



SYLLABUS
AJ 420 Methods of Research and Planning
Spring 2010

Professor: Kelly Cheeseman Dial, PhD

Office: GCSSC 140B

Telephone:

Email: Kelly.dial@usm.edu

Class Hours: T 9-11:45

Classroom: CH 203

Office Hours: Tuesday 12-4, Wednesday 10-4-12, Thursday or BY APPOINTMENT

Required Texts

Hagan, F. E. (2002). *Research Methods in Criminal Justice and Criminology*, Sixth Edition

** additional readings may be required and will be provided by the instructor

Course Goal

This course is an upper-level undergraduate course designed to explore the basic methods of scientific inquiry with an emphasis on the practical aspects of research design and implementation. Topics include the philosophy of science, the relationship of sampling theory to statistical theory, causation, non-experimental and experimental design, data analysis, and data processing techniques. Additional topics include research ethics, survey methods, validity and reliability, qualitative research, secondary data methods, analysis, and presentation.

Many of you will leave this course and assume roles in society that involve the enforcement, creation, or interpretation of crime policies that are driven by various research and studies conducted in criminal justice. In this effort, it is essential that you not be mere automatons in the performance of duty. Class lectures will be conducted according to a lecture-discussion format. Lectures and presentation materials will help clarify points made by the author(s). Discussions (a major emphasis in the class) will help other students think critically about research and what it means to society as a whole and the criminal justice field in particular. It is crucial that students come to class prepared having read the required material for class and having completed any other tasks or assignments that are required. Films, other video presentations, and guest speakers will be utilized to try and critically evaluate criminology

and its importance in society. The criminal justice system and the research that drives it do not exist apart from the people who make, enforce, and suffer from it.

Course Objectives:

1. To learn and have fun in the process.
2. To introduce the student to research and theories that are relevant to understanding crime and deviant behavior in the 21st Century.
3. To increase our understanding of the research methods and how this impacts ourselves and society as a whole.
4. To provide a forum for students to express their ideas and feelings regarding the criminal justice system and how it responds to people.

Attendance Policy:

It is expected that students attend class and be prepared to discuss the scheduled topic. Attendance will be taken at every class session. Please note that in class assignments/discussions/free writes are a portion of your grade and absences, for any reason, will begin to influence your grade.

Grading Policy and Course Requirements:

Student course grades will depend on:

Test #1	30%	Grade: _____
Test #2	30%	Grade: _____
Test #3	30%	Grade: _____
In Class Assign.	10%	Grade: _____

Grades indicate either superior (A), good (B), satisfactory (C), passing (D) or Failing (F) evidence of, among other things, the student's grasp of the subject matter; critical evaluation of the subject matter; and ability to organize, analyze, and integrate ideas.

The following is the course grade distribution:

A	90-100
B	80-90
C	70-80
D	60-70
F	59 and below

TESTS: Tests will consist of multiple choice, true/false questions, and essay questions. The tests will cover material presented in class as well as material for the assigned readings in the textbook.

PLEASE BRING A SCANTRON WITH YOU TO THE EXAMS

CLASS PARTICIPATION: As noted above class participation is essential to the learning process and facilitates class discussions. Although attendance in class is important it is also necessary to be an active participant in learning. The instructor may place students into groups and facilitate discussions on a variety of topic areas that relate to criminology. Students are expected to contribute.

CLASSROOM CONDUCT: It is expected that students conduct themselves in a manner that is respectful of others. The instructor will not tolerate disrespect of others. The use of cell phones or other electronic devices is prohibited. **THIS INCLUDES TEXT MESSAGING AND LAPTOP COMPUTERS.** It disrupts your learning and the learning of others around you. This class is only one hour and 15 minutes in duration. If you cannot commit your full attention to class for any reason, please do not ruin the class for those who want to learn. The professor reserves the right to ask any student to leave if their behavior is disruptive (this includes students who are perceived to be under the influence of alcohol and/or other drugs).

E-mail Accounts:

Every student is issued an e-mail account by the university. The university uses this account to contact students with messages from the Administrative and other offices. Students in this class are required to access their university e-mail account. You will, on occasion, be receiving information about the class and materials through this account. **FAILURE TO HAVE AN ACCOUNT OR HAVE ACCESS TO IT IS NOT A FAILURE ON MY PART TO COMMUNICATE WITH YOU.**

Make Up Policy:

Make-up exams will not be given. There is a strict make-up policy for the exams. Instructors are not under any obligation to give a make-up exam unless the student has a valid excuse that can be supported by appropriate documentation (i.e. Dr.'s note) Only one make-up exam will be given. If you do miss an exam it is your responsibility to notify me and to get the make-up taken. Each make-up will be short answer and essay, and each must be scheduled and taken before the next exam.

Academic Honesty:

The Faculty at The University of Southern Mississippi expects students to conduct their academic work with integrity and honesty. Acts of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and can result in the failure of a course and dismissal from the University.

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating on a test, plagiarism, collusion, the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing work offered for credit, the abuse of resource materials, and misrepresentation of credentials or accomplishments as a member of the college.

University Policy on Disability:

If a student has a disability which qualifies under the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) and requires accommodations, he/she should contact the Office for Disability Accommodations (ODA) for information on appropriate policies and procedures. Disabilities covered by the ADA may include learning, psychiatric, physical disabilities or chronic health disorders. Students can contact ODA if they are not certain whether a medical condition/disability qualifies. Mailing address: 118 College Drive, 8586, Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001; Telephone: (601) 266-5024; TTY: (601) 266-6837; Fax: (601) 266-6035.

Class Schedule and Reading Assignments

The reading assignments for each class week are noted below. These reading assignments are the required reading for that particular class period and topic. It is expected that we may deviate somewhat from the time schedule as we spend more time on some topics and less on others. Nevertheless, unless stated in class you are expected to come to class with the days reading completed. Exams will include all reading material assigned up to the time of the exam, including those not discussed in class.

Important Dates to Consider

Last Day to Drop with 100% financial refund: Feb 1
Last Day to drop without academic penalty: March 3
Mardi Gras Holiday: Feb 15-16
Spring break: March 15-19
Last Day to file for Fall 2010 Commencement: March 12
Final exam week: May 10-13
Graduation: May 15

COURSE OUTLINE

	<u>TOPIC</u>	<u>READING DUE</u>
Week 1	Introduction/Syllabus	

Week 2	Theory and Method	Chapter 1
Week 3	Ethics Researcher's Role Professionalism Institutional Review Boards Avoiding Ethical Problems	Chapter 2
Week 4	Research Design: Internal Validity Causality Rival Causal Factors External Validity Experimental Designs The Classical Experimental Design Posttest-Only Control Group Design Solomon Four Group Design	Chapter 3
Week 5	TEST #1	
Week 6	Official Data and Secondary Data Use of Official Statistics	Chapter 4 and 8
Week 7	Sampling and Survey Research Questionnaire Construction	Chapter 5
Week 8	Survey Research Interviews & Telephone Surveys Interviewer Demeanor Probing/Recording General Procedures in Interviews	Chapter 6
Week 9	TEST #2	
Week 10	Participant Observation	Chapter 7
Week 11	Library Research Day	Outside Readings
Week 12	Thanksgiving Break	
Week 13	Validity and Reliability	Chapter 9

Week 14

Scaling and Index Construction

Chapter 10

Week 15

TEST #3