WILMINGTON UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL & BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES
BASIC COURSE INFORMATION

COURSE TITLE: Research Methods in Criminal Justice
COURSE NUMBER: CRJ 413

I. RATIONALE:

Students graduating with a degree in criminal justice must understand the basics of the research process and interpretation of research data. Professionals employed in criminal justice agencies will need to critically evaluate research and determine the appropriateness of its methods and the legitimacy of its conclusions.

II. MAJOR INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS:

GOAL A:
Students will demonstrate an understanding of research and an appreciation of its role in the field of criminal justice.

Learning Outcomes: The student will:

A-1 Understand the purpose of research
A-2 Understand the standard methods of research
A-3 Understand the nature of variables in research

GOAL B:
Students will understand and be able to explain the steps of the research process.

Learning Outcomes: The student will:

B-1 Specify a study’s goals or objectives
B-2 Define a study’s parameters, such as population, sample, and variables
B-3 Specify the techniques and procedures used to achieve the study’s goals or objectives.
B-4 Describe the process of collecting relevant data

GOAL C:
Students will contrast major types of research design, including when and why each is used.

Learning Outcomes: The student will:

C-1 Identify and describe historical and archival research
C-2 Identify and describe descriptive research
C-3 Identify and describe survey research
C-4 Identify and describe correlational research
C-5 Identify and describe experimental and quasi-experimental research
C-6 Identify and describe field research

GOAL D:
Students will understand the process of data collection and sampling.

Learning Outcomes: The student will:

D-1 Demonstrate an understanding of the process of asking questions
D-2 Demonstrate an understanding of the process of direct observation
D-3 Demonstrate an understanding of the use of existing records in research
D-4 Demonstrate an understanding of the use of multiple data sources
D-5 Examine studies that make use of these methods, including national crime surveys and other standard recurring criminal justice data sources

GOAL E:
Students will critically read and review a research article in an area of criminal justice and demonstrate an understanding of its major features.

Learning Outcomes: The student will:

E-1 Identify the type of research method used
E-2 Specify the purpose of the research
E-3 Describe the research steps used.
E-4 Identify possible flaws and fallacies in the research
E-5 Suggest future areas of inquiry based upon the review

GOAL F:
Students will understand ethical standards in criminal justice research.

Learning Outcomes: The student will:

F-1 Discuss the issues related to potential harm to research participants
F-2 Discuss voluntary participation
F-3 Discuss deceit in research

F-4 Discuss legal liability and special problems

GOAL G:
Students will demonstrate appropriate written and oral communication skills.

Learning Outcomes: The student will:

G-1 Give an oral presentation on a topic related to criminal justice research
G-2 Present written information using standard APA style
III. RESOURCES:

List here materials that will be used other than the text. Example: videos, handouts, guest speakers, trips, lecture notes, computer databases and CD-Rom data sets, etc. Provide a reading list here if one is required or suggested.