WILMINGTON UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL & BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES
BASIC COURSE INFORMATION

COURSE TITLE: Research Methods in Criminal Justice
COURSE NUMBER: MAJ 6633/MHS7033

II. RATIONALE:

Students on the graduate level must have an understanding of the research process and the interpretation of data. The scholarly practitioner in criminal justice agencies must have the tools to critically assess research and determine the type, purpose, steps used, and fallacies of the research project.

III. MAJOR INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS:

GOAL A:
Students will develop an understanding and appreciation for research.

Learning Outcomes: The student will

A-1 Analyze and discuss the nature of scientific inquiry and the importance of research to the field of criminal justice.
A-2 Analyze and discuss the various errors in personal humor inquiry as it pertains to criminal justice research.
A-3 Identify, discuss and evaluate criminal justice problems and the theoretical perspectives about the suggested causes of these problems.
A-4 Critique the use of experiments and research in criminal justice.
A-5 Identify, discuss and evaluate the various research designs (time series, classical experiment, quasi-experimental, etc).
A-6 Evaluate the relationship between theory and research.

GOAL B:
Students will develop an understanding and appreciation for the use of the tools related to criminal justice research.

Learning Outcomes: The student will:

B-1 Analyze and discuss the methods of determining validity, reliability and the weaknesses of validation studies in criminal justice research.
B-2 Identify and discuss the UCR and NCVS as measurements of crime and their purposes.
B-3 Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the UCR, NIBR, NCVS, victim surveys and self-report surveys.
B-4 Analyze and discuss concepts, operationalization and measurement as they relate to criminal justice research.

**GOAL C:**
Students will develop an understanding of ethics in criminal justice research.

**Learning Outcomes:** The student will:

C-1 Analyze and discuss the ethics associated with human subjects’ research.
C-2 Identify and discuss deception in the research process and assess when deception may be acceptable.
C-3 Analyze and discuss the ethical issues associated with informed consent and confidentiality requirements as they pertain to research in the criminal justice field.
C-4 Evaluate and discuss the rights and regulations issued by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Institutional Review Boards (IRB’s) as well as other legal liabilities and problems.

**GOAL D:**
Students will develop and appreciate the process of data collection and sampling.

**Learning Outcomes:** The student will

D-1 Identify and discuss the various types of sampling designs, survey research, survey construction and observational research.
D-2 Analyze and discuss the various methods of collecting, analyzing, interpreting and reporting research results.
D-3 Examine studies that make use of these research methods including national crime surveys, sampling of police officer attitudes on a subject, and observation of detention subjects.
D-4 Identify and critique the various approaches to research including quasi-experimental and experimental designs.

**GOAL E:**
Students will develop and understanding of the interpretation of data.

**Learning Outcomes:** The student will

E-1 Construct and read explanatory bivariate tables and multivariate tables.
E-2 Compare measures of dispersion and central tendency.
E-3 Analyze and discuss the procedures needed for measurement and reporting of common inferential statistical analyses, frequency distribution, confidence intervals, graphs, charts and statistics (rates, percentages, proportions, ratios).

**GOAL F:**
Students will critically read and review a completed research project in an area of criminal justice and demonstrate an understanding of key issues in the finished product of
research.

Learning Outcomes: The student will

F-1 Identify and discuss the type of research used.
F-2 Specify the purpose of the research.
F-3 List the research steps used in the project.
F-4 Identify possible fallacies in the research.
F-5 Make suggestions to improve the project.
F-6 Identify future areas of inquiry based upon the review

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

Learning Outcomes: The student will

G-1 Use computer technology to resolve research problems presented in class.
G-2 Utilize professional writing skills to analyze and cite appropriate sources (e.g. APA format) to express and convey empirical research.
G-3 Research, construct, and deliver professional presentations using a variety of communication tools and techniques