

Research Methods in Criminal Justice
CJUS 3900.001
Tu/Th 11AM-12:20PM
Spring 2026

Instructor: Jessica Roberts, M.A.

Office: Chilton Hall 265

Contact Information: jessica.roberts@unt.edu; 940-565-2562 (office)

Office Hours: By appointment—Please refer to class announcement.

Preferred Communication

When emailing please put the course number (CJUS 3900) in the subject. Email only from your UNT email (name@my.unt.edu). You can expect to receive a response within 48 hours during the week and 72 hours on the weekend. If you have not received a response within that time, please email me back as it may have gotten lost.

Course Description

This course teaches students about social science research with the goal of making them adequate consumers of research products. The course reviews key research methodologies to help students become critical of studies and be able to review findings of the studies in a way that helps them think about practical application of research to the field of criminal justice. The course focuses on qualitative and quantitative research methods, the protection of human research subjects and research ethics, and ways to communicate research to audiences. By the end of the course, students should have a clear understanding of the main aspects of research design and how to be practice

Course Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Understand how to ask research questions relevant to criminology and criminal justice, and how to find and use resources to answer those questions.
- Identify and understand the key difference between qualitative and quantitative research designs.
- Understand types of measurement, data collection methods, and sampling strategies relevant to criminal justice research.
- Understand key research design and measurement concepts including of causality, validity, and units of analysis.
- Be able to critically analyze research products based on research design.

Required Materials

Textbook:

Bachman, Ronet D. & Schutt, Russell K. (2020). *The Practice of Research in Criminology and Criminal Justice* (7th Edition). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

NOTE: If a student chooses to purchase anything other than the current edition of the assigned course text, it is their responsibility to ensure access to and familiarity with the most up-to-date course materials.

Technology:

This course has digital components. Students will need internet access to reference content on the Canvas Learning Management System. Grades, the course schedule, and supplemental course content

will all be accessible on Canvas. If circumstances change, you will be informed of other technical needs to access course content. Information on how to be successful in a digital learning environment can be found at [Learn Anywhere](https://online.unt.edu/learn) (<https://online.unt.edu/learn>).

Course Notes and Recommendations

- Outside of the classroom, the announcement board in Canvas will be used for primary communication to the class as a whole. I advise you check the announcements section frequently. Ensure that your [Canvas notifications are set up](#).
- 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 you message with a question, make sure to review this syllabus, schedule and welcome statement. Most questions are answered in these documents. NOTE: It is your responsibility to utilize a computer system that works and is compatible with the UNT online system/Canvas.

Course Requirements and Grading

Your final grade will be determined based on your performance on in-class activities, assignments, quizzes, and a final presentation. There are a total of 1000 points that can be earned in this class. The dates for each exam and quiz are listed in the course schedule on canvas.

Final Grades will be determined based upon the following:

○ Attendance	200 Points
○ In-Class Activities x 10 @ 5 points each (14 opportunities; 10 required)	100 Points
○ Quizzes x 3 @ 50 points each (4 opportunities; 3 required)	300 Points
○ Assignments x 4 @ 50 points each	200 Points
○ Final Research Presentation	200 Points

Total 1000 Points

Points Breakdown by Letter Grade

Letter	Points Required
A	900-1000
B	800-899
C	700-799
D	600-699
F	0-599

Attendance (200 Points): Attendance during the course is required and will be tracked through participation in class activities. Students are allowed four (4) unexcused absences throughout the semester. Any other absences must be accompanied by a written excuse (i.e., a medical doctor's note). **Note:** It is your responsibility to reach out to the instructor in case you miss or know you are going to miss class.

Assigned Reading: Reading assignments are noted in the Course Schedule. All students are expected to read the assigned chapters prior to the date specified in the Course

Schedule. The assigned readings will serve as a foundation for the discussion of the issues in class and in-class activities.

In-Class Activities (100 Points) Students will complete in-class activities throughout the semester. These activities are designed to help you apply the information learned from the lectures. Students should work in groups, and all activities must be completed during the class period. Individual grades will be provided in the form of participation and attendance score. You will be provided with 10 points

for each in-class activity. There will be 14 in-class activity opportunities. Students must complete 10 of them. If you complete more than the required number, you will receive extra credit.

Quizzes (300 Points): You need to complete a minimum of three quizzes throughout the semester (worth 100 points each; 300 points total). There are four opportunities to complete quizzes, though only three are required. If you complete more than the required number, I will count your top scores for the required exams. Each exam will cover the preceding chapters and readings. They will be administered on Canvas. They will open on Monday @ 8:00 AM the week they are assigned and be due the following Sunday @ 11:59 PM. See the course schedule for specific dates. You can prepare for quizzes by taking notes on the readings, lectures, and class activities.

Assignments (200 Points): Students will be required to submit four assignments throughout the course. These assignments are designed to improve your writing skills and apply the principles of research methods. More information will be provided in class and on Canvas prior to the assignment due date. Each assignment will be turned in on Canvas on Sundays @ 11:59 pm. See the course schedule for specific dates.

Final Research Presentation (200 Points): Students will identify a research question. They will prepare a 5-minute presentation explaining their question and briefly describe corresponding measures and data. Further details and requirements for this proposal will be provided. ***Students must upload their proposed research question to canvas no later than 3/8 @ 11:59 PM.**

Classroom & University Policy

Attendance Policy: Attendance during the course is required and will be tracked. Students are allowed two (2) unexcused absences throughout the semester. Please follow the policy as listed below for additional absences:

Absences are authorized for the following reasons: a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose; active military service, including travel for that purpose; participation in an official university function; illness or other extenuating circumstances; pregnancy and parenting under Title IX; and when the University is officially closed by the President. Students who wish to request an excused absence can do so and will be excused from class as long as they make a request as early as possible and within the required time frame set by the University (see the most recent undergraduate catalog). Notification must be in writing so that I may have it for my records. You must arrange to make up any work missed during the excused absence.

Make-Up Policy: Because I offer some flexibility in the number of quizzes and in-class necessary, no make-ups will be provided. The only exception is for students with extenuating circumstances or special situations that may require personalized adjustments. There will be no opportunities to make up any missed coursework with the exception of authorized absences according to University policies prescribing authorized absences in certain situations. I reserve the right to consider extreme circumstances and modify this rule. Students should notify me prior to missing an assignment, if possible. Those who are absent for reasons described above like religious holidays and/or those involved in other school supported activities that require being absent from class will be allowed to make up assignments if proper procedures are followed in requesting an excused absence. I must have written documentation in advance that you will be away from class for the absence to be excused.

Academic Honesty/Integrity: According to UNT Policy 06.003, Student Academic Integrity, academic dishonesty occurs when students engage in behaviors including, but not limited to cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, forgery, plagiarism, and sabotage. A finding of academic dishonesty may result in a range of academic penalties or sanctions ranging from admonition to expulsion from the University. Any evidence of academic dishonesty including plagiarism and cheating of any kind will result in immediate failure of the course.

A Statement on Artificial Intelligence: 'AI-assisted writing' is distinguished from 'AI-generated writing' for this course. AI-assisted writing is permitted in the form of development and advancement in the writing process. AI-assisted writing may include brainstorming, outlining, and drafting. AI-generated writing means there has been little or no involvement from the student as an author, with most of the writing being generated by an AI. **Using an AI to generate writing or compositions without substantial original contribution from a student is neither acceptable nor allowed.** If AI generated writing or composition is suspected, students may be required to meet with the instructor to revisit the course policy, recomplete the assignment, and write a reflection on the ethical concerns of AI generated writing and how it has impacted their learning process. If a student is suspected of AI generated writing more than once in a semester, they risk receiving a 0 for that assignment among the other penalties listed above. Please see the instructor with questions regarding ethical use of AI.

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.

ADA accommodation statement: 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](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/office-disability-access) website (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/office-disability-access>). You may also contact ODA by phone at (940) 565-4323.

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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. Students have the right to view their individual record; however, information about student's records will not be divulged to other individuals without proper written consent. Students are encouraged to review the Public Information Policy and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) laws and the University's policy. See UNT Policy 10.10, Records Management and Retention for additional information.

Grade Appeals: Please keep all your graded work. You cannot, under any circumstance, dispute a grade on an exam or assignment if you cannot provide the original copy. Should you have any discrepancy with a grade you receive, you must submit a written complaint and meet with me within one week of receiving the grade. Bring the original copy of the exam or assignment to this meeting. Written complaints must address specific comments and/or grading criteria. Filing an appeal does not guarantee that your grade will be changed. **Grades are not verbally negotiable.**

Student Evaluation Administration Dates: 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. The survey will be made available during weeks 13, 14 and 15 of the long semesters to provide students with an opportunity to evaluate how this course is taught. Students will receive an email from "UNT SPOT Course Evaluations via IA System Notification" (noreply@iasystem.org) with the survey link. Students should look for the email in their UNT email inbox. Simply click on the link and complete the survey. Once students complete the survey they will receive a confirmation email that the survey has been submitted. For additional information, please visit the [SPOT website](http://spot.unt.edu/) (<http://spot.unt.edu/>) or email spot@unt.edu.

Student Behavior and University Policy: Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The University's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including University and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. Visit UNT's Code of Student Conduct (<https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct>) to learn more.

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.

Spring 2025 Criminal Justice Research Methods Course Schedule

Week	Meeting Dates	Topic	Assigned Readings, Quizzes, and Assignments
1	1/13	What is research? Research Question and Literature Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assigned Reading: Bachman & Schutt Chapter 1: pp. 7-21 & Chapter 2
	1/15		
2	1/20	Ethics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assigned Reading: Bachman & Schutt Chapter 3
	1/22		
3	1/27	Levels of measurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assigned Reading: Bachman & Schutt Chapter 4 • Assignment #1 Due 2/3 @ 11:59 PM: Designing a Research Questions
	1/29		
4	2/3	Sampling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assigned Reading: Bachman & Schutt Chapter 5 • Quiz # 1: (Chapters 1-4) Due 2/8 @ 11:59 PM
	2/5		
5	2/10	Causation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assigned Reading: Bachman & Schutt Chapter 6
	2/12		
6	2/17	Experimental Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assigned Reading: Bachman & Schutt Chapter 7 • Assignment #2 Due 2/22 @ 11:59 PM: Levels of Measurement & Sampling
	2/19		
7	2/24	Nonexperimental Designs: Survey & Administrative Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assigned Reading: Bachman & Schutt Chapter 8
	2/26		
8	3/3	Nonexperimental Designs: Qualitative Methods & Content Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assigned Reading: Bachman & Schutt Chapter 9 & Chapter 10 pp. 320-323 • Quiz # 2: (Chapters 5-8) Due 3/8 @ 11:59 PM • Research Question Due 3/8 @ 11:59 PM
	3/5		
9	3/10	No Class: Spring Break	
	3/11		
10	3/17	Applied Research & Evaluation Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assigned Reading: Bachman & Schutt Chapter 12 • Assignment #3 Due 3/22 @ 11:59 PM: Survey Design
	3/19		
11	3/24	Secondary Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review: Bachman & Schutt Chapter 10 pp.327-331 • Quiz # 3 (Chapters 9-12) Due 3/29 @ 11:59 PM
	3/26		
12	3/31	Mixed-Methods, Meta-analysis, & Meta synthesis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assigned Reading: Bachman & Schutt Chapter 13
	4/2		

13	4/7	Analyzing Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assigned Reading: Bachman & Schutt Chapter 14 & 15 • Assignment #4 Due 4/12 @ 11:59 PM: Evaluation Design
	4/9		
14	4/14	Putting it Together: Reporting Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assigned Reading: Bachman & Schutt Chapter 16 • Quiz # 4 (Chapters 13-15) Due 4/26 @ 11:59 PM
	4/16		
15	4/21	Research Presentations (In Class; 5 Minutes Each)	
	4/23		
16	4/28	Research Presentations Continued	
	4/30		
17	5/5	Finals Week: No Class	
	5/7		

****Note:** This is a tentative syllabus. I reserve the right to modify this schedule.