



Research Methods in Criminology



Course Description:

The primary purpose of this course is to give you experience evaluating and conducting research in the fields of criminology and criminal justice. A basic understanding of statistics and research methodology is extremely important for all individuals who wish to be effective consumers of information, especially because diverse information about many topics is readily available online. It is particularly important for criminologists to be able to search for, read, and critically evaluate research. Additionally, an understanding of the process of conducting research is essential for criminal justice practitioners in order for them to appreciate the scope of what we know (and do not know) about phenomena in criminology and criminal justice.

Therefore, this course mainly focuses on principles of research design and methods of data analysis. The classroom portion of the class will mostly cover major concepts in research design, and the "laboratory" portion of the class will cover basic statistics and allow you to apply your knowledge from class and lab to a unique research project with original analyses. This course uses a "portfolio-style" format which requires sections of the major research paper project to be completed over time, in which feedback will be provided and revisions can be made before final submission.

Prerequisite Knowledge and Skills: The pre-requisite for this course is successful completion of CCJ 3024 Advanced Principles of Criminal Justice and 3LS or 4LS major or instructor approval.

Virtual Office hours: Monday through Friday 10:00 AM – 1:00 PM daily or on evenings/weekends (via conference call, Zoom, etc.). Email and texting is the quickest/easiest way to reach me. On-campus office hours are not available per current university guidelines, although when on campus I am located in Turlington Hall 3108.

About your Instructor

Tiffany Jenson is an Associate Instructional Professor in the Department of Sociology and Criminology & Law and an Affiliate Faculty, Center for European Studies in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at the University of Florida (UF). Although she arrived at UF in 2017, Tiffany has worked in higher education full-time for over 20 years (as faculty and staff) since 2001.

She completed a Bachelor of Science degree in Sociology and a Master of Liberal Arts degree in Social Sciences from Southern Methodist University. She holds a Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of Oklahoma with an emphasis in Criminology. She also received a second Master's degree in Social Work from the University of Louisville.



Her professional experiences include working as a researcher/statistician for the Oklahoma Department of Corrections as well as for the Department of Health and Human Services. She currently teaches mostly upper-division courses on criminology, corrections, terrorism, research methods, and applied statistical analysis. She has been awarded \$3.78 million in several state and federal grants and served as a statistician, researcher, evaluator, and consultant on many others which served various populations such as foster children, inmates, high-risk juveniles, tribes, and the elderly. Her research and publications are focused on topics of social justice and sexual victimization.

Before arriving at the University of Florida, she has taught at Southern Methodist University, University of Oklahoma, Brigham Young University-Provo, and Brigham Young University-Idaho. Dr. Jenson has also served as Faculty Association President-Elect and Staff Association President at two of these universities. She achieved the rank of Associate Professor at BYU-Idaho in 2014 and she was recently promoted to Associate Instructional Professor at the University of Florida in 2021.

Required Software:

SPSS Grad Pack version 29 or higher
Available for free at login.apps.ufl.edu or
for download/purchase at [OnTheHub.com](https://www.onthehub.com)

No required textbook,
readings and lab materials available in Canvas



- Be an informed consumer of social science research
- Perform and interpret basic and intermediate statistical analyses using SPSS
- Hone in social research writing skills and assembling the results of a personal question of interest
- Communicate research findings to many audiences
- Use a statistical software package (SPSS) to calculate statistics and compute results from real social survey data.



Course & Learning Objectives

Statistics and research analysis classes have the potential to be some of the most important classes you will ever take.

The world is full of research and statistics.

Whether we are reading an article, watching the nightly news, or attending a lecture it seems that we are constantly being exposed to numbers and figures drawn from some sort of study.

- Formulate research questions and design studies to test those questions
- Explain the intuitive meaning behind a variety of common social statistics you will be familiar with
- Providing practical experience in evaluating statistical information
- Become more comfortable with quantitative analyses and explain its relevance in criminological research

Essential Course Overview

Assignments and Labs

Almost every week throughout the semester you will be asked to complete out of class assignments (4) and labs (8). This is not to torture you but to keep you active and engaged in the learning process. Each assignment will allow you to build skills you will need in calculating the results for your final paper. These assignments are designed to give you hands-on experience with the topics taught in class. Doing assignments is critical to good performance in the course.

Assignments are not optional, these items are your "training and practice." If time allows, we will go over the assignments in class to ensure that everyone knows how to do them correctly. Answer keys will be provided for each assignment.

Quizzes

A few brief assessments over assigned material help the instructor refresh your skills and knowledge.

Paper Section Draft Projects

During the last 6 weeks of the course, we will be moving away from labs and actively drafting sections of your final research paper. It is important to get these drafts to me on time, so that I may provide feedback to make edits and improvements for your final draft. This class is collaborative with me, and we can talk on the phone, text, and discuss your questions live. You can call me or schedule a Zoom meeting with screen-sharing to help you work on these tasks.

The more we talk, the more we can strategize on how to organize your work and get your final paper done with less stress. I'm excited to see your topic coming together and I'm cheering for you! **Regular participation** is expected and encouraged. These will be considered in the final course grade.

WATCH. EVERY. VIDEO.

The students who score the best, finish early, and have more ease at completing labs, assignments, and the final research paper are the ones who watch every video I prepare, as they are loaded with shortcuts and helps with everything. I promise, this will save you so much time and stress. You can re-watch them for refreshers on skills, too!

Final Research Paper

A statistical report will be provided in the form of a final research paper. This informs readers about a particular topic, tests our ideas on it, shares results, and provides a conclusion on what we learned. A successful statistical report is formatted properly and includes all the necessary information your readers need. The sections will be as follows:

1. Title Page
2. Abstract
3. Literature Review
4. Theory
5. Graphical Figure
6. Data & Methodology
7. Results
8. Statistical Tables
9. Discussion
10. Conclusion
11. References



The papers will vary in length (20-25 pages), so make sure that you are mindful of the criteria for each assignment and the due dates and times. Late papers will be penalized by 10% for every day they are late.

Anti-Plagiarism Assignment

An online module to complete training in recognizing plagiarism (posted under assignments, 5 points). This upload of a certificate given at the end of the modules is due later in the semester. If you have completed the anti-plagiarism training from another course with Dr. Jenson within the last year, please simply provide the certificate (no need to retake).

Course Pacing & Modules

The modules and approximate beginning and ending dates are provided below to assist in your own scheduling. New modules begin on Mondays and end on Sunday evening of the following week:

Module 1: Introduction to Social Research and Statistics

January 8– 14

Module 2: Criminal Justice Research Process

January 15 – 21

Module 3: Data Management Skills and Statistics Review

January 22 – 28

Module 4: General Issues in Research Design

January 29– February 4

Module 5: Concepts, Operationalization, and Measurement

February 5– 11

Module 6: Measuring Crime, Conditional Variables, and Bivariate Statistics (Chi Square)

February 12– 18

Module 7: Creating Scales & Summations with Variables and Bivariate Statistics (ANOVA, t-test, correlation)

February 19– 25

Module 8: OLS Regression

February 26– March 1

Module 9: Binary Logistic Regression

March 11– 17 – (SPRING BREAK March 2– 10)

Module 10: Building Tables & Reviewing Literature

March 18– 24

Module 11: Proposing Theory & Methodology

March 25–31

Module 12: Drafting Statistical Results

April 1– 7 **Last day to submit pre-approved late work: April 7th**

Module 13: Wrapping Up Research - Conclusions

April 8– 14

Module 14: Formatting/Revisions & Careers

April 15–May 5

**All assignments are due on
Sundays by 11:59 PM.
When possible, you may work
ahead.**

Disclaimer: This syllabus represents my current plans and objectives for your learning experience. As we go through the semester, those plans may need to change to enhance the class learning opportunities and provide ample time for completion of work. Such changes, communicated clearly and in advance, are not unusual and should be expected. Thank you for your flexibility and understanding.

GRADING

Lab Assignments (29% of grade)

Throughout the semester, there will be many lab assignments that will assist you in learning the statistical analysis skills necessary for your final paper.

Research Paper Projects (12% of grade)

There will be research paper projects for this class that you complete in several parts. Each project will assist you in drafting a section of your final paper and obtain feedback from the instructor, teaching assistants, tutors, and peers to improve it.

Research Paper (59% of grade)

You will write an original research paper that will be submitted in the final weeks of the course. This will be our capstone assignment and hopefully become your writing sample for employers and graduate study to demonstrate your skills. Since this course meets a major requirement in the criminology program, you must achieve a passing score on the research paper in order to pass the overall course.

GORDON RULE COURSES (Writing Requirement)

The State of Florida Legislature requires that all students at a Florida institution must complete a writing, research, and math requirement, formerly known as the Gordon Rule. Some courses fulfill writing requirement for the number of words indicated. In order to graduate, Florida college students must complete, with a grade of C or higher, courses that involve substantial research and writing totaling 2,000-6,000 words (24,000 over the college career). This course meets this requirement with the research paper.



Letter Grade	Percentage
A	93%-100%
A-	90%-92%
B+	87%-89%
B	83%-86%
B-	80%-82%
C+	77%-79%
C	73%-76%
C-	70%-72%
D+	67%-69%
D	63%-66%
D-	60%-62%
F (E)	59% and below

Information on current UF grading policies for assigning grade points:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

For more information, see: <http://www.isis.ufl.edu/minusgrades.html>

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Course Policies



Course Website: <http://elearning.ufl.edu>

Course Communications: With Instructor: Email is the best form of communication for individual concerns for this class; it's easy to maintain a history and record that way. USE YOUR UF EMAIL! It's one way to indicate official business; it is less likely to be delayed or rejected as spam; we use it to set priorities in how we respond because we get in excess of 100 emails on some days. The email in Canvas organizes emails for us, so please use that delivery. Emails sent during regular business hours will typically receive a response within 24 Hours. Emails sent on Holidays or weekend will normally be responded to within 48 Hours. Sent messages are not completed communications until they are received. If you leave an important message and don't hear back, follow up to make sure it has been received. This applies to phone messages and email. The discussion board in Canvas will be useful for sharing ideas and questions class-wide. There will be discussion-based activities so get used to it early on in the class. The instructor will also send weekly announcements through the Canvas Mail system.

With Fellow Students: A miscellaneous Discussion Board is provided for students to post questions for one another to answer. Students are encouraged to use and check this board PRIOR to emailing "housekeeping" questions about the syllabus etc..., as many questions may be more quickly or easily answered by one another. However, this board will NOT be regularly monitored by me and any pressing questions or questions that go unanswered should be emailed to me directly.

Required or Recommended Textbooks: None

Materials and Supplies Fees: SPSS Grad Pack version 26 available on apps.ufl.edu or for purchase on OnTheHub.com

Additional Resources: Canvas: Canvas is accessible at: <http://lss.at.ufl.edu> . If you experience any computer-related difficulties, don't hesitate to contact the UF Computing Help Desk at <http://helpdesk.ufl.edu>, 352-392-4357. Please familiarize yourself with the course site, as it is intended to enhance your learning experience. The "Student Help FAQ" tab is a good introduction for anyone new to e-Learning. A reliable computer running Windows XP (or higher) or Mac OS X 10 (or higher). - A web browser with Adobe Flash Player installed. We recommend Flash Player 10 or higher. - A reliable, high-speed internet connection.

NETIQUETTE GUIDE FOR ONLINE COURSES It is important to recognize that the online classroom is in fact a classroom, and certain behaviors are expected when you communicate with both your peers and your instructors.

These guidelines for online behavior and interaction are known as netiquette.

Security: Remember that your password is the only thing protecting you from pranks or more serious harm.

- Don't share your password with anyone
- Change your password if you think someone else might know it
- Always logout when you are finished using the system

If you have issues with internet connection (especially when it concerns the submission of assignments or exams) you will need to contact the UF Help Desk Immediately. If you encounter issues, you MUST have verification from the UF Help Desk to make up any assignments missed due to poor internet connection. The UF Help Desk Number is: (352) 392-HELP (4357) and their site can be found at: <http://helpdesk.ufl.edu>

Guidelines for Communicating online (Netiquette) - When communicating online, you should always:

- Treat instructor and fellow peers in the course with respect, even in email or in any other online communication like discussion post or chat.
- Use clear and concise language and remember that all college level communication should have correct spelling and grammar
- Avoid slang terms such as "wassup?" and texting abbreviations such as "u" instead of "you." Use standard fonts such as Times New Roman and use a size 12 or 14 pt. font and avoid using the caps lock feature AS IT CAN BE INTERPRETED AS YELLING
- Limit and possibly avoid the use of emoticons like :) and be cautious when using humor or sarcasm as tone is sometimes lost in an email or discussion post and your message might be taken seriously or offensive. Be careful with personal information (both yours and other's) and do not send confidential information via e-mail

When sending emails:

- Use a descriptive subject line and be brief. Avoid attachments unless you are sure your recipients can open them
- Avoid HTML in favor of plain text. Sign your message with your name and return e-mail address.
- Think before you send the e-mail to more than one person. Does everyone really need to see your message? (Use of "reply all" and forward").

Computer Guidelines:

The University of Florida requires all students to have continuous ongoing access to computer hardware and software appropriate to their degree program. Course work in all degree programs requires the use of a computer and reliable high-speed internet connectivity. Activities related to student life including academic advisement, course registration, official university correspondence, use of library resources, and student financial affairs are predicated on access to a computer with internet connectivity.

It is expected that most students will meet this requirement by owning or leasing a computer appropriate to their degree program. The cost of meeting this requirement may be included in financial aid considerations.

Health and Wellness U Matter, We Care: If you or a friend is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu or 352-392- 1575 so that a team member can reach out to the student.

Counseling and Wellness Center:<https://counseling.ufl.edu/> , 352-392-1575; and the University Police Department: 352-392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

Career Connections Center: Reitz Union Building, Suite 1300, 352-392-1601, <https://career.ufl.edu/>

Teaching/Tutoring Center: Broward Hall, 352-392-2010, <https://teachingcenter.ufl.edu/>

Writing Studio: 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138, <https://writing.ufl.edu/>

Library Support: <https://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask>

Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS) Student Health Care Center, 352-392-1161.

University Police Department, 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).
<http://www.police.ufl.edu/>

Student Rights and Responsibilities: Please inform yourself about your rights and responsibilities, including academic honesty guidelines, formal and informal procedures for hearing academic dishonesty cases, the grievance procedure, and the confidentiality of student records. See <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/studentguide/> . UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." The Honor Code (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor

You may raise matters or concerns with your instructor, the department chair or ombudsman (<http://www.ombuds.ufl.edu>). You may also submit comments to: <http://www.distance.ufl.edu/student-complaints>.

Attendance Policy: Obviously in an online course, there is no regular class roll given, however active participation is required and will be monitored by your instructor by your activity log analytics in Canvas. Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

Instructional Methods: The course is 100% online and will be divided into 14 modules, found under Course Materials in the Canvas e-learning site. We use about 1 week per module. There will be required readings and web lectures (videos/films) for each module as well as assignments. See the posted Tentative Schedule for specific due dates and readings under the Syllabus Tab on Canvas. Instructor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus and will provide announcements to students in advance.

Students Requesting Accommodations should register with the Disability Resource Center (<http://www.ufl.edu/disability> 352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc), which will provide documentation to give to the instructor. Student records are confidential. If your parent(s) contact(s) us about your grade or any information that is not "UF directory information," we will ask them to contact you. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Course Technology/Getting Help

Canvas: Canvas is accessible at: <http://elearning.ufl.edu> . If you experience any computer-related difficulties, don't hesitate to contact the UF Computing Help Desk at <http://helpdesk.ufl.edu> , 352-392-HELP (4357), select option 2. Please familiarize yourself with the course site, as it is intended to enhance your learning experience. The "Student Help FAQ" tab is a good introduction for anyone new to e-Learning. Any requests for make-ups due to technical issues MUST be accompanied by the ticket number received from the Help Desk when the problem was reported to them. The ticket number will document the time and date of the problem. You MUST e-mail your instructor within 24 hours of the technical difficulty if you wish to request a make-up.

Academic honesty policy: Cheating and/or plagiarism is not tolerated at the University of Florida. For more on Academic Honesty guidelines please see the Student Guide at www.dso.ufl.edu/stg/ . If the honor code is broken, such matters will be taken to the department and University of Florida Judicial Affairs.

Make-up Policy: I understand that sometimes one's personal life interferes with one's ability to complete coursework. If you have a [university-recognized reason](#) for missing something (e.g., documented illness, religious holiday, death in the family), and **can provide documentation**, you will be allowed to make up what you missed IF you contact the instructor immediately before/after the missed assignment. This decision will be made at the instructor's discretion based upon the circumstances. All approved late work must be submitted by a deadline set by the instructor in order to complete final grading tasks for the course. **For this semester, the last day to submit approved late work is April 7, 2024.** If you submit assignments late, you will receive a penalty for every day that these are late. If you provide documentation of a legitimate reason for turning in one of these assignments late, you will not receive a late penalty.

Gordon Rule Requirement

This paper also meets the Gordon Rule requirement. Over the course of the college career, Students must present evidence of writing totaling 24,000 words, evaluated as satisfactory, as a requirement for graduation. This required writing may be accomplished in courses that are certified as offering evaluated writing for: 2,000, 4,000, or 6,000 words on a major paper. The instructor teaching the class determines the course grade and in a Gordon Rule class, also puts the writing assigned to the "satisfactory test" as defined by University rubrics. The default outcome is satisfactory; unsatisfactory will be noted and the student will receive no writing credit for the course. **Students must earn a C or better in the course.**

Assignment Policy: (Helpful Hint: plan ahead, review due dates, and inform me of any conflicts you foresee as soon as possible). The success or failure of an online program (and the value of your degree) will depend on academic integrity: both in terms of content of the courses and in terms of the grades you earn. We need to structure grading in ways that make cheating harder.

Grammar, punctuation, and syntax matter in all written assignments. You may, of course, discuss assignments with others but you are expected to submit your own independent work. Please be careful about plagiarism; it is easy to "cut and paste" from others' work. CITE, CITE, CITE! If you take someone else's ideas, cite them; if you take someone's words verbatim, use quotation marks and a citation. Remember it is also easier to run programs to detect plagiarism these days. All assignment deadlines are posted on the course schedule in Canvas and within this syllabus. Make sure you are checking due dates regularly to plan accordingly and complete assignments on time.

UF Online Course Evaluation

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at GatorEvals: ufl.bluer.com/ufl. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results>.

Criminology Student Learning Outcomes – These focus on “Content, Critical Thinking, and Communication.” (Our course reinforces Student Learning Outcome numbers 3, 4 and number 5 is assessed in your written assignments.)

1. Define and describe the criminal justice system, the interrelationships among its components and their fit with society.
2. Define and describe the legal institutions, the law and their interaction in society.
3. Analyze theories of crime and their implications for programs and policies to reduce crime.
4. Interpret and evaluate research in criminology, law and society and exhibit proficiency in the techniques used to conduct such research.
5. Communicate ideas clearly and effectively in an accepted style of presentation.

Zoom Expectations

Students are expected to behave appropriately during class. This class is meant to be an enriching, enjoyable experience for all of you. Disrupting the class results in depriving your fellow classmates and yourself of this experience. The instructor is the final arbiter of what behavior is appropriate and inappropriate. However, you may use the following principle to guide your classroom behavior: Your behavior should not be disruptive or distracting to the instructor or your classmates. This principle will help you determine appropriate classroom behaviors. The following list is not exhaustive.

Be prepared:

- ✓Make sure your computer is charged.
- ✓Use your camera if your bandwidth and webcam allow it.
- ✓Use a virtual background that reflects your personality if you'd like (but make sure it's appropriate!)
- ✓Register with your name that is on our official roster; if you changed your name to better reflect your gender identity, no problem; just let us know what name you prefer in a private message so we can count your attendance.
- ✓Wear clothes!

Participation guidelines:

- ✓Log on a few minutes before class and say hi to your fellow classmates and instructor.
- ✓When you're not speaking, keep yourself on mute to eliminate background noise for this large class.
- ✓Use the chat! Type questions here –your instructor will respond to them in real time. Stay on topic in the chat.
- ✓Raise your virtual hand when you would like to speak.
- ✓Stay focused, attentive, and actively participate! You will get more out of class the more you put into it.
- ✓Stay on task during class! Close other browsers or applications. Don't text. Focus on what you're doing.
- ✓Behave in a civil manner that is respectful to your fellow classmates, your instructor, and yourself.

Privacy:

- ✓Do not share your Zoom classroom link or password with others.
- ✓Do not record the zoom classroom sessions.



Please log on

Gatorlink

Password

Log On



SPSS Statistics 29

Your login.apps.ufl.edu login screen will look like this. Use Firefox or Chrome browsers for best results. Navigate to the SPSS software program with the Apps tools and launch the software, enabling the Citrix Receiver, to work on labs and your own data for the research paper.

All files and work can be saved to the //M: Drive (permanent student file storage).

Course Schedule:

Date	Details	Date	Details
Fri Jan 12, 2024	Discussion: Introductory Post About You	Sun Mar 17, 2024	Lab 8: Coding Variables and Running Binary Logistic Regressions
Sun Jan 14, 2024	Assignment 1: Getting Started - Statistics Pre-Test		Module 9: Playlist
	Lab 1: Data Sets		Module 9: Paper Project #1 Descriptive Tables
	Module 1: Playlist	Sun Mar 31, 2024	Module 10: How to Recognize Plagiarism Tutorial and Test
Sun Jan 21, 2024	Lab 2: Correcting Data		Module 10: Paper Project #2 Literature Review
	Module 2: Playlist		Module 10: Playlist
Sun Jan 28, 2024	Quiz 1: Policing in the Era of Big Data	Sun Apr 7, 2024	Module 11: Paper Project #3 Theory
	Module 3: Playlist		Module 11: Paper Project #4 Data & Methods
	Lab 3: Variables and Recoding		Module 11: Playlist
Sun Feb 4, 2024	Module 4: Playlist	Sun Apr 14, 2024	Module 12: Paper Project #5 Results
	Assignment 2 Submit Your Topic		Module 12: Playlist
	Quiz 2: Research Ethics	Sun Apr 21, 2024	Module 13: Paper Project #6 Discussion & Conclusion
	Module 5: Playlist		Module 13: Playlist
Sun Feb 11, 2024	Assignment 3: Abstract	Sun Apr 28, 2024	Module 14: Playlist
	Lab 4: Dataset, Variable, Identification, and Testing		Module 14: Final Research Paper
Sun Feb 18, 2024	Assignment 4: Building Figures		
	Lab 5: Conditional Recodes on Variables		
	Module 6: Playlist		
Sun Feb 25, 2024	Assignment 5: References & Sources		
	Lab 6: Building Scales and Summations		
	Module 7: Playlist		
Fri Mar 1, 2024	Assignment 6: Research Design		
	Lab 7: Running Linear Regressions		
	Module 8: Playlist		