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## **Course Syllabus Fall 2023**

**Meets 8/28/2023 through 9/29/2023**

### **CJ 575-01W Research Methods in Criminal Justice**

**Instructor:** David Marble Ph.D.  
**Virtual Office Hours:** I will respond to your email every weekday and some weekends; please allow 24 hours to respond  
**Office Phone:** (816) 385-6717  
**University Email Address:** David.Marble@tamuc.edu

## **COURSE INFORMATION**

### **Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings**

#### **Required Reading**

Bachman, R., & Schutt, R.K. (2020). *The practice of research in criminology and criminal justice, 7<sup>th</sup> edition*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage. ISBN: 978-1-5443-3912-2.

#### **Additional Readings**

Other materials/readings as assigned and posted in DocSharing in D2L.

### **Course Description/Explanation**

This course covers the basic techniques and procedures used in the process of criminal justice research. Topics include: defining research problems, ethics in criminal justice research, selecting and measuring variables, stating hypotheses, sampling, and developing experimental research designs.

### **Prerequisites**

Please note that prerequisites for this course include CJ 501, CJ 530, CJ 531, and CJ 568. Students who are registered for this class and who do not meet the prerequisites should contact the Director and Advisor of the MS in Applied Criminology program.

*The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.*

## **Student Learning Outcomes**

1. Think critically about important issues in criminal justice research methodology
2. Understand how to conduct criminal justice research
3. Problem-solve solutions to methodological problems
4. Enhance communication skills and reading/research/writing acumen

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

### **Instructional Methods/Activities/Assessments**

This course will provide a variety of activities and assessments to assist you in achieving the outcomes/objectives for the course. You will work toward achieving these outcomes through discussions/comments, assignments, and tests. Below is an explanation of each course requirement including due date, assignment instructions, and other requirements.

### **Introduction/Discussions/Comments/Posts (SLOs)**

When preparing discussions/comments/assignments/papers/etc., use the following to help you critically think through each task. You will be graded (in part) on how well you are able to perform this skill.

- Determine the problem/issue you are trying to solve. Make sure you remain open-minded and objective and be aware of your own biases on the subject and put them aside
- Develop a hypothesis and/or possible solution to the problem/issue. Brainstorm other possible solutions. Think about the pros and cons of the problem/issue
- Gather information on the problem/issue that may support or contradict your position
- Analyze your facts. Don't assume anything. Evaluate the facts objectively
- Determine a reasonable conclusion based on all of the facts
- Make sure your facts (and the reporting of the facts) are accurate. You may assume a causal relationship but there might be other possible conclusions to be drawn based on other factors.
- Be sure to evaluate what those might be

### **Introduction/Discussion Posts**

The **Introduction** is a chance for you to 'meet' your colleagues (although most of you likely know each other by now) in the class and an opportunity to introduce yourself to your professor. You will also be required to answer a course-related question. Specific instructions on what to post are available when you click on Introduction in Week #1.

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The Introductory post is due on **Wednesday** of Week #1 of the course.

The **Discussions** are directly related to the assigned readings. Upon completion of the assigned readings, you are expected to engage in an **ongoing** discussion/debate with your classmates. Your contributions to the discussion forums will be graded for **quality** and a **detailed analysis** linking the material to a critical appraisal of theory, policy, and practice. The introduction of outside materials is not mandatory (unless otherwise noted in the discussion topic assignment), but is highly recommended. In all cases, students must cite in-text and provide a full bibliography/works cited at the end of their post for all citations mentioned in the post (See information later in the syllabus for more information on citing utilizing APA citation format. Also see the 'How to Cite' FactSheet in the CJ 500 Orientation Course).

These posts should be **the equivalent of 1 page in length or a minimum of 250 words**. The specific discussion assignment is located in each unit Week by clicking on the Discussion link.

#### **Assessment Method:**

- 1 Introduction @ 50 points;
- 4 discussion posts @ 100 points each = 450 course points

Posts are due by **11:00PM** CST on **Thursdays** with the exception of Discussion #1 which is due on Saturday.

#### **Comment Posts**

**Comment** posts are responses you make to the discussion posts that you and your classmates post each week. You are **required** to make a minimum of **five** comments each week. I would strongly encourage you to engage your colleagues well past the four-comment minimum in order to maximize your opportunity for meaningful discussion and learning.

Comment posts should be meaningful. Merely agreeing or disagreeing with a classmate will not be looked upon favorably and will result in a loss of points. A meaningful post is one that moves the discussion forward in some substantive way through providing one's perspective, additional information through research, or reframing the discussion in some new way. You are expected to engage in an **ongoing** discussion/debate with your classmates. Your comments will be graded for **quality**, and **relevance**. Your comments will also be graded based on your ability to engage in critical thinking. Students **must** provide one outside source for **at least** one comment that they make.

**NO LATE COMMENTS ARE ACCEPTED.** All comment posts are due by **11:00PM** CST on **Saturdays** with the exception of Comments for Discussion #1 which are due on Sunday.

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**Assessment Method:** Comments will be graded using the Comments Grading Rubric attached to the Discussion Post Grading Rubric. The discussion and Comments for each week will be graded together and posted as one grade (Discussion = 100 + Comments 5@ 10 points each = 150 points/week).

## **Assignments**

Students are required to complete an annotated bibliography and a literature review for this course. These assignments are linked and you must complete one before completing another. This will make more sense as you read below.

Before completing either assignment, you must choose a topic that you are interested in studying in criminal justice. This can be any topic, but ideally it is a topic that you feel strongly about/have great interest in, as the work you do in this class is the foundation for what you will continue in CJ 576 and complete in CJ 595. Therefore, you should give this topic some serious consideration.

### **Annotated Bibliography Instructions (100 points):**

Your first order of business is to choose your topic. This topic forms the basis for your Annotated Bibliography and Literature Review. As you will have the opportunity to receive this syllabus prior to the start of the course, I highly recommend that you begin the process of selecting a topic immediately.

You want to strike a balance between a topic that is too broad and one that is too narrow. This is difficult. In order to work toward a viable topic, you might first consider brainstorming issues/topics of interest on a piece of paper. Then, you might consider narrowing down your interests to one or two topics. Then you should consider conducting some cursory searching in the library databases (CJ Abstracts, SOCIndex, PsychInfo, etc.) on the topics of interest to you. Once you have done this and zeroed in on your topic of choice, it is time to begin the process of writing a research question. Plan to allow some time to accomplish this task. This is not as easy as you think.

You should plan to converse often with your professor via Email during the first week of class to solidify your topic. Developing a topic is a VERY difficult task. Do not be lured into a false sense of security about your topic until and unless your topic has been approved by your professor.

You will want to have an approved topic in hand PRIOR to posting your first discussion due on Saturday of Week #1 as the discussion post is directly related to your paper topic. If you do not, you will be significantly behind in your work for this and other courses (not to mention make a poor grade on the assignment).

As you will learn in this class, there are several different study types. With only limited exceptions, most of you will not be conducting actual research that requires IRB approval, but if you wish to take this route, you need to contact your professor immediately. There is much to be done in a short amount of time. Most of you will likely

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tackle a policy or practice consideration. For this you will need to rely on information and literature that others have written on the subject.

Once you have selected your topic, your next task is to begin the process of compiling a list of references for possible use in your annotated bibliography. You may have already found several references of interest when you were searching for your topic. At this point, however, you should refine your literature search and hone your list of applicable/relevant resources to 10. Obviously (and with limited exceptions), there will be well more than 10 credible sources that you could use. Your challenge is to pick the 10 most important/relevant articles to your topic.

Annotated bibliographies are not just lists of sources. Instead, they are critical appraisals of the articles/books you have selected. See these links for more explanation of what annotated bibliographies are. They will assist you greatly.

<http://lib.calpoly.edu/research/guides/bibliography.html> or  
<http://olinuris.library.cornell.edu/ref/research/skill28.htm>

It isn't enough to provide an abstract (a summary) of an article/book. Instead, you must read the article/book and provide critical evaluation/assessment of what you have read. You will also wish to attempt to make linkages between materials that you read. Some material may agree/disagree/evaluate the same questions differently, etc. You will want to tease out relationships between your materials in the annotated bibliography. This will assist you immensely when you go to write the literature review.

Below is the format for your bibliography entries. You will be graded on your format and your ability to outline the key points of your materials in a clear, concise, and critical way. The sources you use for the annotated bibliography MUST be peer-reviewed publications.

Example:

Goldschneider, F. K., Waite, L. J., & Witsberger, C. (1986). Nonfamily living and the erosion of traditional family orientations among young adults. *American Sociological Review*, 51(1), 541-554. doi:9.134823038/4537.390

The authors, researchers at the Rand Corporation and Brown University, conducted research on the impact of family living situations on the adoption or inculcation of family and gender roles. Using data from the National Longitudinal Surveys of Young Women and Young Men, they tested their hypothesis that nonfamily living by young adults alters their attitudes, values, plans, and expectations, moving them away from their belief in

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traditional sex roles. They found their hypothesis strongly supported in young females, while the effects were fewer in studies of young males. They concluded that increasing the time away from parents before marrying increased individualism, self-sufficiency, and changes in attitudes about families. In contrast, an earlier study by Williams cited below shows no significant gender differences in sex role attitudes as a result of nonfamily living. This was useful to my study to determine consistent patterns reported for adolescents versus adults.

Each annotated bibliography should be at least 200 words but not over 500. Remember, the purpose of an annotated bibliography is to distill only the most important facts and information from the source you are citing. Maximum 12-point font and 1-inch margins. Include your name on the paper and utilize proper APA citation format.

The annotated bibliography is due by **11:00PM** CST on **Tuesday** of Week #4 of the course.

### **Literature Review Instructions (150 points)**

A literature review is substantively different than an annotated bibliography, but the work you do for the bibliography (if you do it correctly) will help you considerably with the literature review.

A literature review aims to highlight the current state of knowledge regarding a particular topic under study (see any journal article you have read for this program and/or the Literature Review FactSheet located in the CJ 500 Orientation course for more). Literature reviews generally include substantive findings as well as theoretical and methodological contributions to a particular topic. Literature reviews are comprised of secondary sources and as such do not report any new or original experimental work. The main purpose of a literature review is to situate the current study/paper within the body of literature and to provide context for the reader.

A literature review is not a summary but a synthesis of the material from your annotated bibliography. As mentioned above, if you took the time to critically evaluate the 10 sources you chose, your literature review will be relatively easy. The idea is to take your sources and organize them in some way that informs the study you wish to conduct/paper you wish to write. This requires that you pull your sources together in a way that explains to the reader why the issue/topic/problem you have identified is worth studying (i.e., not covered in current literature, no consensus in existing literature, augmenting existing literature, etc.)

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Your literature review must be a minimum of 8 pages in length (does not include references), maximum 12-point font, 1-inch margins, include your name on the paper, and utilize proper APA citation format.

The literature review is due by **11:00PM** CST on **Wednesday** of **Week #5** of the course.

**Assessment Method:** Students will be graded on their annotated bibliography using the Annotated Bibliography Grading Rubric. Students will be graded on their literature review using the Literature Review Grading Rubric.

- 1 assignment with multiple parts = 250 course points;
- 100 points assigned for the annotated bibliography;
- 150 points assigned for your literature review.

### Quizzes

You will take two quizzes, 100 points each in this course. They will be multiple choice/true false assessments of your knowledge of chapters 1-7 of your textbook.

**Quiz #1 (covers chapters 1-4 of the text) Friday of Week #2 of the course**

**Quiz #2 (covers chapters 5-7 of the text) Friday of Week #5 of the course**

Quizzes will be available beginning at midnight on Wednesday of the week in which the quiz is assigned and close at **11:59PM on Friday** of the week in which the quiz is assigned. Students will have only one opportunity to take the exam and the exam will be timed. Specific information regarding test length and time allotted will be available in the quiz link in **Week #2** and **Week #5**.

**Assessment Method:** Quizzes will be graded automatically with scores available in D2L.

## GRADING

Assignments for this course will be scored using a points system. Below is an explanation of how each assignment type will be scored.

Assignment Type	# of Assignments	Point Value	Total Points
Introduction	1	50	50
Discussions and Comments	4	150	600
Annotated Bibliography Assignment	1	100	100
Literature Review Assignment	1	150	150
Quizzes	2	100	200
		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1100</b>

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Grades earned on each assignment will be added together and will be divided by the total number of points possible in the course to obtain a percentage score. Below is the overall grading schema for the course.

90% to 100% = A
80% to 89% = B
70% to 79% = C
60% to 69% = D
Below 60% = F

Grades will be available in the gradebook so that students can track their progress in the course in 'real time'. For the purpose of assigning final letter grades, percentages will be rounded to the nearest whole number.

## TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

### LMS

All course sections offered by Texas A&M University-Commerce have a corresponding course shell in the myLeo Online Learning Management System (LMS). Below are technical requirements

LMS Requirements:

<https://community.brightspace.com/s/article/Brightspace-Platform-Requirements>

LMS Browser Support:

[https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser\\_support.htm](https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser_support.htm)

YouSeeU Virtual Classroom Requirements:

<https://support.youseeu.com/hc/en-us/articles/115007031107-Basic-System-Requirements>

## ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or [helpdesk@tamuc.edu](mailto:helpdesk@tamuc.edu).

**Note:** Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary

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use of a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, Starbucks, a TAMUC campus open computer lab, etc.

## **COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT**

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your Instructor.

### **Technical Support**

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support options can be found here:

<https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport>

### **Interaction with Instructor Statement**

My primary form of communication with the class will be through Email. Any changes to the syllabus or other important information critical to the class will be disseminated to students in this way via your official University Email address. It will be your responsibility to check your University Email regularly.

Students who Email me can expect a reply within 24 hours M-F. Students who Email me during holidays or over the weekend should expect a reply by the end of the next regularly scheduled business day.

I encourage students to contact me either by phone call or email using the contact information listed above if you have questions or concerns regarding the assignments in the class. I try to anticipate questions and address them in the syllabus and in the instruction sheets that can be found in D2L. However if something does not make sense or is not real clear, please contact me.

Please complete all assigned work on time and by the posted deadlines. Quizzes cannot be opened after the deadline as they are graded and available for student review after the deadline passes. Written assignments need to be completed and submitted before I start grading them in order for the student to receive credit for the assignment.

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# **COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES**

## **Course Specific Procedures/Policies**

### **Attendance Policy**

While this is an online course, students are expected to 'attend class' and actively participate. Student participation/activity will be monitored by the professor. Students should plan to dedicate approximately 15- 20 hours/week of time to this course, of which approximately 1 hour/week should be spent in the discussion board (reading posts and comments and conversing with others).

### **APA Citation Format Policy**

It is very important that you learn how to cite properly. In some ways, citations are more important than the actual text of your paper/assignment. Therefore, you should take this task seriously and devote some time to understanding how to cite properly. If you take the time to understand this process up front, it will save you a significant amount of time in the long run (not to mention significant deductions in points).

In the social and behavioral sciences (including Criminal Justice), we use APA (American Psychological Association) format. As a rule of thumb, one cites whenever they are paraphrasing other people's words or when they quote other's words directly. You may learn to cite from a variety of different sources including the APA Tutorial and the sources listed below and from a document I have placed in the Doc Sharing section of the course in D2L. [www.apastyle.org](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/02/)  
<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/02/>  
[www.library.cornell.edu/resrch/citmanage/apa](http://www.library.cornell.edu/resrch/citmanage/apa)

It is the student's responsibility to understand how to cite properly. If you have questions, feel free to ask.

### **Syllabus Change Policy**

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance.

## **University Specific Procedures**

### **Student Conduct**

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. The Code of Student Conduct is described in detail in the [Student Guidebook](http://www.tamuc.edu/Admissions/oneStopShop/undergraduateAdmissions/studentGuidebook.aspx).  
<http://www.tamuc.edu/Admissions/oneStopShop/undergraduateAdmissions/studentGuidebook.aspx>

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Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum:

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/netiquette>

### **TAMUC Attendance**

For more information about the attendance policy please visit the [Attendance](#) webpage and [Procedure 13.99.99.R0.01](#).

<http://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/generalInformation/attendance.aspx>

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/academic/13.99.99.R0.01.pdf>

### **Academic Integrity**

Students at Texas A&M University-Commerce are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures:

[Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.03](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/undergraduates/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

[Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.10](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/graduate/13.99.99.R0.10GraduateStudentAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

### **Students with Disabilities-- ADA Statement**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

#### **Office of Student Disability Resources and Services**

Texas A&M University-Commerce

Gee Library- Room 162

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax (903) 468-8148

Email: [studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu](mailto:studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu)

Website: [Office of Student Disability Resources and Services](#)

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<http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/>

### **Nondiscrimination Notice**

Texas A&M University-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

### **Campus Concealed Carry Statement**

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M-Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.

For a list of locations, please refer to the [Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus](#) document and/or consult your event organizer.

Web url:

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

## **A&M-Commerce Supports Students' Mental Health**

### **Counseling Center Services**

The Counseling Center at A&M-Commerce, located in the Halladay Building, Room 203, offers counseling services, educational programming, and connection to community resources for students. Students have 24/7 access to the Counseling Center's crisis assessment services by calling 903-886-5145. For more information regarding Counseling Center events and confidential services, please visit [www.tamuc.edu/counsel](http://www.tamuc.edu/counsel)

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## Department or Accrediting Agency Required Content

### COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

Every effort will be made to adhere to the course schedule as noted below. However, unforeseen circumstances may require changes to the schedule. In that case, changes will be announced via University Email and in Announcements. The professor reserves the right to change the schedule if necessary and depending on the progress of the class. I highly recommend that you follow the schedule outlined below **VERY CAREFULLY** so that you are sure to complete readings as assigned and turn your assignments in on time.

**Please note that all discussions/comments/assignments are due by 11:00PM CST in D2L on the day they are due as outlined in the syllabus. Please note that this course runs on a Monday-Sunday schedule.**

#### WEEK #1—The Challenges Associated with Social Science Research (Beginning August 28, 2023)

<b>Monday</b>	Read the syllabus carefully and make note of important course due dates. Readings from the Text <i>Chapter 1: Science, Society, and Criminological Research</i> <i>Chapter 2: The Process and Problems of Criminological Research</i> <i>Chapter 3: Research Ethics</i>
<b>Wednesday</b>	Post a Week #1 Introduction where you introduce yourself, accept the conditions of the syllabus, agree to the Rules of Netiquette, and answer the question I pose. Please note that this post is required for ALL students and will be graded. The link to the Rules of Netiquette may be found under Course and University Procedures/Policies under Student Conduct or here: <a href="http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html">http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html</a>
<b>Friday</b>	Complete course pre-test (if available)
<b>Saturday</b>	Complete Discussion Assignment #1
<b>Sunday</b>	Complete Comments for Discussion Assignment #1

#### WEEK #2—Conceptualization and Measurement

<b>Monday</b>	This week's chapter discusses the conceptualization, operationalization, and measurement of variables used in social science research Readings from the Text <i>Chapter 4: Conceptualization and Measurement</i>
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	Consider accessing this website for further information on this week's topic of study: <a href="http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/index.php">http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/index.php</a>
<b>Thursday</b>	Complete Discussion Assignment #2
<b>Friday</b>	Quiz #1 (covering Chapters 1-4)
<b>Saturday</b>	Comments for Discussion Assignment #2 due

### **WEEK #3—Sampling**

<b>Monday</b>	This week's chapter covers issues related to sampling including planning the sample and challenges associated with developing a viable sampling method. Readings from the Text <i>Chapter 5: Sampling</i> Consider accessing this website for further information on this week's topic of study: <a href="http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/index.php">http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/index.php</a>
<b>Thursday</b>	Complete Discussion Assignment #3
<b>Saturday</b>	Comments for Discussion Assignment #3 due

### **WEEK #4—Causation and Research Design**

<b>Monday</b>	This week's chapter covers the principles of causal explanation. Readings from the Text <i>Chapter 6: Causation and Research Design</i> Consider accessing this website for further information on this week's topic of study: <a href="http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/index.php">http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/index.php</a>
<b>Tuesday</b>	Annotated Bibliography Assignment Due
<b>Thursday</b>	Discussion Assignment #4 Due
<b>Friday</b>	Course Post-test due (if available)
<b>Saturday</b>	Comments on Discussion Assignment #4 Due

### **WEEK #5—Experimental Design**

<b>Monday</b>	This week's chapter covers experimental design including issues related to validity. Readings from the Text <i>Chapter 7: Experimental Designs</i> Consider accessing this website for further information on this week's topic of study: <a href="http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/index.php">http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/index.php</a>
<b>Wednesday</b>	Literature Review Due
<b>Friday</b>	Quiz #2 (covering chapters 5-7)

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