

DEPARTMENT OF CRIMINOLOGY AND POLITICAL SCIENCE
College of Arts and Sciences
Texas A&M University-San Antonio
Phone: 508-331-5109 (Cell)

CRIM 3370 – Research Methods in Crim
Fall 2026

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Office Hours: Online 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.

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 research proposal based on course concepts, which they will work on throughout the semester.

WRITING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

1. **Describe** and **analyze** the structure and conventions of an academic journal article to understand disciplinary expectations.
2. **Synthesize** criminological literature to construct a literature review that justifies the value of your research question.
3. **Construct** a research proposal through multistage drafting that describes how you would answer your research question using a research method.
4. **Reflect** on the writing and research process to identify personal strengths and areas for growth as a researcher.

Note: The instructor is not solely responsible for assuring students meet these outcomes. It requires effort and input from the students as well. Students are solely responsible for managing their enrollment status in a course and must withdraw on their own. Therefore, not showing up for class does not automatically constitute a withdrawal.

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. **Low Stakes Writing Assignments (30% or 30 points):** There will be three "low stakes" writing assignments across the course of the semester, consisting of a Research Question assignment, a Literature Review, and a Methods Outline. These three smaller assignments will help you prepare for the final project and will ultimately be major components of said final project. It is imperative that you pay close attention to and apply the feedback that you receive on these portions in order to perform well on the final project. While more information will be given as the semester progresses, the following is some general information regarding each portion, along with the individual percentage weight towards the final grade for the course.
 - a. **Research Question (10% or 10 points):** Students will create a research question that is testable and realistic, and which will serve as the basis for the rest of the project assignments. Students will first draft a potential research question (5 points), which will be evaluated by the instructor. Students will then need to revise their research question based on instructor feedback and resubmit it by the due date indicated on Blackboard and the syllabus schedule (5 points). If the instructor's feedback indicates that the question is good-to-go as-is, then the student will simply resubmit the same research question. If students do not pass the revised research question check, then they must

work with the instructor to get an approved research question before the deadline of the next project portion in order to continue to the next assignment. The student's grade on the failed revision will remain the same. See the assignment instructions for more information.

- b. **Literature Review (10% or 10 points):** Students will be tasked with creating a literature review similar to those found in academic research articles. As part of this, students will need to find, cite, and properly assess **eight** academic journal articles, summarizing their key methods and findings while also integrating all three into a brief discussion of how they inform the student's research question (8 points). Students will then be randomly assigned to provide a peer review of three other students' literature reviews to offer ideas while also getting some ideas from their colleagues, which they can apply to their own work (2 points). See the assignment instructions for more information.
 - c. **Methods Outline (10% or 10 points):** Students will need to create an outline of what will become their methods section in the final project. Students will elaborate on the methodology they would use in their proposal, including things like their sample, experimental design, proposed analysis, etc. This will not be the full methods section of the final project, but rather a set of bulleted sections and summaries of what will eventually be the methods section. See the assignment instructions for more information.
2. **Final Project: Research Proposal (30% or 30 points):** The final project will be a research proposal featuring the three major portions completed throughout the semester, along with some additional requirements and details. Students should incorporate all the feedback that they have received regarding the major assignments throughout the semester. As such, students will be graded more harshly on any mistakes that persist despite the feedback they have received previously. This project will have a large number of specific components and requirements, which are outlined in the instructions. Most of these will mirror those originally required in the previous assignments, but students should be sure to pay extremely close attention and should double-check that they accurately completed **all** components of the project in order to have the best chance at doing well on it. See the assignment instructions for more information.
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 the weekly readings and material. Further, the questions themselves will draw predominantly from previous weekly quizzes. Therefore, reviewing the quizzes is a good way to study for the exams. The exam will consist of 40 multiple-choice questions, and students will have one hour to complete the exam once they begin it.

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 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 exam's due date.

Students are expected to complete exams on time and will not be given extra time should they start late. Late assignment/exam submissions will not be accepted. All assignments must be turned in to the instructor during class time or via Blackboard as instructed.

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

Writing Assignments (x3)	30%
Final Project	30%
Midterm	20%
Final	20%
Total	100%

Grade Distribution:

90-100% = A
80 - 89% = B
70 - 79% = C
60 - 69% = D
59% or below = F

ADDITIONAL CLASS POLICIES

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

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 your 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 class. 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 misses), 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 achieve 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. 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. Weeks are from Monday through Sunday at 11:59 PM except for Finals Week

Week	Start Date	Readings(s)	Assignment(s) (Due Sunday 11:59pm)
1	8/24-8/30	Chapter 1 Basics of Research Methods	
2	8/31-9/6	Chapter 3 Ethics in Research	Research Question Draft
3	9/7-9/13	Chapter 2 How to Find Research, How to Cite	Revised Research Question
4	9/14-9/20	Chapter 4 Measuring Crime	Work on Literature Review
5	9/21-9/27	Chapter 5 Classical Experiment, Quasi-experiment, Validity	Literature Review
6	9/28-10/4	Chapter 6 Probability and Non-probability Sampling	Literature Review Peer Review
7	10/5-10/11	Midterm	Midterm
8	10/12-10/18	Chapter 7 Survey Research	
9	10/19-10/25	Chapter 7 Cont'd	Methods Outline
10	10/26-11/1	Chapter 8 Scaling	Work on Final Project
11	11/2-11/8	Chapter 9 Qualitative Research	Work on Final Project
12	11/9-11/15	Chapter 10 Qualitative Interviews	Work on Final Project
13	11/16-11/22	Final Project	Final Project
14	11/23-11/29	Chapter 11 Evaluation Research	
15	11/30-12/4	Review	
FINAL EXAM DUE 12/10 11:59pm			

IMPORTANT POLICIES AND RESOURCES

University Email Policy and Course Communications: All correspondence between professors and students must occur via university email accounts. You must have your Jaguar email account ready and working. If it is not working, contact the help desk at helpdesk@tamusa.edu or at 210-784-HELP (4357). If you don't hear back within 48 hours, contact them again. They have many requests during the first part of the semester, so you may need to follow up with them.

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 at the [website](http://www.dss.tamusa.edu) or email us at dss@tamusa.edu. All students are encouraged to discuss their academic accommodation with Disability Support Services and their instructors as soon as possible.

Academic Learning Center: All currently enrolled students at Texas A&M University-San Antonio can utilize the Academic Learning Center for subject-area tutoring. 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. Online tutoring is also available for after hours and weekend assistance. While tutoring hours may change based on tutor schedules and availability, the current tutoring hours for MATH in the ALC are as follows:

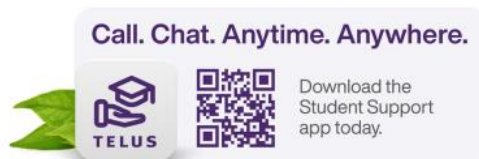
Appointments available MATH Walk in Tutoring – No appointment needed

	Appointments available	Walk in Tutoring – No appointment needed
MONDAY	8 am – 6 pm	9 am – 5 pm
TUESDAY	8 am – 6 pm	9 am – 5 pm
WEDNESDAY	8 am – 6 pm	9 am – 5 pm
THURSDAY	8 am – 6 pm	9 am – 5 pm
FRIDAY	8 am – 5 pm	11 am – 4 pm

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, visit our website, call 210-784-1331 or visit Madla 120 between the hours of 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM.

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. *Crisis support is available 24/7/365 by calling the SCC at 210-784-1331 or through the TELUS student support App.*

The TELUS Student Support App provides a variety of mental health resources to including 24/7/365 support for in the moment distress, crisis support, 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 system. 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 on emergency response may be found at: [Emergency Operations Plan](#) and the [Emergency Action Plan](#). 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 by the published Census Date (the first week of class). Any student receiving federal financial aid who does not attend prior to the published Census Date (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.

Jaguar Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center (WLDCC): The WLDCC provides support to graduate and undergraduate students in all three colleges as well as faculty and staff. Writing 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. The WLDCC offers face-to-face, synchronous online, and asynchronous digital appointments. Students can schedule appointments with the WLDCC in JagWire under the Student Services tab. Click on "Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center" to make your appointment. Students wanting to work in realtime with a tutor can schedule an "Online Appointment." Students wishing to receive asynchronous, written feedback from a tutor can schedule an "eTutoring" appointment. More information about what services we offer, how to make an appointment, and how to access your appointment can be found on our [website](#). The WLDCC can also be reached by emailing wldcc@tamusa.edu.

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 report](#) for support. Furthermore, please notify the professor if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable them to direct you to available resources. A food pantry is available on campus; click [here](#) for hours and contact information.

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 wide variety 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 on our campus and within our state, nation, and world. All decisions and actions involving students and employees are to 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, or pregnancy/parenting status. Individuals who believe they have experienced harassment or discrimination prohibited by this statement are encouraged to contact the University's Civil Rights Officer at 210-784-2061 or titleix@tamusa.edu.

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 discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, domestic or dating violence, or stalking based on sex, 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 sex-based 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.

Young Jaguars can support parenting students with daycare if students meet this criteria: (1) must be enrolled in classes at Texas A&M-San Antonio in the current semester, (2) must be Pell eligible or a single parent, (3) child(ren) must be aged 3 to 12-years-old, and (4) child(ren) must be enrolled in Pre-K-3 through 6th grade. Hours of operation is Monday-Thursday 3:30pm-9:00pm. For more information, please contact Young Jaguars at youngjaguars@tamusa.edu or call (210) 784-2636.

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, 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, 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](#) or visit the resources available in the [OSRR website](#)

Important Fall 2026 Dates:

Dates	Event
August 20	Tuition & Fee Payments deadline
August 24	First day of class
September 7	Labor Day Holiday – No Classes / University Closed
September 9	Census Date – Students not paid in full or enrolled in a payment plan by 4:59 pm may be dropped for non-payment
October 5 – October 16	Midterm grading period
November 13	Last day to drop with an automatic “W”
November 25	Study Day – No classes
November 26-November 28	Thanksgiving Holiday – No Classes / University Closed
November 30	Last day to drop a course or withdraw from the University
December 4	Last day of classes
December 5 – December 11	Final exams
December 15	Commencement

The complete [academic calendar](#) is available online

No Use of Generative AI Permitted

CJ 3370 assumes that all work submitted by students will be generated by the students themselves, working individually or in groups. Students should not have another person/entity do the writing of any portion of an assignment for them, which includes hiring a person or a company to write assignments and/or using artificial intelligence (AI) tools like ChatGPT. Use of any AI-generated content in this course qualifies as academic dishonesty and violates Texas A&M-San Antonio’s standards of academic integrity.