

Spring 2025

CCJ 3701 Research Methods in Criminology

University of Florida, Department of Sociology and Criminology & Law

Course Instructor: Chris L. Gibson, Ph.D., Professor

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Dr. Gibson's Office Hours:

M,W,F 4pm -5pm (Available also by appointment & zoom)

Lab Instructor:

Ryan Howard, Sociology Graduate Student

Office: Turlington 3349

Office Hours: Thurs & Fri 11:45am - 12:45am

Email: ryanhoward@ufl.edu

Course Lecture (Days and Times):

M,W,F 3pm - 3:50pm (Room: CSE E221)

Weekly Lab Meeting:

Friday 9:35am - 10:25am (Room: Weil 408D) (Section: CGL3 # 10959)

Friday 10:40am -11:30am (Room: Weil 408D) (Section:CGL4 # 10960)

As scheduled and consistent with UF policy, this course will be delivered in person/face-to-face. This course will not have a hyflex option; therefore, lectures/labs will not be online synchronous. Lectures will not be posted on the canvas course.

Required Text:

Bachman, R., & Schutt, R.K. (2020). The Practice of Research in Criminology & Criminal Justice (7th edition). Sage.

Additional required readings can be located on the canvas course site. Each module will not always have additional readings, but if they do the

links to these pdf articles will be easily accessible within each module on the canvas course site.

Course Description

Criminologists and criminal justice practitioners should know how to use research methods and interpret results from empirical studies. They should understand research designs and statistical methods that are often necessary for answering questions about the criminal justice system and criminal behavior. They should be able to conduct searches for peer-reviewed scientific journal articles and be able to identify limitations of studies. Further, criminal justice practitioners should be familiar with the research process although many may never engage in actual research themselves. A practitioner who can understand this process is better equipped for policy discussions.

This course focuses on the fundamentals of research design, measurement, and data analysis techniques used by criminologists. Students will learn various types of research designs, research terminology, and develop an understanding of the ethical practices involved in conducting research. In weekly labs students will experience analyzing criminological data while becoming familiar with statistical software packages, e.g., STATA and/or SPSS.

General Education Objectives for Social Sciences

General education objectives for social science (S) can be found by clicking on the following link:

<https://undergrad.aa.ufl.edu/general-education/gen-ed-program/subject-area-objectives/>

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

This section briefly describes the course-specific student learning outcomes by outlining the general knowledge and skills students can expect to acquire through successful completion of this course.

Course Student Learning Objectives

1. Identify and describe key social science research terms and be able to apply the terms to real world research project and scenarios
2. Become informed consumers of criminological research
3. Learn how to formulate a research question and hypotheses

4. Become proficient in using statistical software for analyzing criminological data
5. Learn to apply quantitative methods to describe samples, examine correlations, and test hypotheses.
6. Learn how to communicate research findings clearly and effectively

The SLOs will be assessed through a combination of mini-exams, after each of the course modules, and the 5 writing assignments for the course research project.

Material

Students are required to read book chapters and assigned articles posted electronically for each class period. The main readings for each week are listed in the course outline. Additional readings may be required as the course progresses, and they will always be announced and posted electronically.

Expectations

What can you expect from me?

1. Be interested and passionate about the course and the material
2. Help you understand the applicability of research methods
3. Challenge you to think about an apply course/lab material
4. Start and end class on time

What will I expect from you?

1. Attend class and show up on time
 2. Finish reading assignments prior to lecture/lab and take complete notes
 3. Complete all assignments on time
 4. For success in most college courses, a student should put in 2 hours outside of class for each hour spent in class. (*Especially important for a research methods course*)
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Course Policies and Etiquette

ATTENDANCE IS REQUIRED FOR ALL LABS. You earn 2.5 points for each lab session attended. It is important that you do not miss labs because valuable information and data exercises are discussed that are related directly to major assignments for this course. If you must miss a lab due to extremely extenuating circumstances, you MUST email your lab instructor BEFORE the lab session you are missing.

Course Policies

1. Upon entering class all cell phones, Ipods, Ipads, earphones, and MP3 players should be silenced. Failure to do so can result in me asking you to leave the class and return the following class period.
2. Makeup exams will be provided for students with a university recognized excused absence such as: illnesses with a doctor's excuse, serious family emergency, and participation in official university activities (athletics). If you must miss an exam due to extremely extenuating circumstances, you must notify me before the exam by email. All make-up exams will be scheduled during finals week.
3. Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Any student suspected of cheating will be failed on that assignment and referred to the University Honor Court. If you are unsure about what constitutes plagiarism, then you are strongly encouraged to refer to your Student Handbook @ (<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>) or discuss any concerns with the instructor.
4. Be respectful of your professor, lab instructor, and peers. Impulsively shouting out ideas and opinions will not be tolerated. If you want to share an insight, idea, or have a question please raise your hand. The expression of ideas will not be censored; however, be prepared to defend your ideas. In addition, extend appropriate courtesy to each person in the class.
5. I do not post video lectures on canvas. If you miss class it is your responsibility to borrow notes from a peer who attended the lecture you miss.
6. Requirements for class attendance, make-up exams, and other works are consistent with UF policies:
<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>
7. Publication of audio or video of this course without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To "publish" means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless, of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class

section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third-party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

Course Evaluations

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/> (Links to an external site.). Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/> (Links to an external site.). Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/> (Links to an external site.).

University's honesty policy regarding cheating and plagiarism

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 honor 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 specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. [Click here to read the Honor Code \(Links to an external site.\)](#). 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 or TA in this class.

Academic Resources

E-learning technical support: Contact the [UF Computing Help Desk \(Links to an external site.\)](#) at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at helpdesk@ufl.edu.

Career Connections Center (Links to an external site.): Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services.

Library Support (Links to an external site.): Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.

Teaching Center (Links to an external site.): Broward Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352- 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.

Writing Studio: 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.www.writing.ufl.edu

Student Complaints On-Campus: [Visit the Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code webpage for more information \(Links to an external site.\)](#).

Accommodations for students with disabilities

University of Florida is an Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action institution committed to providing reasonable accommodations for any person with a disability who meets the definition of disabled as described in the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center. [Click here to get started with the Disability Resource Center \(Links to an external site.\)](#). It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

Grading

Exams: 250 points

Paper Assignments: 250 points

Lab Attendance: 40 points (2.5 points per lab)

TOTAL POINTS: 540 points

If you desire to convert your earned points into a percentage for determining course standing you will need to take the number of earned points and divide by total number of possible points. For example, if you earned a total of 500 points your grade is $500 / 540 = .925$ (92.5 which is an A-).

The link below provides information on current UF grading policies for assigning grade points

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

Your final grade for this course will be a percentage that is converted to a letter grade using the grading scale shown below:

A = 100-94

A- = 93-90

B = 89 - 83

B- = 82-80

C = 79-73

C- = 72-70

D = 69 - 66

The link below has the UF current grading policies and grade points below:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

Module Mini Exams:

Exam questions will come from lecture notes and assigned readings. Exams may consist of multiple choice, short answer, and true/false questions. The final exam is NOT comprehensive.

Module 1 Mini-Exam: Monday, Feb. 10th

Module 2 Mini-Exam: Monday, March 3rd

Module 3 Mini-Exam: Monday, March 24th

Module 4 Mini-Exam: Monday, April 7th

Module 5 Mini-Exam: Wednesday, April 23rd

Research Project Assignments:

Students are required to complete 5 major assignments worth 50 points each. These assignments are a large part of the course grade. Collectively assignments are designed to achieve the equivalent of a course research paper that satisfies the department/program requirement. Completion of the course research project will accomplish this in smaller chunks that make the task of writing a major research paper less

overwhelming and more manageable. The overarching goal of these assignments is to develop and test a criminological hypothesis by analyzing quantitative data provided by Dr. Gibson. You will have approximately 2 to 3 weeks to complete each assignment. These assignments will go hand and hand with materials covered in lectures and labs so it is VERY IMPORTANT you understand, and are able to apply, information covered in both.

Writing assignments for the course research project should follow APA style guidelines.

Instructors will evaluate and provide feedback on all students written assignments (grammar, punctuation, clarity, coherence, and organization). A general writing assessment rubric for written assignments can be found below. Further, each assignment has its own specific grading rubric too.

| | SATISFACTORY (Y) | UNSATISFACTORY (N) |
|----------------------------|--|---|
| CONTENT | Papers exhibit at least some evidence of ideas that respond to the topic with complexity, critically evaluating and synthesizing sources, and provide at least an adequate discussion with basic understanding of sources. | Papers either include a central idea(s) that is unclear or off- topic or provide only minimal or inadequate discussion of ideas. Papers may also lack sufficient or appropriate sources. |
| ORGANIZATION AND COHERENCE | Documents and paragraphs exhibit at least some identifiable structure for topics, including a clear thesis statement but may require readers to work to follow progression of ideas. | Documents and paragraphs lack clearly identifiable organization, may lack any coherent sense of logic in associating and organizing ideas, and may also lack transitions and coherence to guide the reader. |
| ARGUMENT AND SUPPORT | Documents use persuasive and confident presentation of ideas, strongly supported with evidence. At the weak end of the Satisfactory range, | Documents make only weak generalizations, providing little or no support, as in summaries or narratives that fail |

| | | |
|-----------|---|--|
| | documents may provide only generalized discussion of ideas or may provide adequate discussion but rely on weak support for arguments. | to provide critical analysis. |
| STYLE | Documents use a writing style with word choice appropriate to the context, genre, and discipline. Sentences should display complexity and logical sentence structure. At a minimum, documents will display a less precise use of vocabulary and an uneven use of sentence structure or a writing style that occasionally veers away from word choice or tone appropriate to the context, genre, and discipline. | Documents rely on word usage that is inappropriate for the context, genre, or discipline. Sentences may be overly long or short with awkward construction. Documents may also use words incorrectly. |
| MECHANICS | Papers will feature correct or error-free presentation of ideas. At the weak end of the Satisfactory range, papers may contain some spelling, punctuation, or grammatical errors that remain unobtrusive so they do not muddy the paper's argument or points. | Papers contain so many mechanical or grammatical errors that they impede the reader's understanding or severely undermine the writer's credibility. |

Brief Description of Research Project Assignments

Assignment 1: (500 words)

Literature Search and Written Summary of Relevant Scientific Articles pertaining to the course Research Topic and question, as well as, Human Subject and Ethics Research Certification

Assignment 2: (1,500 to 2,000 words)

Written introduction to research paper that makes a strong argument for why it is important to empirically examine the research question you will examine

Assignment 3: (500 to 1,000 words)

Written description of sample and measures used for the course research project

Assignment 4: (250-500 words)

Reporting and describing univariate and bivariate statistical results

Assignment 5: (1,000 to 1,500 words)

Reporting and describing multivariate results testing hypothesis formulated during beginning of semester.

Write a discussion/conclusion section providing a summary of your findings and whether the research hypothesis was supported, describe study limitations and how these limitations could impact your study's conclusions, identify and describe two future directions for research related to your study but were not empirically addressed.

TENTATIVE COURSE OUTLINE

COURSE INTRODUCTION

Week 1 1/13 - 1/17 Intro to Lecture and Lab

MODULE 1 RESEARCH FUNDAMENTALS AND ETHICS

Week 2 1/22 & 1/24 Bachman & Schutt (2020) Science, Society, and Research...
Fundamentals of Research in Criminology and Criminal Justice.
Pp 2-25.

Week 3 1/28 - 1/31 Bachman & Schutt (2020) The process and problems of research
related to crime and Criminology. The Practice of Research in
Criminology and Criminal Justice. Pp 26-57.

Week 4 2/3 - 2/7 Bachman & Schutt (2020). Ethical Guidelines for Research. The
Practice of Research in Criminology and Criminal Justice. Pp.
59 - 81

MODULE 2 INTRODUCTION TO MTF DATA AND MEASUREMENT

Week 5 2/10 - 2/14 Monitoring the Future Data (assigned articles)

2/10 (Monday) Module 1 Mini-Exam

Week 6 2/17 - 2/21 Bachman & Schutt (2020) Conceptualization and Measurement. The
Practice of Research in Criminology and Criminal Justice.
Pages 86 - 116.

Week 7 2/24 - 2/28 Bachman & Schutt (2020) Conceptualization and Measurement. The
Practice of Research in Criminology and Criminal Justice.
Pages 86 - 116.

MODULE 3 SAMPLING AND SURVEY RESEARCH

Week 8 3/3 - 3/7 Bachman & Schutt (2020) Sampling. The Practice of Research in
Criminology and Criminal Justice. Pages 117 - 149.

3/3 (Monday) Module 2 Mini-Exam

Week 9 3/10 - 3/14 Bachman & Schutt (2020). Survey Research. The Practice. Of
Research in Criminology and Criminal Justice. Pp. 214 - 263.

MODULE 4 CORRELATION, CAUSATION, & EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN

Week 10 3/17 - 3/21 SPRING BREAK (No Class)

Week 11 3/24 - 3/28 Bachman & Schutt (2020). Causation and Research Design. The
Practice of Research in Criminology and Criminal. Pp. 150-180.

3/24 (Monday) Module 3 Mini-Exam

Rapp-Paglicci, Stewart, & Rowe (2009). Evaluating the effects
of the Prodigy Cultural Arts Program... Best Practices in Mental
Health. Pp. 65-73. Justice. Pp. 182-213.

MODULE 5 UNIVARIATE & BIVARIATE ANALYSIS

Week 12 3/31 - 4/4 Ellis, Hartley, & Walsh (2010). Univariate statistics and the concept of statistical significance. Research Methods in Criminology and Criminal Justice. Pp 213 - 24.

Week 13 4/7 - 4/11 Ellis, Harley, & Walsh (2010). Bivariate correlation and multivariate statistics. Pp 72 - 97.

4/7 (Monday) Module 4 Mini-Exam

MODULE 6 MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS

Week 14 4/14 - 4/11 TBA

Week 15 4/14 - 4/18 TBA

Week 16 4/21 & 4/23 Wrapping up

4/23 (Wed.) Module 5 Mini-Exam