

# RM

## RESEARCH METHODS

FALL 2020 | 4 CREDITS

MONDAY, WEDNESDAY, & FRIDAY 9:25 – 10:40AM VIA ZOOM  
ZOOM LINK: [HTTPS://UWYO.ZOOM.US/J/91207518545](https://uwyo.zoom.us/j/91207518545)

### INSTRUCTOR INFO.

Kimberly Schweitzer, PhD

[kschweit@uwyo.edu](mailto:kschweit@uwyo.edu)

**Zoom Office Hours:**

<https://uwyo.zoom.us/j/2440098125>

Monday 2:30-4:30p

Wednesday 11a-12p

\* By appointment too! Email me and we'll find a time that works for both of us.

### TA INFO.

Nicholas Michalski, M.S.

[nmichall@uwyo.edu](mailto:nmichall@uwyo.edu)

**Zoom Office Hours:**

<https://uwyo.zoom.us/j/98790209938>

Friday 1-3p

### BOOK

None! \* If this worries you, you would like another resource, or you have an extra \$120 you're dying to spend, I recommend:

Bachman, R. D., & Schutt, R. K. (2017). *The practice of research in criminology and criminal justice* (6th ed.). Sage Publications.

### PREREQUISITES

Criminal Justice Major

### WHAT'S THE POINT?

**FAKE NEWS! • REAL NEWS! • IDK!**

This course is designed to introduce you to the methods used to investigate and conduct scientific research. Throughout this course, you will learn how to be a better consumer of research. Research findings are easily misportrayed by news outlets, people on social media, and others attempting to convey the results. This course will teach you the skills necessary to make your own determination as to the quality of the research you are reading/being presented with on a daily basis in real life.

**HOW?**

By conducting your own research! First, you'll learn some of the basic ins and outs of research design and methodology. Research is an art, most decisions have pros and cons, and it's often messy. In this course, I'll guide you through the mess and confusion and help you start to understand the wonderful world of research. There will be lots of activities, questions, discussions, debates, and reading, all capped off by your own research projects and presentations.

### WHAT SKILLS WILL I LEARN?

• **OUTCOME 1** •

Read and understand (gasp) scientific, peer-reviewed research articles.

• **OUTCOME 2** •

Critique scientific, peer-reviewed research articles, and articles/new stories based on the original article.

• **OUTCOME 3** •

Develop your own research question, hypothesis, and methodology.

• **OUTCOME 4** •

Interpret your own results and accurately discuss what they add to the existing literature on your topic.

• **OUTCOME 5** •

Communicate research (your own and others') both in writing and orally. Develop your own research question, hypothesis, and methodology.

## HOW WILL I BE ASSESSED?

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### • ACTIVITIES • • • APPX. 155 POINTS • • • OUTCOMES 1, 2, 4

To aide in your understanding of the topics we will be covering, there will be numerous activities and handouts. These activities/handouts typically involve you applying some of the knowledge you just learned through lecture and are often completed with classmates, though each student is asked to submit their *own* assignment.

### • KNOWLEDGE ASSESSMENTS • • • 45 POINTS • • • OUTCOMES 1, 2, 4

In addition to the in-class activities, we will also have in-class knowledge assessments, each worth five points, after every section we cover for the first two exams. These assessments are to ensure all students are understanding the material as we are learning it, allow me to reteach anything that wasn't understood, and to give you practice exam questions. They will be completed with classmates and each group will submit one KA.

### • EXAMS • • • 200 POINTS • • • OUTCOMES 1, 2, 4

There will be two regular (non-cumulative) and one, cumulative, final worth 100 points each. Questions will come from the lectures, reading assignments, handouts, activities, and knowledge assessments and will be multiple choice, true or false, fill in the blank, and short answer. Before Exam 1 and 2, there will be a review session. The lowest of your exam scores will be dropped. Because only two of the three exams will count towards your final grade, you also have the option to not take one of the exams. This should compensate for you having an 'off' day or for any unexpected events that may interrupt your exam preparation. Because you are only required to take two of the three exams, there will be **NO make-up exams** given unless your absence is sanctioned by the Office of Student Life or your absence is because of participation in a University-sponsored activity.

### • RESEARCH PROJECT • • • APPX. 200 POINTS • • • OUTCOMES 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

To apply what you have learned in class and to expose you to the actual process of conducting and communicating research, you will be asked to write up and communicate research findings from a study you conduct based off of an idea you generate with your classmates (and my help). Although the research idea will be generated with your classmates, *most components of this assignment will be individual in nature*. Details will be discussed extensively in class and are on the course webpage. The short version is, your project will be submitted in parts, with the final complete submission utilizing the feedback you were given on the earlier drafts. Each part must be uploaded directly into WyoCourses. In addition to the written component, each group will give a presentation regarding their research where they will need to cover the four main components of their research papers (i.e., introduction, method, results, and discussion). I know giving presentations in class is stressful and anxiety provoking for some. However, communicating your findings is an integral part of doing research, and I would like to believe that your classmates want to hear about your studies! After all, they did participate in them.

### • EXTRA CREDIT • • • ?? POINTS • • • HELPFUL FOR ALL OUTCOMES

*SONA Research Participation:* To better understand the research process, I encourage participation in research that is being done through the Psychology and Criminal Justice/Sociology departments by offering up to 10 points of extra credit for SONA participation (one point of extra credit for each half hour of SONA participation, up to five hours). The SONA coordinator will provide more information in class.

*Others:* Additional opportunities for extra credit will be announced in class *if* they arise.

### • GRADE BREAKDOWN •

A = 90.00 – 100%      B = 80.00 – 89.99%      C = 70.00 – 79.99%      D = 60.00 – 69.99%      F = 0 – 59.99%

## HOW CAN I BE SUCCESSFUL IN THIS COURSE?

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Let's just get this out of the way. Research methods is hard. For some, it's really hard. The great thing is, though, I'm here to help you! Throughout the course, you'll encounter topics that make zero sense to you, and that is 100% ok and even expected from time-to-time. When this happens, talk to me. Talk to your classmates. Talk to our TA. Although research shows people can learn more when trying to figure out content on their own, at some point, it's more helpful to get help. Moral: if you want to be successful in this course, (1) don't be afraid to ask questions, (2) work hard, (3) turn in all of the work on time (I do *not* accept late work), and (4) try to actually learn the material.

## WHAT IS EXPECTED OF ME?

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Shockingly, my expectations for you are directly related to how I think you can be successful in this course. So... Show up. Try your best. Ask questions when you are confused. Participate. Learn things. Turn your work in. Have fun!

All that said, I know this semester is weird. Hopefully it's a little less weird than the second half of last spring. Though this course has been moved to online, it will still be synchronous. In other words, **we will still meet during our scheduled class time three times a week**. Basically, it's like we're having our originally scheduled on-campus class, but without having to show up to a physical classroom. We might even appreciate this by the time winter rolls around. That said, I still expect everyone to behave as they would if we were meeting in a physical classroom. What does that mean, you ask? Show up on time and fully clothed, pay attention, don't be on your phone or social media or shopping or whatever that isn't related to this class, and be kind to your classmates and me. We'll get through this. We'll learn some things. We'll become Zoom pros. Hopefully, we can meet in person someday. Until then, we Zoom!

## WHAT ARE THE COURSE POLICIES?

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### • Attendance •

As with many college classes, attendance in this class is not a part of your grade. That said, I strongly suggest you attend every class, as material covered in class will be used to assess your knowledge. Additionally, some assignments/activities/graded things will only be done in class. Thus, to earn those points, you *must* be in class.

### • Emails •

Email is the best and easiest way to contact me. However, *please* refer to this syllabus and the course webpage first. I am more than willing to answer your questions, but often a lot of students' questions can be answered through a quick search of already possessed materials. Typically, I reply to emails the same day. Monday through Friday expect a response within 24 hours unless I let you know I am sick or out of town; Saturday and Sunday, expect one by the end of Monday. **If this does not happen, PLEASE email me again.** I receive a lot of emails and sometimes they get lost in the shuffle. If you have a question regarding an assignment, emailing me at 3am the morning it is due is not the best idea. Email me a couple of days before instead. If your question is specific or elaborate and requires a more detailed response, email me and we can set up a time to meet and chat about it via Zoom.

When you contact me via email, I expect your email to follow proper emailing etiquette. This means starting the email with a greeting; the body of the email should contain complete sentences and proper grammar, spelling, and punctuation; and you should end the email with your name. I understand many of you email from your phones. I do, too, but that is not an excuse. Take 30 seconds and read your email before hitting send. Thank you in advance!

### • Plagiarism •

Any information discussed in your assignments for this course that is not common knowledge (e.g., The sky is blue.) or your own opinion (e.g., I like hedgehogs.) **MUST** be cited properly. Plagiarized work will not be allowed. We'll go over how to not plagiarize in this class. As always, though, if you are confused, you have options for help. You can reach out to the lovely folks at the Writing Center (<http://www.uwyo.edu/ctl/writing-center/index.html>), you can reference the APA manual or any of the numerous online resources (e.g., Purdue Owl), or talk to me or the TA.

## WHERE CAN I FIND ALL THE OTHER THINGS THAT ARE ALWAYS IN SYLLABI?

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**The short answer: WyoCourses**

**The longer answer:**

### • Classroom Climate & Conduct •

See WyoCourses for policies regarding *academic dishonesty*, *classroom behavior*, *diversity*, and *duty to report*.

### • Learning Effectiveness Tools •

See WyoCourses for policies regarding *disability support services*, *changes to the syllabus*, and *student resources*.

### • COVID-19 Policies •

See WyoCourses for policies related to COVID-19.