CRIM 7713 ADVANCED RESEARCH AND EVALUATION METHODS
School of Criminology and Criminal Justice
Northeastern University
Spring 2016
Churchill Hall 200
Wednesday 1:35pm – 4:05pm

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Course Description:
This is an advanced seminar on research and evaluation methods. This seminar is designed to prepare you for: the foundations exam taken at the end of your first year of study; part II of the area exam; a career in research; and critically analyzing readings in the discipline. To accomplish these goals, two agendas will be addressed simultaneously throughout the semester: (1) substantive methodological considerations; and (2) the research process. Three major themes within the substantive part of the course will be explored: (1) sampling and measurement; (2) research design; and (3) methodological complexities. We will also discuss the research process, focusing specifically on how to begin and to compose a dissertation, how to read and review a research article, and how to write a research article. Time management skills, interpersonal skills, and professionalism will also be addressed. Successful completion of this course fulfills one of the core course requirements for the Ph.D. program.

Goals:
This course will build upon your current knowledge from a typical undergraduate methods survey course. The goal is to strengthen your capacity to digest existing criminal justice research and to lay a solid foundation for a productive research career of your own. Thus, the reading materials selected for this course reflect heavily on the current application of research methodology in the field of criminology and criminal justice where theories, research designs, and quantitative and qualitative analyses are intertwined.

Course Readings:
There are no required texts for this course. Most course readings are peer-reviewed journal articles that will be available for download on Blackboard. These articles relate to each topic that will be discussed in class; however, many of these are not seminal readings on the substantive topics. In addition, the course readings, lectures, and discussions are designed to provide a broad introduction to different issues in research methods, not to be all-encompassing. Therefore, students are encouraged to explore each topic in more depth; students interested in specific areas of the course should read outside of the class. Related topic readings, while not comprehensive, will be identified for this purpose; further, recommendations for seminal research sources will be provided when requested.
Class Format:
A typical course will begin with a brief lecture, presenting and summarizing the weekly methodological issue(s). This will be followed by a discussion of the research articles assigned for the week. The remaining class time will be devoted to the development of your course project (see below) and the research process.

Course Requirements and Grading:
Grades, in and of themselves, are not prioritized in this class. Instead, importance should be placed on understanding, digesting, and critically applying the key concepts discussed throughout the course. There are three key graded components throughout the semester:

1. The research methods section of part II of the area exam (550 points)
   Students will obtain and use secondary data to construct a dataset to be used for part II of the area exam (the publishable paper). Details and specific grading rubrics for each part of the research project will be provided during the semester. Parts of the research project, point allocation, and due dates are as follows:
   - Complete the National Institute of Health (NIH) Protecting Human Research Participants Training (50 points) – 1/20
   - Prepare and submit IRB Protocol for project, if applicable (50 points) – 1/27
   - Describe data, participants, and sampling strategy of secondary data (50 points) – 2/17
   - Define and operationalize key concepts and control variables, including scaling, when applicable (50 points) – 3/2
   - Identify missing data concerns (50 points) – 3/23
   - Identify relationships between key variables (50 points) – 4/6
   - Final research methods section (250 points) – 4/13

2. Presentation of the year-long project, highlighting the research methods section (250 points)
   Students will present their research projects in class (4/13, 4/20). Presentations will include a brief description of the project along with a detailed discussion of the methodological strategy. Details and specific grading rubrics will be provided during the semester.

3. Article summaries and class participation (200 points)
   Active student participation is key to the success of this course. Throughout the course, students will be responsible for leading the discussion on assigned articles. Students are responsible for reading and summarizing each assigned article, actively discussing the articles and topics weekly, and raising pertinent questions. Attendance, while not anticipated to be an issue in a Ph.D. level course, will affect your class participation grade.
Tentative Class Schedule:

1/13  Introduction to Research Methods

Readings:


1/20  Survey Methods; Sampling

Readings:

Kleck, Gary, Jongyeon Tark, and Jon J. Bellows. 2006. What methods are most frequently used in research in criminology and criminal justice? Journal of Criminal Justice 34:147-152.


Related readings:


Major Crime Data Sources: the UCR; the NCVS; Self-Reports of Offending

Readings:


Related readings:


Experimental (and Quasi-Experimental) Designs; Evaluation Research

Readings:


**Related readings:**


**2/10 Qualitative Methods: Field Research; In-Depth Interviewing; Ethnography**

**Readings:**


**Related readings:**


2/17  **From Theory to Research: Causality; Conceptualization and Operationalization**

**Readings:**


**Related readings:**


2/24 Measurement Validity and Reliability; Scaling

**Readings:**


**Related readings:**


3/2 Measurement: Causality; Conceptualization and Operationalization; Measurement Validity and Reliability; Scaling

3/9 No Class – Spring Break

3/16 Missing Data

*Related readings:*


3/23 Missing Data (Continued); Interactions

Readings:

Related readings:


3/30 Nonlinear Relationships; Nonrecursive Models

Readings:


Related topic readings:


4/6 Social Network Analysis


Related topic readings:


**4/13 Student Presentations**

**4/20 Student Presentations**