



# Independent Research in Criminology and Criminal Justice

CCJS 389H

Spring 2016

<i>Instructor</i>	Professor David Maimon
<i>Lecture</i>	Tuesday 4:00-6:45 Susquehanna Hall 1123
<i>Office hours</i>	Tuesday 10:15am – 12:15pm and by appointment
<i>Phone</i>	(301) 405-4716
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## Course Synopsis

The primary goal of this course is to allow students opportunity to collect and identify potential data that could be used for the completion of their honors thesis. This will require a large amount of independent work and individual guidance. For that reason, the bulk of the readings will be self-selected and centered on a research topic selected by each student.

The major objectives of the course are:

- To become familiar with the process of grant writing and grant review
- To expose students to ethical and practical issues in the process of data collection
- To collect and identify empirical data that will be used in students' honors theses
- To improve writing and presentation skills

## Required Texts

1. Thomas, D and Hodges, I.D. (2010). Designing and Managing Your Research Project: Core Skills for Social and Health Research. Sage Publications Ltd.

2. Dey, I. (1993). Qualitative Data Analysis: A User Friendly Guide for Social Scientists. Routledge<sup>1</sup>.

3. Various articles will be posted on ELMS. You must be registered in this class to log on to the website. You may use the website to obtain class information, check announcements and your grades and obtain course readings. The address for the website is <http://elms.umd.edu>.

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<sup>1</sup> Available online

## Course Requirements and Evaluation

### *Peer feedback (10 points)*

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#### ***Data collection project (80 points)***

- Research protocol and tool (20 points)
- IRB application (20 points)
- Presentation (10 points)
- Final Data Collection Report (30 points)

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### ***Grant proposal review (10 points)***

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**1. Peer feedback (10 points)** – Students will share their final project from CCJS388H with one other student in the class, and solicit feedback regarding potential ways in which they can organize and improve the literature review around their selected topic. Each review should begin with a summary of the topic selected by your colleague and follow by concrete suggestions regarding potential ways to improve the organization and presentation of the literature review. Students’ reviews should be submitted in two copies: one to their classmate and the other one to me. The due date for this assignment is **February 16**.

**2. Data collection project (80 points)** - Students are expected to collect/obtain data for their honor thesis over the course of the semester. The grade for this project is composed of four parts: a research protocol, an IRB application, an in class presentation of the project’s research design and preliminary findings, and a final data collection report.

1. *Research protocol (20 points):* A research protocol is a detailed set of activities for the project a scholar proposes. The protocol serves as an introduction to the project content area and as an explicit guide on all aspects of the proposed research methodology. A good protocol helps scholars in their application for an Ethics committee approval and in the production of final report (partly because it enables to use and expand on some sections of the protocol, but mainly because so much of the thinking and planning of the project will have already been well thought through.) A good protocol is evidence that the scientist has clarified his research project to the point that when it comes to data collection and analysis, he is confident about the analysis he is going to perform and the implications of this analysis on his research questions. A reasonable structure follows the below rubric:

- Title
  - Name of applicant/supervisors/affiliations/version number
  - Introduction
  - Method
    - Participants
    - Design
    - Materials (if relevant)
    - Procedure

- Ethical concerns
- Timescale
- Appendices
- References

Specific guidelines with respect to the relevant content of each of these components will be given in class. This document should be submitted to me on **February 23**.

2. *IRB application (20 points)*: Students should complete an IRB application form and prepare to submit it to the UMD Institutional Review Board. The IRB application form is available on ELMS under an assignment folder titled “IRB Application.” The application is due to me by **March 8**.

3. *In class presentation (10 points)*: At the end of the semester (**May 3<sup>rd</sup>**), you will give a brief presentation on the topic area for which you collected data. When preparing your presentation, please make sure your talk includes:

- A short review of the relevant literature
- Research question and research hypotheses
- A description of the research protocol
- Methods for data collection
- Preliminary analysis.
- Link to your future honors thesis

Further guidelines for an effective presentation tactics will be provided in class.

4. *Final data collection report (30 points)*: students will submit a data collection report describing the different data they collected or obtained. The data set will address the various aspects that are relevant to the scientific inquiry each student has chosen to focus upon. The data collection report should include the following points:

- A brief description of your research goals
- A description of the data source(s)
  - o From where was the data collected, (description of the environment and participants, number of classes researched from which the data was used etc)
  - o When and over what time period was the data collected
- The form the data took (e.g. questionnaires, videos, interview transcripts etc)
  - o How does the collected data reflect and answer the main research questions you have previously identified in the research design protocol?
- Report on any deviation from the initial data collection plan (if any) as outlined in the research design protocol

- Preliminary data analysis and description of the results/findings derived from the analysis.
- Discussion focused on the ways that this information can be useful in the development of the student final thesis.

Papers will be graded on three criteria. First, is the report well-written and well-organized (structure)? Second, is the report fairly rigorous (has the student collected the most relevant data to his work, can the research hypotheses be assessed with the collected data?) Third, is the report creative? Do you have a fresh approach to the research problem? This research report will be due on **May 10** (no later than 4 p.m.).

**3. Grant proposal review (10 points)** – Students will write a review on a grant proposal that was submitted for funding by a large governmental agency. This review should be around two pages long and include a summary of the proposed project, an evaluation of the novelty of the proposed idea, an assessment of the intellectual merit and broader impact of the scholars’ ideas, and a statement disclosing a recommendation regarding funding of the proposed project. Submission due date for the grant proposal review assignment is **April 5**.

### Grading Scale

**Grades will be assigned following the University of Maryland standard grading scheme:**

Percentage	Letter Grade	Qualitative Description
97-100	A+	Achievement that is <u>outstanding</u> relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements.
93-96	A	
90-92	A-	
87-89	B+	Achievement that is <u>significantly above</u> the level necessary to meet course requirements.
83-86	B	
80-82	B-	
77-79	C+	Achievement that is <u>in keeping</u> with the course requirements in every respect.
73-76	C	
70-72	C-	
67-69	D+	Achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to meet fully the course requirements.
60-66	D	
0-59	F	Work that was either completed but not worthy of credit, or incomplete

### Academic Misconduct

I take Academic misconduct seriously. Please do not engage in any form of academic misconduct. Academic misconduct includes (but is not limited to): cheating (use of unauthorized materials, assistance on individual assignments or exams, etc.), fabrication (the falsification of information in an academic exercise), plagiarism (the presentation of ideas or statements of

another person as one's own), and facilitating academic misconduct (helping another student to do any of the above). Any suspected case of academic dishonesty will be referred to the University Honor Council. For additional information on academic dishonesty and the accompanying procedures and penalties, see the University's Honor Code at: <http://www.shc.umd.edu/code.html>

### **Make-ups and Late Assignments**

**EXAM:** Exam dates are firm. There are **no** make-up exams except under extreme circumstances. You should contact me **PRIOR** to the exam date if you are going to miss an exam. If a make-up exam is granted, you will be asked to provide official documentation.

**ASSIGNMENTS:** I ask that you *don't place assignments in my mailbox or submit them via e-mail*. Rather, I ask that you turn a hard copy of your assignments in to me **within the first 10 minutes of class**. Assignments that are not turned in to me during that time are subject to a 10% reduction (e.g. -7.5 points for a 75 point assignment) per each day, unless you have a credible excuse, official documentation, and you contacted me **BEFORE** (when possible) the assignment was due.

**NOTE :** Keep all of your class materials until you have received your final grade. This includes any papers that have been graded and handed back. In addition, please keep an electronic or additional hard copy of your papers until the end of the semester.

### **The Classroom Environment**

We will meet as a group only six or seven times throughout the semester. I ask that everyone show up to class on time. In addition, please turn off your cell phones and other portable devices that can be distracting in the classroom. I will make exceptions to this rule if you explain to me why you need it turned on during class. Please inform me of this before class begins. **Surfing the web from your laptops for leisure or sending text messages during lecture time is prohibited.** Disruptive behaviors of any kind will not be tolerated. Students who are unable to show civility in class will be subject to referral to the Office of Student Conduct.

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### **Student Services**

I am happy to discuss any issues or problems that you may have with this course during my office hours, or by appointment if needed. If you are experiencing special difficulties with this or other courses, especially in terms of writing or studying, I encourage you to take advantage of the services that The University of Maryland offers:

**Writing Center**  
1205 Tawes Hall  
College Park, MD 20742  
(301) 405-3785  
**Email: [writadmin@umd.edu](mailto:writadmin@umd.edu)**  
<http://www.english.umd.edu/writingcenter>

**Counseling Center Learning Assistance**  
3125 South Campus Dining Hall  
College Park, MD  
(301) 314-7651  
**Email: [LAS-cc@umd.edu](mailto:LAS-cc@umd.edu)**  
<http://www.umarc.miami.edu>

### **Students with Disabilities**

If you need accommodation based on the impact of a disability, you may contact me privately to discuss your specific needs. You may also contact the office of *Disability Support Service* at (301) 314-7682 in 4155 Susquehanna Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodation for your documented disability (see also <http://www.counseling.umd.edu/DSS/>). Students with disabilities are responsible for making their needs known to the instructor, and seeking available assistance, in a timely manner.

### Class Schedule

This schedule is subject to change. Announcements will be made in class as to changes in this schedule. Please complete the assigned readings before class. Additional readings may be assigned by the instructor in class.

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TOPIC</u>	<u>READING ASSIGNMENT*</u>
Jan 26	Introduction and literature reviews	T&H (CH3, CH5 and CH7)
Feb 2	Institutional Review Board	T&H (CH4, CH6 and CH10)
Feb 9	Sampling, case studies and secondary data sets	Dey (CH 8 and CH12) Vergas 2014
Feb 16	Writing a data and methods section <b>*Peer feedback on last semester project is due*</b>	T&H (CH11, CH12 and CH13)
Feb 23	Individual meetings <b>*Research protocol is due*</b>	
Mar 1	Individual meetings	
Mar 8	Individual meetings <b>*IRB application is due*</b>	
Mar 22	Individual meetings	
Mar 29	Individual meetings <b>*Grant proposals are available to students*</b>	
Apr 5	Individual meetings <b>*Grant proposal review is due*</b>	
Apr 12	Individual meetings	
Apr 19	Individual meetings	
Apr 26	Effective presentation	
May 3	Mini conference <b>*Final presentation is due*</b>	
May 10	<b>*Final data collection report is due*</b>	

\*T&H refers to Thomas and Hodges's book