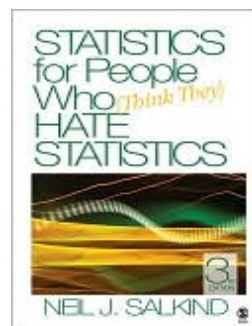
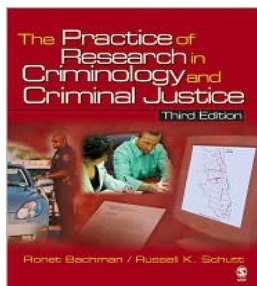


CJ634 – RESEARCH METHODS AND QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

College of Criminal Justice
Sam Houston State University
Spring 2008

Instructor: Dr. Jennifer L. Schulenberg
Campus Office: C-129
Office Phone: (936) 294-4480
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Class Hours: Online
Classroom: N/A
Office Hours: By appointment

Required textbooks:



Bachman, R., & Schutt, R.K. (2007). *The practice of research in criminology and criminal justice* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Pope, C.E., Lovell, R., & Brandl, S.G. (2001). *Voices from the field: Readings in criminal justice research*. The Wadsworth Contemporary Issues in Crime and Justice Series. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning.

Salkind, N.J. (2008). *Statistics for people who (think they) hate statistics* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Course Description:

The intent of this course is to provide you with an overview of current methodological techniques used to conduct research in criminal justice as well as a functional understanding of statistics that are commonly used to investigate questions in the social sciences. The emphasis is placed on the student's ability to recognize and interpret research methodologies and statistics so they become informed consumers. The course is built around providing

foundational knowledge to prepare students to evaluate, understand, and critique research in the field of criminal justice.

Learning Objectives:

Students will be expected to do the following upon completion of the course.

- To develop an understanding of how the scientific methods of research are used in criminal justice
 - To better understand research that is presented in journal articles, newspapers, reports, and other venues
 - To demonstrate an understanding of common statistical techniques applied in the social sciences
 - To understand the planning and effort involved in conducting criminal justice research
 - To enhance the ability of understanding statistical results when presented in criminal justice research
 - To become a better consumer of research in the social sciences
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Policies and Notifications:

Attendance Policy: Class attendance requirements will be followed in accordance with Academic Policy Statement 800401. Students are expected to attend all class sessions and actively participate in the class. An attendance policy is rather pointless for an online graduate class. However, it is important to note the due dates established for the course assignments as outlined in the course schedule. As by its very nature an online course is flexible, it is entirely incumbent upon the student to see that all work is handed in by the stipulated due date. Late papers will be penalized.

Academic Dishonesty:

<http://www.shsu.edu/administrative/faculty/sectionb.html#dishonesty>

Disabled Student Policy:

<http://www.shsu.edu/~vaf/www/aps/811006.html>

Services for Disabled Students:

<http://www.shsu.edu/~counsel/sswd.html>

Student Absences on Religious Holy Day Policy:

<http://www.shsu.edu/catalog/scholasticrequirements.html#holyday>

Make-up Examinations: Make-up exams will not be given unless a student can provide appropriate cause for missing the exam. Examples of this would be:

- An illness that is certified with a licensed physician's note stating that the student should avoid participating in class functions.
- A certifiable death or other cataclysmic life course event that can be documented and/or verified.

A student must inform me prior to missing the exam or following when the situation is warranted. Students who cannot demonstrate appropriate cause will receive a failing grade for the exam.

Grading Policy:

The requirements for the course are as follows:

Critical papers (7)	70 points
Statistics assignments (7)	70 points
Online discussion	60 points
Final exam	<u>100 points</u>
Total	300 points

The final grade will be based upon the following grading scale:

A	270 – 300 points (90% to 100%)
B	240 – 269 points (80% to 89%)
C	210 – 239 points (70% to 79%)
F	209 points or less (69% and below)

Grading Components:

Critical papers – Each worth up to 10 points (for a combined total of up to 70 points)

You will respond in writing to readings from the Pope et al. (2001) text for each module in the course (8 modules). Each of these 2-3 page typed critical papers should demonstrate your familiarity with course material and incorporate your critical response by comparing and evaluating the readings from the Pope et al. (2001) text. Any critical paper that is analytical, thoughtful, and utilizes course content will be considered acceptable. However, a strong critical paper will take a stance on the substantive topic and use course material to support and/or refute that position. All eight critical papers will be graded; however, the lowest grade will be dropped when calculating the final grade. Critical papers will be handed in and returned via email.

Statistics assignments – Each is worth up to 10 points (for a combined total of up to 70 points)

For each module, questions will be assigned that concern that week's statistics readings. Students will hand in answers to the questions via email by the due date stipulated in the course schedule. As with the critical papers, all eight statistics assignments will be graded; however, the lowest grade will be dropped when calculating the final grade. Statistics assignments will be returned via email.

Online discussion – Worth up to 60 points

Starting in Module 2, an online forum will be created in Blackboard for each of the Pope et al. (2001) articles assigned. Individual students will be assigned questions to answer in the forum on a rotating basis. In addition, fellow students should feel free to comment on the responses

given and offer additional detail or explanation when they feel it is appropriate. This is to serve as an excellent resource for you when you go to write your critical papers and integrate the knowledge from all the textbook material in the context of the Pope et al. (2001) assigned readings.

Final exam – Between May 8 and May 14 – Worth up to 100 points

The exam is a comprehensive final exam comprised of a series of short and long essay questions. The exam will be open book thereby allowing you to incorporate personal notes as well as the material from the textbooks in your response. The final exam will be administered by email within a stipulated time frame. The final exam cannot be taken until all other course work has been handed in and not prior to May 8th. Note: I will retain all final exams following the class. If you wish to see your exam and discuss your grade please make an appointment.

Comments on the nature of online courses:

An online course, as many of you are aware, is a very different learning process and environment. The initiative in a class like this rests entirely on you. Complicating matters, with the exception of assignments being handed in your professor has little, if any, way of gauging your knowledge, grasp, and understanding of the material. What does this all mean? You must ask questions! I can be contacted by phone or by email. I strongly encourage you to do so if you would like clarification of the material or assignments. I guarantee that if you have a question then others in the class are probably wondering the same thing. I will set up a questions area on Blackboard for this purpose as well.

Make use of the online tools provided in Blackboard. The discussion board is not meant to be a burdensome tool. It is meant to replace a classroom discussion. There is no real substitute but this gives you a chance to compare 'notes' with your classmates. In addition, I will be reading these boards and commenting just as I would if this were a discussion in a regular classroom.

This is a graduate level course and I will therefore be looking for graduate level work. This means typed, edited, and spell checked submissions.

Don't wait until the last minute. I cannot emphasize this enough. I realize that many of you are working full time jobs in addition to taking courses and that class work can be constantly pushed further and further back on the agenda. However, I can't be expected to be online or checking email at all hours of the day and night. I will be checking email regularly but don't count on asking me a question at 8 p.m. on the day an assignment is due and having an answer by the 11:59 p.m. deadline that evening. I will, of course, reciprocate on this and not send any questions or additions I expect to be answered immediately either. ☺

The work you are required to do for this course is very much the same work you would be completing in a traditional class format. The books and assignments are the same. I believe that a strong foundation in research methods and an understanding of basic statistics will be an asset to many of you regardless of your chosen profession.

Finally, don't confuse the message with the medium. I have tried to offer you class presentations that are 'similar' to what you might see in the classroom version of this course. But, like in a classroom setting, my presentation powerpoints are no substitute for completing the assigned readings.

Course Outline:

MODULE	START DATE	DISCUSSION COMMENTS DUE	CRITICAL PAPER/ STATISTICS ASSIGNMENTS DUE DATE	BACHMAN & SCHUTT	SALKIND	POPE ET AL.
1	January 16	January 23	January 25	Chapters 1-3	Chapters 1-2	Chapter 8
2	January 28	February 8	February 10	Chapter 4	Chapters 3-4	Chapter 2
3	February 11	February 22	February 24	Chapters 5-6	Chapters 5 & 7	Chapter 3
4	February 25	March 7	March 9	Chapter 7	Chapters 8-9	Chapter 4
5	March 10	March 21	March 23	Chapter 8	Chapters 10-11	Chapter 9
6	March 24	April 4	April 6	Chapter 10	Chapters 12-13	Chapter 13
7	April 7	April 18	April 20	Chapter 11	Chapter 14, 16	Chapter 1
8	April 21	May 2	May 4	Chapters 9, 12-13	Chapter 15	Chapter 5

Final Exam will be available after May 8 (last class day) until May 14.

- All due dates refer to 11:59 p.m. of that day.
- The Start Date is the estimated start time of when students should begin the particular module.
- Discussion Comments Due refers to the date when all students should have posted answers to specified questions about that modules particular reading from the Pope text. These questions will be posted online while answers will be posted in a designated discussion board.
- Critical Paper/Statistics/Additional Comments is the due date for all work to be handed in for that particular module(critical papers, statistics assignments, posting comments on the discussion board).