



**Department of Social Sciences**  
**Criminal Justice Research Methods CRIJ 4322**  
**Fall 2025**  
**CAS 104**  
**Mondays & Wednesdays from 2:30pm to 3:55pm**

**Professor:** Beatriz Amalfi Wronski, PhD  
**Office:** CAS 133  
**Telephone:** (903)565-6582  
**Email:** bwronski@uttyler.edu (email is the best way to reach me)  
**Office Availability:** Pre- and post-class periods

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### **COURSE INFORMATION**

This course relies on Open Educational Resources (OER). All materials used in this class are openly licensed and available to you free of cost.

#### **Recommended Materials:**

Bachman, R. & Schutt, R. (2024). The Practice of Research in Criminology and Criminal Justice (8<sup>th</sup> Edition). Sage Publisher.

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course is designed to teach students the methods by which factual information is generated on crime and the criminal justice system. Topics include experiments, surveys, observation, unobtrusive techniques, measurement, statistics, data analysis, and ethics in research.

### **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

After successfully completing this course, students should be able to complete the following:

1. Know and understand the main components of criminology and criminal justice research (i.e., literature review, research question, sampling, causality, measures, and operationalizations).
2. Understand the differences and importance of both quantitative and qualitative methods of data gathering.

3. Develop and enhance writing skills to successfully apply course content to criminal justice-related topics.
4. Analyze and critically evaluate social science research.
5. Acquire a deeper understanding of ethical concerns of reaching hidden populations and answering controversial questions within the field of criminology and criminal justice.

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING POLICY**

<i>Assignment</i>	<i>Possible Points</i>	<i>Actual Points</i>	<i>Grading Scale</i>
In-class Activity - Measurement	10		<b>A = 135 – 150</b> <b>B = 120 – 134</b> <b>C = 105 – 119</b> <b>D = 90 – 104</b> <b>F = Below 89</b>
In-class Activity - Sampling	10		
In-class Activity - Causation	10		
In-class Activity - Survey	10		
In-class Activity – Field Notes	10		
Research Proposal – Research Question	10		
Research Proposal – AI Critique	20		
Research Proposal –Paraphrasing	20		
Research Proposal – Methods	20		
Research Proposal – Ethics	10		
Research Proposal “Presentation”	20		
<b>Total Points</b>	<b>150</b>		

- I. Attendance (10 points – Extra Credit):** Attendance during the course is **required**. I will take attendance at the beginning of every class, and you may receive up to 10 extra points towards your final grade based on your presence and participation in class. Between September and December, this class meets 26 times. Extra credit will be awarded to students present and participating in at least 20 class periods. Remember that it is your responsibility to reach out to the instructor if you miss or know you are going to miss class.
- II. In-class Group Assignments (50 points total; 10 points each):** Students will complete 5 (five) in-class activities throughout the semester. These activities are designed to help you apply the information learned from the lectures. Students will work in groups, and all activities must be completed during the class period.
- III. Research Project (100 points total):** Students are expected to complete a research proposal this semester. The project is scaffolded into the following assignments:
  - 1. Topic & Research Question (10 points):** Find a topic of interest to you and propose a research question that can be scientifically studied.

2. **AI Critique (20 points):** It is very difficult to find a research topic that has never been explored before. Often, other researchers have at least indirectly studied the connection between the independent and dependent variables you were interested in. This assignment helps you make sense of what has already been learned about the topic you want to research. To complete this assignment, you should follow these steps: (1) Find a scientific article published in a criminal justice or criminology journal that explores a research question similar to the one you proposed, (2) choose an AI generator of your preference and (3) ask it to summarize the article you chose, and (4) to point out the article's methodological strengths and weaknesses. Finally, (5) ask the AI generator to answer your research question (copy this: "Based only on this article, answer the following research question [your question here]"). Please copy and paste the output into a document and upload it to Canvas along with your answers to the AI Use Evaluation Guide (on canvas).
3. **Paraphrasing (20 points):** Find another scientific article published in a criminal justice or criminology journal that explores a research question similar to the one you proposed. Identify the (1) research question, (2) IV, (3) DV, (4) type of sampling, (5) sampling strategy, (6) type of data, (7) type of answer, and (8) answer to the research question. Then, using a maximum of 200 words, summarize the article's (A) introduction and (B) literature review. Do not copy and paste anything from the article; paraphrase and/or summarize information that seems relevant. Upload your document to Canvas along with your answers to the Literature Review Questionnaire.
4. **Methods (20 points):** Write a methods section to answer your research question. You have read several research papers in this class and can use them as a reference guide. Your methods section should be between 1-2 pages long and cover all main components of a research proposal (independent variable and its level of measurement, dependent variable and its level of measurement, at least two control variables and their levels of measurement, type of research approach, population being studied, type of sampling, sampling strategy, type of data, type of answer). Include a section highlighting how your work expands/improves on previous studies (using the other two studies you have chosen in steps 2 and 3 of this research proposal). Also, consider the limitations of your methodology.
5. **Ethics (10 points):** Write a discussion of the ethical issues relating to your research question or methodology. This section should be no longer than a page, and it should include an ethical review of your proposed research project. Consider any ethical dilemmas in the process of designing your research or potential ethical problems arising from your methodological choices (are you studying a vulnerable population? How are your research participants protected? In which ways are they not protected? Are there any ethical problems with your sampling strategy? Are there any ethical problems with the measurement of your variables? Etc.).
6. **Presentation (20 points):** Students will create a PowerPoint presentation designed to serve as a complete research proposal. Presentations will take place at the end of the semester and should not take longer than 5 minutes. Students will be graded according to the following rubric:

<i><b>Item (possible points)</b></i>	<i><b>Expectations</b></i>
Effectiveness (3 points)	(1) Information is presented clearly, (2) the audience is not required to read long passages, and (3) slides are not visually “busy.”
RQ (2 points)	Identify the topic of the research proposal. Identify a question that can only be answered by a combination of facts (data) and opinion (interpretation).
IV & DV (4 points)	Identify (1) IV, (2) IV’s level of measurement, (3) DV, and (4) DV’s level of measurement.
Control Variables (4 points)	Identify: (1) Control 1, (2) Control 1’s level of measurement, (3) Control 2, and (4) Control 2’s level of measurement.
Research Type (2 points)	Identify: (1) Qualitative or Quantitative method, and (2) Data collection procedure.
Sampling Method (3 points)	Identify: (1) Population, (2) Sample, and (3) Sampling procedure.
Ethics (2 points)	Identify: (1) At least one potential ethical dilemma of your research proposal, and (2) provide a solution to minimize risk or harm to all participants.

### **LATE WORK AND MAKE-UP POLICY**

Students are not allowed to submit late assignments in this course. Similarly, there will be no make-up exams, unless in specific extenuating circumstances. It is the student's responsibility to inform the instructor of any expected absence during an exam or in-class activity so that the proper arrangements can be made. Students who wish to request an extension must email the instructor **before** the original assignment deadline and provide a **copy of their assignment** in its current state. If the student has made sufficient progress until that point, the instructor will provide an alternative timeline for the completion of the project. Do not wait to start assignments at the last possible minute.

### **USE OF TECHNOLOGY**

Any technology or device, such as a laptop or tablet, is welcome in our classroom **if, and only if**, you are using it for class-related purposes. Please turn all mobile devices on vibrate or silent. Please police yourself and avoid texting or using your device for any other purposes. Please do not audio or video record class lectures.

## CONTACT POLICY

The best way to contact me is via my university email (bwronski@uttyler.edu). If you have **any** questions, feel free to contact me. You can expect a response within 24 hours on a weekday or within 48 hours on the weekend.

## COURSE-SPECIFIC POLICIES

### COURSE NOTES, MATERIALS, AND RECORDING POLICY

Any materials from this course developed by the professor or provided to the students may not be sold or distributed to other people. Also, note that this is a tentative schedule. I reserve the right to make changes at any point. All changes will be communicated to students as soon as possible.

Week	Date	Topic	Project	Assignment Due
1	August 25	Syllabus + Expectations	-	-
	August 27	What is Research + Research Ethics in the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century	-	-
2	September 1	<b>Labor Day – NO CLASS!</b>	-	-
	September 3	Ethics + Research Question		-
3	September 8	Literature Review		-
	September 10	Levels of Measurement	In-Class Activity “Measurement”	RP - Research Question (due at 11:59 PM).
4	September 15	Validity/Reliability + Probability Sampling	-	-
	September 17	Probability Sampling	-	-
5	September 22	Nonprobability Sampling	-	-
	September 24	Nonprobability Sampling	In-Class Activity “Sampling”	RP - AI Critique (due at 11:59 PM).
6	September 29	Causation	-	-
	October 1	Causation	-	
7	October 6	Survey	-	
	October 8	Survey	In-Class Activity “Survey”	RP – Paraphrasing (due at 11:59 PM).
8	October 13	Qualitative Methods	-	
	October 15	Qualitative Methods	In-Class Activity “Field Work” Pt 1	
9	October 20	Qualitative Methods	-	
	October 22	Qualitative Methods	In-Class Activity “Field Work” Pt 2	
10	October 27	Mixed-Methods	-	
	October 29	Meta-Analysis/Meta-synthesis	-	

<b>11</b>	November 3	Secondary Data	In-Class Activity “Secondary Data”	-
	November 5	Mapping	-	-
<b>12</b>	November 10	Evaluation	-	-
	November 12	Evaluation	-	RP – Methods (due at 11:59 PM).
<b>13</b>	November 17	Presenting Results	-	-
	November 19	Presenting Results	-	RP – Ethics (due at 11:59 PM).
<b>14</b>	November 24	<b>Thanksgiving Break – No Class!</b>	-	-
	November 26	<b>Thanksgiving Break – No Class!</b>	-	-
<b>15</b>	December 1	Catch-up week	-	-
	December 3	Catch-up week	-	-
<b>16</b>	December 8	Presentations	-	RP - PowerPoint Presentation
	December 10	Presentations	-	-

## **REQUIRED POLICIES**

### **UNIVERSITY POLICIES**

#### **Withdrawing from Class**

Students may withdraw (drop) from this course using the Withdrawal Portal. Withdrawing (dropping) this course can impact your Financial Aid, Scholarships, Veteran Benefits, Exemptions, Waivers, International Student Status, housing, and degree progress. Please speak with your instructors, consider your options, speak with your advisor, and visit the One-Stop Service Center (STE 230) or email [enroll@uttyler.edu](mailto:enroll@uttyler.edu) to get a complete review of your student account and the possible impacts to withdrawing. We want you to make an informed decision. UT Tyler faculty and staff are here for you and often can provide additional support options or assistance. Make sure to carefully read the implications for withdrawing from a course and the instructions on using the Withdrawal portal.

Texas law prohibits students from dropping more than six courses during their entire undergraduate career\*. The six courses dropped includes those from other 2-year or 4-year Texas public colleges and universities. Consider the impact withdrawing from this class has on your academic progress and other areas, such as financial implications. We encourage you to consult your advisor(s) and Enrollment Services for additional guidance. CAUTION #1: Withdrawing before census day does not mean you get a full refund. Please see the Tuition and Fee Refund Schedule. CAUTION #2: All international students must check with the Office of International Programs before withdrawing. All international students are required to enroll full-time for fall and spring terms. CAUTION #3: All UT Tyler Athletes must check with the Athletic Academic Coordinator before withdrawing from a course. CAUTION #4: All veterans or military-affiliated students should consult with the Military and Veterans Success Center.

\* Students who began college for the first time before 2007 are exempt from this law.

### **Artificial Intelligence Statement**

UT Tyler is committed to exploring and using artificial intelligence (AI) tools as appropriate for the discipline and task undertaken. We encourage discussing AI tools' ethical, societal, philosophical, and disciplinary implications. All uses of AI should be acknowledged as this aligns with our commitment to honor and integrity, as noted in UT Tyler's Honor Code. Faculty and students must not use protected information, data, or copyrighted materials when using any AI tool. Additionally, users should be aware that AI tools rely on predictive models to generate content that may appear correct but is sometimes shown to be incomplete, inaccurate, taken without attribution from other sources, and/or biased. Consequently, an AI tool should not be considered a substitute for traditional approaches to research. You are ultimately responsible for the quality and content of the information you submit. Misusing AI tools that violate the guidelines specified for this course is considered a breach of academic integrity. The student will be subject to disciplinary actions as outlined in UT Tyler's Academic Integrity Policy. **For this course, AI is permitted only for specific assignments or situations, and appropriate acknowledgment is required.** This course has specific assignments where artificial intelligence (AI) tools (such as ChatGPT or Copilot) are permitted and encouraged. When AI use is permissible, it will be clearly stated in the assignment directions, and all use of AI must be appropriately acknowledged and cited. Using AI tools outside of these parameters violates UT Tyler's Honor Code, constitutes plagiarism, and will be treated as such.

### **Final Exam Policy**

Final examinations are administered as scheduled. If unusual circumstances require that special

arrangements be made for an individual student or class, the Dean of the appropriate college, after consultation with the faculty member involved, may authorize an exception to the schedule. Faculty members must maintain student final examination papers for a minimum of three months following the examination date.

### **Incomplete Grade Policy**

If a student, because of extenuating circumstances, is unable to complete all of the requirements for a course by the end of the semester, then the instructor may recommend an Incomplete (I) for the course. The "I" may be assigned in place of a grade only when all of the following conditions are met: (a) the student has been making satisfactory progress in the course; (b) the student is unable to complete all coursework or final exam due to unusual circumstances that are beyond personal control and are acceptable to the instructor, and (c) the student presents these reasons before the time that the final grade roster is due. The semester credit hours for an Incomplete will not be used to calculate the grade point average.

The student and the instructor must submit an Incomplete Form detailing the work required and the time by which the work must be completed to their respective department chair or college dean for approval. The time limit established must not exceed one year. Should the

student fail to meet all of the work for the course within the time limit, then the instructor may assign zeros to the unfinished work, compute the course average for the student, and assign the appropriate grade. If a grade has yet to be assigned within one year, then the Incomplete will be changed to an F, or NC. If the course was initially taken under the CR/NC grading basis, this may adversely affect the student's academic standing.

### **Grade Appeal Policy**

Disputes regarding grades must be initiated within sixty (60) days from the date of receiving the final course grade by filing a Grade Appeal Form with the instructor who assigned the grade. A grade appeal should be used when the student thinks the final course grade awarded does not reflect the grades earned on assessments or follow the grading scale as documented in the syllabus. The student should provide the rationale for the grade appeal and attach supporting document about the grades earned. The form should be sent via email to the faculty member who assigned the grade. The faculty member reviews the rationale and supporting documentation and completes the instruction section of the form. The instructor should return the form to the student, even if a grade change is made at this level. If the student is not satisfied with the decision, the student may appeal in writing to the Chairperson of the department from which the grade was issued. In situations where there is an allegation of capricious grading, discrimination, or unlawful actions, appeals may go beyond the Chairperson to the Dean or the Dean's designee of the college from which the grade was issued, with that decision being final. The Grade Appeal form is found in the Registrar's Form Library.

NOTE: The Grade Appeal Form is different from the Application for Appeal form submitted to the Student Appeals Committee, which does not rule on grade disputes as described in this policy.

### **Disability/Accessibility Services**

In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA), the University of Texas at Tyler offers accommodations to students with learning, physical, and/or psychological disabilities. If you have a disability, including a non-visible diagnosis such as a learning disorder, chronic illness, TBI, PTSD, ADHD, or a history of modifications or accommodations in a previous educational environment, you are encouraged to visit <https://hood.accessiblelearning.com/UTTyler/> and fill out the New Student application. The Student Accessibility and Resources (SAR) office will contact you when your application has been submitted and an appointment with the Assistant Director Student Accessibility and Resources/ADA Coordinator. For more information, including filling out an application for services, please visit the SAR webpage at <https://www.uttyler.edu/disability-services>, the SAR office located in the Robert Muntz Library, LIB460, email [saroffice@uttyler.edu](mailto:saroffice@uttyler.edu), or call 903.566.7079."

### **Military Affiliated Students**



UT Tyler honors the service and sacrifices of our military-affiliated students. If you are a student who is a veteran, on active duty, in the reserves or National Guard, or a military spouse or dependent, please stay in contact with your faculty member if any aspect of your present or prior service or family situation makes it difficult for you to fulfill the requirements of a course or creates disruption in your academic progress. It is important to make your faculty member aware of any complications as far in advance as possible. Your faculty member is willing to work with you and, if needed, put you in contact with university staff who are trained to assist you. The Military and Veterans Success Center (MVSC) has campus resources for military-affiliated students. The MVSC can be reached at MVSC@uttyler.edu or via phone at 903.565.5972.

### **Students on an F-1 Visa**

To remain in compliance with Federal Regulations requirements you must do the following:

- Traditional face-to-face classes: Attend classes on the regular meeting days/times.
- Hybrid Classes: Attend all face-to-face classes convened by the instructor according to the schedule set for your specific course.
- Online course: Only one online course can count toward your full-time enrollment. Students are expected to be fully engaged and meet all requirements for the online course.

### **Academic Honesty and Academic Misconduct**

The UT Tyler community comes together to pledge that "Honor and integrity will not allow me to lie, cheat, or steal, nor to accept the actions of those who do." Therefore, we enforce the Student Conduct and Discipline policy in the Student Manual Of Operating Procedures (Section 8).

### **FERPA**

UT Tyler follows the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) as noted in University Policy 5.2.3. The course instructor will follow all requirements to protect your confidential information.

### **Absence for Official University Events or Activities**

This course follows the practices related to Excused Absences for University Events or Activities as noted in the Catalog.

### **Absence for Religious Holidays**

This course follows the practices related to Excused Absences for Religious Holy Days as noted in the Catalog.

### **Absence for Pregnant Students**

This course follows the requirements of Texas Laws SB 412, SB 459, SB 597/HB 1361 to meet the needs of pregnant and parenting students. Part of the supports afforded pregnant students includes excused absences. Faculty who are informed by a student of needing this support should make a referral to the Parenting Student Liaison. NOTE: Students must work with the Parenting Student Liaison in order to receive these supports. Students should reach out to the Parenting Student Liaison at [parents@uttyler.edu](mailto:parents@uttyler.edu) and also complete the Pregnant and Parenting Self-Reporting Form.

### **Campus Carry**

We respect the right and privacy of students who are duly licensed to carry concealed weapons in this class. License holders are expected to behave responsibly and keep a handgun secure and concealed. More information is available at <http://www.uttyler.edu/about/campus-carry/index.php>