST on **Thursdays** with the exception of **Discussion #1 which is due on Saturday.**

Comment Posts *(SLO)*

Comment posts are responses you make to the discussion posts that you and your classmates post each week. You are **required** to make a minimum of **five** comments each week. I would strongly encourage you to engage your colleagues well past the four-comment minimum in order to maximize your opportunity for meaningful discussion and learning.

Comment posts should be meaningful. Merely agreeing or disagreeing with a classmate will not be looked upon favorably and will result in a loss of points. A meaningful post is one that moves the discussion forward in some substantive way through providing one's perspective, additional information through research, or reframing the discussion in some new way. You are expected to engage in an **ongoing** discussion/debate with your classmates. Your comments will be graded for **quality**, and **relevance**. Your comments will also be graded based on your ability to engage in critical thinking. Students **must** provide one outside source for **at least** one comment that they make.

NO LATE COMMENTS ARE ACCEPTED. All comment posts are due by 11:00PM CST on **Saturdays** with the exception of **Comments for Discussion #1 which are due on Sunday.**

Assessment Method: Comments will be graded using the Comments Grading Rubric attached to the Discussion Post Grading Rubric. The discussion and comments for each week will be graded together and posted as one grade (Discussion = 100 + Comments 5@ 10 points each = 150 points/week). *(20 comments @ 10 points each = 200 course points)*

Assignment (SLO***)***

Students were required to complete an annotated bibliography and a literature review for the CJ 575 course. The current assignment servers as a continuation of the work students did in the previous course. This will make more sense as you read below.

Before completing the survey assignment, refresh yourself with the topic you chose for your annotated bibliography and literature review in CJ 575. You will now proceed to design a survey that taps into the research question(s) you investigated.

Assessment Method: *1 assignment with multiple parts @ 250 points each = 250 course points; 150 points assigned for the Survey Assignment; 100 points assigned for your D.A.R.E Meta-analysis review*

Part I: Survey Assignment

Think back to the topic you chose for CJ 575. You should have completed a literature review and an annotated bibliography. Now I would like for you to consider the topic you chose and design a survey to address a particular issue you found interesting about your research. If you are more interested in the practical application of your work you may consider a survey that tests a specific hypothesis or theory. If you are leaning toward a management track you may wish to do a policy evaluation survey. I highly recommend that you begin the process of selecting an approach immediately since this will take some time to complete.

Survey design is not an easy task to complete correctly. While there are almost endless examples of surveys, you will notice after you read your text that many surveys are poorly constructed or they do not address the research questions they are designed to address. When you read chapter 8 in your text think about ALL of the points that are addressed and apply them to this assignment if they are applicable.

Your survey should consist of 15 to 20 questions and you must justify why the questions you designed are adequate for the task at hand. This means that you have to address ALL of the issues the chapter brings up such as the type of survey you are designing, potential error problems in measurement, question order and design, ethical concerns and so on. I think you will find that writing your questions will be easy at first but making sure they are valid and reliable measures is probably going to take up a considerable amount of your time.

Assessment Method

150 points

Part II: Meta-Analysis Review (SLO): The second assignment in this course is to carefully review a meta-analysis on the effectiveness of the Drug Awareness Resistance Education program (DARE). This article is available in docsharing and is relatively lengthy. It offers a comprehensive review of the DARE program using many studies across several years. A meta-analysis is focused on contrasting and combining results from different studies, in the hope of identifying patterns among study results, sources of disagreement among those results, or other interesting relationships that may come to light in the context of multiple studies. In its simplest form, this is typically achieved by identification of a common measure of effect size, of which a weighted average might be the output of a meta-analysis. The weighting might be related to sample sizes within the individual studies. More generally there are other differences between the studies that need to be allowed for, but the general aim of a meta-analysis is to more powerfully estimate the true effect size as opposed to a less precise effect size derived in a single study under a given single set of assumptions and conditions.

I do not expect you to be able to conduct a meta-analysis as part of this course but you should be able to interpret one. If you understand some of the techniques used, great! If you are unfamiliar with statistics many of the tables in this article may be confusing to you. That is OK; every table is accompanied by a plain-English explanation of the findings. You may need to read this article more than once to get the full picture of what it is presenting but by the time you write your review you should be able to answer several questions:

- What are the general findings? You can think of this as a summary of the overall article.
- In what situations is the DARE program most and least effective in reaching its goals?

- Based on what we know, what seems to be the greatest obstacle in making DARE effective?
- Now that you are an informed reader about the DARE program how would you implement it to make it the most successful? Be specific!
- If you were to redesign or "tweak" the program what would you do differently?

This review should be about five pages in length double-spaced.

Assessment Method: Students will be graded on their survey design using the Survey Design Grading Rubric. Students will be graded on their meta-analysis review using the Meta-Analysis Review Grading Rubric. **100 points**

Quizzes

You will take two quizzes, 100 points each in this course. They will be multiple choice/true false assessments of your knowledge of chapters 8-13 of your textbook.

Quiz #1 (covers chapters 8-10 of the text) Friday of Week #2 of the course

Quiz #2 (covers chapters 11-13 of the text) Thursday of Week #5 of the course

Quizzes will be available beginning at midnight on Wednesday of the week in which the quiz is assigned and close at **11:00PM on Friday** of the week in which the quiz is assigned. Students will have only one opportunity to take the exam and the exam will be timed. Specific information regarding test length and time allotted will be available in the quiz link in Week #2 and Week #5.

Assessment Method: Quizzes will be graded automatically with scores available in eCollege.

Course Pre/Post-test *(not graded)*

Pre and post-tests allow the professor to assess your baseline (foundation) knowledge of a particular subject at the time that you enter a course and the degree of increase in knowledge at the end of the course. This pre/post-test is comprised of no more than 10 questions that will assess your knowledge. You will be asked to complete the pre-test by **Friday** of Week #1 and your post-test by **Friday** of Week #5. These tests will not be graded (they are used for assessment purposes only). **Weeks 2-4 will become visible once you have completed the pretest and Week 5 will be visible once you complete the post test in week 4.**

GRADING

Assignments for this course will be scored using a points system. Below is an explanation of how each assignment type will be scored.

Assignment Type	# of Assignments	Point Value	Total Points
Introduction	1	50	50
Discussions	4	100	400
Comments	20	10	200
Assignments	1		
Survey Design	1	150	150
Meta-Analysis review	1	100	100
Quizzes	2	100	200
Pre/Post-test	1	0	0
		TOTAL	**1100**

Grades earned on each assignment will be added together and will be divided by the total number of points possible in the course. Below is the overall point scale/grading schema for the course.

Total points possible for the term = 1100.

1100 - 990 = A
989 - 880 = B
879 - 770 = C
769 - 660 = D
559 and below = F

Grades will be available in the gradebook so that students can track their progress in the course in 'real time'.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

You will need regular access to a computer with a broadband Internet connection. The minimum computer requirements for Ecollege are:

- Any current Flash-compliant browser (eg. Internet Explorer 7 or Firefox 3.0)
- 512 MB of RAM, 1 GB or more preferred

- Broadband connection required – courses are heavily video intensive
- Video display capable of high-color 16-bit display – 1024 x 768 or higher resolution
- A sound card and speakers or headphones

Current anti-virus software must be installed and kept up to date
Some classes may have specific class requirements for additional software. These requirements will be listed on the course offerings page. Most home computers purchased within the last 3-4 years meet or surpass these requirements.

You will need some additional free software for enhanced web browsing. Ensure that you download the free versions of the following software:

- Adobe Reader
- Adobe Flash Player

At a minimum, you must have Microsoft Office 2003, XP, 2007 or OpenOffice. Microsoft Office is the standard office productivity software utilized by faculty, students, and staff. Microsoft Word is the standard word processing software, Microsoft Excel is the standard spreadsheet software, and Microsoft PowerPoint is the standard presentation software. Copying and pasting, along with attaching/uploading documents for assignment submission, will also be required. If you do not have Microsoft Office, you can check with the bookstore to see if they have any student copies.

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:
http://www.tamuc.edu/myleo.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@tamuc.edu**.

Course Navigation

This course like the others in the program is divided up into weekly units. Each unit will have an Overview, Outcomes, Activities/Assignments and Resources. The Activities/Assignments will provide you with a list of everything you need to do to be successful in the course.

You should begin by reading the course syllabus, paying particular attention to the assignments and course calendar, and then complete the Start Here unit.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

Interaction with Instructor Statement

My primary form of communication with the class will be through Email and Announcements. Any changes to the syllabus or other important information critical to the class will be disseminated to students in this way via your official University Email address available to me through MyLeo and in Announcements. It will be your responsibility to check your University Email and Announcements regularly.

Students who Email me outside of regular office hours can expect a reply within 24 hours M-F. Students who Email me during holidays or over the weekend should expect a reply by the end of the next regularly scheduled business day.

Virtual Office

Welcome to my office. This space is set aside for students to ask course related questions. Place any questions or concerns about the course here and they will answered within 24 hours on weekdays. (It is possible that I will answer all threads during my office hours as posted on the syllabus.)

Please feel free to answer one another's questions. I will check answers (as well as questions) for correctness, but do not hesitate to respond to a posting if you feel you can answer the question thoroughly and directly.

eCollege Student Technical Support

It is reassuring to know that technical support is available to make your online learning experience convenient. All you have to do is call or email and a knowledgeable representative will help you solve your technical issues.

Policy for Reporting Problems with eCollege

Students, who encounter eCollege-based problems with submitting assignments/exams, etc., are required to do one of the following:

- Call 1-866-656-5511 or 720-931-3847 (direct)
- Online Chat by clicking on the "Tech Support" tab within your eCollege course.
- Email helpdesk@online.tamuc.org

Hours: The eCollege helpdesk is open 24/7 to meet your needs.

Your call will be logged and I will check with the Tech Support staff to confirm your call. Once I have confirmed your call, I will contact you regarding the issue.
Only eCollege-based problems will be addressed. Make sure your internet connection is working and viable when taking tests or turning in assignments.

myLeo Support

Your myLeo email address is required to send and receive all student correspondence. Please email helpdesk@tamuc.edu or call us at 903-468-6000 with any questions about setting up your myLeo email account. You may also access information at https://leo.tamuc.edu.

Internet Access

An Internet connection is necessary to participate in discussions and assignments, access readings, transfer course work, and receive feedback from your professor. View the requirements as outlined in Technology Requirements above for more information.

Learner Support

Go to the following link One Stop Shop- created to serve you by attempting to provide as many resources as possible in one location.

Go to the following link Academic Success Center- focused on providing academic resources to help you achieve academic success.

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Course Specific Procedures

Academic Honesty

Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including (but not limited to) receiving a failing grade on the assignment, the possibility of failure in the course and dismissal from the University. Since dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. In **ALL** instances, incidents of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Department Head. Please be aware that academic dishonesty includes (but is not limited to) cheating, plagiarism, and collusion.

Cheating is defined as:

- Copying another's test of assignment

- Communication with another during an exam or assignment (i.e. written, oral or otherwise)
- Giving or seeking aid from another when not permitted by the instructor
- Possessing or using unauthorized materials during the test
- Buying, using, stealing, transporting, or soliciting a test, draft of a test, or answer key

Plagiarism is defined as:

- Using someone else's work in your assignment without appropriate acknowledgement
- Making slight variations in the language and then failing to give credit to the source

Collusion is defined as:

• Collaborating with another, without authorization, when preparing an assignment

If you have any questions regarding academic dishonesty, ask. Otherwise, I will assume that you have full knowledge of the academic dishonesty policy and agree to the conditions as set forth in this syllabus.

Students should also reference the following link Criminal Justice web site for more information.

Attendance Policy

While this is an online course, students are expected to 'attend class' and actively participate. Student participation/activity will be monitored by the professor. Students should plan to dedicate approximately 15-20 hours/week of time to this course, of which approximately 1 hour/week should be spent in the discussion board (reading posts and comments and conversing with others).

APA Citation Format Policy

It is very important that you learn how to cite properly. In some ways, citations are more important than the actual text of your paper/assignment. Therefore, you should take this task seriously and devote some time to understanding how to cite properly. If you take the time to understand this process up front, it will save you a significant amount of time in the long run (not to mention significant deductions in points).

In the social and behavioral sciences (including Criminal Justice), we use APA (American Psychological Association) format. As a rule of thumb, one cites whenever they are paraphrasing other people's words or when they quote other's words directly. You may learn to

cite from a variety of different sources including the APA Tutorial and the sources listed below and in the CJ 500 Orientation Course.

www.apastyle.org

http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/02/

www.library.cornell.edu/resrch/citmanage/apa

It is the student's responsibility to understand how to cite properly. If you have questions, feel free to ask.

Late Work

In principle, I do not accept late work and do not believe in allowing students to turn in work after the due date. My position is that everyone knows the rules of engagement at the beginning of the term and that it is the student's responsibility to ensure that they plan accordingly to submit their assignments in a timely manner. However, I also do understand that sometimes there are circumstances outside one's control that may impact timely submission of assignments. To that end, I have developed a policy on late work. Please note that this policy applies **ONLY** to your discussions, papers, and quizzes, **not** your comments.

Late assignments will be accepted after the due date and time up to 1 day (24 hours) late. Twenty (20) points will be deducted from all late assignments. Assignments turned in more than one day late **will not** be accepted/graded.

Drop Course Policy

Students should take responsibility for dropping themselves from the course according to University policy should this become necessary.

University Specific Procedures:

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- Room 132

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835
Fax (903) 468-8148
Go to the following email address: StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu
Go to the following link: Student Disability Resources & Services

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. (See *Code of Student Conduct from Student Guide Handbook).* Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum: http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html

COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

Every effort will be made to adhere to the course schedule as noted below. However, unforeseen circumstances may require changes to the schedule. In that case, changes will be announced via University Email and in Announcements. The professor reserves the right to change the schedule if necessary and depending on the progress of the class. I highly recommend that you follow the schedule outlined below **VERY CAREFULLY** so that you are sure to complete readings as assigned and turn your assignments in on time.

Please note that all discussions/comments/assignments are due by 11:00PM CST in eCollege on the day they are due as outlined in the syllabus. Please note that this course runs on a Monday-Sunday schedule.

WEEK #1—Survey Research

Monday	Read the syllabus carefully and make note of important course due dates. **Readings from the Text** ***Chapter 8***: Survey Research ***Chapter 9***: Qualitative Methods and Analyses ***Chapter 10***: Analyzing Content
Wednesday	Post a Week #1 Introduction where you introduce yourself, accept the conditions of the syllabus, agree to the Rules of Netiquette, and answer the question I pose. Please note that this post is required for ALL students and will be graded. The link to the Rules of Netiquette may be found under Course and University Procedures/Policies under

	Student Conduct or here: http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html
Friday	Complete course pre-test
Saturday	Complete Discussion Assignment #1
Sunday	Complete Comments for Discussion Assignment #1

WEEK #2—Evaluation and Policy Analysis

Monday	This week's chapter discusses evaluation and policy analysis used in social science research **Readings from the Text** ***Chapter 11:*** Conceptualization and Measurement
Thursday	Complete Discussion Assignment #2
Friday	Quiz #1 (covering Chapters 8-11)
Saturday	Comments for Discussion Assignment #2 due

WEEK #3—Quantitative Data Analysis

Monday	This week's chapter covers the basics of quantitative data analysis. **Readings from the Text** ***Chapter 12:*** Quantitative Data Analysis Consider accessing this website for further information on this week's topic of study: http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/index.php
Thursday	Complete Discussion Assignment #3
Saturday	Comments for Discussion Assignment #3 due

WEEK #4—Reporting Research Findings

Monday	This week's chapter covers the basics of reporting research findings. **Readings from the Text** ***Chapter 13:*** Reporting Research Findings Consider accessing this website for further information on this week's

	topic of study: http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/index.php
Tuesday	Survey Design Assignment Due
Thursday	Discussion Assignment #4 Due
Friday	Course Post-test due
Saturday	Comments on Discussion Assignment #4 Due

WEEK #5—Meta Analysis, Wrap-up, and Course Conclusion

Monday	Consider accessing this website for further information on this week's topic of study: http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/index.php
Thursday	Quiz #2 (covering chapters 8-13)
Saturday	Meta-analysis Review Due