CCJS 300: Criminological and Criminal Justice Research Methods
Spring 2016
University of Maryland College Park @ Shady Grove
Building III  Room 4215

SECTION SG91 Tuesday, 11:00am-1:30pm

**Instructor:** Dr. Tom Alexander
talexand@umd.edu
301-573-0742

**Office Hours:** By appointment

**Course Description**
This course will teach students how to actually conduct research in the criminal justice field. Students will learn about traditional social science methods used in our discipline and how to apply them to their own research. We will cover various research designs, sampling issues, ethical considerations, survey construction, interviewing, and basic functions with a computer software package, SPSS that are typically used in analyzing social science data. In this class, students will complete five research projects that build on each other. These research projects introduce students to the various research techniques used in our field by having them actually conduct the research. These projects are designed to increase in difficulty and to allow the student to apply the knowledge learned in this class as they progress. In the course of these projects, students will: assess ethical issues in research, create a survey instrument, disseminate the survey, decide on and assess a sampling technique, analyze survey and other criminological data using descriptive analysis and inferential statistics, conduct a field observation study, develop hypotheses and present the justification for these hypotheses, select and transform variables, test hypotheses using criminological data, perform appropriate statistical tests, and develop conclusions and implications based on their research.

**Learning Objectives**
In the course of this class, students will:
1. Demonstrate an ability to select, critically evaluate, and apply relevant areas of scholarship;
2. Articulate the processes required to bring about a successful outcome from planning, modeling, and preparing, to critiquing, revising and perfecting;
3. Recognize how an application of scholarship affects or is affected by political, social, cultural, economic or ethical dimensions;
4. Produce original projects that reflect a body of knowledge relevant to the course;
5. Effectively communicate the application of scholarship through written material

**Course Prerequisites**  CCJS100, CCJS105, and CCJS200 (or an approved statistics course)
**Required Textbook**

**Recommended**

- EDITION: 14TH 16
- PUBLISHER: CENGAGE L
- ISBN: 9781305877719

**Required Data (and class related files)**
The data files, codebooks, and other supplementary files (the syllabus, computer assignments, readings, etc.) that will be used for this course will be available through Canvas/ELMS.

**ELMS/CANVAS**
I will be using CANVAS to post the syllabus, grades, and some handouts. Go to [http://www.elms.umd.edu/](http://www.elms.umd.edu/) and log in with your Directory ID (logon ID) and password to use this feature.

**Course Requirements**
There are multiple requirements for this course. As noted above, there are five research projects where students will do independent research utilizing social science data that will build on each other. These research projects make up 40% of the overall course grade. There will be also be two exams, each covering a specified portion of material and each worth 20% of the overall course grade. None of the exams are cumulative. The exams are designed to cover the vocabulary, content, and use of the statistical software that students must learn in order to conduct research. **Exams and all assignments are considered to be Major Scheduled Graded Events and**
Therefore the University medical excuse policy which allows one student signed honor statement attesting to illness does not apply to them. Exams are primarily multiple choice with some true/false. The information for exam questions comes from lecture as well as from the textbook. Extra credit may come in the form of unannounced, open notes quizzes. If these quizzes are offered, the fact they are extra credit means that there will be no make-ups for them.

Grading Schema
Exams (Mid-term and Final) 100 points
Research Projects 75 points
Class Participation 10 points

Research Projects
1. Ethical Issues (10 points)
2. Survey Construction (10 points)
3. Analysis with Descriptive Statistics/Write up of sampling technique (10 pts)
4. Analysis with Tests of Independence (20 pts)
5. Analysis with Tests of Inferential Statistics (25 pts)

Learning Objectives
In the course of this class, students will:
1. demonstrate an ability to select, critically evaluate, and apply relevant areas of scholarship;
2. articulate the processes required to bring about a successful outcome from planning, modeling, and preparing, to critiquing, revising and perfecting;
3. recognize how an application of scholarship affects or is affected by political, social, cultural, economic or ethical dimensions;
4. produce original projects that reflects a body of knowledge relevant to the course;
5. effectively communicate the application of scholarship through written material

Course Philosophy
Research Methods is a complicated topic. In order to give you the time and attention to truly grasp the concepts and practice of research methods, supplementary information will also be posted online. You will be responsible for all assigned readings and lectures PRIOR to class. Class time will be spent on further exploring concepts, group and independent work, and discussion.

Final Grades

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>97-100</td>
<td>A+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93-96</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>90-92</td>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87-89</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83-86</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-82</td>
<td>B-</td>
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<tr>
<td>77-79</td>
<td>C+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73-76</td>
<td>C</td>
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<tr>
<td>70-72</td>
<td>C-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67-69</td>
<td>D+</td>
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<tr>
<td>63-66</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-62</td>
<td>D-</td>
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<tr>
<td>&lt; 60</td>
<td>F</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Exams
There will be two exams (which will collectively make up just over one half of your grade). These exams will not be cumulative and will consist of multiple choice, matching, true/false, and short answer questions. The exams will cover all assigned material presented in lectures, readings, and class discussion. Exams will be taken in a computer lab during the schedules class time. All exams are closed-book and are to be completed independently.
unless otherwise specified by the instructor. Make up exams will be given only if the instructor is provided documentation of an excused absence and the student notifies the instructor of his/her absence prior to the start of the exam. The instructor holds the rights to provide make up exams in an alternative format. All make up exams must be complete within 2 weeks of the original exam.

Research Projects
Five research projects will account for a total of approximately 40% of your final grade. All projects should be turned in via ELMS (unless noted otherwise) before class on the due date. Projects turned in during or after class will be considered late. Ten percentage points will be deducted for every day (including weekend days) a project is late. Class room time will be provided for peer-review as well as feedback from the instructor. There will be opportunities for collaboration with your pre-assigned groups. Specific details on group projects, including expectations when working in groups, will follow.

Class Participation
Class participation will be measured by attendance, class participation as well as other assignments as designated by the Instructor. Class participation will be also be evaluated through the collection of assignments, and observation of classroom and group discussions. Absent students will not be permitted to make-up in-class assignments without documentation for an excused absence.

Extra Credit
Extra credit opportunities may be made available during the semester, at the discretion of the instructor.

Make-Up Policy
Opportunities to make-up missed in-class work will only be given in cases of excused absences and official documentation is required. Exams and research projects are considered to be Major Scheduled Graded Events and therefore the new University medical excuse policy which allows one student signed honor statement attesting to illness does not apply to them. Excused absences are: illness with a doctor's note, death in the immediate family, required school activities, and required court appearance. If a doctor will not write you a note, you will need to get a copy of your medical record from them to verify your illness. By law, you are entitled to get a copy of this and it is your responsibility to do so. I must be notified in person or by phone or email PRIOR to missing a in-class assignment for me to consider giving you a makeup. If you know you will not be in class for in-class work or a date a project is due for an excused reason it is your responsibility to turn in the work PRIOR to the due date.

Sending Email
Please use the subject line “CCJS300” whenever you send an email, which will increase the probability of us not considering it junk mail. The professor will mainly rely on email in order to communicate with students. The professor prefers communications be send via Outlook rather than through ELMS. Please check your email regularly.

Use of Technology
In this class, students are encouraged to bring their laptops to class to take notes only. If a student is found to be using a laptop for any other reason than taking notes, then that student will lose the privilege of bringing his/her computer to class. All technological devices, except a laptop computer, are prohibited in this class including MP3 devices, smart phones, phones, calculators, gaming devices, etc. If these devices are seen and/or used during the class, the student will be asked to leave the class immediately. If these devices are seen and/or used during an exam, the exam will be collected from the student and the student will no longer be allowed to continue taking the exam. The exam score will be noted as 0"
**Code of Conduct**

Students are expected to treat each other with respect. Disruptive behavior of any kind will not be tolerated. Students who are unable to demonstrate civility with one another, the teaching assistant, or me will be subject to referral to the Office of Student Conduct or to Campus Security. You are expected to adhere to the Code of Student Conduct.

By February 8, 2016, students must provide the instructor, in writing, a request for a make-up exam for an exam date on the syllabus you are unable to make due to a specific religious observance (specify). Please refer to the Online Catalog Policy on Religious Observance. Please remember that accommodations are not made for travel to and from the religious observance.

Academic dishonesty of any form will absolutely NOT be tolerated. Academic dishonesty encompasses the traditional behavior such as cheating on exams and assignments, giving false statements, etc., but also includes activities such as possessing and/or reviewing previous semester's exams and computer assignments. Additionally, students will be asked to write the University approved Honor Pledge on each exam and project. The University of Maryland, College Park has a nationally Recognized Code of Academic Integrity, administered by the Student Honor Council. This Code sets standards for academic integrity at Maryland for all undergraduate and graduate students. As a student you are responsible for upholding these standards for this course. It is very important for you to be aware of the consequences of cheating, fabrication, facilitation, and plagiarism. For more information on the Code of Academic Integrity or the Student Honor Council, please visit: http://www.studenthonor council.umd.edu/whatis.html

**Grade Disputes**

If you have questions or concerns about your grade(s) and believe the professor should review them, you must submit a written request over email to the professor that describes your concern in detail. This request must be submitted within one week of the day that grades for the relevant assignment are disseminated.

**Copyright**

The lectures I deliver in this class and the course materials I create and distribute are protected by federal copyright law as my original works. My lectures are recorded or delivered from written lectures in order to ensure copyright protection. You are permitted to take notes of my lectures and to use course materials for your use in this course. You may not record, reproduce, or distribute my lectures/notes for any commercial purpose without my written consent. Persons who sell or distribute copies or modified copies of my course materials, possess commercial copies of my notes (i.e. Terpnotes), or assist another person or entity in selling or distributing those materials may be considered in violation of the University Code of Student Conduct, Part 9(k)

**Course Evaluation**

I take your course evaluation very seriously. Each semester, I revise my syllabus, course assignments and exam questions based on the feedback I receive on the course evaluation. I am not only interested in the scores that you give this class but I am also very interested in the specific comments you have about this course. I want to encourage each student in this class to evaluate not only my class but all of your classes. One important campus-wide evaluation is the online evaluation at the end of the semester. I will announce the dates the evaluations are available during our semester. Students can go directly to the website (www.courseevalum.umd.edu) to complete their evaluations.
Disability Support
I will make every effort to accommodate students who are registered with the Disability Support Service (DSS) Office and who provide me with a University of Maryland DSS Accommodation form. Only written DSS documentation of the accommodation will be considered. This form must be presented to me no later than February 10, 2015. I am not able to accommodate students who are not registered with DSS or who provide me with documentation which has not been reviewed and approved by UM’s DSS Office after February 10, 2015.
Academic Integrity Pledge

The University of Maryland, College Park has a nationally recognized Code of Academic Integrity, administered by the Student Honor Council. This Code sets standards for academic integrity at Maryland for all undergraduate and graduate students. As a student you are responsible for upholding these standards in this course. It is very important for you to be aware of the consequences of cheating, fabrication, facilitation, and plagiarism. For more information on the Code of Academic Integrity or the Student Honor Council, please visit http://www.shc.umd.edu. Academic dishonesty of any kind will NOT be tolerated. All students are expected to abide by University rules governing academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty encompasses behavior such as cheating on exams and assignments, giving false statements, etc. Any cheating will be immediately turned over to the Office of Judicial Programs. To further exhibit your commitment to academic integrity, remember to sign the Honor Pledge on all examinations and assignments: "I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received any unauthorized assistance on this examination (assignment)."

By signing this document, I am testifying that I have read in full both the University Code of Academic Integrity and this document, understand the policies and vow to adhere to them.

Student Name    Signature   Date
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week/Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading/Assignment(s)</th>
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| Week 1: Jan 26, 2016 to Feb 1, 2016 | *Syllabus review  
*Introduction to Research | Chapters 1 and 2                                          |
| Week 2: Feb 2, 2016 to Feb 8, 2016 | *Introduction to Research cont’d  
*Research Design | Chapters 1 and 2  
Instructor supplemental materials |
| Week 3: Feb 9, 2016 to Feb 15, 2016 | * Ethics  
*Conceptualization and Measurement | Chapter 3  
Chapter 4 |
| Week 4: Feb 16, 2016 to Feb 22, 2016 | *Sampling  
*Survey Research | Chapter 5  
Chapter 7  
Research Project 1 (Ethics) Due |
| Week 5: Feb 23, 2016 to Feb 29, 2016 | EXAM 1 | In-class |
| Week 6: Mar 1, 2016 to Mar 7, 2016 | Causation and Research Design | Chapter 6 |
| Week 7: Mar 8, 2016 to Mar 14, 2016 | SPRING BREAK | |
| Week 9: Mar 22, 2016 to Mar 28, 2016 | Measurement / Sampling  
Experiments/Quasi Experiments | Research Project 2 (Survey Construction) Due |
| Week 10: Mar 29, 2016 to Apr 4, 2016 | Measures of Central Tendency and SPSS Introduction | Instructor Notes |
| Week 11: Apr 5, 2016 to Apr 11, 2016 | SPSS Practical | SPSS LAB |
| Week 12: Apr 12, 2016 to Apr 18, 2016 | Quantitative methods  
Tests of Independence | Instructor Notes |
| Week 13: Apr 19, 2016 to Apr 25, 2016 | Quantitative methods  
Inferential statistics and tests of variance | Instructor Notes  
Research Project 3 (Descriptive Statistics) Due |
| Week 14: Apr 26, 2016 to May 2, 2016 | Unobtrusive Research and other forms of Research | Instructor Notes  
Research Project 4 (Tests of Independence) Due |
| Week 15: May 3, 2016 to May 9, 2016 | Evaluation of Research and Proposal Writing | Instructor Notes  
Research Project 5 (Tests of Variance) Due |
| Week 16: May 10, 2016 to May 16, 2016 | LAST DAY OF CLASS- May 10th | Catch up and Review for Final Exam |
|                          | FINAL EXAM May 12th- May 18th | FINAL EXAM |
|                          | FINAL EXAM | FINAL EXAM |
## 2015 - 2016 ACADEMIC CALENDAR

### Spring Semester 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Day of Classes</td>
<td>January 25, 2016</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spring Break</td>
<td>March 13-20 (Sunday-Sunday)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last Day of Classes</td>
<td>May 10 (Tuesday)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Day</td>
<td>May 11 (Wednesday)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exams</td>
<td>May 12-18 (Thursday-Wednesday)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commencement- Main Ceremony</td>
<td>May 18 (Wednesday)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Senior Day</td>
<td>May 19 (Thursday)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commencement- College/Department</td>
<td>May 19 (Thursday) and May 20 (Friday)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ceremonies</td>
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