

SS2709: METHODS OF CRIMINOLOGICAL RESEARCH

Effective Term

Semester A 2025/26

Part I Course Overview

Course Title

Methods of Criminological Research

Subject Code

SS - Social and Behavioural Sciences

Course Number

2709

Academic Unit

Social and Behavioural Sciences (SS)

College/School

College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CH)

Course Duration

One Semester

Credit Units

3

Level

B1, B2, B3, B4 - Bachelor's Degree

Medium of Instruction

English

Medium of Assessment

English

Prerequisites

Nil

Precursors

Nil

Equivalent Courses

Nil

Exclusive Courses

Nil

Part II Course Details

Abstract

This course aims to introduce students to the basic elements of research methods in social science and their application in criminology. It covers both qualitative and quantitative approaches. It will help students to form a solid foundation for the preparation of their final year project in criminology.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

CILOs		Weighting (if app.)	DEC-A1	DEC-A2	DEC-A3
1	Identify different research methods in social science and their applications in criminological research.	20	x	x	
2	Compare and contrast the theoretical issues behind research methods and the relative strengths and weaknesses of each method.	10	x	x	
3	Explain the research methods used in selected studies in criminology.	30	x	x	
4	Apply the skills of data analysis and interpretation, both qualitatively and quantitatively, in criminological study.	40	x	x	x

A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

A2: Ability

Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to real-life problems.

A3: Accomplishments

Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

Learning and Teaching Activities (LTAs)

LTAs	Brief Description	CILO No.	Hours/week (if applicable)
LTA1: Lecture	Students will engage in formal lectures to understand different research methods and their relative strengths and weaknesses.	1, 2, 3, 4	
LTA2: Tutorial	In tutorial, students will engage in activities to familiar with the skills of using the latest statistical analysis software, such as SPSS.	1, 2, 3, 4	

Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

ATs	CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks ("- for nil entry)	Allow Use of GenAI?
AT1: Qualitative assignments	2, 3, 4	30	-	Yes

2	AT2: SPSS assignments	3, 4	30	-	Yes
3	AT3: Quiz	1, 2, 4	40	-	No

Continuous Assessment (%)

100

Examination (%)

0

Assessment Rubrics (AR)**Assessment Task**

1. Qualitative assignments

Criterion

Critically examine the justifications of existing qualitative methods

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

High

Good (B+, B, B-)

Significant

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Moderate

Marginal (D)

Basic

Failure (F)

Not even reaching marginal levels

Assessment Task

2. SPSS assignments

Criterion

Understand how to conduct data analyses and interpret the results

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

High

Good (B+, B, B-)

Significant

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Moderate

Marginal (D)

Basic

Failure (F)

Not even reaching marginal levels

Assessment Task

3. Quiz

Criterion

Understand different research methods, theoretical issues behind research methods, and the relative strengths and weaknesses of each method; and evaluate data analysis and interpretation in criminological research.

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

High

Good (B+, B, B-)

Significant

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Moderate

Marginal (D)

Basic

Failure (F)

Not even reaching marginal levels

Part III Other Information**Keyword Syllabus**

Introduction to criminological research

The quantitative/qualitative debate; Inductive and deductive reasoning; Philosophical and theoretical foundations of research methods; Triangulation; Codes of Ethics in Crime and Justice Research; How to conduct a systematic literature review; Referencing styles; The quantitative research report; The qualitative research report. Positivism. The radical approach. The realist approach.

Quantitative research and its applications in criminological study

An overview of quantitative research designs: experimental and quasi-experimental designs, survey research

Descriptive statistics and interpretation

Bivariate analysis and interpretation

Multivariate analysis and interpretation

Qualitative research and its applications in criminological study

Qualitative design issues, Case studies; Participant observation; Ethnographic field research; Documentary analysis;

Archival data analysis; In-depth interviewing and focus group interviewing; Reliability and validity in qualitative research;

Fieldwork politics

Reading List**Compulsory Readings**

	Title
1	Maxfield, M. G., and Babbie, E. 2014. Research methods for criminal justice and criminology (7th ed.). Belmont, CA.: Wadsworth Thomson Learning.
2	Hagan, F. E. 2013. Research methods in criminal justice and criminology (9th ed.). Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall.
3	Hammersley, M., and Atkinson, P. 2007. Ethnography: Principles in Practice (3rd ed.). London: Routledge.
4	Berg, B. L., and Lune, H. 2014. Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences. Harlow, Essex: Pearson.

5	Field, Andy P. 2018. <i>Discovering statistics using IBM SPSS statistics</i> (5th edition). Los Angeles, California : SAGE Publications
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Additional Readings

	Title
1	Creswell, J. W. 1997. <i>Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Traditions</i> . Thousand Oaks: SAGE
2	Dantzker M. L. (Ed.). 1999. <i>Readings for research methods in criminology and criminal justice</i> . Boston: Butterworth-Heinmann.
3	Fitzgerald, J. D., and Cox, S. M. 2002. <i>Research methods and statistics in criminal justice</i> . Belmont, CA.: Wadsworth.
4	Gadd, D., Karstedt, S., and Messner, S. F. 2011. <i>The SAGE handbook of criminological research methods</i> . London: Sage.
5	Hagan, F. E. 2005. <i>Essentials of research methods in criminal justice and criminology</i> . Boston, Mass.: Pearson/Allyn and Bacon.
6	Jupp, V. 1989. <i>Methods of criminological research</i> . London: Unwin Hyman.
7	Kraska, P. B., and Neuman, W. L. 2008. <i>Criminal justice and criminology research methods</i> . Boston: Pearson/Allyn & Bacon.
8	Lee, E., Hartley, R., and Walsh, A. 2010. <i>Research methods in criminal justice and criminology: An interdisciplinary approach</i> . Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield.
9	Noaks, L., and Wincup, E. 2004. <i>Criminological research: Understanding qualitative methods</i> . London: Sage.
10	Piltch, C., and Terry, K. J. 2011. <i>A short guide to writing about criminal justice</i> . Boston: Prentice Hall.
11	Pogrebin, M. R. (Ed.). 2003. <i>Qualitative approaches to criminal justice: Perspectives from the field</i> . Thousand Oaks, CA.: Sage.
12	Pope, C. E., Lovell, R., and Brandl, S. G. (Eds.). 2000. <i>Voices from the field: Readings in criminal justice research</i> . Belmont, CA.: Wadsworth.
13	Weiss, R. S. 1994. <i>Learning from Strangers: The Art and Method of Qualitative Interview Studies</i> . New York: Free Press.
14	Ryan, G. W., Rand, H., and Hernard, H. R. 2003. Techniques to Identify Themes, <i>Field Methods</i> 15(1):85-109.