CRIM 7400
Graduate Capstone
Justice Policy Research

SYLLABUS & CLASS SCHEDULE
Spring 2016

PROFESSOR: Natasha A. Frost, Ph.D.
CLASS SESSIONS: Mondays, 10:30am – 1:00pm; 301 Churchill Hall
OFFICE: 413 Churchill
EMAIL/PHONE: n.frost@neu.edu (617.373.4076)
OFFICE HOURS: Mondays/Thursdays 8:00am – 9:00am; Thursdays 1:00pm – 2:00pm
Also Available by Appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course offers students an opportunity to integrate knowledge of criminological theory and justice policy with the research skills gained while working toward completion of the graduate degree. Successful completion of this course requires the formulation of a research question that addresses a societal problem, the conceptualization of the scope of the answer to the research question, and the submission of an in-depth analysis of the question with reference to theory, methodology, and policy.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The first part of the semester will be devoted to formulating a justice policy research question embedded in criminological discourse. There is flexibility in the nature and scope of student questions, but the Professor must oversee and approve all topics. Over the course of the semester, students will work both with the Professor and with their fellow students to research their topics and design studies to address their research questions, which must take into account theory, methodology, and policy. The paper will be submitted in parts to allow for feedback and revisions prior to the submission of the final product. The final paper should demonstrate evidence of mastery of relevant criminological and criminal justice theory and research as well as research methods. There is no expectation that the paper will include a novel empirical component.

COURSE OBJECTIVES / LEARNING OUTCOMES

There are three key learning outcomes:

- To bring together and utilize the diverse sets of skills and knowledge gained throughout the Masters coursework.
- To gain in-depth knowledge on a criminological or criminal justice topic of interest to the student.
- To gain new skills (and have an opportunity to practice) researching and writing a paper on a criminological or criminal justice topic.
COURSE MEETINGS

This is a hybrid course that has required in-class sessions, individual student-Professor meetings, and online components. During the beginning of the semester, classes will meet more regularly and will focus on the formulation of a research topic. The middle of the semester will revolve primarily around individual meetings and online components. This phase of the course will involve substantial independent work outside of class. Students will exchange ideas and papers through Blackboard and provide feedback. The instructor will oversee this process. Students will also be responsible for regular meetings with the instructor. Class will meet regularly during the end of the semester, when students will present summaries of their research papers to the class.

COURSE READINGS


COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A number of different graded requirements will be utilized to fulfill the course goals. Graded requirements include:

1. action items (discussion board forums, peer reviews, and written assignments structured around the building of the research project);
2. a final research project/paper;
3. a class presentation of the final research project; and
4. attendance & participation.

See the “Course Grading” section below for specific allocation of points. These requirements will be discussed in depth throughout the semester.

COURSE EVALUATION

The final course grade (out of 1,000 points) consists of 4 key components:

1. **Final Course Research Paper** 180
   *Details regarding the final paper will be discussed throughout the semester.*

2. **Class Attendance/Participation** 110
   *Students are expected to attend every in-class meeting and every scheduled individual meeting with the professor. The attendance and participation grade is based on attendance and participation during these meetings.*

3. **Class Presentation** 150
   *Details regarding the presentation of the final paper will be discussed throughout the semester.*
4. **Action Items**

Action items work in conjunction toward the final paper and presentation. Action items consist of written/oral assignments, peer reviews, and discussion board forums. There are 5 written/oral assignments (70 points each) for a total of 350 points. There are 2 peer reviews (30 points each) for a total of 60 points. There are 4 discussion boards (60, 30, 30, and 30 points) for a total of 150 points. Detailed expectations for each of the action items will be discussed in class. Below is a detailed list of the action items:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Item</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Assigned</th>
<th>Completed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>1/11</td>
<td>1/25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-class PPT presentation on potential research topic and research questions</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>II (DB I)</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>1/25</td>
<td>2/1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Choose a research topic and research question; make the case for the import of the research topic and research question</td>
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<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>2/8</td>
<td>2/22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Annotated bibliography</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>IV (DB II)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2/8</td>
<td>2/29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify the theoretical foundation for the study</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>V (DB III)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2/8</td>
<td>2/29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify the structure of the literature review</td>
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<tr>
<td>VI (DB IV)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2/9</td>
<td>3/14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Identify a research methods strategy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>VII</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>3/14</td>
<td>3/21</td>
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<tr>
<td>Write a formal introduction to the course project</td>
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<tr>
<td>VIII</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3/14</td>
<td>3/28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer review of introductions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>IX</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>3/28</td>
<td>4/4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write a formal research methods section</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3/28</td>
<td>4/11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peer review of research methods sections</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>XI</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>3/28</td>
<td>4/11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Write the literature review outline</td>
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GRADING SCALE

B- 829–800  C-  729–700  D-  629–600

Note that absolutely no extra credit will be given or accepted in this course. Grades will be based strictly on the assignments above.

CLASS CONDUCT & POLICIES

Class Conduct

Arrive to class on time, come prepared, respect others’ views, and turn in assignments on time.

Blackboard & Communication

Blackboard technology will be integrated into this class. You can access the main blackboard site at http://blackboard.neu.edu. You are responsible for checking this site regularly as course information will be added to the site. Blackboard training courses are offered for free through the University. See a representation from the “Help Desk” at the Info Commons in Snell Library.

Students are expected to check Blackboard as well as email on a regular basis. Important information such as assignments, class cancellations, and changes in course material may be relayed via Blackboard and email.

If you need to contact me, use the email provided above. Please put “Graduate Capstone” in the subject line of the email.

Extended Absences

In the rare instance where a student expects to miss class for an extended period of time (i.e., serious illness) or multiple classes regarding the same issue, he or she must contact me as soon as possible. Students must provide a documented reason for an extended absence in order to make any arrangements regarding missed work. All circumstances will be evaluated on an individual basis.

Laptops, Cell Phones, and Pagers

You are not permitted to use the internet in the classroom; laptops should only be used for taking notes. Please turn off your cell phones and pagers before coming to class. This includes text messaging! If I suspect you of using technology for purposes unrelated to the course, I reserve the right to disallow the use of technology in the classroom.
**Missing Assignments and Extra Credit**

I must be notified in advance if you will be submitting an assignment late. Acceptable “excuses” relate to serious emergencies such as a death in the family and serious illness. Documentation may be requested and I reserve the right to approve or deny any such requests. Unexcused late assignments will be penalized 25% each day (including Saturday and Sunday), beginning immediately after the class ends (note that an assignment submitted 5 minutes after class ends will be considered late and penalized 25%). After four days, a grade of zero will be given for any assignment not handed in. Absolutely no extra credit will be given or accepted.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

All students enrolled in this course must adhere to Northeastern University's policy on “Academic Honesty and Integrity.” Those of you who are unfamiliar with this policy are expected to read it online at: [http://www.neu.edu/osccr/academichonesty.html](http://www.neu.edu/osccr/academichonesty.html). Violations of the academic honesty and integrity policy will not be tolerated, and will be reported to university officials. I take this policy very seriously and will make every effort to ensure it is strictly followed. If you are caught cheating, you will receive a failing grade for the course – no exceptions. If you are in any way unclear about this policy, please come speak to me.

**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

Any student who may require special accommodations for this course should notify me as soon as possible. You may need to register with the university’s Disability Resource Center (DRC). The DRC can provide students with services such as note-takers and extended time for taking exams. The DRC is located in 20 Dodge Hall and can be reached at 617-373-2675.

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### CLASS SCHEDULE – AT A GLANCE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK 1:</th>
<th>January 11th</th>
<th>Class Meeting: “Getting Started”</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WEEK 2:</td>
<td>January 18th</td>
<td>NO CLASS – MLK JR. DAY (Optional Individual Meetings)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEEK 3:</td>
<td>January 25th</td>
<td>Class Meeting: “Choosing a Research Topic/Question”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEEK 4:</td>
<td>February 1st</td>
<td><strong>Individual Meetings – Email To Schedule</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEEK 5:</td>
<td>February 8th</td>
<td><strong>Class Meeting: “Planning the Literature Review”</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEEK 6:</td>
<td>February 15th</td>
<td>NO CLASS – PRESIDENT’S DAY (Optional Individual Meetings)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEEK 7:</td>
<td>February 22nd</td>
<td><strong>Online Component: “Planning the Literature Review”</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEEK 8:</td>
<td>February 29th</td>
<td><strong>Class Meeting: “Choosing a Research Design”</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>WEEK 9:</td>
<td>March 7th</td>
<td>NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEEK 10:</td>
<td>March 14th</td>
<td><strong>Individual Meetings – To Be Scheduled</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEEK 11:</td>
<td>March 21st</td>
<td><strong>Online Component: “Writing the Introduction”</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEEK 12:</td>
<td>March 28th</td>
<td><strong>Class Meeting: “Formalizing the Structure of the Paper”</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>WEEK 13:</td>
<td>April 4th</td>
<td><strong>Online Component: “Writing the Core of the Paper”</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>WEEK 14:</td>
<td>April 11th</td>
<td><strong>Class Meeting: “Writing the Conclusion Section”</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>WEEK 15:</td>
<td>April 18th</td>
<td>NO CLASS PATRIOTS DAY (Optional Individual Meetings)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEEK 16:</td>
<td>April 25th</td>
<td><strong>Class Meeting – Presentations and Final Papers Due</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CRIM 7400: GRADUATE CAPSTONE

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WEEK 1: January 11th  
Class Meeting: “Getting Started”

Goals:
- Introduce the course
- Read and understand syllabus and course requirements
- Move toward the course project

Discussions:
- How to choose a research topic
- Brainstorming

Assignments:
- Action Item I (assigned)

Readings:
- Turabian, Kate L. (Chapter 1 & 2)

WEEK 2: January 18th  
NO CLASS – MLK JR. DAY (Optional Individual Meetings)

WEEK 3: January 25th  
Class Meeting: “Choosing a Research Topic/Question”

Goals:
- Receive feedback on potential topic and research questions
- Progress toward the course project

Discussions:
- Accessing information

Assignments:
- Action Item I (presented)
- Action Item II, Discussion Board I (assigned)

Readings:
- Turabian, Kate L. (Chapter 3 & 4)

WEEK 4: February 1st  
Individual Meetings – Email To Schedule

WEEK 5: February 8th  
Class Meeting: “Planning the Literature Review”

Goals:
- Define scope of course project
- Begin to frame the literature review
- Become familiar with research on your topic/question

Discussions:
- Framing the literature review
- Theorizing your hypothesis

Assignments:
- Action Item II, Discussion Board I (completed)
- Action Item III (assigned)
- Action Item IV, Discussion Board II (assigned)
▪ Action Item V, Discussion Board III (assigned)

Readings:
▪ Turabian, Kate L. (Chapters 5 & 6)

WEEK 6:  February 15th  NO CLASS – PRESIDENT’S DAY (Optional Individual Meetings)

WEEK 7:  February 22nd  Online Component: “Planning the Literature Review”
Goals:
▪ Submit annotated bibliography
▪ Discuss the content and structure of the literature review
Assignments:
▪ Action Item III (completed)
▪ Action Item IV, Discussion Board II (continued)
▪ Action Item V, Discussion Board III (continued)

WEEK 8:  February 29th  Class Meeting: “Choosing a Research Design”
Goals:
▪ Choose appropriate research design for course project
Discussions:
▪ Choosing a research design
▪ Group brainstorming
Assignments:
▪ Action Item IV, Discussion Board II (completed)
▪ Action Item V, Discussion Board III (completed)
▪ Action Item VI, Discussion Board IV (assigned)
Readings:
▪ Turabian, Kate L. (Chapter 7)

WEEK 9:  March 7th  NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK

WEEK 10:  March 14th  Individual Meetings – To Be Scheduled
Goals:
▪ Discuss the content and structure of the literature review
▪ Discuss the research design strategy
Assignments:
▪ Action Item VI, Discussion Board IV (completed)
▪ Action Item VII (assigned)
▪ Action Item VIII (assigned)

WEEK 11:  March 21st  Online Component: “Writing the Introduction”
Goals:
▪ Begin the composition of the final research paper
Assignments:
▪ Action Item VII (completed)
WEEK 12: March 28th  Class Meeting: “Formalizing the Structure of the Paper”
Goals:
- Begin writing the core parts of the research paper
Assignments:
- Action Item VIII (completed)
- Action Item IX (assigned)
- Action Item X (assigned)
- Action Item XI (assigned)
Readings:
- Turabian, Kate L. (Chapter 8 & 9)

WEEK 13: April 4th  Online Component: “Writing the Core of the Paper”
Goals
- Formalize the content and structure of the research methods section
- Formalize the structure and content of the literature review section
Assignments:
- Action Item XI (completed)
- Action Item XII (completed)

WEEK 14: April 11th  Class Meeting: “Writing the Conclusion Section”
Goals
- Write, edit, and finalize the course research paper
- Focus on discussion section
Discussions:
- How to conclude a research paper
- Formatting the final research paper
- Formatting the class presentation
Assignments:
- Action Item XI (completed)
- Action Item XII (completed)
Readings:
- Turabian, Kate L. (Chapter 10, 11, 12, & 13)

WEEK 15: April 18th  NO CLASS PATRIOTS DAY (Optional Individual Meetings)

WEEK 16: April 25th  Class Meeting – Presentations and Final Papers Due
Goals:
- Present research to the class