

CRJ301: Research Methods for Criminal Justice

Fall 2016 Syllabus

Class meets Tuesdays and Thursdays, from 11:30 a.m. – 12:45 p.m. in GUA2213

Instructor:

Email:

Office Phone

Office:

Office Hours: Tuesdays from 10:00 AM – 11:30 AM
 Wednesdays from 12:00 noon – 2:00 PM
 Thursdays from 10:00 AM – 11:30 AM
 Or by appointment

***By policy, faculty and staff should e-mail students' Rebelmail accounts only. Rebelmail is UNLV's official e-mail system for students. It is one of the primary ways students receive official university communication such as information about deadlines, major campus events, and announcements. All UNLV students receive a Rebelmail account after they have been admitted to the university. Students' e-mail prefixes are listed on class rosters. The suffix is always @unlv.nevada.edu.*

Course description

Introduction to the formulation of research questions covering crime and justice, research designs, data collection, and interpretation and reporting in criminological and justice-system settings. In essence, this course is designed to teach you how to answer criminological questions. We will cover various research designs by focusing on the strengths and weaknesses of each method and what kinds of questions each method can address.

Learning Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, you will be able to do the following:

- 1) Recognize why it can be a problem to rely on your personal beliefs about the world, and understand how scientific inquiry can produce better information
- 2) Understand ethical problems that arise when studying the social behavior of people
- 3) Discuss the different purposes for doing research
- 4) Identify different types of variables in a study (e.g., dependent vs. independent), and be able to know whether a causal relationship exists between variables
- 5) Understand the relationship between theories and hypotheses, and be able to formulate a hypothesis
- 6) Understand the importance of appropriate sampling procedures, and be familiar with different sampling techniques (e.g., probability vs. non-probability)
- 7) Identify different ways of doing research on people (e.g., surveys, field research, experiments, etc.)
- 8) Understand how to write good survey questions, including when to use different types of responses (e.g., close-ended vs. open-ended questions)
- 9) Articulate issues of reliability and validity as they relate to measurement (e.g., face validity vs. criterion validity, test-retest reliability vs. split-halves reliability)
- 10) Be familiar with the strengths and weaknesses of different research approaches (e.g., cross-sectional vs. longitudinal, experimental vs. non-experimental, qualitative vs. quantitative)
- 11) Discuss issues of validity as they relate to methods of data collection (e.g., internal vs. external validity)
- 12) Summarize and critique a research article

Textbooks

- Chambliss, D.F., and Schutt, R.K. (2015). *Making Sense of the Social World: Methods of Investigation*. 5th Edition. ISBN: 978-1-4833-8061-2.
- Additional readings will be assigned and posted or e-mailed.

CLASS SCHEDULE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

The following is a *TENTATIVE* schedule for lecture topics and exams. I will do my best to keep as close as possible to this schedule. I hope to have guest lecturers making class presentations. The availability of guest lecturers is subject to change depending on their personal schedules and this may require some flexibility in our class schedule. *All exams will be given on the dates indicated. In the event the University is closed on a scheduled exam date (e.g., weather emergency) the exam will be given on the next day that class meets.* Any readings not from your textbook can be found on the WebCampus website.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Reading(s) To Be Completed By This Lecture</u>	<u>Assignment Due</u>
8/30	Introduction/Expectations		
9/1	Why do we need to study research methods?	C/S: Chapter 1	
9/6	Why do we need to study research methods (cont.)? Process and Problems of Criminological Research	C/S: Chapter 2	
9/8	<u>Guest Speaker</u>		Assignment 1 handed out
9/13	Process and Problems (cont.) Ethics in Research	C/S: Chapter 3	
9/15	Ethics in Research		
9/20	Conceptualization and Measurement	C/S: Chapter 4	
9/22	Conceptualization and Measurement		<u>Assignment 1 Due</u>
9/27	Measurement: Validity and Reliability	On Webcampus: Hagan Chapter 9	
9/29	Measurement: Validity and Reliability Begin Sampling and External Validity	C/S: Chapter 5	
10/4	Sampling and External Validity		Assignment 2 handed out
10/6	<u>EXAM 1</u>		<u>EXAM 1</u>
10/11	Research Design and Internal Validity	C/S: Chapter 6 (pp. 111 – 115)	
10/13	Research Design and Internal Validity		
<u>10/18</u>	<u>NO CLASS DUE TO PRES. DEBATE</u>		
<u>10/20</u>	<u>NO CLASS DUE TO PRES. DEBATE</u>		
10/25	Experiments and Quasi-experimental Designs	C/S: Chapter 6 (pp. 116 – 134)	<u>Assignment 2 Due</u>
10/27	Experiments and Quasi-experimental Designs Begin Survey Research	C/S: Chapter 7	
11/1	Survey Research (cont.)		
11/3	Survey Instrumentation	C/S: Chapter 8	Assignment 3 Handed Out
11/8	<u>EXAM 2</u>		<u>EXAM 2</u>
11/10	Field Research: Observational Techniques and Interviewing	C/S: Chapter 9	
11/15	Field Research: Analyzing Qualitative Data	C/S: Chapter 10	<u>Assignment 3 Due</u>
11/17	<i>Boys Alone</i> Extra Credit Opportunity		Assignment 5 Handed Out
11/22	Secondary Data and Content Analysis	C/S: Chapter 11	
11/24	<u>NO CLASS—Thanksgiving Recess</u>		

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Reading(s) To Be Completed By This Lecture</u>	<u>Assignment Due</u>
11/29	<u>Conducting Research on Criminal Justice: Attendance is MANDATORY</u>	Meet in Lied Library's Rhyolite Room	<u>Assignment 4 Handed Out AND Due</u>
12/1	Combining Research Designs		
12/6	Evaluation and Policy Analysis	C/S: Chapter 12	
12/8	Writing Research Papers	C/S: Chapter 13	<u>Assignment 5 Due</u>
12/15	<u>Final Exam: 10:10 AM – 12:10 PM</u>		<u>FINAL EXAM</u>
12/20	Grades due to Registrar		Please check your grades by 12/19 and let me know if an error has been made

Course Requirements and Class Conduct

The overall success of this course, and your individual success, will depend in very large part on your regular attendance and active involvement in class discussions, as well as maintaining a classroom environment conducive to learning. Students are expected to attend and be prepared for all classes, arrive **on time**, be actively engaged in class discussion and activities, and refrain from any disruptive behavior (which includes talking during the lecture).

I strongly encourage you to be on time to class; it can be highly disruptive to me and to the other students when people arrive late to class. **Exams will start promptly at 11:30 a.m. Students arriving more than 10 minutes later than that may not be able to take the exam at that time and will have to provide me with written documentation explaining their absence. Assignments are also due by 11:30 and will not be accepted after 11:40 a.m.** See the section below titled "Instructor policy on Makeup Exams, Assignments, Class Notes, and Special Accommodations" for more information.

You are allowed to eat during the lecture, but please be courteous and consider the ability of others around you to hear and concentrate on the lecture. Also, please be considerate of the cleaning staff and pick up after yourself if you bring disposable food containers into the classroom.

The use of laptops or cellular phones is prohibited. If you are caught using your cellphone during the lecture, you will earn a "strike", described below.

Three Strikes and You're Out

Note that this class is taught in a lecture format. Various disturbances/disruptions (like coming into class late, leaving early, chatting in class with friends, texting while I'm giving a lecture) are magnified in this context, making it difficult for me and other students to pay attention to class materials. As a result of my past experiences at UNLV, I have decided to impose a civility requirement for this class. Its form is like the **"three strikes and you're out"** laws. I will give the student a verbal warning the first time he/she is disruptive in class. The second time this occurs I will drop the student's grade on an exam by a full letter grade. The "third strike" will involve an administrative drop of the student from the class.

There are some very simple ways to avoid a "three strikes" sanction:

- 1) **Take responsibility for getting to class on time. If you are going to be more than 10 minutes late, don't come into class!**
- 2) **If you have to leave a class early for some important reason, talk to me before class about it, and sit in the far back of the class so that when you leave it is not disruptive.**
- 3) **Talk to your friends and classmates outside of class—not during lecture.**
- 4) **Turn off your cell phones before entering class.**

- 5) **Smoke, drink, and go to the bathroom before you come into class.**
- 6) **Plan to get out of class everyday at 12:45 pm.**

Grades

Your grade in this class will reflect what you earn on classroom requirements. If I offer extra credit, the entire class will be made aware of it. I will not offer individual opportunities to individual students to help you earn more points. **Do not attempt to negotiate grades, beg for grades, or otherwise attempt to have your grade changed in this class at any point during or after the semester (this includes requests for rounding).**

Your grades in this course will be based on three exams, five assignments, and the average of your “pop quiz” grades. Exams will be worth 67.5% of your total grade, assignments will be worth 30.0% of your total grade, and quizzes will be worth 2.5% of your total grade.

Exams

All exams will consist primarily of multiple choice and true/false questions. Exams are not cumulative. Exam questions will come from all sources: lectures, video presentations, class handouts, guest speakers, and assigned readings. I will provide study outlines and in-class review opportunities before each exam. **Please note that the study outlines may not cover everything included on the test—students are responsible for preparing for exams based on ALL class materials.** The dates of the exams are:

Exam 1: 10/6
Exam 2: 11/8
Final Exam: 12/15

Assignments

Your class assignments will be described further in handouts distributed during class (which will also be available on WebCampus). You are not allowed to collaborate with other students outside of the classroom when preparing your assignments. The due dates of the assignments are:

Assignment 1: 9/22
Assignment 2: 10/20
Assignment 3: 11/15
Assignment 4: 11/29
Assignment 5: 12/8

Pop Quizzes/Class Participation

I will be giving a five-question quiz at the beginning of certain classes (worth a maximum of 5 points each) to test whether you are keeping up with the reading. The grades on these quizzes will be averaged at the end of the semester for a maximum of 5 points to be added to the other grades. If students are not present for the quiz they will receive a grade of 0 for that quiz and that grade will be included in the average (unless proper documentation of a medical or other emergency is provided). Note that your class participation will also be considered when calculating this grade—if you are on the margins (i.e., are less than 1 point away from getting an A- as opposed to a B+), I will consider any involvement in class discussions/dialogue with me outside of class when assigning your quiz average. I **do not automatically round up to the higher percentage;** to be considered for a higher letter grade, you must have consistently participated in class discussions and shown an interest in the topic.

So, in sum, your grades will consist of the following:

Exam 1	45 points
Exam 2	45 points
Exam 3	45 points
Assignment 1	10 points
Assignment 2	10 points
Assignment 3	10 points
Assignment 4	10 points
Assignment 5	20 points
+ Pop Quiz Average	5 points
Total	200 points

The overall grading scale is:

A	186 to 200 points (93% to 100%)	C	146 to 153.9 points (73% to 76.9%)
A-	180 to 185.9 points (90% – 92.9%)	C-	140 to 145.9 points (70% - 72.9%)
B+	174 to 179.9 points (87% - 89.9%)	D+	133 to 139.9 points (67% - 69.9%)
B	166 to 173.9 points (83% to 86.9%)	D	126 to 132.9 points (63% to 66.9%)
B-	160 to 165.9 points (80% - 82.9%)	D-	120 to 125.9 (60% - 62.9%)
C+	154 to 159.9 points (77% - 79.9%)	F	119 points or less

Grade Disputes

If you have questions or concerns about your grade(s) and believe that I should review them, you should submit a written request over email to me describing your concern in detail. This request must be submitted **within one week** of the date that grades for that assignment are distributed.

The grade of I – Incomplete – can be granted when a student has satisfactorily completed all course work up to the withdrawal date of that semester/session but **for reason(s) beyond the student’s control***, and acceptable to the instructor, cannot complete the last part of the course, and the instructor believes that the student can finish the course without repeating it. A student who receives an I is responsible for making up whatever work was lacking at the end of the semester for undergraduate courses. Graduate students receiving “I” grades in 500-, 600-, or 700-level courses have up to one calendar year to complete the work, at the discretion of the instructor. If course requirements are not completed within the time indicated, a grade of F will be recorded and the GPA will be adjusted accordingly. Students who are fulfilling an Incomplete do not register for the course but make individual arrangements with the instructor who assigned the I grade.

***I only offer incomplete grades in extreme circumstances (e.g., a prolonged hospitalization or other emergency). Being busy or taking too many courses and finding it hard to manage does NOT count. Also, the student had to have been receiving passing grades on completed class assignments.**

Instructor Policy on Makeup Exams, Assignments, and Class Notes

I have a very strict policy regarding makeup exams and excused absences. Makeup exams will only be given in cases of excused absences and official documentation is required. Excused absences are: illness with a doctor's note, death in the immediate family, required University activities, and required court appearance. I must be notified in person, e-mail, in writing, or by phone **PRIOR** to missing an exam for me to consider giving you a makeup. **Makeup exams are essay in nature.** If you have a problem on the day of an exam, call me. **If you know in advance that you will be absent from an exam with an approved absence, you will be expected to take the exam prior to the exam date.** There will be no makeup opportunities for missed quizzes.

Religious Holidays Policy

Any student missing class quizzes, examinations, or any other class or lab work because of observance of religious holidays shall be given an opportunity during that semester to make up missed work. The make-up

will apply to the religious holiday absence only. It shall be the responsibility of the student to notify the instructor within the first 14 calendar days of the course for fall and spring courses (excepting modular courses), or within the first 7 calendar days of the course for summer and modular courses, of his or her intention to participate in religious holidays which do not fall on state holidays or periods of class recess. This policy shall not apply in the event that administering the test or examination at an alternate time would impose an undue hardship on the instructor or the university that could not reasonably be avoided. For additional information, please visit: <http://catalog.unlv.edu/content.php?catoid=6&navoid=531>.

This policy shall not apply in the event that administering the test or examination at an alternate time would impose an undue hardship on the instructor or the university that could not reasonably be avoided. For additional information, please visit: <http://catalog.unlv.edu/content.php?catoid=4&navoid=164>. Prior notification is especially important in connection with final examinations, since failure to reschedule a final examination before the conclusion of the final examination period may result in loss of credits during the semester. I will make every feasible effort to accommodate students' requests based on attendance of religious observances.

Student Participation in Extracurricular Activities

Students who represent the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, at any official extracurricular activity shall have the opportunity to make up any assignments or examinations missed as a result of this event. It is the responsibility of the student to provide official written notification to the instructor of the course(s) at the earliest time possible of his or her intention to participate in a university-sponsored event but no less than one week prior to the date of the missed class(es). This policy shall not apply in the event that completing the assignment or administering the examination at an alternate time would impose an undue hardship on the instructor or the university that could reasonably have been avoided. There should be good-faith effort by both faculty and student to come to a reasonable resolution. When disagreements regarding this policy arise, they can be appealed to the department chair, dean of the college, and the Faculty Senate Academic Standards Committee. For purposes of definition, extracurricular activities may include, but are not limited to, intercollegiate athletics, band, drama, forensics, recruitment, or any other activity sanctioned by the dean and/or the Executive Vice President and Provost.

Students with Disabilities and Students having Academic Difficulties

The UNLV Disability Resource Center (SSC-A 143, <http://drc.unlv.edu/>, 702-985-0866) provides resources for students with disabilities. If you feel that you have a disability, please make an appointment with a Disabilities Specialist at the DRC to discuss what options may be available to you. If you are registered with the UNLV Disability Resource Center, bring your Academic Accommodation Plan from the DRC to me during office hours during the first two weeks of classes, by **September 9th**, so that we may work together to develop strategies for implementing the accommodations to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course. Any information you provide is private and will be treated as such. To maintain the confidentiality of your request, please do not approach me in front of others to discuss your accommodation needs.

Tutoring and Coaching

Students having academic difficulty are also strongly encouraged to consult with the instructor as early as possible. The Academic Success Center (ASC) provides tutoring, academic success coaching and other academic assistance for all UNLV undergraduate students. For information regarding tutoring subjects, tutoring times, and other ASC programs and services, visit <http://www.unlv.edu/asc> or call 702-895-3177. The ASC building is located across from the Student Services Complex (SSC). Academic success coaching is located on the second floor of the SSC (ASC Coaching Spot). Drop-in tutoring is located on the second floor of the Lied Library and College of Engineering TEB second floor.

Transparency in Learning and Teaching

The University encourages application of the transparency method of constructing assignments for student success. Please see these two links for further information: <https://www.unlv.edu/provost/teachingandlearning> and <https://www.unlv.edu/provost/transparency>.

University Library

Students may consult with a librarian on research needs. For this class, the subject librarian is Susie Skarl (https://www.library.unlv.edu/contact/librarians_by_subject). UNLV Libraries provides resources to support students' access to information. Discovery, access, and use of information are vital skills for academic work and for successful post-college life. Access library resources and ask questions at <https://www.library.unlv.edu/>.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is an absolute requirement. Dishonesty in any form will not be tolerated. Academic integrity is a legitimate concern for every member of the campus community; all share in upholding the fundamental values of honesty, trust, respect, fairness, responsibility and professionalism. By choosing to join the UNLV community, students accept the expectations of the Academic Misconduct Policy and are encouraged when faced with choices to always take the ethical path. Students enrolling in UNLV assume the obligation to conduct themselves in a manner compatible with UNLV's function as an educational institution.

An example of academic misconduct is plagiarism. Plagiarism is using the words or ideas of another, from the Internet or any source, without proper citation of the sources. See the *Student Academic Misconduct Policy* (approved December 9, 2005) located at: <http://studentconduct.unlv.edu/misconduct/policy.html>.

Copyright - The University requires all members of the University Community to familiarize themselves and to follow copyright and fair use requirements. You are individually and solely responsible for violations of copyright and fair use laws. The university will neither protect nor defend you nor assume any responsibility for student violations of fair use laws. **Violations of copyright laws could subject you to federal and state civil penalties and criminal liability, as well as disciplinary action under University policies. Additional information can be found at <http://provost.unlv.edu/copyright>.**

UNLV Writing Center

One-on-one or small group assistance with writing is available free of charge to UNLV students at the Writing Center, located in CDC-3-301. Although walk-in consultations are sometimes available, students with appointments will receive priority assistance. Appointments may be made in person or by calling 895-3908. The student's Rebel ID Card, a copy of the assignment (if possible), and two copies of any writing to be reviewed are requested for the consultation. More information can be found at: <http://writingcenter.unlv.edu>.

Rebelmail

According to university policy, faculty and staff should e-mail students' Rebelmail accounts only. Rebelmail is UNLV's official e-mail system for students. It is one of the primary ways students receive official university communication such as information about deadlines, major campus events, and announcements. All UNLV students receive a Rebelmail account after they have been admitted to the university. Students' e-mail prefixes are listed on class rosters. The suffix is always @unlv.nevada.edu. For more information, go to <http://provost.unlv.edu/policies.html>. It is acceptable to email within WebCampus.

Final Examinations

The University requires that final exams given at the end of a course occur at the time and on the day specified in the final exam schedule. See the schedule at: <http://www.unlv.edu/registrar/calendars>.

Extra Credit: Congrats! You made it through the main content of the syllabus, which I think deserves some extra credit. To redeem this extra credit opportunity, e-mail me with your name, student ID number, and the sentence "I'm going to do well in CRJ301." If you do so, I will give you an extra point on Assignment 1. After Assignment 1, this offer is no longer valid.

Additional Resources for Students:

» **Academic Advising**

<http://www.unlv.edu/advising>

Individual colleges and units provide academic advising to students at all levels. It is good practice to be in touch with an academic advisor as part of students' program planning as well as for a discussion of academic challenges.

» **Adult Education Services**

<http://caeo.unlv.edu/AES.html>

The Mission of the Adult Educational Services Program is to assist individuals 19 years of age and older in pursuit of a post secondary education. Adult Educational Services also assists with career path choices and appropriate education channels.

» **Career Services**

<http://hirearebel.unlv.edu/>

The Career Services mission is to educate, prepare and assist students as they pursue the career development and job search process in a global and dynamic world of work.

» **Computing Services**

<http://oit.unlv.edu/>

Services include WebCT, Rebelmail, computer lab accounts, computer discounts, student software, etc.

» **Disability Services**

<http://drc.unlv.edu/>

Disability Resource Center is the office to assist students with documented disabilities who are otherwise qualified to attend UNLV. The assistance will vary according to the documentation of each student.

» **ESL**

<http://elc.unlv.edu/>

The English Language Center (ELC) has offered quality language training to international students, scholars, and professionals.

» **Financial Aid**

<http://financialaid.unlv.edu/>

A central resource for all financial matters affecting students including scholarships, financial assistance, etc.

» **Office of Orientation and Parent Programs**

<http://studentlife.unlv.edu/univprograms/>

This department facilitates students' adjustment to the University environment, facilitating a smooth transition and a successful college experience.

» **International Students**

<http://studentlife.unlv.edu/international/>

This office assists all UNLV international students to make smooth transitions into successful academic, professional, and social experiences. Services include providing assistance with employment, visa and travel issues as well as immigration advising and related documents. This office also organizes the New International Student Orientation, which is required for all new international students and is held during the week before classes begin.

» **Library**

<http://www.library.unlv.edu/>

The main library and branch/college libraries assist students with their academic activities.

» **Multicultural Student Programs**

<http://www.unlv.edu/getinvolved/multicultural>

Student Diversity Programs and Services encourages and promotes ethnic minority students' social and academic integration into the university. Student Diversity Programs and Services also creates events, activities, and services that encourage minority and majority student populations to explore their cultural identification development and to participate in the diversity efforts that are provided in safe environments.

» **Student Conduct**

<http://studentlife.unlv.edu/judicial/index.html>

The Office of Student Conduct works with the UNLV community to provide an equitable and inclusive system that promotes awareness of students' rights and accountability to student conduct.

» **Student Counseling**

<http://www.unlv.edu/srwc/caps>

Pursuing a university education can be exciting and challenging. It can also be highly stressful since social and personal concerns can interfere with academic work and emotional well-being. Student Counseling & Psychological Services is committed to helping students benefit fully from their college experience at UNLV. Psychologists and counselors specialize in dealing with the problems commonly experienced by college students of all ages and collaborate with the student to increase self-understanding and develop the skills necessary to overcome personal concerns. Confidential services offered to assist students manage the adjustment demands and personal challenges of college

» **Student Health Center**

<http://www.unlv.edu/srwc/health-center>

Holistic health care has a direct relationship on educational excellence and is dedicated to promoting students to their highest potential. Therefore, student health programs, policies, and practices are designed to support the University mission through promotion of independent thought, understanding of self, ethical conduct, and the relationship of self to community. It is a dynamic equilibrium between body, mind, and community through self responsibility and positive lifestyle choices.

» **Student Support Services**

<http://caeo.unlv.edu/SSS.html>

The mission of Student Support Services is to assist college students with overcoming personal concerns, academic deficiencies and financial difficulties that could impair their chances of succeeding in college. Student Support Services also provides students with the necessary tools to adjust to the demands of a college environment, while helping them develop good study habits and decision-making skills that increase retention and graduation rates for college students.

» **Tutoring Services**

<http://academicsuccess.unlv.edu/learningsupport/Tutoring/>

The mission of the Tutoring Program is to give qualified students the opportunity to excel in areas they find challenging and to provide them with the confidence to overcome difficulties. To receive free tutoring, you must first be eligible to participate in one of the programs offered at The Center. However, tutoring is also offered on a self-funded basis.

» **Writing Center:** <http://writingcenter.unlv.edu/>The Writing Center provides students with assistance related to course assignments and other writing activities.