

Syllabus  
CRIJ 5355 section 060  
Spring 2023

Instructor: Richard C. Helfers, Ph.D.

Office: CAS 136

Phone: 903-566-7399

Email: rhelfers@uttyler.edu

(The best way to contact me is by using the messaging function in Canvas.)

Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday from 11am-1pm and by appointment. Furthermore, I am available throughout the week, so do not hesitate to send me a message and we can arrange an in person office session or one via Zoom.

Course Overview: This course provides a capstone experience for students to address an important policy and administrative issue within a criminal justice agency. Students will use concepts from their coursework and experiences to develop specific recommendations for design, implementation, and evaluation of this project task

**Student Learning Outcomes:**

- |   |
|---|
| 1) Integrate graduate-level knowledge in the context of an applied field project.   |
| 2) Apply research methods to move from a research problem to identifying and gathering necessary, sufficient, and appropriate data (“quantitative literacy”). |
| 3) Demonstrate advanced written and oral communication skills (“information literacy”) including report writing competencies, for a variety of audiences.     |

**Required Textbooks and Readings:**

Polonsky, M. J., & Waller, D.S. (2018). *Designing and Managing a Research Project*. (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage. ISBN: 978-1-5443-1646-8

**Recommended Textbooks and Readings (if applicable):**

American Psychological Association. (2019). *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (7<sup>th</sup> edition). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. ISBN: 978-1-4338-3217-8

### **Assignments and weights/point values**

1. Scope of Work Memo	3%
2. Progress Assignments	2%
a. Reference List	(worth 1%)
b. Data collection/strategy	(worth 1%)
3. Reading Reviews	20%
a. #1	(worth 10%)
b. #2	(worth 10%)
4. Literature Review	20%
5. Oral Presentation	5%
6. Final Report	<u>50%</u>
	100%

### **Grading Scale:**

A	90% or greater
B	80 – 89%
C	70 – 79%
D	60 – 69%
F	below 60%

\*\*keep in mind, I round up. This means a 89.45, rounds to a 89.5, which rounds to a 90.0

**Late Work and Make-Up Exams:** Unfortunately, illnesses, deaths in the family, or other traumatic events are part of life. Such events are unwelcomed and because I understand how difficult these times are, if you contact me within 24 hours of the event **and** provide documentation, I will be happy to give you a make-up quiz or extend an assignment deadline.

The general rule is I will not accept any late assignments. Please pay particular attention to the due dates for each assignment.

Attendance Policy: This is an online course, but it is not a self-paced course. It is your responsibility to remain current. There are specific reading assignments and assessments that you are expected to complete on or before the due date/time. Of course exceptions of an emergency nature arise so please let me know if you cannot make the deadline for a particular assignment or be available for our zoom sessions.

UT Tyler does have a [Class Attendance policy](#) in the catalog.

### **Graded Course Requirements Information:**

Scope of Work Memo:

This will be your first assignment that requires you to think about and prepare a memo about your project. Thus, you will need to think about the nature of your paper. Will the paper primarily be a policy-oriented paper, or a process/organizational change or reform paper? Will the paper primarily focus on planning, implementation, or evaluation of a program or a policy? Will you be working with an actual agency on a problem – in which case you will need to have a department head, key leader, or your own supervisor as a contact – or will the paper be more theoretical and academic in nature? Thus, you will need to refine your topic and turn in a “scope of work memo” describing the topic and strategies for researching this topic. This is only a plan,

at this point. The memo must be uploaded in Canvas no later than **11:59pm on Saturday, January 21, 2023.**

#### Progress Assignments:

There will be two minor progress assignments that you are required to complete and submit for a grade. The first will be a list of at least ten of your references that is due at the end of the fourth week. This will be the sources you will complete the reading reviews on (see below) during weeks five and six. This reference list must be uploaded in Canvas no later than **11:59pm on Saturday, February 4, 2023.**

The second progress assignment is you are required to submit is a description where you articulate your data collection and data analysis strategies that you will be using in your paper. This assignment must also be uploaded in Canvas and is due no later than **11:59pm on Saturday, March 11, 2023.**

#### Reading Reviews:

There will be two reading reviews. The first is due by the end of the fifth week and the second by the end of the sixth week of the semester. These reviews are designed to demonstrate to me you are making significant progress on your project. In each assignment you will document and summarize material from at least five sources (articles, books, government documents, interviews, reports, etc.). You must format your review by first referencing your source in APA format (just as you would in the Reference section of your final report—thus, they must be in alphabetical order). After you referenced your first source, then you should follow it with a full page summary. Then you move onto your second source and do the same—until you have at least five completed. **The first review is due no later than 11:59pm on February 11, 2023 and the second is due not later than 11:59pm on Feb 18, 2023.** These are uploaded in Canvas in Module 3---for the appropriate assignment. These summaries, as well as a copy of the article (or other source) will be submitted to the instructor.

#### Literature Review:

Your literature review for your final report will be due by the end of the eighth week of the semester. This assignment is intended to reinforce an in-depth understanding of the readings. It is not a summary of the readings. Each student must explore theoretical and practical concepts in the readings to identify the strengths, limitations, and benefits. Students must identify how the approach/model/theory/framework may apply to practical situations. The assignment is intended to continue the development of critical and analytical thinking and writing. The literature review must present a thesis (an argument or viewpoint) about a particular practice, theory, or set of theories. The thesis statement must be included in the first paragraph and must take one of these forms:

1. This paper will examine the effect of the absence of clarity about goal priorities. This paper will show that when goal priorities of the organization are not clear and understood by all executives and senior managers, the organization will not be successful.
2. This paper will show that no matter how much officials talk about the importance of performance measurement, criminal justice administrators managers will not be able successfully adopt and implement the practice.

The paper should demonstrate that the student can relate the content to other concepts presented in the class. It is important to demonstrate the ability to write clear, simple, organized prose that is easily understood by any reader.

Although you may include more sources in the final paper, the literature review assignment will ask the student to provide a thorough review of relevant literature and a “complete” reference section in APA format and to create a coherent background in support of your project objectives. The review must conclude with a research question(s) and hypotheses.

**The literature review is due no later than 11:59pm on March 4, 2023.** The assignment portal is located in Module 3.

#### Oral Presentation:

This assessment will require you to prepare a high-quality oral presentation on your research. You will be required to discuss your topic, findings, recommendations and any next steps that should be pursued. You will record this via flipgrid and your recording can be no longer than 10 minutes.

This recording must be uploaded in Canvas and is due not later than **11:59pm on Friday, April 21, 2023.**

#### Final Report:

The final report is due at the end of the fifteenth week of the semester. This report integrates and extends prior documents to provide a comprehensive report. You may submit a first draft to me and a representative of a criminal justice agency that you have coordinated your project.

The final paper must include:

- Executive summary
- Scope of work memo
- Literature review
- Methods
- Results/Findings
- Discussion
- Limitations
- Next steps

The Final Report will be graded on these Criteria:

1. The project itself will consist of a substantial project that offers an intellectual contribution to the field and/or a practical contribution to the organization or jurisdiction under which the project is undertaken.
2. The project will be well-researched, with a relatively large number of high-quality published resources being cited in the paper.
3. Students must demonstrate a capstone level of proficiency in Critical Thinking. According to the Association of American Colleges and Universities (the AACU), “Critical

Thinking is a habit of mind characterized by the comprehensive exploration of issues, ideas, artifacts, and events before accepting or formulating an opinion or conclusion.” On the Value Rubric for Critical Thinking created by the AACU, grading will be focused on the student’s ability to “select and use information to investigate a point of view or conclusion” (the use of evidence). A “capstone” level of proficiency would be demonstrated by showing that “information is taken from sources with enough interpretation/evaluation to develop a comprehensive analysis or synthesis. Viewpoints of experts are questioned thoroughly.”

4. Students must demonstrate a capstone level of proficiency in Quantitative Literacy. According to the AACU, Quantitative Literacy is “a habit of mind, competency, and comfort in working with numerical data. Individuals with strong Quantitative Literacy skills possess the ability to reason and solve quantitative problems from a wide array of authentic contexts and everyday life situations. They understand and can create sophisticated arguments supported by quantitative evidence and they can clearly communicate those arguments in a variety of formats (using words, tables, graphs, mathematical equations, etc., as appropriate.” On the Value Rubric for Quantitative Literacy created by the AACU, grading will be focused on the student’s “ability to make and evaluate important assumptions in estimation, modelling, and data analysis.” A “capstone” level of proficiency would be demonstrated when the student “explicitly describes assumptions and provides compelling rationale for why each assumption is appropriate. The student shows awareness that confidence in final conclusions is limited by the accuracy of the assumptions.”

Minimum Assignment Requirements:

1. You must use one-inch margins, Times New Roman with 12 pt font.
2. Double space.
3. Number your pages at the top right of each page.
4. Use APA format.
5. Use headings as this keeps you focused on what you will write about and it also informs the reader what he or she will read. (It is also an APA requirement)
6. DO NOT PLAGIARIZE.
7. Cite credible sources to support your argument.
8. Upload in Canvas using a Word document (.doc or .docx).

Generally, when writing an academic paper you will not use the same informal type language you use during your daily conversations. Informal, conversational language, will negatively impact your grade.

The final report must be uploaded in Canvas and is due not later than **11:59pm on Friday, April 21, 2023.**

No late assignments will be accepted. No exceptions!

## **Calendar of Topics, Readings, and Due Dates**

This is a tentative course schedule:

### **Module 1 (Weeks 1 and 2): Project Management**

January 9-14

You will need to think about the nature of your paper. Will the paper primarily be a policy-oriented paper, or a process/organizational change or reform paper? Will the paper primarily focus on planning, implementation, or evaluation of a program or a policy? Will you be working with an actual agency on a problem – in which case you will need to have a department head, key leader, or your own supervisor as a contact – or will the paper be more theoretical and academic in nature?

**Assignments:** Polonsky & Waller (Intro and Chapter 1)

January 15-21

You will refine your topic and turn in a “scope of work memo” describing the topic and strategies for researching this topic. This is a plan, at this point.

**Assignments:** Polonsky & Waller (Chapter 2)  
“Scope of Work Memo” due by 11:59pm (Jan 21)

*UT Tyler is closed on Monday January 16 for the MLK Holiday*

### **Module 2 (Weeks 3 and 4): Project Definition**

January 22-28

You will begin the search for literature related to your topic. You should access sources (journal articles, books, government documents, interviews, etc.) and begin to accumulate references for your paper.

**Assignment:** Polonsky & Waller (Chapter 3)

*Census Day is January 23rd*

January 29-February 4

You will have collected and will begin to read 10 articles from journals and other credible sources for your paper. You will share those 10 sources in a list of references and provide to me.

**Assignment:** Polonsky & Waller (Chapter 5)  
Upload list of sources/references by 11:59pm (Feb 4)

### Module 3 (Weeks 5 through 11): Contextualizing Activities

- February 5-11                      You will turn in your first reading view this week. These are one-page reports (“reviews”) on five of your sources (double-space your reviews).
- Assignment:** Polonsky & Waller (Chapter 6, 7, & 8)  
Reading Review #1 due by 11:59pm (Feb 11)
- February 12-18                     You will turn in your second reading review assignment this week. Again you are required to submit reviews for at least five additional credible sources.
- Assignment:** Polonsky & Waller (Chapter 9 & 10)  
Reading Review #2 due by 11:59pm (Feb 18)
- February 19-25                     You should be doing the merging of your individual articles into a tight literature review where you are weaving your evidence to support your thoughts in an organized fashion.
- Assignment:** Polonsky & Waller (Chapter 11)
- February 26-March 4                You must complete your literature review for your paper this week.
- Assignment:** Polonsky & Waller (Chapter 12)  
Literature Review due by 11:59pm (March 4)
- March 5-11                         You will upload an initial articulation of your data collection and data analysis strategies for your paper.
- Assignment:** Polonsky & Waller (Chapter 13 & 14)  
Data collection and analysis strategy due by 11:59pm  
(March 11)
- March 13-18                         Spring Break
- March 19-25                         You will begin to collect the data you will use to support your policy or organizational recommendations
- Assignment:** No reading or other assignment to submit
- (March 23: last day to withdraw from one or more classes with “W”)*
- March 26-April 1                    You should begin (if you have not already) writing the first draft of your paper. Your outline for your paper should be well developed by this time.
- Assignment:** Polonsky & Waller (Chapter 15)

#### **Module 4 (Weeks 12-15): Writing the Report**

April 2-8

You should continue writing your paper as the semester is quickly coming to an end. Your outline for your paper (which greatly assists you to remain organized) should be complete. You should also be elaborating on your thoughts—some refer to this as “putting the flesh on the bones” for your manuscript.

**Assignment:** No reading or other assignment to submit

April 9-15

You should continue writing your paper. You should be interacting with me about any issues you may be having with the paper. You may turn in a complete first draft of the paper for my review--I will provide you comments. Submitting the draft to me is not required—only submit if you have fully completed the paper.

**Assignment:** No reading or other assignment to submit

April 16-21

This is it! You have completed all aspects for the Criminal Justice MS degree. Go ahead and submit your final report when you have it finished. Congrats and stay in touch!!

**Assignment:** Oral Presentation due by 11:59pm (Friday, April 21)  
Final Report due by 11:59pm (Friday, April 21)

April 24-29

Finals Week  
*I am available for consultation via Zoom*