

# CJUS 3900.499 Research Methodologies

**Instructor:** Jessica Craig, Ph.D.

**Term:** Wintermester 2025-2026

**Class meeting:** Online

## **INSTRUCTOR'S CONTACT INFORMATION**

Office location: Chilton 273A

Phone: 940-565-3464

E-mail (preferred): [Jessica.Craig@unt.edu](mailto:Jessica.Craig@unt.edu)

Office hours: By appointment

Connect with me through email and/or by attending office hours. During busy times, my inbox becomes rather full, so if you contact me and do not receive a response within two business days, please send a follow-up email. A gentle nudge is always appreciated. Finally, please know I can only discuss grades over email if it was sent through your Eagle Connect email account ([username@unt.edu](mailto:username@unt.edu)).

## **TEACHING ASSISTANT'S CONTACT INFORMATION**

Name: Ashley Hibbs

Office location: Chilton 273

E-mail: [Ashley.Hibbs@unt.edu](mailto:Ashley.Hibbs@unt.edu)

Office hours: By appointment

## **Course Pre-requisites, Co-requisites, and/or Other Restrictions**

There are no pre-requisites for this course. However, it is assumed that students possess a basic understanding of criminological theory and criminal justice.

## **Required Materials**

Maxfield, M, & Babbie, E. (2018). *Research Methods for Criminal Justice and Criminology* (8<sup>th</sup> edition).

## **Course Description**

Research methods is designed to help students learn the various ways in which criminal justice questions can be answered. Many of these questions can be addressed in multiple ways, with multiple techniques, each having their own advantages and disadvantages. Discussing and evaluating these techniques for criminal justice related questions is the overall focus of this course. Major topics related to this overall focus include research ethics and human participant guidelines, the nature of causation versus correlation, experimental and survey research designs, sampling, qualitative research, the advantages and disadvantages of experimental, survey, and qualitative research designs, and reliability and validity among others.

This course is primarily designed as an introduction and evaluation of several research methods so that students become intelligent consumers of research. It is also geared toward those who desire a basis for graduate school and/or a foundation of research methods for their chosen occupation. This course is not limited to criminal justice topics, however, as all social science researchers (and all researchers in general) use the same or similar procedures and techniques for answering most research questions. As such, this course covers a wide variety of topics to help illustrate the research process.

## **Course Objectives**

Upon successful completion of the course, students should be able to:

1. Identify and examine the purposes of conducting scientific research and address methodological issues necessary for conducting and critically analyzing criminal justice research.

## CJUS 3900.499 Research Methodologies

2. Evaluate 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, units of analysis, different types of research design, and stages in the research process.
4. Find and use resources for answering real world research questions.
5. Critically evaluate research based on knowledge of the research process.

### **How the Course is Organized**

This course will take place completely online through Canvas. The course is composed of several modules. Each module contains the relevant chapter outlines as well as other supplementary material as needed. Note not all modules will contain supplementary materials or require extra reading beyond the textbook. The students will also participate in three discussions through Canvas during the course. Finally, the students will take four quizzes. Each quiz will consist of multiple choice and true/false questions.

### ***What Should Students Do First?***

Once you have read this syllabus, go to the “Start Here” module and read through each of the pages. Once you have read this important information, you can move on to the first module.

### ***How Students Should Proceed Each Week for Class Activities***

At the beginning of each week, the student should refer to the course schedule (see below) for their reading assignment for that week. After completing each reading assignment in its entirety, the student should open the corresponding module and study the notes. As noted on the course calendar, three times throughout the course the student will have a discussion post to complete. They will respond to material that is pertinent to the theme of the course that week, and then respond to one of their peers’ posts. The textbook chapters and the online modules will help you complete the discussion posts for each week and satisfy all learning objectives.

### **COURSE NOTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Please make sure to have your official UNT email forwarded to your preferred email address (if different) to receive important updates, changes, announcements, class cancellations (if applicable), and generally, so I can reach you if necessary. **Before emailing Dr. Craig or the course TA with a question, make sure to review this syllabus. Most questions are answered in this document.**

The announcement board in Canvas and email will be used for primary communication to the class as a whole. I advise you check the announcements section frequently.

**Important:** Minimum technology requirements for this course: a browser that is compatible with Canvas (visit [this link](#) to ensure your browser is suitable) and Microsoft Office Word (or a similar word-processing software). Microsoft Office 365 is available for free to all currently-enrolled students. For instructions to download the software, please see [this link](#). Students are expected to know how to access their UNT email, open attachments, and use Microsoft Word (or a similar word-processing software). Students facing IT issues should visit [UNT’s IT website](#) or the [IT Helpdesk](#). Students are also expected to have basic digital literacy skills such as using UNT’s library’s website, searching online databases, and properly citing information sources. Here is a [UNT Library Guide for Criminal Justice students](#) that walks you through how to find research and official sources online.

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

## CJUS 3900.499 Research Methodologies

This course is made up of a series of assignments and assessments to assist you in achieving the course learning objectives. Each week you will work on various combinations of readings, discussions, and quizzes. Students can expect their grades and feedback to be released to them within 3 business days. There are a total of 590 points that can be earned in this class. The grading policy along with other class requirements is presented below.

### **Grading Scale:**

531-590 points=A

472-530 points=B

413-471 points=C

354-412 points=D

Below 354 points=F

### **Discussion Posts (300 points total)**

Each student will be required to respond to 3 Canvas discussions throughout the course of the semester. Each Canvas discussion is worth 100 points, for a total of 300 points towards your final grade. Written portions of the Canvas discussions should be a minimum of 250 words. Students *must* reply to at least one other student's posts for full point potential (responding appropriately, of course). For each discussion, your original post will be worth 85 points and the reply will be 15 points. Your discussions will be graded on depth of explanation, utilization of outside sources, specific efforts to back up your arguments with logical points and sources, grammar and spelling, and adhering to the assignment.

To locate the discussion boards, click the Discussions tab to the left of the main screen. Select the appropriate Canvas Discussion assignment. Next click on the appropriate forum. To post a comment select "Create Thread." In order to receive full credit you must post an original response and respond to at least one other students' posts. Note that you will NOT be able to see any other students' posts until you have first posted a thread yourself.

### **Quizzes (240 points total)**

Each student will be required to take four quizzes in this course for a total of 240 points (each worth 60 points). Each test will consist of 30 multiple choice and true/false questions. Each test will cover all module note material, assigned material in the classroom text, and other assigned reading material. By its nature, the material in this class builds off of prior material. As such, the tests may have material from prior sections on it. Each quiz will be available for 3 days. However, once you start the exam you will have only 60 minutes to take it. Note, the tests in this course will have other restrictions as well including the ability to only answer one question at a time.

### **Human Subjects Research Training for Social-Behavioral-Educational Researchers (50 points total)**

Each student will be required to complete an Internet-based Human Subjects Research Training for Social-Behavioral-Educational Researchers through the University of North Texas. You will need to register with <https://www.citiprogram.org/> to access the training. Be sure to record your log-in information in a secure place in case you need to access it at a later date.

## CJUS 3900.499 Research Methodologies

If this website does not work, try a general search (in Google or Yahoo) for “Human Participant Protections Education” which should direct you the National Institute of Health Extramural Research website. **Please contact me as soon as possible if you experience problems and I will get you to the correct site.** Failure to contact me if you have problems is not a defense against missing the due date.

Once you have registered, start with the first module for the Social-Behavioral-Educational (SBE) Basic Training and progress through the various additional modules and complete the test after each one. There are a total of 16 modules so be sure to allow yourself plenty of time to complete them. Depending on the time, the website may be busy—so please do not wait until the last minute.

To get credit for this training and hence this assignment, you must submit the certificate that you will receive at the conclusion of successful training by the due date. This certificate must have your registered name on it for proper credit to be given. This training should take approximately 1-3 hours. I would advise you to take a few notes during the tutorials so that you may pass the various tests which are sometimes difficult. You will submit the certificate on the Canvas assignment page. Failure to turn in your certification will result in forfeiture of all points associated with this assignment.

### **CLASS POLICIES**

#### **Make-Up, Late Work & Authorized Absence Policy**

Make-up exams, assignments, and late work will only be accepted when an absence or missed deadline is authorized according to UNT policy. Authorized absences include religious holy days, official university functions (including university-sponsored activities), required military service, student pregnancy/parenting (Title IX), university closure, and other documented extenuating circumstances approved by the Dean of Students. If you anticipate an authorized absence, you must notify me as soon as possible—preferably before the due date—and provide written documentation.

Absences for school-sponsored activities require prior approval from the department chair and academic dean, along with authorized absence documentation from the Dean of Students. Requests for excused absences for religious holy days must be made in writing within the university’s prescribed time frame. Late work is generally not accepted unless linked to a documented authorized absence, in which case it will be treated under the same guidelines as make-up work. For unexpected emergencies, notify me as soon as possible. Students with excused absences will be granted a reasonable period—no fewer than 10 business days—to complete missed work unless otherwise specified.

If you have questions about what qualifies as an authorized absence or need assistance, please consult UNT’s Student Attendance and Authorized Absences policy or contact the Dean of Students. While I want all students to succeed, withdrawal may sometimes be the best option for those facing significant challenges. The last day to withdraw with a “W” is December 16, 2025.

#### **Student Behavior and University Policy:**

I value the many perspectives students bring to our campus. Please work with me to create a classroom culture of open communication, mutual respect, and inclusion. All discussions should be respectful and civil. Although disagreements and debates are encouraged, personal attacks are unacceptable. Together, we can ensure a safe and welcoming classroom for all. If you ever feel like this is not the case, please stop by my office and let me know. We are all learning together.

## CJUS 3900.499 Research Methodologies

To be successful at learning and understanding the material in this class, it is essential that you read and complete the assigned material and engage in thoughtful discussions online. Your active participation, along with your willingness to engage in thoughtful discussions will be taken into account at all times during the semester. Certain topics in criminal justice policy are controversial, thus discussion may become heated where there will be disagreements. The online classroom is a place to express ideas, opinions, and engage in thoughtful discussions. Students will respect the views and opinions of others at all times in the online environment. While I do not foresee any problems, if problems do arise, I will address them with the individual student. Below are general guidelines for how to communicate well in an online classroom.

- Remember that college communication is still professional communication. Use correct spelling and grammar and always double-check your response before hitting send or reply. Do not use slang and limit the use of emoticons.
- Use standard, readable fonts, sizes, and colors and avoid writing in all caps.
- Use your instructor's title of "Dr." or "Professor," or if you don't know use "Mr." or "Ms." Do not use "Mrs." to address female instructors unless told otherwise by said instructor.
- Be mindful of tone in online communication as it lacks the nonverbal cues of face-to-face communication that provide clarity and context to conversations.
- Respect the personal identities of others based on gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, class, and/or culture.
- Respect the privacy of yourself, your instructor, and your peers. Keep in mind what you reveal and do not reveal, particularly if this information involves personal health and/or classroom performance, such as grades.
- Give people the benefit of the doubt. Though there may be a computer between you, there are people on the other side of the screen.
- Do not make assumptions about others' technological skills. Technological skills vary across a variety of factors, including experience, age, culture, etc.
- Read these [Core Rules of Netiquette](#) for additional tips about online communication.

### *Communicating via Email*

- Check the syllabus before asking a question about the course and let the instructor know you checked the syllabus before asking. Instructors put a lot of time into making syllabi as comprehensive as possible for students.
- Use a descriptive subject line to get the instructor's attention. Instructors receive a lot of emails and a descriptive subject line helps them identify student inquiries more efficiently.
- Be concise and to the point.
- For a sample email, read this article, ["How to Email Your Professor."](#)

### *Discussion Board Communication*

- Treat your posts like the professional communication that they are. Use correct spelling and grammar and always double-check a response before hitting send or reply. Do not use slang and limit the use of emoticons.
- Read all the messages in a thread before replying so you do not repeat something one of your peers may have already said.
- Avoid replies such as "I agree" and instead explain why you agree or do not agree.
- Show your work by sharing resources and utilizing citations.

## CJUS 3900.499 Research Methodologies

- When disagreeing, do not make personal attacks or use language that discriminates based on gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, class, and/or culture.

### Academic Dishonesty/Integrity

Students caught cheating or plagiarizing will receive a "0" for that particular assignment or exam. Additionally, the incident will be reported to the Dean of Students, who may impose further penalty. According to the UNT catalog, the term "cheating" includes, but is not limited to: a. use of any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, or examinations; b. dependence upon the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments; c. the acquisition, without permission, of tests or other academic material belonging to a faculty or staff member of the university; d. dual submission of a paper or project, or resubmission of a paper or project to a different class without express permission from the instructor(s); or e. any other act designed to give a student an unfair advantage. The term "plagiarism" includes, but is not limited to: a. the knowing or negligent use by paraphrase or direct quotation of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment; and b. the knowing or negligent unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials.

### AI Tools & Academic Integrity

This course takes a transparent and ethical approach to the use of generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Grammarly, Gemini, Claude, Copilot, etc.). You may **not** use generative AI to complete assignments intended to assess your individual understanding, such as quizzes, tests, or discussion posts. Submitting AI-generated work for these assignments violates academic integrity and may result in referral to the Office of Student Conduct.

Use of generative AI tools may be permitted for *transformational* purposes on designated assignments—such as brainstorming, outlining, drafting, or editing—as a collaborative research and writing partner. However, AI tools can produce biased or inaccurate information and should never be relied on as sole sources for research or factual claims. Any use of AI must be transparent and properly cited, as required by assignment instructions. All AI use must be clearly disclosed and include an APA-formatted citation.

*Transactional use*—uploading a prompt or assignment and submitting the AI-generated result as your own work—is strictly prohibited and will be treated as academic misconduct in all cases.

### Office of Disability Accommodation

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking reasonable 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 a reasonable accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request reasonable accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of reasonable 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 reasonable accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of reasonable accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information, refer to the [Office of Disability Access website](#). You may also contact ODA by phone at (940) 565-4323.

### Student Evaluation of Instruction

Student feedback is important and an essential part of participation in this course. The student evaluation of instruction is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. This short survey will be made available at the end of the semester to provide you with an opportunity to evaluate how this course is taught.

# CJUS 3900.499 Research Methodologies

## Syllabus Changes

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 the syllabus must be modified. In the case that the syllabus 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/email so that any and all syllabus changes are documented. Failure to obtain syllabus changes because of failure to check and read announcements does not constitute a defense against missed assignments, test dates, and other applicable changes.

## Miscellaneous:

The material posted online is my personal intellectual property or that of the University of North Texas. You may not utilize the material for other than class purposes. Class recordings are reserved for use only by students in this class for educational purposes. The recordings should not be shared outside the class in any form. Failing to follow this restriction is a violation of the UNT Code of Student Conduct and could lead to disciplinary action.

## Emergency Notification & Procedures

UNT uses a system called [Eagle Alert](#) to quickly notify you 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). The system sends voice messages (and text messages upon permission) to the phones of all active faculty staff, and students. Please make certain to update your phone numbers at [my.unt.edu](http://my.unt.edu). Some helpful emergency preparedness actions include: 1) know the evacuation routes and severe weather shelter areas in the buildings where your classes are held, 2) determine how you will contact family and friends if phones are temporarily unavailable, and 3) identify where you will go if you need to evacuate the Denton area suddenly. In the event of a university closure, please refer to Canvas for contingency plans for covering course materials.

## Retention of Student Records

Student records pertaining to this course are maintained in a secure location by the instructor of record. All records such as exams, answer sheets (with keys), and written papers submitted during the duration of the course are kept for at least one calendar year after course completion. Course work completed via the Canvas online system, including grading information and comments, is also stored in a safe electronic environment for one year. You have a right to view your individual record; however, information about your records will not be divulged to other individuals without the proper written consent. You are encouraged to review the Public Information Policy and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) laws and the university's policy in accordance with those mandates at this [link](#). Information regarding data privacy for Canvas can be found [at this link](#).

## Sexual Assault Prevention

UNT is committed to providing a safe learning environment free of all forms of sexual misconduct. Federal laws and UNT policies prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex as well as sexual misconduct. If you or someone you know is experiencing sexual harassment, relationship violence, stalking and/or sexual assault, there are campus resources available to provide support and assistance. The Survivor Advocates can be reached at [SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu](mailto:SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu) or by calling the Dean of Students Office at 940-565-2648. Visit [Title IX Student Information](#) (Links to an external site) for more resources.

## F1 Visa Holder Regulation

Federal regulations state that students may apply only 3 fully-online semester credit hours (SCH) to the hours required for full-time status for F1 Visa holders. Full-time status for F1 Visa students is 12 hours for undergraduates and 9 hours for graduate students. Instructors teaching online courses should insert information into the syllabus to make F1 Visa students aware of this limitation and provide them with information about options to complete an on-campus experiential component in a course that is otherwise fully-online.

If a F-1 Visa holder intends to take more than 3 SCH of online courses in a term, they will need to document the on-campus experiential component of all courses that exceed the 3-hour limit. This on-campus experiential component can be satisfied in a number of ways including a face-to-face test, lab work, a required on-site lecture, mandatory library orientation, etc. Instructors should develop an option to assist students who request an on-campus experiential component to meet the

## CJUS 3900.499 Research Methodologies

federal regulation. Instructors should have students requesting this assistance to complete the [On-campus Component Reporting Form for Online Courses](#) which requires both the student and the instructor's signature. The instructor should make a copy for the student's departmental file and send a copy to the UNT International Student and Scholar Services (routing address on the form).



## CJUS 3900.499 Research Methodologies

### ACADEMIC CALENDAR

WEEK   DATES	TOPIC, READING ASSIGNMENTS, AND DUE DATES
<p style="text-align: center;">1</p> <p style="text-align: center;">12/15/2025 – 12/21/2025</p>	<p>Topic: Introduction to Criminal Justice Research and Ethical Principles in Practice Reading: Chapters 1-3</p> <p><b>DISCUSSION POST 1 DUE THURSDAY, 12/18 @ 11:59 PM</b></p> <p><b>HUMAN PARTICIPANT PROTECTIONS TRAINING DUE THURSDAY, 12/18 @ 11:59 PM</b></p> <p><b>QUIZ 1 (CH. 1-3) DUE THURSDAY, 12/18 @ 11:59 PM</b></p>
<p style="text-align: center;">2</p> <p style="text-align: center;">12/22/2025 – 12/28/2025</p>	<p>Topic: Research Methods: General Issues and Topics on Measurement Reading: Chapters 4-6</p> <p><b>DISCUSSION POST 2 DUE MONDAY, 12/22 @ 11:59 PM</b></p> <p><b>QUIZ 2 (CH. 4-6) DUE MONDAY, 12/22 @ 11:59 PM</b></p>
<p style="text-align: center;">12/29/2025 – 1/4/2026</p>	<p><b>NO CLASS- UNIVERSITY CLOSED</b></p>
<p style="text-align: center;">3</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1/5/2026 – 1/9/2026</p>	<p>Topic: Sampling, Research Study Design, and Putting it All Together Reading: Chapters 7-12</p> <p><b>QUIZ 3 (CH. 7-9) DUE MONDAY, 1/5 @ 11:59 PM</b></p> <p><b>DISCUSSION POST 3 DUE THURSDAY, 1/8 @ 11:59 PM</b></p> <p><b>QUIZ 4 (CH. 10-13) DUE FRIDAY, 1/9 @ 11:59 PM</b></p>