CJ 330: Research Methods in Criminal Justice Studies GWAR

Fall 2017
Tuesday and Thursday
Hensill Hall 667 9:35a-10:50a
HSS 104 11a-12:15p

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Office Hours: Thursdays 1-2:30p and by appointment.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

What is research and why do we do it? Research is a way of asking questions about the world. Research methods are the tools scholars use to gather information to address these questions in a systematic and scientific way. CJ 330 focuses on increasing students’ familiarity with a range of qualitative research methods. Students will be able to describe what kinds of questions each method can help scholars ask and answer. Students will also learn how to evaluate claims and evidence.

What is the relationship between academic research and criminal justice system policy and practice? The first part of the course focuses on the history and politics of knowledge production in social science research. We will talk about the ethical and political issues surrounding research, especially research about crime and justice. We’ll explore the relationship between academic research and criminal justice system policies and practices through examples of historical and contemporary research and policy debates. We’ll pay particular attention to the transformative potential of research as we review historical and contemporary examples of how research can be used to perpetuate or fight against social inequalities.

In addition to becoming critical consumers of research, students will also develop the skills to conduct their own research. Students will learn how to develop a research question based on a topic that interests them, locate appropriate literatures to investigate a research question, summarize, synthesize and analyze the findings of other scholars, select appropriate methods to investigate the question, and develop a compelling research proposal.

As we develop our skills as researchers, we will also work together to become stronger writers. One of the most important objectives of this course is to build writing skills that will lay the foundation for success in other college courses and beyond. Students should be prepared to write every single day in class and outside of class. Students will be expected to complete multiple writing assignments over the course of the semester, beginning with a motivated research question, followed by an annotated bibliography, literature review and methods section, and culminating in an original research proposal on the CJ topic of students’ choice. Students are encouraged to select topics and questions that they’re passionate about and to use this opportunity to write a research proposal that will lay the groundwork for success in CJ 680, the senior capstone course in Criminal Justice Studies.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This course will hone analytical writing and critical reading, data literacy and research skills. In this course students will:
1. Gain understanding of how to evaluate claims and evidence to become effective consumers and producers of knowledge.

2. Explore the history, politics and ethics of knowledge production in criminal justice studies; identify ethical and unethical research practices.

3. Identify the parts of an argument and evaluate strengths and limitations of supporting evidence.

4. Improve abilities to do library research; use databases to locate peer-reviewed sources; review, synthesize, summarize, analyze and critique the findings of academic research.

5. Explore topics of interest in the field of Criminal Justice Studies and develop an original research question.

6. Identify appropriate research methods to address an original research question.

7. Write clear, compelling and original social science research proposals.

8. Provide and respond to constructive feedback on drafts.

**COURSE MATERIALS**

*The Craft of Research* by Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb and Joseph M. Williams is available to read online via the SFSU library website. Additional readings are available through the course iLearn site—accessible through [http://ilearn.sfsu.edu](http://ilearn.sfsu.edu). Assigned readings will always be posted on iLearn at least a week before they are scheduled to be discussed in class. You are not required to buy a textbook for this class, but you are required to come to class with your readings either printed out or pulled up on your electronic device so that you can refer to the readings during class discussions.

**What is a Graduate Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR) and why is it special?** This class has three special characteristics that make it different from many other courses. Special characteristics of the GWAR can be summarized as: Time, revision, and opportunity to build.

**Time:** This is a time-consuming writing-intensive class. Since you are enrolled in a GWAR class this semester, I recommend that you make time and space in your schedule: This is not the time to sign up for additional units beyond the regular course load. Please be prepared to devote more time than usual to library research, reading, and writing every day. Regardless of how often you currently write, I hope that by the end of the semester writing will become a regular practice and habit that is an integral part of your thinking and expression.

**Revision:** This course is different from your other classes because it is designed to help students grow as writers. In most classes, students turn in their papers for a grade and then they’re done. This course is different because it emphasizes revision and rewriting in response to feedback from peers and from your professor. Revision is a crucial part of writing for everyone, from students to established authors. Regardless of whether you are satisfied with your grade on your first draft, you are expected to revise in response to student and professor feedback. You are also expected to develop your skills as a peer reviewer, providing constructive feedback that helps your peers grow as writers.

**Opportunity to build:** This class is specially designed to help CJ majors develop a research proposal that they can carry out in future semesters. Not only will this course prepare you for CJ 680, our senior capstone in Criminal Justice Studies, but it will also help you build writing and research skills that you’ll use in many of your other classes, in the workplace, and in post-graduate study. You have the opportunity to grow as a writer and researcher, and to start working on a project that you are passionate about and that you will build on during future
semesters. Use this opportunity to explore your interests. Write a research proposal about something that matters to you, and that might help you connect with institutions, organizations or groups that you’d like to collaborate with in the future as a CJ scholar and professional.

**COURSE ASSIGNMENTS**

Students are expected to attend class every time we meet, and have the reading that is assigned for that day completed before coming to class, and available for reference during class. Students should be prepared to participate in class discussion. Students will be evaluated as follows:

- Participation in class activities 10%
- Homework questions (must be completed and posted on iLearn before class) 5%
- Leading class discussion about assigned readings: 5%
- Motivated research question: 5%
- Annotated bibliography: 5%
- Literature review: 10%
- Literature review revision: 10%
- Methods section: 10%
- Methods section revision: 10%
- Abstract: 5%
- Outline: 5%
- Final research proposal: 20%

Assignments must be turned in before the beginning of class on the due date. If you have an emergency that conflicts with an assignment, please contact me as soon as possible to make alternate arrangements.

**Participation and attendance:** In a seminar class, students learn just as much from each other as from their professor, so it’s important to show up for your classmates. Please arrive on time, stay for the entire class and pay attention to your classmates, not your cell phones, social media, etc. Students can miss two classes without a negative impact on their grade. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to get notes from a classmate. We will have frequent in-class writing exercises and collaborative small and large group activities for which students will receive credit.

**Classroom Environment and Conduct**

One of the most exciting parts of being in a university class is the opportunity to try out new ideas and ways of expressing ourselves. We have a chance to meet people and encounter perspectives that we wouldn’t otherwise be introduced to. This class is a supportive space for everyone to engage in dialogue in a way that is respectful of our diverse backgrounds and viewpoints.

We will discuss sensitive and controversial topics in this class. Many of us have strong personal feelings and experiences related to the course material. I encourage you to share your reactions to the readings and arguments that we discuss. Please communicate respectfully with your classmates at all times, and remember that reasonable people (even beginning with the same set of facts) can reach different conclusions. Our job is to think critically, which requires engaging with conflicting ideas. Respectful debate is productive because it encourages us to reconsider our views and it helps us learn to communicate our ideas more effectively. We will work together to maintain a welcoming, respectful, and intellectually challenging environment.
Instructions for your research proposal

This assignment will allow you to explore a topic of personal interest and use your creativity to develop an original research question and data collection plan. You will be asked to commit yourself to a research topic by week 3. Choose a topic that is fascinating and important to you, because you will be working on this topic throughout the semester. If you choose an issue you’re passionate about and put in the time, you will have a paper that you are proud of. Even after this course is over, you will be able to use your final paper as a sample of your very best work, and you’ll have a head start on your senior capstone project for CJ 680. You might also decide to use your research proposal to apply for funding to carry out your project in the future, or as a writing sample for your future application to graduate school.

Your research will require a major time commitment: You should plan to spend an average of five hours per week outside of class finding sources, reading them, taking notes, and writing. This course is designed to improve your writing and research skills, and to prevent procrastination. The assignments build on each other and you are expected to incorporate peer and professor feedback, so you need to make sure that you turn in each assignment ON TIME. We’ll discuss the instructions and grading rubrics for each assignment in more detail before each deadline. For now, check out the guidelines below.

You will complete the following assignments that build into a research proposal:

1. **Motivated research question:** This is a one-page double-spaced paper (3-5 paragraphs, maximum 750 words) that describes a) the question you hope to answer b) why research is needed to answer this question and c) why the answer to this question is important. How might the answer to your question inform policy? How could service providers or criminal justice system professionals use the results of your research in their daily work? How might the answer to your research question change the practices of a group or groups of people? DUE: 9/12/17

2. **Annotated bibliography:** Your annotated bibliography must include at least five peer-reviewed articles or academic books that you have read, not counting the “required readings” listed on the syllabus. It must include a one-paragraph description of each source in your own words. The description should briefly summarize a) the argument of the book or article b) the methods the author used to collect and analyze data c) the evidence supporting the argument and d) how this source contributes to answering your research question. Your bibliography must use ASA style: [https://sociology.fas.harvard.edu/files/sociology/files/asastyleguide.pdf](https://sociology.fas.harvard.edu/files/sociology/files/asastyleguide.pdf) DUE: 9/19/17

3. **Literature review:** Your literature review should summarize, synthesize and analyze at least five peer-reviewed academic articles or books in order to present different scholarly perspectives on your research question. Your literature review should end with a description of why the answer to your research question is an important intervention. How does your question fit in with the literature? Will the answer to your question help adjudicate between two conflicting scholarly perspectives? Provide more insight about an understudied issue or phenomenon? Help readers understand more about how a social, political or economic process works? Provide insight into the lived experience of a social,
political or economic process? The literature review is your chance to use the literature about your topic to show why answering your research question is important and necessary. Your literature review should be 3 double-spaced pages long. It must include a full bibliography and in-text citations in ASA style with author, year of publication and page number. DUE: 9/28/17

4. **REVISED research question and literature review:** Write a one-page cover letter that summarizes professor and peer feedback on your research question and literature review, and your revisions in response to this feedback. Add a 3-5 page double-spaced revised version of your introduction, literature review, and research question sections, plus a reference page with full bibliographic citations in ASA style. DUE: 10/19/17

5. **Methods section:** Your methods section should describe, in detail, how you plan to collect and analyze data in order to answer your research question. Your methods section should show how you plan to answer your research question and why your strategy for data collection and analysis is appropriate to answer the question. Sub-sections should discuss sampling, data collection, data analysis, ethical considerations, and researcher positionality. Your methods section should be 3 double-spaced pages long. You must cite at least two studies to justify your choice of research methods. You should attach an appendix that includes your data collection instruments (for example an interview guide or survey questions). Note that for this class, you do not have to actually collect or analyze the data—you just have to have a detailed plan for doing so. The methods section must include a full bibliography and in-text citations in ASA style with author, year of publication and page number. DUE: 11/9/17

6. **REVISED methods section:** Write a one-page cover letter that summarizes professor and peer feedback on your research question, literature review, and methods section, and your revisions in response to this feedback. Add a 7-page double-spaced revised document that combines your literature review, research question and methods section, and a complete works cited page with references in ASA style. DUE: 11/30/17

7. **Research proposal abstract:** In a one-paragraph abstract of your proposal, list your research question, why it is important, how it contributes to scholarly understanding (for example how it adjudicates between two different perspectives in the literature), and how you plan to answer the question. **Research proposal outline:** In a one-page outline, list your research question & plan for organizing your proposal. Your outline should include the following sub-sections:

- Introduction
- Literature review
- Research questions
- Proposed methods
- Researcher positionality
- Ethical considerations
- Significance of the project
- Works cited (full list of references in ASA style)
- Appendixes (data collection instruments)
8. **Research proposal:** Submit a final, polished version of your research proposal that incorporates peer and professor feedback on previous drafts. Your final proposal must be a minimum of 8 and a maximum of 10 double-spaced pages long (not including the works cited and appendixes pages), and must include an abstract and citations in ASA style. You will be graded not only on the final product, but also on the extent to which you revised your work in response to feedback on earlier assignments. **DUE: 12/12/17**

**Final Portfolio and summary of revisions:** You’ll turn in a summary of how you revised each section along with all of your assignments so far (including professor comments) along with your final proposal. **DUE: 12/12/17**

**READING SCHEDULE (SUBJECT TO CHANGE- Check iLearn for updates)**

**WEEK 1 Thursday 8/24: Introductions and welcome.**
*Homework due next Tuesday:* Read Randall Contreras’s “Preface and Introduction” to *The Stick Up Kids* on iLearn. Print these documents out and highlight two quotes that you found interesting or surprising. Come to class ready to discuss which quotes stuck out to you and why. Answer the following questions: How did Contreras’s personal experience influence his research interests? How was his approach to studying and representing violence different from that of other researchers and why?

**WEEK 2: How do scholars come up with research questions?**
**Tuesday 8/29:** Discussion of Randall Contreras’s “Preface and Introduction.”

*Homework due on Thursday 9/1:*
1. Read “Ch 3: From Topics to Questions” pg. 35-51 in the online version of Booth et al. (2008) *The Craft of Research*. Bring a list of research topics you’re interested in, and be ready to explain why these topics are interesting or important. Brainstorm a preliminary list of questions about your favorite topics, using the steps outlined in the chapter.

What does Armenta mean by “studying the state”? How is her approach different from the approach of many other scholars of criminology? What did she want to know? How did she gain access to her research sites?

**Thursday 9/1:** Discussion of assigned readings from Amada Armenta and *The Craft of Research*. Introduction to Motivated Research Question assignment.

*Homework questions will be posted on iLearn from now on. Please make sure you have access to the site.*

**WEEK 3: Participatory Action Research**
**Tuesday 9/5:** Guest Speaker Cody Dolan, ’17, Distinguished Student Award Recipient.

Homework for Tuesday 9/12: Print out Contreras’s Part One. Highlight an interesting quote and be prepared to discuss with classmates. Answer the following questions about Contreras’s lit review on a separate sheet of paper: With which ideas does Contreras agree and disagree? In your own words, summarize his specific criticisms of other scholars’ theories about violence and drug use.

Skim the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) and UC Berkeley writing guides posted on iLearn in the “Writing Resources” section.

**WEEK 4: Writing a literature review**

**Tuesday 9/12:** Discuss Contreras’s literature review. Identify summary, synthesis and analysis.

**Thursday 9/14:** Library research session with CJ librarian Joe Daniels. You should have a list of five articles relevant to your topic by the end of the session. NOTE: WE WILL MEET IN LIBRARY ROOM 282. DO NOT GO TO OUR REGULAR CLASSROOM.

To make appointments for additional help using the library databases, contact: jad43@sfsu.edu

**WEEK 5: The basics of interview and survey research**


**Thursday 9/21:** In-class activity: Interview and survey design

**WEEK 6: Research ethics and positionality**


**In class:** Prepare student case study presentations:
- The Zimbardo experiment
- The Tuskeegee study
- *Gang Leader for a Day* by Sudhir Venkatesh
- *On the Run* by Alice Goffman

**WEEK 7: Epistemologies and the historical relationship between research & policy**


**WEEK 8: Introduction to ethnography and participant observation**


WEEK 9: Critical reading and incorporating critique into your literature review


WEEK 10: Introduction to comparative historical methods, archival research & media


WEEK 11: Methodology and data analysis

Thursday 11/2: Mini-lecture on qualitative data analysis. In-class activities.

Week 12: Policy analysis: Using research to influence a policy debate

Thursday 11/9: Op-eds TBA

Week 13: Studying the state


Week 14: HAPPY FALL BREAK!!!

Week 15: Recruitment and sampling strategies


**Week 16: Workshops**
12/5 In class activities
12/7 In class activities

**Week 17: Sharing & celebrating research accomplishments and plans**
12/12 Lightning presentations

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**IMPORTANT CAMPUS DEADLINES AND RESOURCES**

Welcome to the College of Health & Social Sciences,

This section is to inform you of the College and University policies that may affect you. Knowledge of these deadlines (viewed at [http://registrar.sfsu.edu/](http://registrar.sfsu.edu/)) and policies will help you to navigate the bureaucracy of the University while helping you succeed and graduate in a timely manner. Policies can be intimidating sometimes, but they ensure an equitable, consistent and reliable process for each student. Please review this information and refer to [http://chss.sfsu.edu/content/petitions-information](http://chss.sfsu.edu/content/petitions-information) for more detail on these policies. Approval of a petition from the instructor and/or Department Chair does not constitute automatic approval from the Associate Dean so please continue attending class until a decision is made. If you have any questions about how these policies specifically apply to your situation, please contact the Associate Dean’s Office at assocdean@sfsu.edu or in HSS 239.

**When is the deadline to drop a class?**

The last day to drop a class without a W grade is September 13, 2017 by 11:59 PM.

**What if I wish to withdraw from a course after the drop deadline?**

Withdrawal from a course is allowed from September 14, 2017 until November 17, 2017 only if you have **serious and compelling reasons with current, relevant supporting documentation**. The following are examples of non-serious and non-compelling reasons and would be denied:
• Changing major
• Poor academic performance in class
• Course no longer needed
• Missing pre-requisite(s)
• Instructor forgot to drop
• More time needed for other classes

Unexpected changes in work schedule or serious accident, protracted illness, or family emergencies may be considered serious and compelling if appropriate supporting documentation is attached. The petition must be submitted within a reasonable timeframe (e.g., within 2 weeks of an illness or change in work hours) and must include your unofficial transcripts. From November 18, 2017 until December 12, 2017, you may not withdraw from a class or the University, except only in the case of a documented serious illness or verified accident.

Withdrawals cannot be initiated electronically and must be submitted using a paper application. A maximum of 18 units can be withdrawn, and a course can only be repeated once with a failing grade.

**How do I take a course for Credit or No Credit (CR/NC) Grade?**

Please check the course description in the Bulletin to determine if the class can be taken CR/NC. If it is permitted, then you may change your grading option via your SF State Gateway until October 18, 2017 by 11:59 PM. The Associate Dean will not approve requests for changes if you miss this deadline.

**What if I want to add a class after registration closes?**

The period to add classes via permission numbers is August 23, 2017 through September 13, 2017 until 11:59 PM. It is your responsibility to obtain a late permission number from your instructor and add the class. Faculty cannot add you into a class. Starting September 14, 2017, a Waiver of College Regulations form must be submitted. This will only be approved if there was an administrative error.

**How do I know if any changes in my registration went through?**

Always check your registration on your SF State Gateway after making any changes and before deadlines to ensure you are registered properly for your classes. It is always your responsibility to ensure your schedule is correct, even if the instructor indicates they will drop you. All deadlines will be strictly adhered to by the instructor, the Department Chair, and the CHSS Associate Dean.

**When are finals?**

According to Academic Senate policy F76-12 a time period is set aside at the end of each semester for a formal examination period. All classes are expected to meet during the
final examination period whether an examination is given or not. The final examination schedule is:
http://www.sfsu.edu/~acadres/final_exams/finalf17.htm

What resources are available to me on campus?

Disability Programs and Resource Center: Students with disabilities who need reasonable accommodations are encouraged to contact the instructor. The Disability Programs and Resource Center (DPRC) is available to facilitate the reasonable accommodations process. The DPRC, located in SSB 110, can be reached by telephone at 415-338-2472 (voice/TTY) or by e-mail at dprc@sfsu.edu.

Student Disclosures of Sexual Violence: SF State fosters a campus free of sexual violence including sexual harassment, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, and/or any form of sex or gender discrimination. If you disclose a personal experience as an SF State student, the course instructor is required to notify the Dean of Students. To disclose any such violence confidentially, contact:
The SAFE Place - (415) 338-2208; http://www.sfsu.edu/~safe_plc/
Counseling and Psychological Services Center - (415) 338-2208; http://psyservs.sfsu.edu/
For more information on your rights and available resources: http://titleix.sfsu.edu

CHSS Student Resource Center (HSS 254): Provides academic advising and support to all students with a CHSS major. For more information and to book advising appointment: http://chss.sfsu.edu/src or call (415) 405-3740.

Undergraduate Advising Center (ADM 212): Provides academic advising and support to all students. For more information: https://advising.sfsu.edu/.

Willie Brown scholarship opportunity for eligible seniors with at least a B average: https://dusp.sfsu.edu/wlbjfellowship

Housing and food insecurity: There are local resources for San Francisco students and families who experience homelessness, threat of eviction, or food insecurity. For homeless students under 25 years old, Larkin Street Youth Services offers shelter, dorm-style transitional housing and other services: http://www.larkinstreetyouth.org.
Saint Anthony’s Dining Room offers free meals for all ages: https://www.stanthonyssf.org/dining-room-free-meal-san-francisco/
The Eviction Defense Collaborative can offer resources to tenants at risk of losing their housing: http://evictiondefense.org
The SF Homeless wiki is a good place to look up city services: http://sfhomeless.wikia.com/wiki/San_Francisco_Homeless_Resource

DACA Students: https://undocugators.sfsu.edu
https://immigrantsrising.org/introduction-to-working-for-yourself/