

University of Texas at El Paso  
Department of Criminal Justice  
Summer 2019

## COURSE

Title: CRIJ 3300 Applied Research Methods in Criminal Justice  
CRN: 32015

## INSTRUCTOR

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## COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course introduces students to research with a focus on the importance of suitability of the sample for the research question, as well as the correctness of the concepts, methods of data collection and analysis used. Students should develop the skills required to become educated users of research findings and reports.

## REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS

### **Textbook:**

Maxfield, Michael G., and Earl R. Babbie. Basics of Research Methods for Criminal Justice & Criminology  
4<sup>th</sup> edition

ISBN-10: 1-305-27697-0

ISBN-13: 978-1-305-27697-0

Additional readings for the course are available on Blackboard.

## COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of this course, a student should be able to:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the basic methods of research design, measurement, and data collection used in criminal justice and criminology.
2. Evaluate information sources critically and incorporate selected information into papers and projects.
3. Utilize information sources ethically and effectively document and communicate acquired information.

## INSTRUCTOR'S CLASSROOM POLICIES

### General:

This class will feature readings, lecture notes, PowerPoint slides, and discussion boards to promote learning. To succeed in the class, it is essential that you keep up with readings, lectures, and assignments.

The grade you earn in this course will be based on the amount of effort you exert. If you need a specific grade for this course, be proactive and contact me as early and often as possible. I will make every effort to assist you in achieving your goals.

This class is NOT self-paced. Instead, the course is based on weekly discussion posts due by the Wednesday or their respective weeks at 11:59pm and discussion post replies due by the following Sunday at 11:59pm. Furthermore, there are two exams that are open for limited time periods as well.

Because this course is in a compressed (seven week) format, the pace is very fast. In fact, it is about double the pace of a typical 16 week class in terms of readings, exams, assignments, etc. It is thus easy to get behind and, if you do, it may be difficult (if not impossible) to catch up. You must hit the ground running and not let up for seven weeks. If you do this, there is no reason you cannot earn an "A" in the course. If you slack off, even for one week, you will set yourself up for a difficult struggle and severely hinder your ability to get a good grade in the course or even pass at all.

### Students with disabilities:

If you require modifications to the course or testing environment, **please** inform me as soon as practical via email or during office hours. Accommodations are coordinated through the Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS). If you feel an accommodation is necessary please contact CASS at 915-747-5148 (tel) [cass@utep.edu](mailto:cass@utep.edu) (email) or visit them at Union Building East Room 106.

### Late assignment and missed exam policy:

If students fail to submit any required work before the due date they will receive a zero on the assignment or exam—no exceptions! Put another way, no late work will be accepted.

### Important reminders:

The exams are timed, meaning that once you begin the exam you will have a limited amount of time (90 minutes) to complete and submit your work. The exams will automatically close and submit at the end of the time limit if you haven't already submitted it yourself. Do not wait until the last minute to begin exams. This way, if you do experience any difficulties with submissions, they can be corrected before the module closes.

### Technology issues:

I will **not** provide you with technical assistance. Rather, you should familiarize yourself with assistance available to you whenever you have problems.

### Dissemination policy:

All the materials in this course, aside from that in the assigned text, should be considered as my intellectual property and, as such, under copyright protection. This includes my lectures, exams, written assignments, and notes. These are intended for your use during this course and may not be disseminated to anyone outside of the course without my explicit written permission.

### Email policy (contacting the instructor):

There are three ways you can contact me in this course. 1) Through your institutional email address. These emails will only be viewed by me; 2) Through the “send email” function under the course tools tab in Blackboard. These emails will also only be viewed by me. I expect you to identify yourself within the body of the email. I also expect you to compose emails using standard word and sentence structure (i.e., no acronyms, slang, etc.). In other words, do not email me as if you are texting your friends. 3) Through the “instructor’s office” forum in our discussion board. These will be seen by other students. Other students will also be able to post replies to these posts. Please consider if your question and its answer will be useful to other students. If so, please post them in the forum.

I will do my best to respond to your emails within 24 hours under most circumstances from Monday through Friday. I will also do my best to check my email at least once on Saturdays and Sundays; however, at times I may not be able to respond over the weekends. Please plan accordingly.

### Scholastic dishonesty:

Scholastic dishonesty includes cheating on an exam, turning in someone else’s assignment from a previous class, or plagiarism: “(1) use by paraphrase or direct quotation of the published or unpublished work of another person without fully and properly crediting the author with citations or biographical reference; (2) unacknowledged use of work/materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials; (3) unacknowledged use of original work/material that has been produced through collaboration with others without release in writing from collaborators.”

I take cases of alleged scholastic dishonesty seriously. Cases wherein students have allegedly engaged in any form of scholastic dishonesty will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution (OSCCR). While the case is being investigated by OSCCR, an “I” (Incomplete) will be assigned until the case is resolved. If the student is found by OSCCR to have engaged in misconduct, sanctions may include a failing grade on the assignment or exam in question, a failing grade in the course, suspension, or dismissal from the University. Information about scholastic dishonesty can be found here: <https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/osccr/student-conduct/index.html>

Learn more here: [HOOP: Student Conduct and Discipline](#)

### A note about sexual misconduct:

What you should know about sexual misconduct: UTEP does not tolerate acts of sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment and all forms of sexual violence. If you have experienced sexual misconduct, or know someone who has, the University can help. It is important to know that federal regulations and University policy require faculty to promptly report complaints of potential sexual misconduct known to them to their campus Title IX Coordinator(s) to ensure that appropriate measures are taken and resources are made available. The University will work with you to protect your privacy by sharing information with only those that need to know to ensure the University can respond and assist. Any student who believes that he or she may be experiencing sexual harassment or misconduct is encouraged to consult with or report such conduct immediately to the Title IX Coordinators. Contact information for UTEP’s Title IX Coordinators can be found here:

<http://utep.edu/titleix/Title%20IX%20Coordinators%20.html>

### UTEP Drop Policy:

If circumstances arise to where a student must drop this course, it is the student’s responsibility to initiate the course drop. It is also the student’s responsibility to determine how dropping courses may

affect his or her financial aid. Students are limited to dropping no more than 6 courses over their entire academic career of all courses taken at any public college or University in Texas.

- a) If a course is dropped within the first 2 weeks before the “official census date”:
  - a. the course will not appear on the transcript and
  - b. the course will not count toward the 6-course drop limit.
- b) If a course is dropped after the official census data but before the “course drop date”:
  - a. the student will receive a “W” in the course
  - b. the drop will show on transcripts but will not lower GPA
  - c. the drop will count toward the 6 class drop limit
- c) If the course is dropped after the “course drop date” or if the student just stops coming/taking tests, etc.:
  - a. UTEP requires the instructor to issue an “F” in the course that permanently remains on the transcript.
  - b. the drop will count against the 6 class drop limit.
- d) UTEP also allows instructors to administratively drop any student because of excessive absences, lack of effort, or disciplinary reasons. In this case, the student will be notified of the course drop through their UTEP email account. A “W” will be issued if the drop occurs before the course drop date, and an “F” will be issued if a student is administratively dropped for disciplinary reasons or after the course drop date. This type of drop counts against the 6 drop limit.
- e) If circumstances occur where a student must miss an excessive number of classes and/or is unable to submit multiple assignments (e.g., student medical reasons, medical conditions of a family member, death of a family member, active military service), they should first discuss the possibility of withdrawal from all classes with their academic advisor. If a student withdraws completely from all classes, kindly notify me at: tedickinson@utep.edu. Complete withdrawals from all classes in the same semester do not count against the 6 drop limit.

### Student Resources

- [UTEP Library](#): Access a wide range of resources including online, full-text access to thousands of journals and eBooks plus reference service and librarian assistance for enrolled students.
- [University Writing Center \(UWC\)](#): Submit papers here for assistance with writing style and formatting, ask a tutor for help and explore other writing resources.

## ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

### Term project: (100 points)

There is one term project assigned for this course. For this project, you will create several elements of a research proposal. These include a short paper discussing your research question, the population of interest, the units of analysis, the variables of interest, the background and rationale of the proposed study (including 4 outside references), the sampling strategy, potential threats to validity, ethical and practical considerations, limitations, and a reference section. The project also requires that you create a survey consisting of 20-30 questions. The final draft of the paper is due 8/2/2019 at 11:59pm MST. **The project must be submitted via Blackboard. Failure to make the submission by the deadline will result in point deductions as detailed in the project instructions.**

### Discussion posts/replies: (10 points each/150 points total)

Each week you are responsible for creating a discussion post referring to one or both of the assigned readings for that week. These posts are due on Wednesday by 11:59pm MST. To receive full credit your post must be at least 4 sentences and must indicate that you have read the assigned material. For the first week you must create two posts: one referring to the material and one providing an introduction to yourself to the rest of the class. The introduction post is worth 10 points. **You are not required to post replies to other students' introductions.**

You are also responsible for replying to another student's post. These replies are due on Sunday by 11:59pm MST. These replies must consist of substantive comments and not simple statements such as "I agree" or "I disagree." The responses should demonstrate your understanding of the post, provide an alternative to their opinions, or display application of concepts. The replies must also be at least 4 sentences.

A note on etiquette while online: Please remember that this is a classroom like any face to face course and you are expected to behave in the same manner as if you were having a face to face discussion with classmates. **Please refer to the Netiquette guide posted at the bottom of this syllabus.** Also refer to the following website: <https://www.utep.edu/extendeduniversity/utepconnect/blog/october-2017/10-rules-of-netiquette-for-students.html>

### Exams: (100 points each/200 points total)

There are two exams for this course. Each exam will consist of multiple choice, true/false, and fill in the blank. You will have a 5 day window to begin and complete each exam.

#### IMPORTANT NOTES:

1. The exams are timed. Once you open them you will have **90** minutes to complete them.
2. Please close all browser windows and applications before beginning the exam.
3. The midterm will open on Monday 7/1 at 12:00am MST and is due on Saturday 7/6 at 11:59pm MST. This exam covers the material from chapters 1 -5.
4. The final will open on Monday 7/29 at 12:00am MST and is due on Saturday 8/3 at 11:59pm MST. This exam covers the material from chapters 6-11.

### Grade Calculation:

Your grade will be calculated as follows:

#### Point distribution:

|                               |                  |
|-------------------------------|------------------|
| Discussion participation..... | 150points        |
| Exams.....                    | 200points        |
| Term project.....             | 100points        |
| <b>Total.....</b>             | <b>450points</b> |

#### Grade scale:

|   |            |                  |
|---|------------|------------------|
| A | 90% - 100% | 405 – 450 points |
| B | 80% - 89%  | 360 – 404 points |
| C | 70% - 79%  | 315 – 359 points |
| D | 60% - 69%  | 270 – 314 points |
| F | < 59%      | < 269 points     |

## COURSE SCHEDULE\*

\* Students are responsible for reading all the required materials prior to coming to class on the dates listed below.

\* I reserve the right to adjust the course syllabus as needed. Revisions will be communicated to students via email or Blackboard.

| Date              | Topic   | Required reading    | Assignments   | What you will be able to do for the term project  |
|-------------------|---|---------------------|---|---|
| Week 1: 6/10-6/16 | Criminal Justice and Scientific Inquiry                                       | Ch. 1               | Discussion board post and reply   | Research topic; Research questions  |
| Week 2: 6/17-6/23 | Ethics<br><br>General Issues in Research Design                               | Ch. 2<br><br>Ch. 3  | Discussion board post and reply   | Prior research on topic<br><br>Identify independent and dependent variables (if any);<br>Identify units of analysis |
| Week 3: 6/24-6/30 | Concepts, Operationalization, and Measurement                                 | Ch. 4               | Discussion board post and reply   | Construct conceptual definitions for key concepts   |
| Week 4: 7/1-7/7   | Experimental and Quasi-experimental Designs<br><br>Sampling                   | Ch. 5<br><br>Ch. 6  | Discussion board post and reply;<br><b>Midterm Exam due (ch. 1-5) 7/6 @ 11:59pm MST</b>                                 | Define possible threats to validity<br><br>Determine sampling strategy  |
| Week 5: 7/8-7/14  | Survey Research<br><br>Qualitative Interviewing                               | Ch. 7<br><br>Ch. 8  | Discussion board post and reply;  | Operationalize variables (construct survey)   |
| Week 6: 7/15-7/21 | Field Observation<br><br>Agency Records, Content Analysis, and Secondary Data | Ch. 9<br><br>Ch. 10 | Discussion board post and reply   |   |
| Week 7: 7/22-8/3  | Evaluation Research and Problem Analysis                                      | Ch. 11              | Discussion board post and reply;<br><b>Term paper due 8/2 @ 11:59pm MST; Final Exam (ch.6-11) due 8/3 @ 11:59pm MST</b> |   |