



**DEPARTMENT OF CRIMINOLOGY AND
POLITICAL SCIENCE**

College of Arts and Sciences

Texas A&M University-San Antonio

Phone: 210-784-2205 (Chair)

Web: <https://www.tamusa.edu/academics/college-of-arts-and-sciences/criminology-political-science/index.html>



**TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY
SAN ANTONIO**

**CRIM 3370 – Research Methods in Crim
Fall Semester 2024**

Section 001, CRN: 12203

Tuesdays and Thursdays 11:00 a.m. – 12:15 p.m., Central Academic Room 218

Syllabus

Instructor: Dr. James O’Berry, Ph.D.

Email: joberry@tamusa.edu

Office: 349-D Central Academic

Office Hours: 12:30 PM – 2:30 PM Tuesdays and Thursdays and by appointment

TEXT:

Vito, G.F., Tewksbury, R.A., & Kunselman, J.C. (2014). *Introduction to criminal justice research methods: An applied approach*. Springfield, IL: Charles C Thomas Publisher Limited.

This textbook is available for free digitally via the University Library’s website.

Link:

<https://tamusa.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=814755&site=ehost-live&scope=site>

eBook Page (in case the link does not work): <https://tamusa.on.worldcat.org/oclc/868150942>

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Examines methods of crime and justice research. Topics include the nature of scientific inquiry, framing a research problem, choosing a research design, developing hypotheses, sampling designs, and measuring variables

COURSE PREREQUISITES:

CRIM 1301, CRIM 2330, and ENGL 1302 must be completed first.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Knowledge – Students should be able to: define the role of research and methodology in the field of criminal justice and criminology, properly label variables as independent, dependent, etc.,

accurately cite sources they use in their work in APA style, and recall the basic definitions and understandings of course concepts.

Comprehension – Students should be able to: describe complex experimental designs and discuss multifaceted ethical issues and dilemmas regarding the criminal justice field and criminological research.

Application – Students should be able to: apply course concepts to research and practice within criminology both in terms of scientific analysis and ethical concerns. Students should also be able to collaborate effectively with others in their field on various projects.

Analysis – Students should be able to: analyze various materials to make conclusions regarding ethics and research design and examine the quality and methodological soundness of research and practice in criminal justice.

Evaluation – Students should be able to: evaluate the methodological rigor of research, namely in the field of criminal justice and criminology, and defend their arguments for why specific methodology is or is not appropriate.

Synthesis – Students should be able to: create a rudimentary plan for a research study to test a criminological theory, construct a basic survey for distribution, and prepare and deliver group presentations.

Note: The instructor is not solely responsible for assuring students meet these outcomes. It requires effort and input from the students as well.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Students can earn up to a total of 100 possible points for the semester. In this case, the students' final percentage grades are equivalent to the number of points they earn throughout the course.

1. **Attendance/Participation (20% or 20 points):** Consistent class attendance is required, and students are expected to stay for the entire class time. Attendance will be taken every class, with each day of attendance counting for 0.4% (or .4 points) of the student's final grade (for a total of 10%). Attendance will only be counted for 24 (9.6 points total) of the 27 scheduled class days. What this means is that students can miss up to 3 classes (not including days such as when I am at a conference on November 12th and 14th) with no penalty to their **attendance grade**. The remaining .4 points will be given to students automatically.
2. The remaining 10% of this grade will be based on the completion of 4 different in-class assignments scheduled to occur throughout the semester (for 2.5 points each). These in-class assignments will be graded based on completion. As long as the student has genuinely attempted the assignment, they will receive credit. Students must generally be present for the whole class time. For an absence to be considered excused, it **must** be due to a serious circumstance like illness, death in the family, or a university-approved excuse. If there is a reason for missing class such as being involved in a car accident or a sudden hospitalization, these will also be considered

as valid excuses and the student can inform the instructor when it is feasible for them to do so.

As students will have a safeguard to miss up to 3 classes with no attendance grade penalty, students should generally not expect to have to provide an excuse for missing a regular class. However, the rules for acceptable excused absences **always** apply to making up a missed in-class assignment should the student be absent the day of one.

Students are solely responsible for managing their enrollment status in a course and must withdrawal on their own. Therefore, not showing up for class does not automatically constitute a withdrawal.

3. **Exams (40% or 40 points):** There will be a Midterm Exam and a Final Exam, with each counting for 20% of the student's overall grade. These exams will not be cumulative. Instead, the Midterm will cover any course material up to the exam date, and the Final will cover any course material covered after the Midterm. Both exams will cover material from in-class lectures and discussions as well as the textbook and any other materials (i.e., videos, handouts, assignments, etc.) presented in the course.

Students are expected to be on time for exams and will not be given extra time should they arrive late.

Make-Up Exams: Make-up exams will only be given when arrangements have been made with the instructor, and the student misses the exam due to one of the reasons listed for an acceptable absence. The exam must be made up at a time convenient for the instructor, and the student must contact the instructor to determine a time to make up the exam within three days of the missed exam.

4. **Projects 1 (Experimental Design) and 2 (Survey Construction) (20% or 20 points):** Projects 1 and 2 are group projects that will be based around applying the material learned in class. Project 1 requires a group presentation to the class which each group member must be present for unless they have an excused absence. More instructions will be given for these later in the semester. Each of these projects will be worth 10 points. 8 points of each of these will be based on the project itself while the remaining 2 points will be based on Group Member Peer Reviews.
5. **Project 3: *Thank You for Smoking* (2005) (20% or 20 points):** The third and final project will see students work in groups to apply course concepts related to ethics on research methods, critical analysis of scientific claims, and research design to the film *Thank You for Smoking* (2005), which we will watch together in class (see dates below). This project will involve students writing a paper and then creating and delivering a presentation on the project. Additionally, 4 of the 20 points will be based on group evaluations of each member's contribution.

The instructor will determine how to assign the groups for the semester. **Late project submissions will not be accepted.**

All assignments must be turned in to the instructor during class time or via Blackboard as instructed. Projects will be evaluated based on a grading rubric that focuses mainly on content, APA7 formatting, and grammar

Grading Policy: Grades will be computed in the following manner:

Exam 1	20%
Exam 2	20%
Attendance/Participation	20%
Project 1	10%
Project 2	10%
Project 3	20%
Total	100%

Grade Distribution:

90-100% = A
80 - 89% = B
70 - 79% = C
60 - 69% = D
60% or below = F

Important Dates:

August 26	First day of class
September 2	Labor Day Holiday
November 11	Last day to drop with an automatic "W"
November 19	Last day to drop a course or withdraw from the University
November 27	Study Day – No classes
November 28-30	Thanksgiving Holiday – No classes
December 5	Last day of classes
December 6	Study Day – No classes
December 7-13	Final exams

The complete academic calendar is available online: <https://www.tamusa.edu/academics/academic-calendar/index.html>.

ADDITIONAL CLASS POLICIES

Check Blackboard every day for any cancelations, updates, assignment links, etc.

If a student misses class for any reason, it is up to the student to work with a classmate to obtain any notes, instructions, etc., that are missed. The instructor will **not** go over all the material again simply because you missed class and will not provide lecture materials beyond the PowerPoint slides shown in class.

No cell phones, iPads, MP3 players, etc., are allowed in class. In general, laptops are permitted for note-taking (and even recommended for in-class workdays), but I ask that you sit in the back of the room during lecture if you plan to use a laptop to minimize distractions for other students. Additionally, taking hand-written notes is strongly encouraged as research suggests that this is a much more effective means of note-taking than using a computer. All other devices should be

put on silent or vibrate and left stored away. If you have an important call or text you need to answer, quietly step out of class and do so. If you know that you will be anticipating an important call for whatever reason, please let me know at the start of class. If your device is repeatedly a distraction for your classmates, you will be asked to leave the class for the day.

All students are expected to follow Texas A&M University-San Antonio's Student Code of Conduct at all times. Frequent or disruptive side conversations will not be tolerated and will result in you being asked to leave the class for the day.

All students must treat other students and the instructor with respect at all times. This requirement means no name-calling, threats, insults, general bigotry, or rudeness. Any of this can result in removal from the classroom. The instructor reserves the right to bring issues to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities if they deem it necessary.

There should be no expectation of extra credit of any kind in this class. If the instructor decides to grant extra credit, this opportunity will be available to the entire class, not particular students. If extra credit is offered at a time when a student is not available (such as a surprise bonus question on a test the student does not show up for), the student will have missed the opportunity for said extra credit.

Final grades are indeed final, and the instructor will **not** negotiate final grades for assignments or the course. The grading scale is quite clear and allows the student to easily track their progress towards their desired grade as the semester goes along. The end of the semester is **not** the time to start worrying about one's grades, especially if a student is involved in athletics or scholarships. All students should work from the start of the semester to ensure that they accomplish the grades they want. If you believe there is a genuine error with your grade, please raise the issue professionally and respectfully, and the instructor will be glad to look into it to make sure that everything is correct. Coming to office hours or discussing grades via a virtual meeting is the most efficient way to handle this kind of issue.

This course syllabus provides a general plan for the course and is for planning purposes only. It is tentative and subject to change at the discretion of the instructor. However, every effort will be made to keep changes to a minimum. In short;

The course syllabus provides a general plan for the course; deviations may be necessary.

Class Schedule

Research Methods Schedule

Date	Topic
August 27 Tuesday	Introductions. Go over Syllabus. In-class assignment. Introduction lecture
August 29 Thursday	Chapter 1 Basics of Research Methods
September 3 Tuesday	Chapter 2. Go over how to find research, how to cite, etc.
September 5 Thursday	Chapter 3 Ethics in Research Day 1. In-class assignment.
September 10 Tuesday	Chapter 3 Ethics in Research Day 2
September 12 Thursday	Chapter 4 Measuring Crime

September 17 Tuesday	Chapter 5 Classical Experiment
September 19 Thursday	Chapter 5 Quasi Experiment. Start on Validity
September 24 Tuesday	Finish Chapter 5 Validity. In-class assignment
September 26 Thursday	Chapter 6 Probability and Nonprobability Sampling
October 1 Tuesday	Review for Midterm
October 3 Thursday	Midterm (Online)
October 8 Tuesday	Assign Groups for Group Projects. Go over Project 1, Group Workday
October 10 Thursday	Project 1 Presentations. Project 1 materials due before the start of class.
October 15 Tuesday	Chapter 7 Survey Research Day 1
October 17 Thursday	Chapter 7 Survey Research Day 2
October 22 Tuesday	Group Workday Project 2. Project 2 due October 29 th 11:59 PM.
October 24 Thursday	Chapter 8 Scaling
October 29 Tuesday	Chapter 9 Qualitative Research Part 1
October 31 Thursday	Chapter 9 Qualitative Research Part 2 In-class assignment
November 5 Tuesday	Watch <i>Thank You for Smoking</i> (2005) for Project 3
November 7 Thursday	Watch <i>Thank You for Smoking</i> (2005) for Project 3
November 12 Tuesday	NO CLASS I will be at a conference
November 14 Thursday	NO CLASS I will be at a conference
November 19 Tuesday	Group Workday Project 3
November 21 Thursday	Project 3 Presentations. Project 3 materials due before start of class.
November 26 Tuesday	Guest Lecture: Dr. Volkan Topalli (Online) Chapter 10 Qualitative Research: Qualitative Interviews.
November 28 Thursday	Thanksgiving Break NO CLASS
December 3 Tuesday	Review for Final Exam (Online) Additional virtual office hours available by appointment until Final Exam Day
December 5 Thursday	Review for Final Exam/Study Day (Online) Additional virtual office hours available by appointment until Final Exam Day
December 10 Tuesday (Finals Week)	Final Exam (Online) 10:00-11:50 PM

University Policies & Resources

Academic Accommodations for Individuals with Disabilities: Texas A&M University-San Antonio is committed to providing all students with reasonable access to learning opportunities and

accommodations in accordance with The Americans with Disabilities Act, as amended, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. If you experience barriers to your education due to a disability or think you may have a disability, Disability Support Services is located in the Central Academic Building, Suite 210. You can also contact us via phone at (210) 784-1335, visit us <https://www.tamusa.edu/Disability-Support-Services/index.html> or email us at dss@tamusa.edu. Disabilities may include, but are not limited to, attentional, learning, mental health, sensory, physical, or chronic health conditions. All students are encouraged to discuss their disability-related needs with Disability Support Services and their instructors as soon as possible.

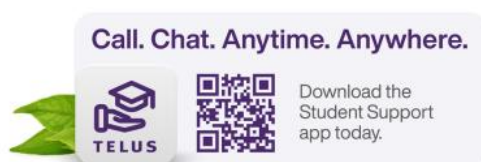
Academic Learning Center: The Academic Learning Center provides free course-based tutoring to all currently enrolled students at Texas A&M University-San Antonio. Students wishing to work with a tutor can make appointments through the Brainfuse online tutoring platform. Brainfuse can be accessed in the *Tools* section of Blackboard. You can contact the Academic Learning Center by emailing tutoring@tamusa.edu, calling (210) 784-1307, or visiting the Central Academic Building, room 202.

Counseling/Mental Health Resources: As a college student, there may be times when personal stressors interfere with your academic performance and negatively impact your daily functioning. If you are experiencing emotional difficulties or mental health concerns, support is available to you through the Student Counseling Center (SCC). To schedule an appointment, call 210-784-1331 or visit Madla 120.

All mental health services provided by the SCC are free and confidential (as the law allows). The Student Counseling Center provides brief individual and group therapy, crisis intervention, consultation, case management, and prevention services. For more information on SCC services visit tamusa.edu/studentcounseling

Crisis support is available 24/7 by calling the SCC at 210-784-1331 (after-hours select option '2').

Additionally, the TELUS Student Support App provides a variety of mental health resources to including support for in the moment distress, an anonymous peer to peer support network, mental health screenings, podcasts, and articles to improve your mental wellbeing.



Emergency Preparedness: JagE Alert is Texas A&M University-San Antonio's mass notification. In the event of an emergency, such as inclement weather, students, staff and faculty, who are registered, will have the option to receive a text message, email with instructions and updates. To register or update your information visit: <https://tamusa.bbcportal.com/>.

More information about Emergency Operations Plan and the Emergency Action Plan can be found here: <https://www.tamusa.edu/about-us/emergency-management/>.

Download the SafeZone App (<https://safezoneapp.com/>) for emergencies or call (210) 784-1911. Non-Emergency (210) 784-1900.

Financial Aid and Verification of Attendance: According to the following federal regulation, 34 CFR 668.21: U.S. Department of Education (DoE) Title IV regulation, a student can only receive Title IV funds based on Title IV eligibility criteria which include class attendance. If Title IV funds are disbursed to ineligible students (including students who fail to begin attendance), the institution must return these funds to the U.S. DoE within 30 days of becoming aware that the student will not or has not begun attendance. Faculty will provide the Office of Financial Aid with an electronic notification if a student has not attended the first week of class. Any student receiving federal financial aid who does not attend the first week of class will have their aid terminated and returned to the DoE. Please note that any student who stops attending at any time during the semester may also need to return a portion of their federal aid.

Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center: The Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center supports graduate and undergraduate students in all three colleges as well as faculty and staff. Tutors work with students to develop reading skills, prepare oral presentations, and plan, draft, and revise their written assignments. Our language tutors support students enrolled in Spanish courses and students composing in Spanish for any assignment. Our digital studio tutors support students working on digital projects such as eportfolios, class presentations, or other digital multimedia projects. Students can schedule appointments through JagWire under the Student Services tab. Click on "Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center" to make your appointment. The Center offers face-to-face, synchronous online, and asynchronous digital appointments. More information about what services we offer, how to make an appointment, and how to access your appointment can be found on our website at <https://www.tamusa.edu/academics/>.

Meeting Basic Needs: Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect their performance in the course, is urged to submit a CARE referral (<https://www.tamusa.edu/university-policies/Student-Rights-and-Responsibilities/file-a-report.html>) for support. Furthermore, please notify the professor if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable them to direct you to available resources.

Military Affairs: Veterans and active-duty military personnel are welcomed and encouraged to visit the Office of Military Affairs for any question involving federal or state VA Education Benefits. Visit the Patriots' Casa building, room 202, or to contact the Office of Military Affairs with any questions at military.va@tamusa.edu or (210)784-1397.

Religious Observances: Texas A&M University-San Antonio recognizes the diversity of faiths represented among the campus community and protects the rights of students, faculty, and staff to observe religious holidays according to their tradition. Under the policy, students are provided an opportunity to make up any examination, study, or course work requirements that may be missed due to a religious observance provided they notify their instructors before the end of the second week of classes for regular session classes.

The Six-Drop Rule: Students are subject to the requirements of Senate Bill (SB) 1231 passed by the Texas Legislature in 2007. SB 1231 limits students to a maximum of six (6) non-punitive course drops (i.e., courses a student chooses to drop) during their undergraduate careers. A non-punitive drop does not affect the student's GPA. However, course drops that exceed the maximum allowed by SB 1231 will be treated as "F" grades and will impact the student's GPA.

Statement of Harassment and Discrimination: Texas A&M University-San Antonio is committed to the fundamental principles of academic freedom, equal opportunity, and human dignity. To fulfill its multiple missions as an institution of higher learning, A&M-San Antonio encourages a climate that values and nurtures collegiality and the uniqueness of the individual within our state, nation, and world. All decisions and actions involving students and employees should be based on applicable law and individual merit. Texas A&M University-San Antonio, in accordance with applicable federal and state law, prohibits discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or pregnancy/parenting status. Individuals who believe they have experienced harassment or discrimination prohibited by this statement are encouraged to contact the appropriate offices within their respective units.

Texas A&M University-San Antonio faculty are committed to providing a safe learning environment for all students and for the university as a whole. If you have experienced any form of sex- or gender-based discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, domestic or dating violence, or stalking, know that help and support are available. A&M-San Antonio's Title IX Coordinator can support those impacted by such conduct in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, and more. The university strongly encourages all students to report any such incidents to the Title IX Coordinator. Please be aware that all A&M-San Antonio employees (other than those designated as confidential resources such as counselors and trained victim advocates) are required to report information about such discrimination and harassment to the university. This means that if you tell a faculty member about a situation of sexual harassment, sexual violence, or other related misconduct, the faculty member must share that information with the university's Title IX Coordinator (titleix@tamusa.edu, 210-784-2061, CAB 439K). If you wish to speak to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting requirement, you can contact the Student Counseling Center at (210) 784-1331 or visit them in Madla 120.

Pregnant/Parenting Students: Texas A&M-San Antonio does not require a pregnant or parenting student, solely because of that status or issues related to that status, to (1) take a leave of absence or withdraw from their degree or certificate program; (2) limit the student's studies; (3) participate in an alternative program; (4) change the student's major, degree, or certificate program; or (5) refrain from joining or cease participating in any course, activity, or program at the University. The university will provide such reasonable accommodations to pregnant students as would be provided to a student with a temporary medical condition that are related to the health and safety of the student and the student's unborn child. These could include maintaining a safe distance from substances, areas, and activities known to be hazardous to pregnant individuals and their unborn child; excused absences because of illness or medical appointments; modified due dates for assignments; rescheduled tests/exams; taking a leave of absence; and being provided access to instructional materials and video recordings of lectures

for excused absences, if these would be provided to any other student with an excused absence. Pregnant/parenting students are encouraged to contact the Title IX Coordinator with any questions or concerns related to their status (titleix@tamusa.edu; 210-784-2061; CAB 439K).

Texas A&M-San Antonio has also designated the Title IX Coordinator as the liaison officer for current or incoming students who are the parent or guardian of a child younger than 18 years of age. The Title IX Coordinator can provide students with information regarding support services and other resources.

Students' Rights and Responsibilities: The following statement of students' rights and responsibilities is intended to reflect the philosophical base upon which University Student Rules are built. This philosophy acknowledges the existence of both rights and responsibilities, which is inherent to an individual not only as a student at Texas A&M University-San Antonio but also as a citizen of this country.

Students' Rights

1. A student shall have the right to participate in a free exchange of ideas, and there shall be no University rule or administrative rule that in any way abridges the rights of freedom of speech, expression, petition and peaceful assembly as set forth in the U.S. Constitution.
2. Each student shall have the right to participate in all areas and activities of the University, free from any form of discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and pregnancy/parenting or veteran status in accordance with applicable federal and state laws.
3. A student has the right to personal privacy except as otherwise provided by law, and this will be observed by students and University authorities alike.
4. Each student subject to disciplinary action arising from violations of university student rules shall be assured a fundamentally fair process.

Students' Responsibilities

1. A student has the responsibility to respect the rights and property of others, including other students, the faculty, and administration.
2. A student has the responsibility to be fully acquainted with the published University Student Rules found in the Student Handbook, Student Code of Conduct, on our website, and University Catalog, and to comply with them, as well as with federal, state, and local laws.
3. A student has the responsibility to recognize that student actions reflect upon the individuals involved and upon the entire University community.
4. A student has the responsibility to recognize the University's obligation to provide a safe environment for learning.
5. A student has the responsibility to check their university email for any updates or official university notifications.

We expect that students will behave in a manner that is dignified, respectful, and courteous to all people, regardless of sex, ethnic/racial origin, religious background, sexual orientation, or disability. Conduct that infringes on the rights of another individual will not be tolerated.

Students are expected to exhibit a high level of honesty and integrity in their pursuit of higher education. Students engaging in an act that violates the standards of academic integrity will find themselves facing academic and/or disciplinary sanctions. Academic misconduct is any act, or attempt, which gives an unfair advantage to the student. Additionally, any behavior specifically prohibited by a faculty member in the course syllabus or class discussion may be considered as academic misconduct. For more information on academic misconduct policies and procedures please review the Student Code of Conduct (<https://www.tamusa.edu/university-policies/student-rights-and-responsibilities/documents/Student-Handbook-2022-23.pdf>) or visit the resources available in the OSRR website (<https://www.tamusa.edu/university-policies/student-rights-and-responsibilities/academic-integrity.html>)

AI Policy

There are situations and contexts within this course where you may be asked to use artificial intelligence (AI) tools to explore how they can be used. Outside of those circumstances, you should not use AI tools to generate content (text, video, audio, images) that will end up in any student work (assignments, activities, discussion responses, etc.) that is part of your evaluation in this course. Any student work submitted using AI tools should clearly indicate with attribution what work is the student's work and what part is generated by the AI. In such cases, no more than 25% of the student work should be generated by AI. If any part of this is confusing or uncertain, students should reach out to their instructor for clarification before submitting work for grading. Use of AI-generated content without the instructor's permission and/or proper attribution in this course qualifies as academic dishonesty and violates Texas A&M-San Antonio's standards of academic integrity.