CRIM 7713 ADVANCED RESEARCH AND EVALUATION METHODS

School of Criminology and Criminal Justice
Northeastern University
Spring 2015
Churchill Hall 301
Tuesday 1:35pm – 4:05pm

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Office Hours: T 10:30-1:00

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) quantitative methodological complexities. We will also discuss the research process, focusing specifically on how to formulate a research question, 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 graduate-level 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 empirical analyses are intertwined.

Course Readings:

There are no texts required 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, they 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). PPTs will be provided on Blackboard, when applicable. 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:
Research project (450 points)

Students will develop the backbone of an original research paper. I strongly encourage you to select a topic that has the potential to be the subject of part II of your area exam. 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:

- Statement of research topic and research question (50 points) – 1/27–2/3
- Proposed research methods strategy (50 points) – 2/17
- Literature review outline (50 points) – 3/17
- Written introduction (50 points) – 3/31
- Final research project (250 points) – 4/14

Presentation of research project (200 points)
Students will present their research projects in class (4/14, 4/21). Presentations will follow the format of a SCCJ dissertation proposal presentation. Details and specific grading rubrics will be provided during the semester.

Topic profile presentation (200 points)
I will work closely with each student to choose a research topic to teach to the class. Topics will cover material pertinent to research methods but not discussed in depth during class. There is flexibility in topics so as to benefit each student in his or her research. Examples include: validity and reliability: concerns for different research designs; major crime data sources: promises and problems; qualitative methods: field research, in-depth interviewing, and ethnography; and missing data concerns and solutions include: Students will “teach” the class on 4/7 and 4/14. Presentations must be limited to 45 minutes and include PPT and/or handouts, as applicable. Details and specific grading rubrics will be provided during the semester.

Article summaries and class participation (150 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 the Course and Dissertation Research
      Survey Methods: Sampling

Readings for the week:

Minneapolis Domestic Violence Experiment

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.


Project on Human Development in Chicago Neighborhoods (PHDCN): Sampling strategy
http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/PHDCN/sampling.jsp.

Related topic readings:


1/20  From Theory to Research: Conceptualization and Operationalization

Readings for the week:


Related topic readings:

1/27  Measurement: Causality, Validity, and Reliability

Readings for the week:


Related topic readings:


2/3  Major Crime Data Sources (Official Data, NCVS, Self-Reports)

Readings for the week:


Related topic readings:


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

*Readings for the week:*


*Related topic readings:*


2/17 Experiments: True and Quasi-Experimental Designs

**Readings for the week:**


**Related topic readings:**


**2/24 Evaluation Research**

*Readings for the week:*


*Related topic readings:*


**3/3 Scaling: Summated Rating Scale Construction, Factor Analysis, and Item Response Theory**

*Readings for the week:*


Related topic readings:


3/10 No Class – Spring Break

3/17 Interactions and Multilevel Analysis

Readings for the week:


Related topic readings:


3/24  Nonlinear Relationships and Nonrecursive Models

Readings for the week:


Related topic readings:


3/31  Social Network Analysis


Related topic readings:


4/7  Research Profile Presentations

4/14  Research Profile Presentations / Research Project Presentations

4/21  Research Project Presentations