

W.T. Jordan's Syllabus for CJ 454, Research Techniques in Criminal Justice

Fall 2025, 16 Week

Delivery Method: Web-based Section, Canvas + synchronous video meetings via ZOOM Mondays 6:00-7:15 p.m.

Instructor : W. T. Jordan

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E-mail: tom.jordan@tamut.edu I answer class email 2-3 times per week on a triage basis.

Office: University Center 204

On-campus office hours: Monday/Wednesday, 11-12:00 & 2:00-3:00. Drop-ins are welcome at other times (appointments are better). Additional appointments & ZOOM meetings are encouraged as well.

Course Description:

Introduction to research methods and computer applications in criminal justice.

Purpose: Prepare students to read about, participate in, and utilize research applicable to criminal justice related policy and work; and provide a foundation for more advanced research courses.

Student Learning Outcomes:

Given published resources and literature databases, the student will be able to

- Find and organize a targeted bibliography
- Identify research questions or theories, hypotheses, and dependent and independent variables
- Identify and distinguish between elementary research models
- Identify and distinguish between sampling and data collection strategies
- Make elementary comparisons of the goodness of research techniques
- Demonstrate basic analytical logic given appropriate summary data.

Course Materials:

Required

- *Making Sense of the Social World: Methods of Investigation*, 7th Edition. Daniel F. Chambliss, Russell K. Schutt. 2025. ISBN: 9781071871317
- SDA & GSS data set <https://sda.berkeley.edu/archive.htm>
- Books and articles as needed by individual students or as assigned in class.
- 3-Ring Binder, Dictionary, Stapler, Calculator

Required Course Materials, Continued

- Computer and internet access and bandwidth with MS-Word, email software, internet browser, that is compatible with ZOOM and Canvas. All written product files must be turned in as a MS-Word format. Ordinary participation will be direct text entry to Canvas text fields. Library computers have all necessary capability. See computer requirements at the end of this syllabus.
- M&M's candy (package size TBA; if you are allergic to M&M's plain chocolate candy, let the prof know.)

Suggested Materials:

Although not required reading, these resources can provide you with a better understanding of key topics in research. When you are confused about a concept, go to these resources to read explanations in a different voice.

Online

- Trochim, William (N.D.) RESEARCH KNOWLEDGE BASE, <https://conjointly.com/kb/>

- E-book: Encyclopedia of survey research methods, Paul Lavrakas, HN29 .E53 2008
 - http://tamut.idm.oclc.org/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=474384&site=ehost-live&ebv=EB&ppid=pp_Cover

On Reserve in the Library:

- *The practice of social research* / Earl Babbie. Babbie, Earl R. JFM Reserves -- H62 .B2 2004
- *Research methods for criminal justice and criminology* / Dean J. Champion. Champion, Dean J. JFM Reserves -- HV6018 .C43 1993 c.2
- *Research methods for criminal justice and criminology* / Michael G. Maxfield, Earl R. Babbie. Maxfield, Michael G., author. JFM Reserves -- HV7419.5 .M38 2015
- *Research methods in criminal justice and criminology* / Frank E. Hagan. Hagan, Frank E. JFM Reserves -- HV6024.5 .H33 1993

Grading Policy:

Letter Grades are based on exams, written assignments, etc. listed below. Each of these components will contribute proportionally to the final grade as indicated in the table below.

| Planned Activities: | POINTS | LEVELING/BONUS POINTS ADDED |
|---|--------|---------------------------------|
| Exams (3@25 pts) | 75 | |
| Bibliography | 10 | |
| AAA Final Exam | 20 | |
| AAA Activities, Leveling/Bonus Points | | ~6@ 2 pts each task |
| Practice Exercises, Leveling/Bonus Points | | ~8 @ 1 pt each pts |
| Total | 105 | (Subject to change with notice) |

Approach to grading: Final course grades will be determined according to the scale below. If for any reason activities are added, canceled, or modified, the scale will be adjusted to reflect this.

Assignments and tests will be developed and marked in an “Old School Marking” (OSM) style to mimic the demands of decades past and provide a heightened sense of academic challenge for those individual students who desire it. Course grades are assigned on a “Contemporary College Customer” (CCC) basis. Leveling points (bonus/extra credit) are provided through learning activities that have been calculated considering previous students’ performance in my courses, national grading trends, and A&M-Texarkana management, faculty, and student grade expectations. The difference between OSM and CCC scoring are imbedded in these leveling points to align the final grades distribution in this course close to the average in the College of Arts, Sciences, and Education.

CCC Final Course Grading Scale:

95 pts = A 74 pts = C
 84 pts = B 63 pts = D

To calculate your approximate CCC grade on any individual assignment, or combination of assignments, sum earned scores and an appropriate proportion of awarded leveling points, then calculate your percentage in the normal way using “Points” as your denominator. So for example, if you earn 15 points on test #1, and you add 5 leveling pts, divide by 25, then you end with 80%, or a “B”.

IF you would like the opportunity to engage more deeply in performing research analysis through an experiential project, and possibly presenting your research at a conference, contact Dr. Jordan. Students who are considering pursuit of a PhD to become a professor or researcher are strongly encouraged to discuss this and additional coursework with the Prof.

Course Schedule (16 Week, Online version)

WEEK/DATES, TOPIC/AGENDA, READING/OTHER (Changes announced in class or via email or Canvas.)

- The dates in parenthesis are presumptive class-activity dates, but you will manage your own work schedule.
- Due dates are firm unless changed by the professor. "Due before class" will generally mean before a class meeting on that date, or 5 p.m. otherwise.
- Ch.# and pp.#'s refer to the required textbook.

Week 1 (08/18 – video meeting) Introduction

- Read Tom's Research Helps linked to Assignment Document

Week 1 (08/20) Literature Research Appendix A

<https://sites.google.com/geauxjordan.net/jordan-research-and-study>

AKA "Where's the Library and what's it there for?" (Literature Types and Literature searching)

- Obtain and print articles for AAA Assignments Articles before Week 2.
- Bibliography Assignment

Week 2 (08/25 – video meeting) Philosophy of Science and the Scientific Method Ch. 1 & 2

Week 2 (08/27) Scientific Method continued Ch. 2 & pp. 71-77
Hypothesis Testing

- Hypothesis exercises
- AAA #1

Week 3 (09/01) LABOR DAY HOLIDAY

Week 3 (09/03) Intro. to Data, Datasets, and Statistics Ch.4 pp.83-87 & Ch.8 pp. 185-200
Frequency Distribution and Summary Statistics (central tendency and dispersion)
Introduction to Excel for data analysis

- Level of measurement exercises

Week 4 (09/08 – video meeting) Hypothesis Retrospective

- DUE before class: Hypothesis Exercises, upload to Canvas
- DUE before class: AAA#1, upload to Canvas

Week 4 (09/10) Statistics Intro. Cont'd.

Introduction to Excel for data analysis

- Due before class: Level of Measurement Exercises, upload to Canvas
- Central Tendency exercises
- AAA#2

Week 5 (09/15 – video meeting) Wrap up hypothesis testing and stats intro

Week 5 (09/17) Ethics of Research Ch. 3

- DUE before class: Central Tendency Exercises, upload to Canvas
- DUE by End of Day: Bibliography, upload to Canvas

Week 6 (09/22 – video meeting) Muddy Points: Prof answers Questions

- **Exam 1 open on Canvas. 1st Attempt Due 09/24**

Week 6 (09/24) Research Design & Experimental Models pp. 31-36 & Ch. 6

- DUE before class AAA#2, upload to Canvas

Week 14 (11/19) Passing the baton (primer on statistical interpretation and logic of inference statistics)

Reading Statistics

pp. 191-192 (Figure 8.6)

- Tentative: Contingency Table Analysis

Week 15 (11/24 – video meeting)

Complete statistical table interpretation

Muddy Points: Prof Answers Questions

- **AAA Final Test, Online in Canvas**

Week 15 (11/26)

Elaboration Model retrospective (Tentative)

- **DUE before class: AAA Final Test, Online in Canvas**
- **Exam #3 Open on Canvas**

11/27-28

THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY!

FINALS (12/01-12/03)

Final Exam Week

All exams close at Midnight, December 3rd

- Make sure you have completed your final desired attempt on all tests

Important Course Policies

- **Face-to-face Sections: Technology Devices** are strongly discouraged during class time. Turn them off; put them away.
 - **Why?** (A) Note-taking is an important professional skill for criminal justice personnel. Victims, suspects, and witnesses will not give you a Powerpoint file. (B) Research shows that taking notes by hand leads to more learning and better retention.
- **Absences:** If you will be absent or late turning in an assignment for a legitimate reason, it is your responsibility to let the professor know as soon as possible before the absence. It is the professor's sole discretion as to whether a late assignment will receive a grace period.
- **Late work will not be graded.** A grace period is extended for graded assignments (not to exceed 3 days); but the letter grade will be lowered each day the assignment is late. After the 3rd day, it receives a zero. Late leveling/bonus/extra credit activity will not be scored.
- You are strongly encouraged to complete your assignments early when possible to avoid missed deadlines due to technology failures or other circumstances. Last minute technology failure should be expected and planned for; it is not an excused event.
- Note that you are responsible to be in class and/or online every meeting, week, or module that the class operates. Do not schedule other activities that will interfere with class attendance and participation (this includes vacations, weddings, hunting camp, etc.) If you are in a web-based course or web-enhanced course, this means that you are expected to participate in weekly web-based activities and meet all deadlines. Exam and activity dates are tentative and may be moved. If you are absent, you are responsible to get from other students the notes, syllabus changes, assignments, instructions, or other announcements that are given in class. Absence can negatively affect your grade.
- Every out-of-class assignment includes the requirement to make and keep a copy of your written work in case the original is lost or misplaced.
- Students are encouraged to make an appointment to review and discuss graded material and their progress in the course.
- No Grade of "incomplete" will be given except in the most unusual circumstances that reasonably preclude completion of the course (e.g. you are in a coma) when they occur after the final drop date. Poor grades or late work are not acceptable reasons. Catastrophic events that occur before the drop date should lead you to drop the class.
- No additional extra credit assignments beyond opportunities offered to the entire class will be given; please do not ask.

Academic Dishonesty: Please review the Student Code of Conduct and the statement on Academic Dishonesty in the Catalog, then read the explanation of plagiarism supplied by TurnItIn at plagiarism.org. In my courses, unless specifically directed, use of any AI tools (such as Grammarly, ChatGPT, etc.) is forbidden and is cheating. Any writing that you turn in to me must be your personal composition. Any act of academic dishonesty or plagiarism will normally result in a zero for failure to appropriately complete the assignment and may additionally result in an "F" in the course and referral to the university judicial system. At this level of scholarship, students should understand the severity of cheating, plagiarism, and misrepresentation of another's work. The instructor encourages questions regarding citations, references, cheating, improper behavior, and academic ethics. You should review this page within the first two weeks of class. When in doubt, **ASK** the instructor!

Classroom Courtesy: If you are enrolled in a classroom section of a course --> Electronic devices are strongly discouraged in class. Turn them off and put them away. If you must have yours out, sit in the back of the class and do not disturb your peers or the professor. If an emergency situation exists (or on-call law enforcement officers) which requires you to be contacted immediately, you are expected to discuss the situation with the professor prior to the beginning of class presentation. Students are expected to refrain from talking to each other while formal instruction is

being presented. This also applies to the professor's and student's presentations (Amended from the College of Health and Behavioral Science statement on classroom courtesies).

Required University Policy and Information Statements

For University policies on Academic Integrity, A&M-Texarkana Email Address, and the Drop Policy, please refer to the [Syllabus Policies](#).

Information Technology (IT) Support

For questions on password reset, login issues, and application installation, please refer to IT Helpdesk or Submit a [TeamDynamix](#) ticket.

Learning Management System (Canvas) Support

This course utilizes Canvas, the university's Learning Management System (LMS), for all course materials, announcements, assignments, and communication. You can access Canvas through the university's website or by navigating to [link to university's Canvas portal] using your student credentials. For questions on *all web-enhanced and online courses*, please refer to [Technology Innovation and Digital Education \(TIDE\)](#).

Disability Accommodations

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal non-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this law requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring accommodations, please contact the Office of Student Life in UC room 125, or call (903) 223-1351. For additional information visit [Disability Services](#).

Student Conduct and Complaints

The university is committed to maintaining a respectful and safe environment. The [Student Code of Conduct](#) outlines behavioral expectations and disciplinary procedures. If you encounter a concern or issue, you may submit a formal report through the [Student Complaint Process](#). To report an issue related to academic misconduct, you can do so at the [Academic Misconduct](#) page.

Student Resources and Programs

The university enhances student education beyond academics through diverse programs. Students can join clubs (like SGA, Honors, Greek Life), participate in service, experience study abroad, and learn about career services, internships and job opportunities. Visit [Student Resources and Programs](#) to learn about clubs, organizations and student resources.