

# Course Information

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- Course title: Criminology and criminal justice research methods
- Course and section number: CCJS 300-0301
- Semester: Spring 2026
- Meeting location: 1117 Susquehanna Hall
- Meeting time: Tuesday and Thursday, 11:00am-12:15pm
- Instructor: Robert Brame
- Instructor email: rbrame at umd.edu
- Regularly scheduled office hours: Tuesday and Thursday, 1-2pm
- Office: 2139 LeFrak Hall
- Regular course communication will be posted on this webpage throughout the semester.
- To contact me outside of class for any reason, please use my email address above.
- Required textbooks: Frank E. Hagan (2017). *Research Methods in Criminal Justice and Criminology* (10th ed.). ISBN: 013455891X.
- Required technology: a calculator that can take square roots.
- Weather or other disruptions: I will post announcements to this webpage as soon as possible when a disruptive event occurs.

- Please consult the [University's Course-Related Policies and Resources for Undergraduate Students webpage](#) for University policies that govern this course.

# Course Description, Goals and Expectations

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- Catalog 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.
- My description: Research methods is often viewed as a "technical" or "how-to" course but it's so much more than that. At a deeper level, it's about the use of the scientific method (yes, that same one you learned about in grade school) to answer questions and develop knowledge. The rules of logic, the practice of asking "how do you know that?", the process of critically evaluating evidence, and ethical conduct in doing these things are all issues we cover in this course.
- At the end of this semester, you should have increased proficiency in (1) the goals and ethics of research; (2) the linkages between theory and research (including the differences between inductive and deductive research); (3) explaining the distinctions between concepts and variables; (4) evaluating a study's measurement strategy; (5) evaluating a study's research design; (6) critically analyzing the evidence in support of a study's conclusions; and (7) describing the strengths and weaknesses of a study.

# Grades

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- Final grades: I will not be using plus/minus grading in this course. Each graded item this semester will be on a 100-point scale. At the end of the semester, I will assign letter grades based on the following cutoffs:

<b>Numeric Grade</b>	<b>Letter Grade</b>
90 and above	A
80-89	B
70-79	C
60-69	D
59 and below	F

- Grade components: throughout the semester, I will assign numeric grades which will contribute to your final course grade. The weights for the individual components are:

<b>Item</b>	<b>% Weight</b>
Exam 1	25%
Exam 2	25%

Exam 3	25%
Assignment #1	8.33%
Assignment #2	8.33%
Assignment #3	8.33%

## Exams and Assignments

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- Exams will be in-class, pencil/pen-and-paper format and will cover the material since either the beginning of the class (exam 1) or since the last exam (exams 2-3).
- Material for the exams will come from the lectures (see below) and assigned readings.
- I tend to overweight the material I cover in lecture (especially lecture material that specifically covers the assigned readings) on the exams; so I would recommend that you overweight your studying in a similar way.
- The final exam (exam 3) will be administered during the scheduled final exam period for this course which is Monday 5/11/26 (10:30-11:45am; location TBD).
- I will provide a few practice questions before each exam.
- Each exam will be comprised of multiple choice, true-false, and open-ended short answer questions.
- For each assignment, you will be asked to address a specific criminology or criminal justice

problem. In addition to addressing/solving the problem, I will ask you some questions about the problem and your answers to these questions will be part of the assignment grade.

- You will have 2 days to work on each assignment; when the assignment is due, you will submit it in class.
- Assignments can be typed or handwritten. Regardless of how you submit it, it should be organized and legible so I can read it.
- You will need a calculator for exams and assignments in this class. The calculator must be able to take square roots.
- Assignments must be submitted in class on paper. I do not accept assignments submitted electronically.
- If you have to miss a class session when there is an exam or an assignment is due, the absence must be excused in accordance with the University's Course Related Policies and Resources for Undergraduate Students. For excused absences, I require appropriate documentation to support the excuse.

## Readings and Lectures

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- Throughout the semester, I will assign various readings from the textbook and I will cover certain parts of these readings in class.
- I will post lecture notes on this webpage throughout the semester so you should

bookmark this page and refer to it on a regular basis.

- If you have to miss a regular class session (no exam and no assignment due), it will be important for you to consult with another student taking the class to make sure you get the material I covered in class when you were absent (The notes I post on this webpage should not be viewed as a substitute for coming to class).
- If you're ever confused about course material, you should come by and ask questions during office hours. If you have a class conflict and can't attend office hours, we can set up an appointment at a mutually convenient time.

## Accessibility Accommodations

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- I commit to abiding by and implementing any approved accommodations for persons with disabilities.
- It is your responsibility to consult with the Accessibility and Disability Service (ADS) Office which is located in Shoemaker Hall.
- After your consultation, the ADS Office will transmit your approved accommodations to me.
- After I have received your accommodations from the ADS office, you and I must meet to discuss implementation.

## Academic Integrity

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If credible evidence of a rule violation materializes, it will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct in accordance with the University's Academic Integrity Policy. Please note that an Academic Integrity referral does not mean that you have been found responsible for a violation or that I have concluded you are responsible for a violation. It means that an issue of concern has been noted and that the Office of Student Conduct will examine it. A determination of responsibility will only be reached after the Office of Student Conduct has completed its investigation with appropriate due process; as an instructor, my role in the process is a limited one.

## Course Schedule

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- Tuesday 1/27/26: University closed due to inclement weather.
- *Inclement Weather Note*: please review the syllabus and begin reading Chapter 1 (Introduction to Criminal Justice Research Methods: Theory and Method)
- Thursday 1/29/26: Chapter 1 (continued)
- Tuesday 2/3/26: Chapter 1 (continued)
- Thursday 2/5/26: Concluding chapter 1
- Tuesday 2/10/26: Chapter 2 (Ethics in Criminal Justice Research)
- Thursday 2/12/26: Chapter 2 (continued)
- Tuesday 2/17/26: Chapter 2 (continued)
- Thursday 2/19/26: Chapter 3 (Research Design: The Experimental Model and its Variations)

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- Tuesday 2/24/26: Chapter 3 (continued) + handing out assignment #1
- Thursday 2/26/26: Chapter 3 (continued) + assignment #1 is due
- Tuesday 3/3/26: Chapter 3 (continued) + exam 1 review
- Thursday 3/5/26: Exam 1

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- Tuesday 3/10/26: Chapter 4 (Uniform Crime Reports and Sampling)
- Thursday 3/12/26: Chapter 4 (continued)
- Tuesday 3/17/26: Thursday 3/19/26 - Spring break.
- Tuesday 3/24/26: Chapter 4 (continued) + handing out assignment #2
- Thursday 3/26/26: Chapter 4 (continued) + assignment #2 due
- Tuesday 3/31/26: Chapter 5 (Survey Research: Questionnaires)
- Thursday 4/2/26: Chapter 5 (continued)
- Tuesday 4/7/26: Chapter 6 (Survey Research: Interviews and Telephone Surveys)
- Thursday 4/9/26: Chapter 6 (continued)
- Tuesday 4/14/26: Chapter 6 (continued) + exam 2 review
- Thursday 4/16/26: Exam 2

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- Tuesday 4/21/26: Chapter 9 (Validity, Reliability, and Triangulated Strategies)

- Thursday 4/23/26: Chapter 9 (continued)
- Tuesday 4/28/26: Chapter 9 (continued) + handing out assignment #3
- Thursday 4/30/26: Chapter 11 (Policy Analysis and Evaluation Research) + assignment #3 due
- Tuesday 5/5/26: Chapter 11 (continued)
- Thursday 5/7/26: Chapter 11 (continued) + exam 3 review
- Monday 5/11/26: Exam 3 (10:30am-11:45am; location TBD)