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2021

CRJ 380: Research Methods in Criminal Justice syllabus

Paul M. Hawkins

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CRJ 380: Research Methods in Criminal Justice

Section 001

Fall 2021

3 semester credit hours

Prerequisites: C or better in CRJ 110 and STAT 150

Co-Required with LIB160

MWF 12:20 p.m. – 1:10 p.m.

Kepner Hall, Room 060

Instructor: Dr. Paul M. Hawkins, Ph.D.
Email: paul.hawkins@unco.edu
Office: Candelaria Hall 2075E
Student Office Hours: MWF 10:00am-11:00am or by appointment
Teaching Assistant: Allison Renegar
TA Email: TBD
TA Office: TBD
TA Office Hours: TBD



CRJ Library Professor/Liaison: darren.ilett@unco.edu; LIB160 Professors: rachel.dineen@unco.edu and ramon.garcia@unco.edu

Course Description: This course provides a general introduction to the process of social research and data collection in a criminal justice setting. We will first cover several issues that are central to most social research, including ethics, design, causation, measurement, and sampling. Students will learn how to examine research reports critically, how to review the research literature on a topic, and how to construct a research proposal independently.

Course Objectives: Upon successful completion of this course, each student will be able to:

1. understand the role of research and how it is used in criminal justice (CRJ Program Goals 1-4, 6 and 7)
2. formulate questions and design research to answer those questions (CRJ Program Goals 1-4 and 6)
3. understand the importance of ethics in research and protections afforded to research subjects (CRJ Program Goals 1-7)
4. critique research and determine both the strengths and weaknesses of a particular project (CRJ Program Goals 1-4 and 6)

5. design a research project, highlighting a strong level of understanding of the elements of conducting research (CRJ Program Goals 1, 3, 4, and 6)

Disclaimer: Students may vary in their competency levels on these objectives, and they can expect to achieve these objectives *only if* they honor all course policies, attend class regularly, complete all assigned work in good faith and on time, and meet all other course expectations of them as students.

Course Requirements:

1. Each student is expected to attend and participate in class (50 points).
2. Each student is expected to complete 11 in-class mini-assessments (100 points).
3. Each student is expected to complete five (5) homework assignments (100 points).
4. Each student is expected to complete one research proposal (100 points).
5. Each student is expected to complete one group project (250 points).

Note: All five requirements are graded. Each is discussed in the Grading Policy section.

***Required Course Materials:**

There are no required textbook/materials for this course. This course is supported through Open Educational Resources.

***Note:** supplemental readings may be assigned throughout the semester and distributed in class or made available on Canvas.

Canvas: <https://www.unco.edu/canvas/>

Technology Policy: Students are responsible for checking their UNC email and Canvas accounts on a regular basis (e.g., daily) to check for updates from the instructor. Laptops, notebooks, and smartphones may be used in class only for legitimate classroom purposes, such as taking notes, downloading class information from Canvas, or working on an in-class assignment, when instructed. E-mail, instant messaging, browsing the Internet, reading the news, playing games, or wasting your brain space on social media are not considered legitimate classroom purposes; such inappropriate technology use is distracting to those seated around you and is unprofessional. During certain class activities, I may ask each student to open or close their laptop, turn on or off their notebook, and take out or put away their smartphones so that we can actively construct knowledge together, or so that I can have everyone's full attention. If a student fails to adhere to this policy, the student will lose any earned points for the class session. If technological abuse becomes a recurring theme, the student's device(s) may be confiscated and returned at the end of the class session.

Grading Policy

Attendance & Participation (50 points): UNC expects all students to attend class. I will take attendance each class. It is vital for the success of this course that students come to class prepared and ready to participate. Being “fully prepared” means that students thoughtfully review and consider assigned materials prior to it being discussed in class. Furthermore, “participation” can take many forms ranging from attending class, asking and answering questions, paying attention, arguing points, engaging in ongoing discussion, to immersing in group activities and presenting to the class, and generally becoming regularly and fully involved in the dynamics of the class. **You start with 0 participation points** and earn your points as you progress through the semester. Each student can earn up to 60 participation points throughout the semester. Participation will be graded out of 50 points. As such, there are no extra credit opportunities in this course.

Keep in mind, additional participation activities may be announced or unannounced, will be decided upon by the instructor, and will come in many forms (e.g., small writing assignments, free writing, think/pair/share, general discussion, discussing audio/video clips, attending and reflecting on career/student development opportunities, and completing interactive exercises). The grading criteria for these activities will be discussed in class prior to the activities (typically ranging from 2-5 points).

Please note: You can't benefit from this portion of the course if you aren't in class or attentive to activities or updates posted on Canvas or the course syllabus. Moreover, you will need to come to class prepared to actively participate. I will update participation grades weekly on Canvas. If you have a question about your participation grade at any time throughout the semester, please contact me immediately.

Please note: Students who miss a participation opportunity and have a valid excused absence should contact the instructor by the next attended class to complete an alternative and individualized out of class assignment (within 1 week) of the excused absence for credit. Make-ups for unexcused absences are prohibited.

In-Class Mini-Assessments (100 points): The purpose of having you take low-stakes in-class mini-assessments is to ensure that you are learning the material presented and discussed in class. There will be roughly one in-class mini-assessment per week for 11 weeks of the semester (see course schedule for mini-assessment weeks). All mini assessments will be given and taken in class on Fridays. Each mini-assessment is worth 10 points. Your lowest mini-assessment score will be dropped from your final mini-assessment grade (out of 100 points) and thus, make-ups are prohibited. Mini-assessments will come in many forms such as multiple choice and true/false quizzes, free-writing, and problem solving activities.

Homework Assignments (HW) (100 points): Throughout the semester, each student will complete five (5) individual homework assignments. The homework assignments will help students apply the concepts learned in class sessions, and if done correctly, will help each of you construct your final research proposal. Each homework assignment is worth 20 points. Additional details regarding these assignments will be made available on Canvas and reviewed in class in the coming weeks. These homework assignments will be submitted and graded as individual assignments on Canvas. Any inference of academic dishonesty will be dealt with according to the Academic Honesty Policy reviewed below.

Final Research Proposal Paper (100 points): All students will be required to write an 8-page research proposal. The purpose of this paper is for students to gain experience working through and writing a proposal to study a criminal-justice related problem. We will not actually conduct the study, just propose to conduct the study. For the paper, students will select a topic; review the research literature on the topic; establish research questions; describe the method and plan for data collection; and discuss the potential policy implications. You will be writing the paper over the course of the term in HW#1-5 and building off your work in LIB 160. Guidelines for the paper will be distributed later in the semester, provided on Canvas, and discussed in class.

Textbook Chapter (250 points): All students will be required to participate in a group that works together to create an undergraduate CRJ research methods textbook chapter in conjunction with Open Educational Resources). A rough draft of the chapter will be reviewed around mid-term (100 points). A final draft of the chapter will be reviewed at the end of the semester (150 points). Additional details and guidelines for the textbook chapter will be provided on Canvas and discussed in class.

Grades will be determined as follows:

Course Requirement	Maximum Points	Percent of Total Grade	My Grades
Attendance & Participation	60	8.5%	/50
Mini-Assessments	100	16.5%	/100
HW#1-5	100	16.5%	/100
Final Research Proposal	100	16.5%	/100
Textbook Chapter	250	42%	/250
Total	600	100%	/600

Grades will be assigned using the standard scale. Your total number of points will be added, and letter grades assigned as follows: A+ 97-100%, A 94-96%, A- 90-93%, B+ 87-89%, B 84-86%, B- 80-83%, C+ 77-79%, C 70-76%, etc.

Tentative CRJ 380-001 Fall 2021 Course Schedule

Date	Topics
Week 1 August 23	Greetings, Overview of Course, Syllabus/Assignments Review
Week 2 August 30	Exploring the World of Research Design In-class Mini-assessment #1 Friday
Week 3 September 8	No class on 6 th (Labor Day) Foundations of Research and Research Design HW #1 Due Friday In-class Mini-assessment #2 Friday
Week 4 September 13	Research Questions In-class Mini-assessment #3 Friday
Week 5 September 20	Literature Reviews HW #2 Due Friday In-class Mini-assessment #4 Friday
Week 6 September 27	Research Ethics In-class Mini-assessment #5 Friday
Week 7 October 4	Measurement I In-class Mini-assessment #6 Friday
Week 8 October 11	Measurement II Textbook Chapter Rough Draft Due Friday
Week 9 October 18	Data Generation Techniques I In-class Mini-assessment #7 Friday
Week 10 October 25	Data Generation Techniques II HW #3 Due Friday In-class Mini-assessment #8 Friday
Week 11 November 1	Sampling I In-class Mini-assessment #9 Friday
Week 12 November 8	Sampling II In-class Mini-assessment #10 Friday
Week 13 November 15	Analysis I HW #4 Due Friday In-class Mini-assessment #11 Friday
Week 14 November 22	No class on 24 th and 26 th (Thanksgiving Break) Analysis I continued
Week 15 November 29	Analysis II HW #5 in class (peer review of research proposal)
Finals Week	Textbook chapter final draft due (December 10 th) Research Proposal final draft due (December 10 th)

Note: The above schedule, policies, procedures, and assignments in this course are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances (e.g., time constraints, weather, etc.), by mutual agreement, and/or to ensure better student learning. The general structure of the course this semester will consist of Monday lectures, Wednesday individual research project work, and Friday textbook chapter work.

Writing Guidelines: APA format, 7th Edition.

- Font: Times New Roman or Arial, 12 pts
- Double spaced pages, only one space between punctuation and start of new sentence
- All Margins: 1"

Additional Writing Guidelines/Tips:

1. Please write in complete sentences. Use Spell-check and Grammar-check.
2. Proofreading is essential.
3. Make sure you accurately cite all the references you use. The Bibliography reference must match the one in the text of the paper. Dates, author names, and page numbers must be correctly listed.
4. Only the references you use in the text of the paper appear in the Bibliography.
5. Please avoid using direct quotes. When you must use them, be sure to provide the page numbers.
6. It is preferred that you paraphrase the material and then cite it. Cite all information that you learned through your research. Ask this question: Did I know this statistic, fact, theory, institution, policy, practice, and/or research result before I read this source? If not, cite all the material you extract from the sources in your paper.
7. Make sure you use sub-headings where appropriate.
8. Every paper should have an "Introduction" and a "Conclusion". Before the end of the first page (preferably before the end of the first paragraph), you must state what the main topic of this paper is. Please make the thesis statement concise, on point, and manageable.
9. In this class, there is no "in regards to", "amongst" or "towards". By contrast, there is "in regard to", "among" and "toward". If the former terms are part of your usual writing pattern, refrain from using them in this course.
10. There is no "thing" in any writing assignment for this class. Stipulate what it is you are referring to and be consistent with the subject and verb agreement.
11. When proofreading, notice how frequently you are using the same verb or noun. For example, check how many times you are employing the terms, "examination" or "discuss" its derivatives in the same paragraph or page? There are certain verbs that tend to be in papers excessively. Try to avoid this.

Additional Policies and Information

Disability Resources

It is the policy and practice of the University of Northern Colorado to create inclusive learning environments. If there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that present barriers to students' inclusion or to accurate assessments of students' achievements (e.g. time-limited exams,

inaccessible web content, use of videos without captions), students should communicate about these aspects with their instructor(s) and contact Disability Resource Center (DRC) to request accommodations.

Office: (970) 351-2289, Michener Library L-80.

Students can learn more here: www.unco.edu/disability-resource-center

Title IX

The University of Northern Colorado is committed to providing a safe learning environment for all students that is free of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. Students who have experienced (or who know someone who has experienced) any of these incidents should know that they are not alone. UNC has staff members trained to support students to navigate campus life, to access health and counseling services, to provide academic and housing accommodations, to help with legal protective orders, and more.

Please be aware all UNC instructors and most staff members are required to report their awareness of sexual violence to the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC). This means that if students tell an instructor about a situation involving sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking, the instructor must share that information with the Title IX Coordinator, Larry Loften. Larry or a trained staff member in OIEC will contact the reporting students to let them know about accommodations and support services at UNC as well as their options to pursue a process to hold accountable the person who caused the harm to them. Students who have experienced these situations are not required to speak with OIEC staff regarding the incident. Students' participation in OIEC processes are entirely voluntary.

If students do not want the Title IX Coordinator notified, instead of disclosing this information to the instructor, students can speak confidentially with the following people on campus and in the community. They can connect you with support services and help explore options now, or in the future.

UNC's Assault Survivors Advocacy Program (ASAP): 24 Hr. Hotline 970-351-4040 or <http://www.unco.edu/asap>

UNC Counseling Center: 970-351-2496 or <http://www.unco.edu/counseling>

UNC Psychological Services: 970-351-1645 or http://www.unco.edu/cebs/psych_clinic

Students who are survivors, who are concerned about someone who is a survivor, or who would like to learn more about sexual misconduct or report an incident, can visit www.unco.edu/sexual-misconduct. Students may also contact OIEC at 970-351-4899 or email titleix@unco.edu.

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to practice academic honesty in every aspect of this course. Students who engage in academic misconduct are subject to grading consequences with regard to this course and/or university disciplinary procedures through the Dean of Students Office. More information about the academic misconduct process can be found in UNC's Student Code of Conduct (BEAR Code).

Attendance

Students are expected to attend class regularly. Each instructor determines the relationship between class attendance, the objectives of the class, and students' grades. Instructors are responsible for articulating their attendance policies and their effect on grades to students. Students are responsible for knowing the attendance policy of each course. Only the instructor can approve students' absences. Students are responsible for requesting such approval. In an effort to create inclusive learning environments, instructors should not require doctors' notes to determine whether or not to excuse an absence.

COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic is a complex, challenging, and fluid situation, which continues to evolve. UNC will follow applicable legal requirements and federal, state, and county public health recommendations and mandates in all decisions related to university operations. Students should review the Coronavirus website for the current academic term for the most up to date guidance. Students who fail to comply with UNC's public health requirements, such as the use of masks and social distancing, will be reminded of current policy; students who fail to correct their behavior will be asked to leave the classroom and may be referred to the Dean of Students office.

The safety and well-being of our Community of Bears requires each of us to be prepared to do our part to protect the health of our entire campus community, as well as our friends, families, and neighbors. It is important that all members of the university community work together to do all we can to keep our community safe.

Equity and Inclusion

The University of Northern Colorado (UNC) embraces the diversity of students, faculty, and staff. UNC honors the inherent dignity of each individual, and welcomes their unique perspectives, behaviors, and world views. People of all races, religions, national origins, sexual orientations, ethnicities, genders and gender identities, cognitive, physical, and behavioral abilities, socioeconomic backgrounds, regions, immigrant statuses, military or veteran statuses, sizes and/or shapes are strongly encouraged to share their rich array of perspectives and experiences. Course content and campus discussions will heighten your awareness of others' individual and intersecting identities. For information or resources, contact the Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, at 970-351-1944. If students want to report an incident related to identity-based discrimination/harassment, please visit www.unco.edu/institutional-equity-compliance.

Food Insecurity and Basic Needs

Knowing that food insecurity is experienced at higher rates among college students, UNC offers assistance to students facing food insecurity through an on-campus food pantry. The Bear Pantry is located in University Center 2166A and is open for regular hours throughout the semester. Please visit www.unco.edu/bear-pantry for more information. Students who face challenges (i.e., emotional distress, grief and loss, academic concerns, basic needs insecurity, navigating university processes) and believe this may affect their academic performance may contact Student Outreach and Support (SOS), which is part of the Dean of Students Office. SOS will help connect students with appropriate referrals based upon their needs. The Dean of Students Office can be reached at dos@unco.edu or via phone at 970-351-2001.

Land Acknowledgment

The University of Northern Colorado occupies the lands in the territories of the Ute, Cheyenne, Lakota and Arapaho peoples. The University acknowledges the 48 tribes that are historically tied to the state of Colorado. Thus, the land on which UNC is situated is tied to the history and culture of our native and indigenous peoples. UNC appreciates this connection and has great respect for this land. Additionally, the University community pays its respect to Elders past, present, and future, and to those who have stewarded this land throughout the generations.

As part of the learning and reflection process please visit <https://native-land.ca/> or call the Office of Equity & Inclusion at 970-351-1944.

Name in Use/Pronoun in Use/Name Change

Some students may have changed their names to better reflect their gender identity or for other reasons. The process to request that the University change the name that appears on Canvas and on the course roster is available here: <https://www.unco.edu/registrar/name-change.aspx>

Writing Center

The Writing Center offers three kinds of sessions to meet your writing needs: In-Person, Email, and Zoom Sessions. Trained Writing Center Consultants can assist you with writing assignments from any course or subject. Even if you think your writing is pretty good, it's always nice to have another reader look over your work.

To guarantee a session time, make an appointment using our online scheduling system: www.unco.mywconline.com. You will need to create a new account if you've never visited the Writing Center before. We also have walk-in session times available during our scheduled open hours, Monday – Friday 9:00 am – 4:00 pm in the Writing Center, Ross Hall 1230. We also have walk-in sessions in the library (first floor) Monday – Thursday evenings, 5:00 pm – 8:00 pm.

If your instructor requires you to visit the Writing Center, make sure to alert your Consultant, and/or check the box on the appointment form, and we will send an email confirmation of your session to your instructor.

For more information, email the Writing Center at writingcenter@unco.edu or visit the website: www.unco.edu/writing-center.