

CJ 5334: Methods of Social Research

Sul Ross State University – Spring 2026

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Class Room & Hours	: Online
Office Hours	: MAB 109, Monday 4:00 PM - 5:00 PM & by appointment.
Contacting Me	: This is an Online course, and the best way to reach me is via email. Do not hesitate to contact me for any reason. I will respond to email inquiries as soon as I can.

Required Texts

- 1) Michael G. Maxfield & Earl R. Babbie (2018), Research Methods for Criminal Justice and Criminology, 8th Edition, <https://www.cengage.com/c/research-methods-for-criminal-justice-and-criminology-8e-maxfield/9781337091824PF/>
- 2) American Psychological Association (October 2019), Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, Seventh Edition, <https://apastyle.apa.org/products/publication-manual-7th-edition-spiral>
- 3) Additional readings (e.g., articles, reports) will be posted on Blackboard.

Regarding scientific journal articles, the Bryan Wildenthal Memorial Library and Archives of the Big Bend in Alpine offer FREE resources and services to the entire SRSU community. Access and borrow books, articles, and more by visiting the library's website, <https://library.sulross.edu/>. Off-campus access requires logging in with your LoboID and password. Librarians are a tremendous resource for your coursework and can be reached in person, by email (srsulibrary@sulross.edu), or by phone (432-837-8123).

No matter where you are based, public libraries and many academic and special libraries welcome the general public into their spaces for study. SRSU TexShare Cardholders can access additional services and resources at various libraries across Texas. Learn more about the TexShare program by visiting <https://library.sulross.edu/find-borrow-request/texshare/> or ask a librarian by emailing srsulibrary@sulross.edu.

Mike Fernandez, SRSU Librarian, is based in Eagle Pass (Building D-129) to offer specialized library services to students, faculty, and staff. Utilize free services such as InterLibrary Loan (ILL), ScanIt, and Direct Mail to get materials delivered to you at home or via email.

Course Description

This course is intended to introduce you to research methods in social sciences in general and specifically in Criminal Justice. More specifically, the course provides extensive information about the methods of production and accumulation of knowledge. We are living in an era which is called as “information age”. Every individual, regardless of their differences in occupation, career, research interests, etc., is either consumer or producer (sometimes both) of research and information. For this reason, it is essential to understand how the information is produced, how the research was conducted, how the results of a study might apply in one’s occupation or everyday life. In this regard, during the course the students will gain knowledge about different topics regarding scientific research such as sources of knowledge, how to prepare, conduct, and interpret the findings of scientific research.

Course Learning Objectives

This graduate course will help you make the transition from student to independent researcher/scholar in the field of Criminal Justice. This course is designed to provide knowledge about various topics (such as research design, sampling, data collection, measuring crime, etc.) related to research methods in Criminal Justice profession. Upon successful completion of this course, you will be able to:

- Understand and explain the difference between different sources of knowledge (tradition, authority, and scientific observation).
- Design a research project and conduct review of literature review.
- Summarize three fundamental features of social science: theory, data collection, and data analysis.
- Distinguish between inductive and deductive forms of reasoning.
- Define and discuss different ethical considerations in criminal justice research. Describe examples of the special ethical questions sometimes raised by criminal justice research.
- Define causality and describe the three basic requirements for establishing a causal relationship in science, together with what is a necessary cause and a sufficient cause.
- Understand the concepts of validity, causation, unit of analysis, ecological fallacy, cross-sectional and longitudinal studies.
- Understand the role of concepts. Explain how concepts are mental images that do not exist in the real world.
- Distinguish different levels of measurement and the properties of different levels.
- Understand precision, reliability, and validity as dimensions of measurement quality.

- Understand and compare different measurements of crime based on different levels of analysis. Understand the difference between crimes known by or reported by the police and self-reported crimes.
- Distinguish between experimental and quasi-experimental designs. Understand the concepts such as pretest, posttest, experimental group, control group, and manipulation.
- Understand how the logic of probability sampling makes it possible to represent large populations with small subsets of those populations. Distinguish the variety of probability and nonprobability sampling models.
- Understand the process of survey research. Distinguish different methods of survey administration and provide examples of advantages and disadvantages of those methods.
- Understand that descriptive statistics are used to summarize data under study. Describe a frequency distribution in terms of cases, attributes, and variables. Compute and interpret percentages in contingency tables. Understand that multivariate analysis examines the relationships among several variables.

Student Learning Outcomes

GRAD-SLO 1: The student will be able to analyze the function and decision making of the court systems of the United States, including the ability to assess the impact the impact of court rulings, in particular those of the Supreme Court.

GRAD-SLO 2: Student will be able to identify and apply criminological theories and competing theory arguments.

GRAD-SLO 3: Student will be able to develop a working knowledge of the process and application of the methods of scientific research, including the ability to critique a piece of research based on its methodology and develop the ability to apply research to Criminal Justice and Homeland Security policy.

Attendance Policy

Students are expected to respect their classmates' and instructors' privacy and the work or comments they produce. All assignments you submit or tests you take must be your own work unless you have been requested that you work in groups. You may not submit work that is plagiarized or violates copyright laws. It is also your responsibility to respect copyright protection of licensed computer software. When you are taking a distance education course from a remote site, please remember that you are “guests” on the remote site campus. The

facilities, equipment, staff, and materials at that site are neither the property nor employees of Sul Ross State University. Please treat the site respectfully and be responsible for caring for the site that we have been allowed to use.

Absence policies in effect for on-campus, traditional classroom instruction courses also apply to students enrolled in distance education courses, including Web-based and ITV courses. The University allows a maximum of 20% absences in a course before an instructor may drop a student for excessive absences with a grade of "F". In Web courses, this policy is interpreted as not participating for more than 3 weeks in a long semester, 1 week in a summer session, or 3 days in the midwinter session. Any student dropped for non-participation will receive an "F" in the course dropped. Inactivity may include the following:

- Not logging on to the course
- Not submitting assignments
- Not participating in scheduled activities
- Not communicating with the instructor by phone or email, and/or
- Not following the instructor's participation guidelines stated in the syllabus

All students taking distance learning classes are responsible for checking their [Sul Ross email account](#) regularly for notices from the School and from their instructors. A student's Sul Ross email address is added to Blackboard when a student registers, so when instructors email students through Blackboard, the message is sent to the student's Sul Ross email account. Email accounts are automatically set up when a student registers. To use your SRSU email account, you will need to log in to the email system. The information you need to log in is a username and a password.

Class Participation Policy

This class is a fully online course; there are no class meetings. However, I want you to introduce yourself to all of us. This "Introduction" is a chance for you to "meet" your colleagues in the class and an opportunity to introduce yourself to your professor. You are also expected to log into the class at the earliest opportunity to check the class website every day for announcements. All assignments and examinations are to be completed online no later than the final due dates for each assignment. If you have questions regarding the reading material, assignments, quizzes, and exams, e-mail me.

Course Assessment

1 - Weekly Quizzes (10 Points Each): You will take a quiz every week to measure the knowledge of the week's required readings. The questions will be posted during the weekdays, and due date will be Sunday 11:59 PM every week.

2 - Midterm Exam and Final Exam (100 Points each): There will be a midterm exam and a final exam in this class. These exams will cover the assigned chapters and other relevant material covered in the course up to the date of the examination. The final exam will be cumulative, which means that the material from the entire course will be covered. Each of these exams will be worth 100 points. No make-up test will be given, unless an uncontrollable emergency or illness arises (written proof required).

3 - Research Proposal (100 points): There will be semester project on writing a research proposal. The semester project is designed to get you actively involved in the social research process by writing a 10+ page research proposal. The project is split into sections that will be assigned over the course of the semester in conjunction with the course readings. A final version of the paper is due at the end of the semester. The research proposal is comprised of five sections (assignments): 1 - Introduction, 2 - Literature Review, 3 - Methods, 4 - Measurement and Sampling, and 5 - Discussion and Conclusion. Each of these assignments is worth 20 points.

Please carefully read the "Research Proposal Guidelines" under the "Start Here" section on Blackboard. Your "Final Research Proposal" must be 10+ pages and must have a "Title Page", "Table of Contents", "Abstract", "Body of the Paper", and "References". Only count the "Body of the paper" towards your minimum page limit.

The paper should;

- a) be typed, double-spaced, 1-inch margins, 12-point Calibri font,
- b) include at least five scholarly citations other than the ones we covered in the class (no website articles, wikipedia, news agencies, magazines, and etc.),
- c) be written according to APA formatting and citation style.

A plagiarism detection software ([SafeAssign](#)) is used in this course. SafeAssign will detect and report all instances of plagiarism including where the student copied and pasted directly from a source. Students will receive a grade of "0" in these instances and possibly fail the course. Your weekly reaction papers and specialty papers will be submitted through SafeAssign.

Late Assignment Submission Policy

Students are supposed to finish their coursework on time and assignments must be submitted before the deadlines. In principle, I do not accept late work and do not believe in allowing students to turn in work after the due date. My position is that everyone knows the rules of

engagement at the beginning of the term and that it is the student's responsibility to ensure that they plan accordingly to submit their assignments and take their exams in a timely manner.

If an assignment/exam is missed or late the students are expected to show an appropriate cause for this issue. Late assignments will not be accepted unless there is an excuse that is recognized by the university. Students are encouraged to frequently review the syllabus and remain aware of the deadlines for all assignments and exams.

Some Useful Websites for Research Data

- 1- U.S. Census Bureau <https://www.census.gov/data.html>
- 2- The General Social Survey <http://gss.norc.ox.ac.uk/get-the-data/spss>
- 3- Cornell University ROPER Center for Public Opinion Research
<https://ropercenter.cornell.edu/>
- 4- SDA: Survey Documentation and Analysis <http://sda.berkeley.edu/index.html>
- 5- ICPSR, the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research
<https://www.icpsr.umich.edu>
- 6- The Global Terrorism Database (GTD) <https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/>
- 7- FBI The Uniform Crime Reports <https://www.fbi.gov/services/cjis/ucr>
- 8- The Police Data Initiative <https://www.policedatainitiative.org/>
- 9- DOJ Bureau of Justice Statistics <https://www.bjs.gov/>
- 10- National Comorbidity Survey (NCS) <https://www.hcp.med.harvard.edu/ncs/>
- 11- UMass. Amherst <https://guides.library.umass.edu/c.php?g=672421&p=4735755>

Recommended Video Website for Research Methods

"Against All Odds" is an excellent video resource series for students who want to understand and deepen their knowledge on research methods and basic statistical techniques. The videos may be watched at: <https://www.learner.org/series/against-all-odds-inside-statistics/>

Technology Requirements

Blackboard is a course management tool that is an integral part of this course. You are required to check Blackboard on a regular basis to keep abreast of course developments. Several Blackboard features are utilized throughout the course including email, course documents, the discussion board, grade center, external links, and SafeAssign. This course requires a significant amount of online activity. For students to participate in and progress in this course the followings are required.

Minimum Computer Skills Requirement

Using Blackboard does not require any special skills. Blackboard is, however, an Internet tool so you must possess basic computer skills, specifically

- using e-mail (sending, opening, replying, and saving attachments)
- web browsing (navigating, searching, and downloading)
- word processing (MS Word or compatible)

For more information and instructions about using Blackboard, see the Blackboard tutorials at: <https://help.anthology.com/blackboard/student/?lang=en>

Hardware & Software Requirements

You must have regular and reliable access to a computer with access to the Web. The computer must be robust enough to run one of the recent web browsers and download files in a reasonable amount of time. You will need to be able to reach the World Wide Web, either through a network at your place of business or through a connection from home, using an Internet Service Provider (ISP).

Academic Integrity

Be sure that you understand the university's Academic Honesty Policy. It is important that you refrain from any form of academic dishonesty or deception, such as cheating or plagiarism. SRSU students are responsible for reading, understanding, and abiding by the by the [Sul Ross Student Handbook](#) and the [Undergraduate & Graduate Catalog](#) and for abiding by the [University rules and regulations](#). SRSU and the instructor of this course both place a high priority on the academic integrity of their student scholars. As a result, all institutional guidelines and instructional policies concerning academic integrity will be strictly and uniformly enforced with all students regardless of context.

Students in this class are expected to demonstrate scholarly behavior and academic honesty in the use of intellectual property. A scholar is expected to be punctual, prepared, and focused; meaningful and pertinent participation is appreciated. Examples of academic dishonesty include but are not limited to:

- turning in work as original that was used in whole or part for another course and/or professor;
- turning in another person's work as one's own;
- copying from professional works or internet sites without citation;

- collaborating on a course assignment, examination, or quiz when collaboration is forbidden.

Students should also avoid using open AI sources unless permission is expressly given for an assignment or course. Violations of academic integrity can result in failing assignments, failing a class, and/or more serious university consequences. These behaviors also erode the value of college degrees and higher education overall.

APA Style

This course will use the American Psychological Association (APA) Seventh Edition formatting and style guide for all written assignments. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the use of APA a number of resources have been provided below. Please note that all external sources must be appropriately cited. A failure to do so constitutes plagiarism and is a violation of the course academic honesty standards. Beside numerous online sources you can also visit the following link for help with APA

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_style_introduction.html.

Online Support Desk

The Support Desk is where you can direct your more technical questions. For example, if you are having issues submitting a document, getting videos to play, or you are dealing with a technical error in the course. The support desk is open 24 hours a day / 7 days a week for your convenience. You can reach the support desk:

- By calling 432 - 837 8888
- Via email ltac@sulross.edu
- Using resources from the Technology Support tab within Blackboard
- Clicking the Support Desk graphic on the course homepage

Tutoring Center

The [Lobo Den Tutoring Center](#) offers FREE tutoring support to help you excel in your courses. Whether you need assistance in Writing, Math, Science, or other subjects, we're here to help!

Important Information:

- Drop-in and Scheduled Appointments: Flexible options to fit your needs.
- Hours of Operation: Monday–Friday, 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM.
- Workshops: Attend our regularly hosted academic workshops on STEM topics and professional development, often in collaboration with specialized faculty.

- Location: BWML Room 128.
- Contact Us: For more information or to book an appointment, email tutoring@sulross.edu or call (432) 837-8726.

Looking for additional support?

- Tutor.com offers FREE 24/7 online tutoring in over 200 subjects, including specialized support for ESL and ELL learners with native Spanish-speaking tutors.
- Access Tutor.com via Blackboard: Log in to your Blackboard account to get started anytime, anywhere.

Take advantage of these valuable resources to boost your confidence and performance in your classes. We look forward to helping you succeed!

Student Support Services - Counseling

Sul Ross has partnered with [TimelyCare](#) where all SR students will have access to nine free counseling sessions. You can learn more about this 24/7/365 support by visiting [Timelycare/SRSU](#). The SR Counseling and Accessibility Services office will continue to offer in-person counseling in Ferguson Hall room 112 (Alpine campus), and telehealth Zoom sessions for remote students and RGC students.

Students with Special Needs - Americans with Disabilities Act as Amended (ADAAA)

Sul Ross State University (SRSU) is committed to equal access in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1973. It is SRSU policy to provide reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request each semester for each class. Students seeking accessibility/accommodations services must contact Mrs. Mary Schwartz Grisham, LPC, SRSU's Accessibility Services Director or Ronnie Harris, LPC, Counselor, at 432-837-8203 or email mschwartz@sulross.edu or ronnie.harris@sulross.edu. RGC students can also contact Alejandra Valdez, at 830-758-5006 or email alejandra.valdez@sulross.edu. Our office is located on the first floor of Ferguson Hall, room 112, and our mailing address is P.O. Box C122, SRSU, Alpine. Texas, 79832.

Distance Education Statement

Students enrolled in distance education courses have equal access to the university's academic support services, such as library resources, online databases, and instructional technology support. For more information about accessing these resources, visit the SRSU website.

Students should correspond using Sul Ross email accounts and submit online assignments through Blackboard, which requires a secure login. Students enrolled in distance education courses at Sul Ross are expected to adhere to all policies pertaining to academic honesty and appropriate student conduct, as described in the student handbook. Students in web-based courses must maintain appropriate equipment and software, according to the needs and requirements of the course, as outlined on the SRSU website. Directions for filing a student complaint are located in the student handbook.

Departmental MS Program Marketable Skills

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) sets statewide goals through the 60x30TX initiative. The THECB plan includes four major goals: 60x30: Educated Population, Completion, Marketable skills, and Student debt. The [60x30TX](#) plan was designed to tie together all four student-centered goals. 60x30, which measures the educated population in Texas, is the overarching goal at the center of the plan and calls for 60 percent of 25- to 34-year-olds in Texas to hold a credential or degree by 2030. The 60x30 goal is supported by the other three goals (completion, marketable skills, student debt) that will get Texas to 60 percent by 2030.

By 2030, all graduates from Texas public institutions of higher education will have completed programs with identified marketable skills. Students who can effectively market their skills to potential employers can secure employment that pays competitively. Marketable skills include interpersonal, cognitive, and applied skill areas, are valued by employers, and are primary or complementary to a major. Marketable skills are acquired by students through education, including curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities. Marketable skills are often called “employability skills” in other countries, or “transferable skills” here in the states. They include both technical and soft skills. The marketable skills of Homeland Security and Criminal Justice MS Program are listed as follows:

1. Students Develop Verbal and Written Communication Skills.
2. Students Access Resources with Crime Data and Work with Numbers and Demonstrate Quantitative Skills.
3. Students Use Critical Thinking and Observation.
4. Students Use Teamwork and Work Collaboratively.
5. Students Develop Multicultural Understanding.
6. Students Know Legal Codes & Procedures and Safety.
7. Students Know How to Conduct Scientific Research.

Classroom Climate of Respect

Importantly, this class will foster free expression, critical investigation, and the open discussion of ideas. This means that all of us must help create and sustain an atmosphere of tolerance, civility, and respect for the viewpoints of others. Similarly, we must all learn how to probe, oppose and disagree without resorting to tactics of intimidation, harassment, or personal attack. No one is entitled to harass, belittle, or discriminate against another on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity, age, gender, national origin, or sexual preference. Still, we will not be silenced by the difficulty of fruitfully discussing politically sensitive issues.

Other Course Expectations

- Remember that this is a graduate level course, therefore, graduate level work will be expected which includes proper APA format, proper grammar, sentence structure, and organizational structure.
- Review the syllabus so that you may be aware of assignments and papers; Email for any clarifications.
- Review the feedback provided for all assignments for ways to improve work (I always provide feedback for assignments).
- Review any announcements for significant information.

Grading

12 Weekly Quizzes	120 points (10 points each)
1 Midterm Exam	100 points
1 Final Exam	100 points
5 Assignments (Semester Project)	100 points (20 points each)
Total	<u>420 points</u>

Final Grading Scale

A 420 - 378

B 377 - 336

C 335 - 294

D 293 - 252

F 251 & below

Tentative Weekly Course Schedule

Week	Dates	Topics	Assignments
1	January 14 – 18	Introduction of Syllabus and course requirements	Review syllabus and course requirements & Post your “Introduction”
2	January 19 – 25	Crime, Criminal Justice and Scientific Inquiry	Maxfield & Babbie - Ch. 1 Quiz 1
3	Jan. 26 – Feb. 1	Foundations of Criminal Justice Research	Maxfield & Babbie - Ch. 2 Quiz 2
4	February 2 – 8	Ethics and Criminal Justice Research	Maxfield & Babbie - Ch. 3 Quiz 3
5	February 9 – 15	General Issues in Research Design	Maxfield & Babbie - Ch. 4 Quiz 4 & Assignment 1
6	February 16 – 22	Concepts, Operationalization, and Measurement	Maxfield & Babbie - Ch. 5 Quiz 5
7	Feb. 23 – March 1	Measuring Crime	Maxfield & Babbie - Ch. 6 Quiz 6 & Assignment 2
8	March 2 – 8	Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs Midterm Exam, Chapters 1 – 6	Maxfield & Babbie - Ch. 7 Take the midterm exam
	March 9 – 13	Spring Break. No classes.	University Closed
9	March 16 – 22	Sampling	Maxfield & Babbie - Ch. 8 Quiz 7
10	March 23 – 29	Survey Research	Maxfield & Babbie - Ch. 9 Quiz 8 & Assignment 3
11	March 30 – April 5	Qualitative Interviewing	Maxfield & Babbie - Ch. 10 Quiz 9
12	April 6 – 12	Field Observation	Maxfield & Babbie - Ch. 11 Quiz 10 & Assignment 4
13	April 13 – 19	Agency Records, Content Analysis, and Secondary Data	Maxfield & Babbie - Ch. 12 Quiz 11
14	April 20 – 26	Evaluation Research and Problem Analysis	Maxfield & Babbie - Ch. 13 Quiz 12
15	April 27 – 29	Interpreting Data	Maxfield & Babbie - Ch. 14
16	April 29 April 30 May 1, 4 – 6	Last class day before finals Dead Day Final Exams Research Proposal is due on Sunday, May 5.	Final Exam Assignment 5

End of Course Evaluations

Student evaluations of faculty are administered online at the end of each term/session for all courses with five or more students. Students will receive an email containing a link to a survey for each course in which they are enrolled. All responses are anonymous.

****Syllabus is subject to updates and changes by announcement, always look to the course announcements and reminders for updates. The faculty member reserves the right to amend this syllabus as needed****