

Evaluation and Research Methodologies
CJUS 5700.001 and .600
Fall 2026

Professor Contact Information

- Eric J. Fritsch, Ph.D.
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- Office hours: By appointment

Course Description

Graduate Catalog Course Description: Quantitative and qualitative methods of gathering and analyzing data on crime and the justice system, with special attention devoted to evaluation methods.

Course Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Identify the purposes of conducting scientific research and address methodological issues necessary for conducting and critically analyzing criminal justice research.
2. Recognize the various forms of data collection and sampling techniques used in criminal justice research.
3. Explain issues in research design, including criteria for causality, types of validity, different types of research design, and stages in the research process.
4. Find and use resources for answering real world research questions.
5. Develop a research proposal and critically evaluate research.

Required Texts

No text is required for students enrolled in the class. It is recommended that you have access to an undergraduate criminal justice research methods textbook, but it is not required.

Course Requirements

There are a total of 550 points that students can earn in this class: 2 exams (100 points each, for a total of 200 points); 2 article critique assignments (100 points each, for a total of 200 points); and

1 research proposal (150 points). The grading scale and descriptions of the assessment measures are described below.

Grading Scale

495 – 550 points = A

440 – 494 points = B

385 – 439 points = C

330 – 384 points = D

Below 330 points = F

I do not offer extra credit in this course.

PLEASE NOTE: I DO NOT DEVIATE FROM THE ABOVE GRADING SCALE EVEN IF YOU ARE ONLY ONE POINT AWAY FROM THE NEXT LETTER GRADE.

Exams (200 points total)

There will be 2 online exams for this class which will be available on the course site in Canvas when they are released. The exams will consist of essay questions and are worth a maximum of 100 points each. ***You may use all course materials while completing the exams.*** The exams are designed to assess the knowledge that each of you has individually learned regarding the course materials. Therefore, I expect your exam responses to reflect your own individual and independent knowledge and work, without assistance from any other person. The exams themselves should not be copied or duplicated by you or anyone else for any purpose whatsoever. The university rules concerning academic integrity will be strictly enforced.

The exams will be included in the related course materials in Canvas, under *Modules*, and should be submitted there.

Students who do not complete any exam during the scheduled time period will receive a zero for the exam. *Exam grades will be available within 7 business days after the applicable exam period closes.*

Article Critique Assignments (200 points total)

There will be 2 online article critique assignments for this class which will be available on the course site in Canvas when they are released. The article critique assignments will consist of short-answer questions and are worth a maximum of 100 points each. The assignments are designed to assess the knowledge that each of you has individually learned regarding the course

materials. Therefore, I expect your assignments to reflect your own individual and independent knowledge and work, without assistance from any other person. ***You may use all course materials while completing the assignments.*** The assignments themselves should not be copied or duplicated by you or anyone else for any purpose whatsoever. The university rules concerning academic integrity will be strictly enforced.

The assignments will be included in the related course materials in Canvas, under *Modules*, and should be submitted there.

Students who do not complete any assignment during the scheduled time period will receive a zero for the assignment. *Assignment grades will be available within 7 business days after the applicable assignment period closes.*

Research Proposal (150 points total)

Each student will identify an empirical research question to be addressed by their research proposal. For this project, the research question must be causal in nature (what is the effect of X on Y?). In other words, proposals seeking to address research questions of a descriptive (e.g., characteristics of homicide offenders) or exploratory (e.g., how do prostitutes distinguish between undercover police officers and “Johns”?) nature are unacceptable. Because the proposal requires you to do a literature review, it is important that the research question be derived from existing literature on your topic. The topic must be approved by the professor. Further details and requirements for this proposal will be provided during the course and in Canvas.

The requirements for the research proposal are detailed in a separate handout available in Canvas, but a few comments are necessary. **The text (excluding title page, abstract, appendix, and references) of the proposal should be at least 23 and no more than 28 pages typed (double-spaced) pages long. There must be reference to at least 10 scholarly sources other than the required readings for class (for example, scholarly journals, books, research studies, and government statistics).** Parenthetical references to sources and a reference section concerning the sources cited in the proposal must be in APA format.

By Sunday September 20 at 11:59PM, all students must identify in writing the research proposal topic they have chosen. I need a brief statement of your topic (about one paragraph) including your research questions, methods, and citations for four scholarly sources that will be used in the paper. These proposal topics will not be graded but will be reviewed by the instructor and returned with comments. *The reviewed proposal must be submitted with the final paper. Any major changes in the topic must be approved by the instructor.* The final proposal is due on November 30.

A grading rubric will be utilized for the research proposal so students can identify how their proposals will be graded.

To submit the research proposal, click on "Submit Research Proposal Here" in Canvas and follow the instructions to upload your final document.

Students who do not complete the research proposal within the scheduled time period will receive a zero for the research proposal. *Late research proposals will generally not be accepted. Research proposal grades will be available within 7 business days after the applicable research proposal period closes.*

General Class Policies

Communication:

I will return emails and voicemails within 48 hours during Monday-Friday. If you do not receive a response from me during that period, assume that I did not receive your communication and contact me again. You are, of course, also welcome to communicate with me in person in Chilton Hall 265 by appointment.

If you are having technical or technological issues regarding coursework via Canvas, your first communication should be with the help desk at helpdesk@unt.edu or 940-565-2324. The technicians there have the expertise to help you resolve your issues.

Syllabus Change:

I reserve the right and have the discretion to change this syllabus. While every effort will be made to follow this syllabus as closely as possible, it is sometimes the case that it must be modified. In the case that it needs to be adjusted, I will announce such adjustments to the class. I will make every effort to ensure that any changes to the syllabus benefit the class as a whole. It is the student's responsibility to check announcements/notifications/emails so that any and all changes are documented. Failure to obtain syllabus changes because of failure to check and read announcements/notifications/emails does not constitute a basis for a missed applicable change.

Release of Coursework:

The coursework will be released on the course site in Canvas according to the Course Schedule.

Late Policy:

Because students have an extended period of time to complete exams, article critique assignments, and the research proposal, *coursework deadline extensions are not granted. A zero will be awarded for any coursework that is submitted late or not turned in at all during the scheduled time period.* However, students with absences that are authorized pursuant to university policy 06.039 Student Attendance and Authorized Absences **and** that impact the timeliness of their work (for example, by covering the entire time period during which the coursework could be done), should contact me and provide documentation *prior to any due date* in order for such absence to receive any consideration.

Individual technical or technological difficulties in completing coursework in a timely manner (e.g., computer crashes or viruses or interrupted internet connections) do not constitute a basis to request a coursework deadline extension. To avoid such issues, I encourage you to not wait until the final available hours or minutes to complete assigned coursework.

Course Etiquette:

This course provides the opportunity to thoughtfully discuss issues and exchange ideas. Your communication with me and your fellow students should be appropriate to the course and respectful of the opinions of others. Engaging in disruptive or disrespectful behavior in this course may result in your dismissal from this class, as provided in university policy.

Posting of Grades:

Students can access their grades via the *Grades* tab on the course page in Canvas. *Coursework grades will be available within 7 business days after the applicable coursework period closes.*

Academic Integrity:

The university rules (UNT Policy 06.003) concerning cheating and plagiarism will be strictly enforced. *Your work on exams, article critique assignments, and the research proposal should be your own individual and independent work. These are not group projects. You should not consult other persons when completing coursework.*

Generative Artificial Intelligence Use:

You are not allowed to use GenAI tools for the exams and article critiques. However, you are permitted to use GenAI tools (such as ChatGPT, Grammarly, or similar platforms) to supplement—rather than substitute—your learning during the research proposal. These tools can

assist with brainstorming, drafting, editing, and exploring complex ideas, helping you develop skills relevant to your future careers.

However, you remain responsible for the accuracy, integrity, and originality of your work. GenAI tools can produce errors, biases, or fabricated information, so you must critically evaluate all AI-generated content. Proper citation of GenAI use is required. Any work submitted must reflect your own understanding, analysis, and critical engagement with course material. Misuse of GenAI—such as submitting AI-generated work as your own without proper attribution or critical engagement—constitutes academic misconduct under UNT Policy 06.003.

Policy on Server Unavailability or Other Technical Difficulties:

The University is committed to providing a reliable online course system to all users. However, in the event of any unexpected server or any unusual technical difficulty which prevents students from completing a time sensitive assessment activity, the instructor will extend the time window for coursework submission.

SPOT (Student Perception of Teaching):

You will have the opportunity to complete the SPOT survey at the end of the semester and share your thoughts about the course. I value the feedback that I receive from the SPOT survey and strongly encourage you to participate by completing the survey in this class and all your classes.

ADA Statement:

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodations for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet (i.e., electronically, phone, or in person) with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information, see the Office of Disability Access website at <http://disability.unt.edu/>. You may also contact them by phone at 940.565.4323.

Intellectual Property Statement:

Some of the material provided in this course is my personal intellectual property or that of the university. You may not use this material for anything other than class purposes.

Emergency Notification & Procedures:

UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify students with critical information in the event of an emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). In the event of a university closure, please refer to Canvas for contingency plans for covering course materials.

Course Schedule

Class Meeting Date	Activity	Activity Due Date/Time
Week 1 August 17	Class Introduction	
Week 2 August 24	Measurement - Section 1 Materials in Canvas	
Week 3 August 31	Measurement – Section 1 Materials in Canvas	
September 7 – No Class – Labor Day – University Closed		
Week 4 <i>No Class Meeting on September 14</i>	Complete Research Proposal Topic	<i>Research Proposal Topic</i> due by Sunday September 20 at 11:59PM
Week 5 September 21	Measurement - Section 1 Materials in Canvas	
Week 6 September 28	Sampling – Section 2 Materials in Canvas	
Week 7 October 5	Sampling – Section 2 Materials in Canvas	
Week 8 <i>No Class Meeting on October 12</i>	Complete Article Critique 1	<i>Article Critique 1</i> due by Sunday October 18 at 11:59PM
Week 9 October 19	Sampling – Section 2 Materials in Canvas	
Week 10 <i>No Class Meeting on October 26</i>	Complete Exam 1	<i>Exam 1</i> due by Sunday November 1 at 11:59PM
Week 11 November 2	Design and Methods – Section 3 Material in Canvas	

Week 12 November 9	Design and Methods – Section 3 Material in Canvas	
Week 13 November 16	Design and Methods – Section 3 Material in Canvas Individual Meetings on Research Proposal	
November 23 – No Class – Thanksgiving Break		
Week 14 <i>No Class Meeting on November 30</i>	Complete Research Proposal Complete Article Critique 2	<i>Research Proposal</i> due by Monday November 30 at 11:59PM <i>Article Critique 2</i> due by Friday December 4 at 11:59PM
Week 15 <i>No Class Meeting on December 7</i>	Complete Exam 2	<i>Exam 2</i> due by Monday December 7 at 11:59PM