

**San José State University  
Justice Studies Department  
Spring 2019  
JS 114 Research Methods**

**Contact Information**

**Instructor:** Yue Yuan Ph.D.

**Office Location:** Online office hours by Zoom appointment only

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**Classroom:** SJSU Canvas

**Course Format**

This course adopts an online classroom delivery format. You will need the access to the internet, computer, and video/word processing software, in order for students to participate in the classroom activities. See [University Policy F13-2](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F13-2.pdf) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F13-2.pdf> for more details.

**MYSJSU Messaging**

You are responsible for regularly checking with the messaging system through MySJSU. Course materials including syllabus, notes, assignment, and journal articles can be found on the Canvas website.

**Course Description**

**Catalog Description:** Introduction to quantitative research methods used in Justice Studies. Includes relationship of theory to empirical evidence; logic underlying methods of inquiry; ethics in conducting empirical research; and methodological design, operationalization, and data analysis. Prerequisite: JS 10, 12, 25, or FS 11; JS 100W with a grade of "C" or better; JS 15 or Stat 95 or equivalent with a "C" or better; Upper Division Standing; Restricted to JS majors and minors. Note: A grade of "C" or better is required for Justice Studies majors.

This course will cover philosophy of science, fundamental techniques and procedures, research ethics, and methods of data collection and data analysis in criminal justice and criminological research, with emphasis on quantitative analysis.

**Course Goals**

Students will leave this course with a firm understanding of different research designs in criminal justice and criminological research. In addition, students will be able to initiate and conduct an independent research project proposal. It is useful to think of research methods as tools that can be used to answer questions about the social world. For example, social scientists have relied on statistics to answer questions such as “Has the level of violent crime in American cities increased over the past decade?” or “Do juvenile smokers commit more delinquent acts than nonsmokers?” During this course, you will learn some of these research methods and statistical techniques and how to use them to answer questions commonly confronted by social scientists. That said, it is important that you do not fall behind in this class. As we move through the course material, you will find that an understanding of a given topic builds on what has been covered previously.

Thus, it is in your best interest to stay current on the readings, take detailed notes, and ask questions if you are unsure about a topic.

**Student Learning Objectives are as follows:**

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

SLO 1: Understand why knowledge of research methods is valuable to criminal justice professionals and how to conduct a review of research literature, write a research proposal, design a research project.

SLO 2: Summarize three fundamental features of social science: theory, data collection, and data analysis; describe how theory and public policy can be closely linked.

SLO 3: Recognize how criminal justice research is shaped by ethical considerations.

SLO 4: Understand how the logic of probability sampling makes it possible to represent large populations with small subsets of those populations.

SLO 5: Understand that survey research involves the administration of questionnaires in a systematic way to a sample of respondents selected from some population

SLO 6: Recognize when to use qualitative interviewing as a data-gathering tool.

SLO 7: Recognize that public organizations produce statistics and data that are often useful for criminal justice researchers.

SLO 8: Understand the differences between EDA and CFA. For example, descriptive statistics are used to summarize data under study.

SLO 9: Understand that tests of statistical significance make assumptions about data and methods that are rarely satisfied completely in social science research.

**Required E-book:**

Maxfield, M. G., & Babbie, E. R. (2014). *Research methods for criminal justice and criminology*. Nelson Education. <https://www.chegg.com/textbooks/research-methods-for-criminal-justice-and-criminology-7th-edition-9781285067841-1285067843>

**Other Readings**

- Richlin-Klonsky, J., Strenski, E., & Giarrusso, R. (2001). *A guide to writing sociology papers*. Macmillan.
- Galvan, J. L. (2006). Writing literature reviews. *A guide for students of the social and behavioral sciences (3rd ed.)*. Glendale, CA: Pyrczak.

- Articles on Canvas

### Course Requirements and Assignments

SJSU classes are designed such that in order to be successful, it is expected that students will spend a minimum of *forty-five hours for each unit of credit*, including preparing for class, participating in course activities, completing assignments, and so on. **Late homework, quizzes and exams will not be accepted.**

**Requirements:** You are required to read all books, book chapters, and articles in advance. Your grade is based on class participation (discussion on Canvas), quizzes, homework, midterm, research paper proposal (project guideline will be available on Canvas), and final exam.

**Participation:** Success in this class is predicated on regular on line discussion. If you do not discuss regularly, your grade will certainly suffer. To be more specific, your participation grade is graded upon your discussion on the CANVAS discussion board. You are expected to post original contributions based on each discussion question.

**Midterm and Final Examination:** Midterm is scheduled on Monday, March 18 and Final exam is scheduled on Monday, May 17.

**Research Project Proposal:** A guideline of the research project proposal will be provided on Canvas (see Files in Canvas).

### Grading Information

You will not be able to drop the class after the official DROP Day (<http://www.sjsu.edu/winter/academic/calendar/>) except when you have medical emergency with your doctor's note. There will be no make-ups for your missed exams. There will be only one exception to this policy. Those students who provide written notice in advance who must miss class for university business will have special tests arranged usually before the scheduled test. A final grade of incomplete (I) will be reserved for emergency situation only with your doctor's note.

### Final Grade (total points possible: 500 points)

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The point totals break down as follows:

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On-line discussion	50 points
Homework	150 points
Midterm	100 points
Final exam	100 points
Research Project Proposal	100 points
<b>Total</b>	<b>500 points</b>

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**Total Points Possible: 500 points (There is no possibility of extra credit)**  
**Percent to Letter Grade Correspondence**

A plus = 100-96%	A = 95-93%	A minus = 92-90%
B plus = 89-86%	B = 85-83%	B minus = 82-80%
C plus = 79-76%	C = 75-73%	C minus = 72-70%
D plus = 69-66%	D = 65-63%	D minus = 62-60%
F = 59-0% 0-179		

**Justice Studies Department Reading and Writing Philosophy**

The Department of Justice Studies is committed to scholarly excellence. Therefore, the Department promotes academic, critical, and creative engagement with language (i.e., reading and writing) throughout its curriculum. A sustained and intensive exploration of language prepares students to think critically and to act meaningfully in interrelated areas of their lives—personal, professional, economic, social, political, ethical, and cultural. Graduates of the Department of Justice Studies leave San José State University prepared to enter a range of careers and for advanced study in a variety of fields; they are prepared to more effectively identify and ameliorate injustice in their personal, professional and civic lives. Indeed, the impact of literacy is evident not only within the span of a specific course, semester, or academic program but also over the span of a lifetime.

**University Policies**

Per University Policy S16-9, university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc. will be available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs’ [Syllabus Information web page](http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/>

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<b>Tentative Schedule</b>	
<b>Date</b>	<b>Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines</b>
Week1	Chapter 1: Crime, Criminal Justice, and Scientific Inquiry
Week2	Chapter 2: Foundations of Criminal Justice Research
Week3	Chapter 3: Ethics and Criminal Justice Research
Week4	Chapter 4: General Issues in Research Design
Week5	Chapter 5: Concepts, Operationalization, and Measurement
Week6	Chapter 6: Measuring Crime
Week7	Chapter 7: Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs
Week8	<b><i>Midterm</i></b>
Week9	Chapter 8: Sampling
Week10	Chapter 9: Survey Research
Week11	<b><i>Spring Break</i></b>
Week12	Chapter 10: Qualitative Interviewing
Week13	Chapter 11: Field Observation
Week14	Chapter 12: Agency Records, Content Analysis, and Secondary Data
Week15	Chapter 13: Evaluation Research and Problem Analysis
Week16	Chapter 14: Interpreting Data
Week17	<b><i>Final Exam Friday, May 17</i></b>