

RESEARCH METHODS I: RESEARCH DESIGN

CRIMINOLOGY 860

FALL 2023

The Professor

Your instructor is Dr. Ted Palys. If you need to get in touch to arrange an appointment, ask a question, or other important matter, you can:

- Send an e-mail to palys@sfu.ca (typically the best alternative);
- Leave an urgent message with the secretaries in the Criminology General Office, at 778-782-3213;

The easiest and most reliable way of getting in touch is via email. However, email should be limited to arranging an appointment or making queries that can be answered in a couple of sentences or less. Beyond that, a Zoom or office hour meeting would be better.

The Course (as described in the SFU calendar)

Research design for criminological problems and foundational techniques for the conduct of research in criminology. The further development of fundamental research skills to be applied in research, including subsequent research methods courses and in the preparation of theses and dissertations. Students enrolling in this course are expected to have a solid background in undergraduate research methods, equivalent to [CRIM 220](#).

Online Office Hours

Designated **in-person office hours** for the Fall semester are Tuesday and Friday afternoons from 1:00 to 2:00. Other times can be arranged by appointment. If possible, let me know ahead of time that you are coming. That will be helpful in allowing me to stagger times if/when multiple people want to see me.

Readings

There are numerous readings. I have “recommended” that you get a copy of *Research Methods in the Social & Health Sciences* (RMSHS) by Palys & Atchison (2021), although a used copy of the 5th edition of *Research Decisions: Quantitative, Qualitative & Mixed Methods Approaches* (Palys & Atchison, 2014) also would work reasonably well. My intention in “recommending” but not “requiring” RMSHS was to offer you a book as “background reading” that has all the foundational information you need to do be able to understand and appreciate the required readings for the course, which are available online through our course web page (see below).

Our Weekly Meeting

We meet every week from 9:30 AM to 12:20 PM each Friday in Saywell Hall Room 10115 (otherwise known as the Grad Teaching Lab). Two activities will happen in most weeks. Activity 1 will involve discussing the week's readings. Your job is to do the readings and be ready to discuss them. Activity 2 will involve "professional issues" insofar as they are designed to socialize/introduce you to the practice of doing research at SFU, succeeding in the grad program, identifying and introducing you to some of the many resources that exist in Criminology and at the university more broadly, and introducing you to some of the issues that members of the profession – by which I mean especially but not exclusively criminology professors – encounter and deal with. On some occasions this will involve guests; on other occasions it may involve simply shifting the discussion.

Assignments

A series of assignments will give you opportunities to practice skills and employ techniques that we learn about through readings and class activities. You will have a new assignment every two or three weeks; some will be quite straightforward and can be finished in an hour or so; others will be more extensive and take days and multiple drafts. Grades assigned will use a point system weighted to reflect the work required to complete each assignment.

A Couple of Questions

Each week, send me an email before class with a couple of questions or issues you would like to ask about, hear more about, or comment on that arises from one or more of that week's readings.

Evaluation

Your course requirements include two elements:

- A series of assignments that you will be doing throughout the semester that will be worth 80% of your grade in the course; and
- A weekly "couple of questions" and participation in class discussion, which will contribute the remaining 20% of your grade

Course Web Page and Email

There are two ways (beyond class) that I will keep in touch with you regarding the course.

- First is via the course web page. This is where you can find the course syllabus, reading lists, what to prepare for next class, and other course-related materials. The direct URL for the course web page (*not* on Canvas) is <https://www.sfu.ca/~palys/crim860.htm>
- Also, a class email allows you and/or me to send an email to everyone registered in the course. The class email address is crim860-g1@sfu.ca, and if I send anything there, I will assume that you have received it. If you would prefer to receive messages at another address you will need to arrange to have your email forwarded.