



## CJFS 3140 Research Methods and Data Analysis

T-Th, 9:40-11:10

Giddens Alumni Learning Center (GLC) 141S

Hamline University

Department of Criminal Justice & Forensic Science



Dr. Ryan Larson

Email: [rlarson21@hamline.edu](mailto:rlarson21@hamline.edu)

Website: <https://ryanplarson.github.io>

Office Location: Giddens Alumni Learning Center (GLC) 210E

Office Hours: W 1:00pm-3:30pm, or by appointment

Office Phone: (651) 523-2168

Office Hours Google Meet: [Dr. Larson Google Meet](#)

Class Canvas Page: <https://canvas.hamline.edu/courses/13872>

### Course Overview:

If the intellectual dividing line of the early 20th century was linguistic literacy, in the beginning of the 21st century it may be quantitative literacy. Careers in criminology and criminal justice increasingly demand skills and responsible interpretation of the analysis of social data. At the same time, with frequent references to the crime rates, polls, and studies in news reports, quantitative literacy has become essential to informed citizenship.

CJFS 3140 is a criminological research design and data analysis course designed for CJFS majors and other students who wish to gain a foundation in social science methodology. In this class, we will take several steps towards literacy in both quantitative and qualitative social science research methods. This course introduces to students to the fundamental principles of the logic and execution of social research methods and statistics. Students will gain insight into how data are collected and analyzed using methods as divergent as surveys, ethnographies, content analyses, and experiments. The course will help students develop skills in critically analyzing social scientific research by examining issues pertaining to research design, sampling, conceptualization and operationalization of measures, and analytical approach. You will develop skills in critically analyzing and producing social scientific research by examining issues pertaining to research design, sampling, conceptualization and operationalization of measures, data visualization, and a range

of quantitative methods including descriptive, bivariate, and multivariate analyses. In addition to these statistical fundamentals, you will also think about where and when these skills are best put to responsible use. Whether you plan to go to graduate school, go into a data-driven job, or just want to be a better consumer of information, these skills will help students engage critically with quantitative information.

**Required Text(s):**

- Babbie, Earl. 2021. *The Practice of Social Research, 15th Edition.*
- Lecture Notes - uploaded to canvas before each class period.
- Various readings uploaded to [Canvas](#) (TBD).

**Prerequisite(s):** One of the following:

- CJFS 1120 - Crime and Justice in America
- MATH 1200 - Statistics
- QMBE 1310 - Business Statistics

**Course Objectives:**

It is my hope by the end of this course you will:

1. Understand the foundational logic of social science methods.
2. Be able to understand the strengths and weaknesses of different research designs.
3. Be able to read, digest, and explain empirical research articles.
4. Perform basic quantitative data analysis in R.
5. Explain how researchers use data and statistical evidence to develop criminological insights.

This course is a [Hamline Plan Reasoning \(R\)](#) course and therefore upon completion of this course you will be able to:

1. Understand the difference between inductive and deductive reasoning and demonstrate familiarity with basic methods of assessing inductive strength or deductive validity.
2. Understand and make use of symbolic and abstract representations.
3. Solve problems that require rigorous formal demonstrations with multiple steps.

**Grade Distribution:**

Scholarly Attitude	20%	50 pts.
Exams	40%	100 pts.
Research Proposal	40%	100 pts.

**Letter Grade Distribution:**

>= 93.00	A	73.00 - 76.99	C
90.00 - 92.99	A-	70.00 - 72.99	C-
87.00 - 89.99	B+	67.00 - 69.99	D+
83.00 - 86.99	B	63.00 - 66.99	D
80.00 - 82.99	B-	60.00 - 62.99	D-
77.00 - 79.99	C+	<= 59.99	F

## Course Requirements:

- **“Scholarly Attitude”**: Most faculty members evaluate participation as a part of students’ course grades. But mere participation – how much you do or don’t talk, sit up or fall asleep – isn’t really what most of us want from our students. Instead, most of us hope to see students accept our invitation to “the life of mind” by adopting a “scholarly attitude.” Having a “scholarly attitude” involves developing intellectual curiosity and a genuine engagement with the ideas presented in the course. Students with a scholarly attitude take the student role seriously and demonstrate their commitment to academic pursuits by actively engaging in the material, reflecting deeply on the readings, raising thoughtful questions and comments in class, bringing unsolicited materials to share that are directly relevant to the topics being covered, come early and/or stay late to raise their own questions about the material, and generally go above and beyond the requirements of the course. Students who lack a scholarly attitude passively complete the readings and requirements, only occasionally engage in other activities during lecture, and are primarily concerned with obtaining a particular grade in the course.

The main idea here is to be actively engaged with the class material and criminological material we will read this semester, and to display a genuine curiosity towards learning about research methods and statistics. This portion of your grade is necessarily subjective, so please come see me if you have any questions or concerns about this part of your grade.

- **Exams**: There will be both a midterm and final exam, each of which cover material previously covered in each half of the semester respectively. The exams will cover ideas and topics from the class lecture, course readings, and class discussions, and will consist of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. The class period before each exam will consist of a review day and study period, where we will review the relevant material for the exam. Students are expected to come to the review/study day with questions, concerns, and ideas, and we will “study together” before each exam. I know exams can bring about worry and anxiety. However, there will be no “trick” questions on the exams, and students who come to lecture and actively participate in class should be well situated for the exams. Please come prepared for each review/study day, as it is likely other students have the same or similar questions that you do. More details about each exam will be discussed in class.
- **Research Proposal**: In order to delve deeper on a criminological topic and research design of interest, you will write a research proposal in the style of a mini social science research proposal. The idea here is relatively simple: pick a criminological question of interest, find previous studies that have examined that question before, and propose a study and research design that could gain empirical purchase on your question of interest. The purpose of this assignment is to learn 1) to ask a good criminological question, 2) to formulate and support a clear and sophisticated thesis, 3) gain skills in finding appropriate and valid research to support your thesis, and 4) design a sound social research study. In the early weeks of the semester, do some thinking about what truly interests you within criminology, and what methods may best be used to help study your question of interest.

Example research proposals could include, but are certainly not limited to:

- What is the experience of prison like? Interview study of currently incarcerated individuals

- What is the relationship between neighborhood inequality and crime? Quantitative analysis of Census and crime data.
- How are defendants of different racial identifications treated in sentencing? Participant observation of courtroom practices.
- What is the impact of a criminal record on dating and relationships? Experimental audit of a dating app.

The research proposal should have the following sections:

- Abstract - a summary of your paper and your proposed study in approximately 150 words.
- Introduction - including clarification and exposition of the central question, important subsidiary questions, and general framing for the reader.
- Literature review - summarizing and synthesizing the main findings of at least 4 studies that have been done on your topic or a related one. What do these studies have to say about your research question? What research designs did these studies use to answer the question of interest?
- Research Design - The bulk of your paper, where you present your proposed study. Research Design? Data? Sampling strategy? Analytical strategy? Ethical considerations? Causal inference?
- Conclusion - Overall, what do you expect to find if you carried out your study? What questions may remain unanswered? What would the societal or policy implications of your research be? What are the potential strengths and weaknesses of your design?
- References - all citations (including in-text) should be in ASA format.
  - \* [Purdue OWL ASA In-Text Citation Guide](#)
  - \* [Purdue OWL ASA References Page Formatting](#)

Each proposal will be chosen, and approved, in consultation with me, and I will help guide you towards relevant research questions and ideas throughout the semester. We will work together to learn how to find relevant research articles and how to read and digest them. Google Scholar and the Bush Library Website will be integral sources for finding relevant theoretical and empirical scholarship. We will discuss how to use these tools and strategies for searching in class, as well as how to identify quality primary and secondary sources.

In order to produce high quality papers, you will write, workshop, and revise your papers over the course of the semester. The initial sub-submissions will be graded for completion, and will allow an opportunity for me to give everybody feedback on their papers step-by-step, without the specter of graded feedback. The final submission will be graded as a normal paper. This process hopefully will split the workload across the semester and mitigate any end of the semester time crunch. Thus, the following due dates apply:

- 9/23 - Research Question/Proposed Design Synopsis. 10 pts.
- 10/21 - Annotated References. 10 pts.
- 11/23 - Draft of Research Proposal (4-6 pages). 10 pts.
- 12/14 - Final Research Proposal (4-6 pages). 70 pts.

- All writing assignments must be typed, stapled, double-spaced, in 12-point Times New Roman font, and have 1-inch margins. The assignments should also have the student's full name, and date.
- More detailed descriptions of each subcomponent will be discussed in advance of each due date, and a more detailed rubric will be disseminated later in the semester.
- **Extra Credit:** For extra credit in this course you may attend an event on campus or in the Twin Cities (e.g., lecture, research talk) that uses social science research methods and write a 1-2 page reaction paper about the event. In the paper you must discuss how this event is related to social science or criminological research methods generally and how it is related to particular topics and/or research designs discussed in class. Next, critique the substance of the event based on what you know; is it a sound research design? What are some potential threats, if any, to the study's validity? Was the method used appropriate for the research question? Finally, include reactions to the event: what social or criminological knowledge was gained by this event? To get credit for this assignment, you must get approval from the professor for the event over email at least one day prior to the event and you must turn in the paper within one week of attending the event and on or before the last day of class (December 8th). Multiple departments across campus offer opportunities, and the University of Minnesota's Sociology Workshop Series is another place to keep an eye on. Keep in mind that completion of this extra credit opportunity requires timing, and likely cannot be completed last minute. The extra credit is worth 10 pts. upon completion.

## Course Policies and Information:

- **General**

- First and foremost, welcome to CJFS 3140! I am so excited to go on this methodological journey and meet all of you! I find social science research methods to be really neat and fun, and the questions social science methods can answer are truly fascinating. I hope we can have a great time this semester exploring these methodological ideas.
- Given this is an upper-level class, many of you will have already developed strategies that help you be successful in the college classroom. However, I also have some tips that will be useful in this class and the others you may be taking:
  - \* Come to class as much as possible! This will allow you to keep up to date with everything, and really engage with the class material.
  - \* Take notes! Either electronically or the old fashioned way with pen and paper, take notes during lecture and discussion. These will help you when you are studying for exams and writing your papers.
  - \* Ask questions! Please, please, please, ask questions whenever you have them. They can be simple logistical things or in depth questions about the class material. Grappling with class material is what college is all about, so I encourage you to ask questions whenever you find something confusing or fascinating! I'm happy to answer any questions as I am able, no matter how big or small. If I don't know the answer to something, I will work with you to find the answer!
  - \* Come to office hours! Faculty members love when you come to see them. Take this time to get to know me and your other professors, which I personally found to be one of the most rewarding experiences of a liberal arts college experience.

- \* Use a calendar! Whether it be your Google calendar or a paper schedule, write out all the relevant dates for the course: assignment deadlines, exam dates, class times, my office hours, etc. This will help you stay a bit organized and keep tabs on what's to come in the semester.
- Please make use of this syllabus and the class [Canvas](#) site. They will both give a guide to what's coming next, and [Canvas](#) is also the hub for all assignment submissions. All supplementary class reading materials and other resources will also be posted to the class [Canvas](#) site.

- **Grading and Absences:**

- Overall, I'd love for everybody to not worry about their grades and instead spend that energy with the readings and engagement in class. If you do so, I am confident that the grades will follow, and I want everybody in the class to succeed however you define that for yourself. With that being said, keeping up to date on the readings and class material will be *essential* to obtaining a high grade in this class.
- The grading breakdown, course requirements, and letter grade distributions are listed above. Please come see me if you have any questions related to grading or general course expectations.
- All assignments are due at just before midnight of the night they are due unless otherwise noted (11:59pm due date). Emailed assignments are not accepted unless otherwise arranged, and all submissions will take place via [Canvas](#).
- Late assignments are deducted one letter grade if they are turned in within 24 hours of the due date and an additional letter grade for each additional 24 hours beyond this; assignments will not be accepted more than 1 week after the due date or all assignments are graded (whichever is later). Incompletes will not be granted except in rare or extraordinary circumstances and cannot be given without prior written agreement.
- If you have questions about how you have been graded on a particular assignment, I have a general policy for handling these situations: please briefly put in writing your thoughts or comments on the grading and see me in the next available office hours. We will then discuss your grade(s). Any requests must be submitted within one week of the date the grades for that assignment/exam are distributed.
- If you miss a class, please ask a classmate to share their notes with you (in advance, if possible). If you are uncomfortable asking another student, please let me know and I will find a volunteer to share notes. We are in this together! You are still responsible for the class material in the presence of an absence. Note that while attendance is not strictly required, multiple absences will be reflected in your “scholarly attitude” grade.
- You must notify me in person, e-mail, in writing, or by phone **prior** to missing an assignment due date or exam for me to consider giving you a makeup or extension. Exams may not be made up except in the rare event of an excused absence. Medical, bereavement, religious, athletic, or other excused absences require advance notice and proper documentation.
- If you know in advance that you will be absent for an exam with an approved absence, you will be expected to take the exam prior to the exam date, and are expected to consult with me to find a proper time and place for the exam.

- I know your lives can get busy and hectic and you have other responsibilities outside the classroom. The key here is to be in communication with me when you are going to be gone or would request an extension, and I will do my best under the circumstances to work with you to find a solution.

- **Communication:** The best way to reach me is by email. I will attempt to return email within 24 hours Mon.-Fri. and within 48 hours over the weekend. There will be times I cannot respond within 24 hours. If you wait until the last minute to email me with questions, I may not be able to respond in time. However, I will do my best to respond to all email inquiries in a timely fashion.
- **Tech:** Many studies have shown that people are poor multi-taskers. Looking at Facebook, Twitter, Wikipedia, etc. or even doing Google searches that may seem relevant all distract from lecture and discussion. So, if you plan to use a laptop, please stay focused on lecture and discussion and use the laptop to take notes. Additionally, mobile phones should not be used in class unless specifically allowed by me.
- **Inclusivity:** Hamline values diversity and inclusion; we are collectively committed to a climate of mutual respect and full participation. My goal is to create learning environments that are usable, equitable, inclusive and welcoming. If there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in barriers to your inclusion or accurate assessment or achievement, please notify me as soon as possible.

My goal is to welcome everyone to the fascinating world of criminology. As your professor, I hold the fundamental belief that everyone in the class is fully capable of engaging and mastering the material. My goal is to meet everyone in the learning process. Our classroom should be an inclusive space, where ideas, questions, and misconceptions can be discussed with respect. There is usually more than one way to see and solve a problem and we will all be richer if we can be open to multiple paths to knowledge. This course will include discussions of studies regarding class, gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, and criminality. These are sensitive social topics, and I expect each of you to broach with maturity and scholarly curiosity. I expect students to show respect toward the subjects of our study, as well as to treat your classmates and myself with respect and dignity at all times.

- **Accessibility:** If you have a documented disability for which accommodations may be required in this class, please contact Steve Anderson (sanderson65@hamline.edu, West Hall 108) as soon as possible to discuss accommodations. If you have already arranged accommodations through Disability Resources, please ensure submission of your accommodation letter within the first two weeks of class. Accommodations will only be provided after the letter is submitted to me and with sufficient lead-time for me to arrange testing or other accommodations. Although I will receive the letter electronically, I am available to chat privately during office hours if you wish.
- **Preparedness:** I promise to be prepared, engaged, and as helpful as I can be in each class period, as well as outside of class time. We will be wrestling with new and difficult topic matter during the course of the semester, and I understand it can seem daunting especially given your other responsibilities on and off campus. All I ask is that you give your best effort on each assignment, reading, and class period and I promise to reciprocate.

- **Office Hours**

Please come to office hours! This is a dedicated time set aside for **you**, the student, to:

- Ask questions or get clarifications on topic that weren't clear in the lecture or readings
- Get feedback on assignments and papers
- Just talk “shop”: research design, criminology, etc.
- Talk about concerns you have inside or outside of class
- Get to know me! It also lets me get to know you as well, which is one of the best parts of my job.

I'm excited to meet and get to know each of you personally, and office hours are a great time to do that. Feel free to stop by anytime during office hours, or sign up for a slot on the [Canvas](#) site. If my usual office hours do not work with your schedule, please email me to schedule an office hours appointment and I will find a time that works with your schedule. I'd love the opportunity to learn about you, what is bringing you to study criminology, and how I can help you in your future studies/research/career. My office hours and location can be found near my picture at the top of this syllabus. Please don't hesitate to stop by and chat!

- **COVID-19 and Masking Policies**

- Any requirements for use of face masks on campus will be determined by the [Hamline University COVID-19 shift plan](#). See [Hamline's Mask Policy](#) for more information.
- In general, if you were exposed to COVID-19, please follow the recommendations as follows from the CDC.
  - \* [What to Do If You Were Exposed to COVID-19](#)
  - \* [What to Do If You Test Positive for COVID-19](#)

- **Academic Honesty:** Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, making multiple submissions, fabricating information, using materials in an unauthorized manner, misrepresenting academic records, and facilitating academic dishonesty. A student found guilty of academic dishonesty can receive failure for an assignment, failure for the entire course, or academic suspension or expulsion. For more information on the Honor Code, please visit the [Honor Code website](#).

Discussion of class material and readings amongst students is encouraged, and helping each other out is encouraged! However, you are expected to work independently on assignments, papers, and exams. When in doubt, please come see me.

- **Sexual Assault, Relationship Violence, and Stalking:** Hamline University also provides academic and other accommodations to students who have experienced sexual assault, relationship violence (physical, emotional, or other form of abuse by a dating or other intimate partner), or stalking. For more information about Hamline's policy and the resources available to you, consult [Hamline's website](#) or contact our Title IX Coordinator and Associate Dean of Students, Patti Kersten, (651) 523-2421, [pkersten01@hamline.edu](mailto:pkersten01@hamline.edu).
- **Writing Assistance:** The ability to communicate effectively in writing is an important skill that will be required all classes at Hamline University and in life outside of the University. While we will workshop papers throughout the semester and you will receive feedback before your final submission, there are also resources on campus to assist you with your writing. There is free student writing support at the [Writing and Communication Center](#). The writing center can assist you in all stages of the writing process and I encourage all students to take advantage of this valuable resource. To schedule an appointment call (651) 523-2026 or visit [Hamline University Writing and Communication Center Website](#).



### Tentative Course Outline:

The following is a *tentative* schedule for lecture topics and exams. I will do my best to keep as close as possible to this schedule, although we may make some adjustments throughout the semester. *All exams will be given on the dates indicated.*

Week	Content/Readings
Week 1 (8/30 & 9/1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Introduction to Research Methods</i><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– T (8/30): No reading, welcome to class!</li><li>– Th (9/1) Reading: 3140 syllabus; Babbie Ch. 1</li></ul></li></ul>
Week 2 (9/6 & 9/8)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Theory and Research Methods</i><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Reading: Babbie Ch. 2</li></ul></li></ul>
Week 3 (9/13 & 9/15)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Research Ethics</i><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Reading: Babbie Ch. 3</li></ul></li></ul>
Week 4 (9/20 & 9/22)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Research Design</i><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Reading: Babbie Ch. 4</li></ul></li></ul>
Week 5 (9/27 & 9/29)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Conceptualization, Operationalization, and Measurement</i><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Reading: Babbie Ch. 5</li><li>– Research Question/Research Design Synopsis <b>DUE 9/29 11:59pm</b></li></ul></li></ul>
Week 6 (10/4 & 10/6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>The Logic of Sampling</i><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Reading: Babbie Ch. 7.</li></ul></li></ul>
Week 7 (10/11 & 10/13)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Midterm Exam</i><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– T (10/11): Review/study day!</li><li>– Th (10/13): Midterm Exam</li></ul></li></ul>

Week	Content/Readings
Week 8 (10/18 & 10/20)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Experiments and Survey Research</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– T (10/18): Babbie Ch.8</li> <li>– Th (10/20): Babbie Ch. 9</li> <li>– Annotated References <b>DUE 10/19 11:59pm</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Week 9 (10/25 & 10/27)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Qualitative Research Designs</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– T (10/25): Babbie Ch. 10</li> <li>– Th (10/27): Babbie Ch. 11</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Week 10 (11/1 & 11/3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Qualitative Data Analysis</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– T (11/1): Babbie Ch. 13</li> <li>– Th (11/3): Qualitative Analysis Lab</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Week 11 (11/8 & 11/10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Quantitative Data Analysis</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– T (11/8): Babbie Ch. 14</li> <li>– Th (11/10): Statistical Computing Lab: Getting Started in R and RStudio</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Week 12 (11/15 & 11/17)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Quantitative Analysis Labs 1</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– T (11/15): Descriptive Analyses</li> <li>– Th (11/17): Bivariate Analyses</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Week 13 (11/22 & 11/24)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Research Paper Workshop</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– T (11/22): Research Proposal Workshop 1</li> <li>– Draft of Research Proposal <b>DUE 11/23 11:59pm</b></li> <li>– Th (11/24): No class, Thanksgiving Break</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Week 14 (11/29 & 12/1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Quantitative Analysis Labs 2</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– T (11/29): Multivariate Analyses</li> <li>– Th (12/1): Data Visualization, Spatial Mapping/Analysis, and More in R</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Week 15 (12/6 & 12/8)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Tying Up Loose Ends</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– T (12/6): Research Paper Workshop 2</li> <li>– Th (12/8): Review/study day!</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Week 16 (12/12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Final Exam</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– W (12/14): Final Exam 7:45am–9:45am</li> <li>– Final Research Proposals <b>DUE 12/14 11:59pm</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul>