Planning and Evaluation in Criminal Justice
CJ 540, Sec 30169
Tue/Thu 12:30 -1:45pm

Instructor: Sylvia Valenzuela, Ph.D.
Office: PSFA 178
Office Hours: Wednesday 12:30-1:30 and by appointment
E-mail: svalenzuela@mail.sdsu.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course offers an introduction to basic techniques in criminal justice research, including
research writing, components of research design models, sampling and data collection techniques
for both quantitative and qualitative methods. An emphasis will be placed on bridging the gap
between theory, research, and criminal justice policy. The multidisciplinary nature of criminal
justice research will be highlighted.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:
Upon successful completion of the course, you should be able to:
 Formulate testable research questions and hypotheses for criminal justice related topics;
 Select the appropriate research design and method for a particular research question;
 Identify the advantages and disadvantages of different research designs;
 Identify the sampling strategies available for any given research design, as well as the
advantages and disadvantages associated with each;
 Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of quantitative and qualitative research methods;
 Be able to understand, summarize and critique research from multiple disciplines and;
 Think scientifically about social problems
 Recognize signs of strong and weak social science research
 Present a well-written research paper, which develops a criminal justice (or related) research
question, reviews the relevant literature, presents testable hypotheses, describes a well-suited
research design, detailed methodological approach, and discusses policy implications.

REQUIRED TEXT AND READINGS
 Maxfield, M.G. and Babie, E.R. 2011. Research Methods for Criminal Justice and
 Various readings to be posted on Blackboard

METHOD OF EVALUATION
Each student is expected to attend class regularly, complete the assigned readings, homework
and group projects, and participate in class discussion. Failure to attend class or submit
assignments on time will diminish your grade in this course. Grades will be based on the
weighted total of the following:
Assignments & quizzes 30%
Midterm 20%
Writing assignment 20%
Presentation 10%
Final Exam 20%

1. This class will incorporate the use of homework, group work, and quizzes to practice the principles learned from lecture and the textbook. It is imperative that you attend class regularly because both lecture and practice are fundamental in learning research methods, and both are worth a considerable amount of your total points. Only students with valid documentation of serious illness or death in the family will be allowed to make up missed assignments.

In-class and take-home exercises and supplemental readings as assigned. Assignments will be worth 30% of your grade. These will be handed out and explained in class. No late assignments will be accepted.

Homework: Depending on the particular topic covered in class, occasionally you will be given homework assignments to be completed before the next class meeting. Homework is due at the beginning of class (hard copy only). No late or emailed assignments will be accepted!

Group work: Group assignments will require you to apply/practice the principles, concepts, and themes introduced to you during Tuesday’s lecture. You will be RANDOMLY divided into groups in the beginning of the semester and will work on your weekly projects in groups during class time and under the supervision of your instructor.

Quizzes: Quizzes will test you on topics and concepts discussed in lecture & readings.

2. Writing assignment: Students will complete a writing assignment applying the research and analytical skills learned in the course; it is 20% of the course grade. This writing assignment will be described in detail on a separate page. Essentially, you will critique an empirical article from a methodological perspective using the skills and knowledge obtained in the course. No late papers will be accepted.

3. Midterm and Final Exam: The midterm and final exams will include multiple-choice, true/false, and may include short answers questions. The final exam will incorporate material from the entire semester. Make-up Exam policy: Make-up exams are allowed only in cases with legitimate, documentable excuses (medical, military, athletic, death in the immediate family), per University policy. (Work is not considered a legitimate excuse). No early exams will be given.

4. Presentation: You will present, either alone or in a group, a research design for a study of your choice. More information will be provided later in the semester.
Points will be deducted for late assignments. You are always welcome to turn in the assignment before it is due. If you are not a strong writer, you are encouraged to visit the campus writing center for assistance. Papers must be turned in as hard copies; no electronic copies will be accepted!

**COURSE ISSUES AND POLICIES**

**Course Website and Blackboard:** It will be crucial for every student to gain access to the course website as various important announcements and additional course materials (i.e. on-line readings) will be posted on the site. In addition, it is expected that students have an updated e-mail account, so that they can receive group e-mails.

**Classroom Policies:** You are expected to arrive on time, and to not disrupt instruction through talking, laughing, receiving phone calls, snoring, etc. Students are expected to freely express their views on the various CJ topics that will be discussed in class, as long as they are respectful of their fellow classmates and their instructor. Please avoid offensive language and behavior or you will be asked to leave. Class attendance is important, students should come to class prepared and interested in learning! I expect, encourage, and invite participation.

**Late and missed assignments:** No late assignments will be accepted! If you have documentation of having a serious medical illness, death in the family, or other compelling reason you will be allowed to make up the missed assignment. However, you are responsible for providing documentation and timely notice.

**Students with Disabilities:** Disabled students are encouraged to discuss with the instructor how their disability may impact on this course. Course requirement modifications and other accommodations may be provided after proof of eligibility has been provided to DSS staff. For further information, please contact Disabled Students Services.

**Academic Dishonesty:** Make sure to follow APA format on your paper, do not plagiarize, and do not cheat or disciplinary action will be taken.

**Grades:** The plus/minus grading scale follows this distribution:
- 94-100% = A
- 90-93.9% = A-
- 88-89.9% = B+
- 83-87.9% = B
- 80-82.9% = B-
- 78-79.9% = C+
- 73-77.9% = C
- 70-72.9% = C-
- 68-69.9% = D+
- 60-67.9% = D
- 59.9 % or lower = F
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Jan 17</td>
<td>Introduction to course, syllabus</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 Jan 22/24</td>
<td>-Crime, Criminal Justice, and Scientific Inquiry -Theory and Criminal Justice Research</td>
<td>Chapter 1 - 2 On-line reading: <em>The Demedicalization of Self Injury</em></td>
<td>Quiz #1 Group assignment #1</td>
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<td>2 Jan 29/31</td>
<td>Ethics and Criminal Justice Research</td>
<td>Chapter 3 On-line reading: <em>Tearoom Trade</em></td>
<td>Quiz #2 Group assignment #2 Homework #1</td>
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<td>3 Jan 29/31</td>
<td>-General Issues in Research Design -Concepts, Operationalization, and Measurement</td>
<td>Chapter 4 -5 On-line reading: TBD</td>
<td>Quiz #3 Group assignment #3 Homework #2</td>
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<td>4 Feb 5/7</td>
<td>Research design cont.</td>
<td>Chapter 4-5 cont. On-line reading: <em>The Minneapolis Domestic Violence Experiment</em></td>
<td>Design a research project</td>
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<td>7 Feb 26/28</td>
<td>Experimental and Quasi-experimental Design cont. <strong>Midterm Feb 28</strong></td>
<td>Chapter 7 cont. On-line reading: TBD</td>
<td>Homework #3</td>
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<td>8 Mar 5/7</td>
<td>Sampling</td>
<td>Chapter 8</td>
<td>Quiz #5 Sampling</td>
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<td>9 Mar 12/14</td>
<td>Survey Research and Other Ways of Asking Questions</td>
<td>Chapter 9</td>
<td>Are Tattooing &amp; Body Piercing Indicators of High Risk Taking Behavior...</td>
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<td>10 Mar 19/21</td>
<td>Field Research</td>
<td>Chapter 10</td>
<td>Becoming a Marijuana User Consuming Eroticism</td>
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<td>11 Mar 26/28</td>
<td>Agency Records, Content Analysis, and Secondary Data</td>
<td>Chapter 11</td>
<td>Images of Female Delinquents on Film</td>
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<td>12 Apr 2/4</td>
<td>SPRING BREAK</td>
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<td>13 Apr 9/11</td>
<td>Review of Qualitative Methods</td>
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<td>Guest Speaker</td>
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<td>14 Apr 16/18</td>
<td>Evaluation Research and Problem Analysis cont.</td>
<td>Chapter 12</td>
<td>The Impact of Research on Legal Policy: The Minneapolis Domestic Violence Experiment Writing assignment Due</td>
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<td>15 Apr 23/25</td>
<td>Interpreting Data Presentations</td>
<td>Chapter 13</td>
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<td>16 Apr 30, May 2</td>
<td>Presentations</td>
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<td>17 May 7</td>
<td>Final exam review</td>
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**FINAL EXAM**
Thursday, May 16th 10:30 am -12:30 pm

*this syllabus is subject to change without notice*