

TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY, SAN MARCOS
SCHOOL OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE
CJ: 7320 Quantitative Research Methods (Ph.D.)

Fall 2013 ~ Location: Hines 205
Tuesday, 6:30 - 9:20 p.m.

Dr. Donna Vandiver

Office/Hours: Hill House, Tuesday 3-6 p.m. & by appointment

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Required Textbooks:

Bryman, A. (2012). *Social research methods, 4th ed.* New York: Oxford University Press.
ISBN: 978-0-19-958805-3.

Optional Textbooks:

Shadish, W. R., Cook, T. D., & Campbell, D. T. (2002). *Experimental and quasi-experimental designs for generalized causal inference.* Houghton Mifflin Co. ISBN: 978-0-395-61556-0.

Gadd, D. Karstedt, S. & Messner, S. F. (2012). *The Sage handbook of criminological research methods.* Sage. ISBN: 978-1-84920-175-9.

Additional Readings:

Additional information is provided as handouts in class, documents (PDFs or .DOCs on TRACS), or a link to a particular website.

Suggested Reference Books:

Strunk, W. & White, E. B. *The Elements of Style by Strunk and White.* (any edition/any year).

American Psychological Association. *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, 5th or 6th edition.

Suggested App:

www.cramberry.net

Description: Cramberry helps students study with online flash cards. Make cards on Cramberry, or choose from our catalog of free public flash cards. While students study, Cramberry analyzes one's progress and focuses on cards one need to study.

Notes: Former students have already posted some cards from Maxfield & Babbie and the Shadish et al., book.

Course Description:

This is a doctoral level quantitative research methods class that focuses on mastering concepts related to conducting research. It is assumed that students in this class will conduct their own research at some point and this class is geared towards not only reading

other people's research, but evaluating existing research, and carrying out their own research projects. Emphasis is placed on logic of science, links between theory and methods, ethics, research designs, measurement, sampling, issues related to database management, and secondary data.

Student Learning Goals:

- Evaluate existing literature (identify strengths and weaknesses of research).
- Define key concepts of various research projects; identify techniques for measurement; identify validity, reliability issues and develop strategies for minimizing/eliminating such issues.
- Identify various research designs and the advantages/disadvantages of each, including determining the most appropriate research design.
- Develop one's own hypothesis/research questions and quantitative research design; identify hypotheses/research questions in others' research.
- Define and identify ethical issues as they relate to research, including IRB processes.
- Identify and utilize secondary sources of data.

These goals will be attained through assigned readings, discussions, exams, and assignments.

Format of class:

- Students are expected to come to class prepared (have assigned readings completed) and participate in ALL class discussions.
- There are two in-class exams (mid-term and comprehensive final), a research project, three journal issue reviews, and several (graded and ungraded) assignments for the class.
- The format of class includes seminar-style lectures and discussions.
- Ungraded and informal assignments will be given throughout the semester. These are designed to assist students learn/apply the material. They are required assignments.
- You may stop by my office to have questions answered as well. While I do have set office hours, you may stop by *any time*. Emailing questions is also acceptable.

Website/TRACS:

Each student is required to access TRACS for lecture notes, assignments, and grades. From txstate.edu, click on TRACS (under online services). There are tutorials available to learn how to use TRACS at <http://tracsfacts.its.txstate.edu/>. If you need further assistance, please contact the helpdesk at 245-4357.

GRADE INFORMATION

Participation/Assignments (30)

Students are expected to participate in all classes and complete all assignments. Your participation grade will be negatively affected after you miss one class.

Tests: (200 Points)

There are two in-class/closed book/notes exams in this class. The exams will be essay format. They will be similar to comprehensive exam questions (two broad questions; each student chooses which question to answer. Two and a half hours to take the exam. Exams will be taken in lab with computers; typed answers).

Research Project (150 points)

This semester the research project will focus on the topic of violent offenses. Students will select some area of violence offenses to explore and write up. Each section of the project will be graded separately. The research project will consist of: (1) writing an annotated bibliography (20 points); (2) conducting a literature review (30 points); (3) developing a research plan/writing a methods section (30 points); (4) downloading and analyzing data from NIBRS and (5) writing up those results (40 points). An overview of the assignments is presented below.

- **Assignment 1/Research Project (20 points):** Each student will conduct an annotated bibliography of the sources he/she plans to use in the paper. This assignment should include a tentative title/focus of the project. Include an introductory paragraph stating what aspect of violence will be researched. This is a broad topic, and students need to narrow this down. The citations are to follow APA guidelines. An annotated bibliography includes a list of sources with a summary and evaluation of each source. The summary/evaluation can be single-spaced and should not be longer than 1/2 of a page. During the first weeks of class, your readings include several articles about how to critically evaluate your sources. *Thus, the summary/evaluation should NOT just be a summary; it must evaluate the sources.* There is not a minimum number of sources or minimum number of pages for this assignment; it should be a thorough review of the relevant sources related to the topic. **This assignment is due September 17.** Turn in your assignment electronically on TRACS under Assignment 1 Research Project.

Format: Include a cover page. Use APA guidelines for citing sources. Use 1" margins (left, right, top, bottom). Use a standard font (12 point Times New Roman or 12 point Cambria). Double-space.

- **Assignment 2/Research Project (30 points):** Based on the sources collected in assignment one, students will write an Introduction and Literature review. The final product (Introduction, Literature Review, Methods, Results, Discussion and Conclusion) should be between 15 to 20 pages. **This assignment is due October 1.** Turn in your assignment electronically on TRACS under Assignment 2 Research Project. Follow the same format listed above.

- **Assignment 3/Research Project (30 points):** Address all comments/issues that I noted in your Assignment 2 and add a methods section. This assignment, therefore, should include a complete Introduction, Literature Review, and Methods section. The Methods section should include the following sections: (1) research questions and hypotheses; (2) conceptualization/operationalization of key concepts, (3) target population, data source(s)

and sampling issues, (4) measurement issues, validity, reliability, limitations, etc.), (5) analysis and a (6) discussion of the impact of the findings. **This assignment is due October 22.** Turn in your assignment electronically on TRACS under Assignment 3 Research Proposal. Follow the same format listed above.

- **Assignment 4 & 5 (40 points):** Address all comments/issues that I noted in your previous and add a methods section. Download the data from NIBRS, select variables, and analyze the data according to your methods section. Write up the results. Use no more than four tables/figures. Add a discussion and conclusion section. More directions/guidance will be given in class (possibly including short assignments and discussions in class to provide guidance). **The due dates will be announced in class and posted on TRACS.**

Review Three Issues of Justice Quarterly (15 points x 3 = 45 total points)

Students will examine four issues of *Justice Quarterly* throughout the semester. A separate assignment sheet will be given with details. Students must turn in (on TRACS) their write-ups and be prepared to discuss the issue in class. The due data are as follows: JQ, 30,5; JQ, 30,4, & JQ 30,3.

Summary of Points: Participation = 30; Exams = 200; Research Project = 150; Review JQ = 45. Total = 425.

CLASS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Attendance & Participation: All students are expected to come to class each time. Missing class should be avoided. All students should be prepared (having read material, participate in discussion, etc). Those who are not prepared will have their grade deducted based on their lack of attendance, participation, and preparedness.

Late Assignments/Papers/Etc:

Students may turn in their assignments up to one week late. Late points will be taken off. Late assignments/papers will NOT be accepted after one week from the original due date.

Disability:

Students with a disability, which affects their academic performance, are expected to arrange for a conference with the instructor in order that appropriate strategies can be considered to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired. Those with a physically impairment are encouraged to contact the disabilities office.

Academic Dishonesty:

Students are expected to be familiar with all University policies regarding academic dishonesty.

<http://www.dos.txstate.edu/TxState-Handbook/Rules-and-Policies/Honor-Code.html>

Writing Assignments: Students are expected to do their own work. It should be assumed that all assignments are to be completed by yourself, unless I have indicated otherwise.

Any form of plagiarism will not be tolerated. Plagiarism includes (but it is not limited to) paraphrasing someone else's work and not including the in-text citation, turning in a friend's work (or buying a copy from another person or company), cutting and pasting an author's exact words and passing it off as paraphrased information. (You should not use five or more consecutive words from another source w/out quoting it), changing a few of the author's original words, but keeping the same sentence structure. If you are not familiar with what constitutes plagiarism or have a question, there are many available sources (Internet and on-campus) that I will provide you upon request.

Grading Policy:

Your grade is based on the number of points earned on exams, assignments, and participation. At any time you should be able to access your current grade on TRACS. If there is an error on TRACS, please notify me immediately.

Grades are not negotiable: At the end of the semester if you are a few points away (or even one point) from the next grade, you will not have the opportunity to do additional work. Throughout the semester each student should keep up with their grade and monitor their own progress. If you want a certain grade in this class, you should calculate the number of points needed on each exam/assignment to obtain that grade. Hold yourself accountable. All grades are posted on the course website; if the grade on the website is not accurate—contact me *immediately*.

Grading scale:

100% - 90.0% = A

89.9% - 80.0% = B

79.9% - 70.0% = C

69.9% - 60.0% = D

Course Schedule and Reading Schedule:¹

Week 1/Aug 27: Introduction to Class

Go over syllabus

Diagnostic exam

Assignment: Begin examining the literature on the topic of violent offending; think about what area you would like to focus on for your research project.

Week 2/Sept 3: Introduction to Research; Theory and Research

Please note: the reading listed for each day should be read when you come to class that day.

Bryman, Ch. 1: The Nature and Process of Social Research

Bryman, Ch. 2: Social Research Strategies

Bryman, Ch. 3: Research Designs

Shadish et al. Ch 1: Experiments & Generalized Causal Inference

Bem, D. J. (2003). Chapter 8: Writing the empirical journal article. (Available on TRACS)

The role of a literature review in publication. (1998). *Journal of Criminal Justice Education*.

Week 3/Sept 10: Causation, Development Research Questions, and Validity

Bryman, Ch 4: Planning a research project and formulating research questions

Bryman Chapter 5: Reviewing the literature

Shadish et al. Ch 2: Statistical Conclusion Validity & Internal Validity

Armstrong, Lee, & Armstrong (2009). An assessment of scales measuring constructs . . .

JRCD, 46(1): 73-105.

Optional Reading: Davis (1985). *The Logic of Causal Order*. Sage Publication

Assignment: Review 1 of Justice Quarterly due.

Week 4/Sept 17: Ethics

Bryman, Ch. 6: The Ethics of Social Research

Gadd et al., Ch 33: Research Ethics in Criminology

Gadd et al., Ch 18: In Search of Fear (Conceptualization)

Assignment: Complete Citi Training. Directions on TRACS.

Assignment DUE: Assignment 1 of Research Project

Week 5/Sept 24: Secondary Data

Bryman, Ch. 14: Secondary Data

Sorenson, H. T. Sabroe, S. & Olsen, J., (1996). A framework for evaluation of secondary data sources for epidemiological research. *International Journal of Epidemiology*.

Jacob, H. (1984). *Using Published Data*. Sage Publication.

Abu et al., (2011). Exploring NIBRS with a relational database

Assignment: go to ICPSR, identify databases that you could potentially use for your research ideas, be ready to discuss in class.

Assignment: Review 2 of Justice Quarterly due.

¹ This is a "tentative" schedule; all updates will be made online and announced during class. The professor retains the right to modify this syllabus; this includes adding/deleting material and assignments.

Week 6/Oct 1: Sampling & Validity

Bryman, Ch 7: The Nature of Quantitative Research

Bryman, Ch 8: Sampling

Assignment DUE: Assignment 2 of Research Project

Week 7/Oct 8: Research Designs

Shadish et al. Ch. 4: Quasi-Experiment (No Control Group/Pre-Test)

Week 8/Oct 15: Mid-Term

Week 9/Oct 22: More Research Designs

Shadish et al. Ch 8: Randomized Experiments

Assignment: Review 2 of Justice Quarterly due.

Assignment DUE: Assignment 3 of Research Project

Week 10/Oct 29: Analysis Selection

Bryman, Ch. 15: Quantitative Data Analysis

Bryman, Ch. 29: Writing up social research

Week 11/Nov 5: Analysis Continued

Optional reading: Bryman Ch 16.

Week 12/Nov 12: Survey Research (& Meta-analysis)

Bryman, Ch 9: Structured interviewing

Bryman, Ch 10: Self-completion questionnaires

Gadd et al., Ch 10: Using Census Data

Assignment: Find a study in any social science journal that is a meta-analysis, be prepared to present and discuss.

Week 13/Nov 19: Evaluation Research

Babbie Ch 12: Evaluation Research (to be posted on TRACS)

Assignment: Review 3 of Justice Quarterly due.

Week 14/Nov 26: Research Presentations

Week 15/Dec 3: Research Presentations

Final Exam: (Tuesday) Dec 10, 6:30 p.m. (Please note the official exam schedule says we begin at 8pm. I'm assuming no one will have a time conflict (??))