



CJ 575-02 CRN 8728
RESEARCH METHODS IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Course Syllabus: Spring 2024
01/16/2024-03/08/2024
Asynchronous

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: James A. Purdon, Ph.D.

Office Location: Ferguson 229

Office Hours: Office hours is scheduled every Wednesday between 10:00am-2:00pm (CT) and 6:00pm-7:00pm (CT) over Zoom. The Zoom link is located in Module 1 on D2L Brightspace. Alternatively, I welcome scheduling a meeting that is convenient for both of us if these times do not work for you.

Office Phone: (903) 886.5332

University Email Address: James.Purdon@tamuc.edu

Communication Response Time: Emails are answered within 24 hours Monday-Friday during business hours (9am-5pm).

COURSE INFORMATION

Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings

Required Text

Bachman, R. D. & Schutt, R. K. (2020). *The practice of research in criminology and criminal justice*. (8th ed.). SAGE.

Optional Text

American Psychological Association. (2020). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.). APA.

Additional Readings

Braga, A. A., Welsh, B. C., Papchristos, A. V., Schnell, C., & Grossman, L. (2014). The growth of randomized experiments in policing: The vital few

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and the salience of mentoring. *Journal of Experimental Criminology*, 10, 1-28.

Denney, A. S., & Tewksbury, R. (2013). How to write a literature review. *Journal of Criminal Justice Education*, 24(2), 218-234.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10511253.2012.730617>

Gau, J. M. (2014). Procedural justice and police legitimacy: A test of measurement and structure. *American Journal of Criminal Justice*, 39, 187-205.

Gould, J. B., & Mastrofski, S. D. (2004). Suspect searches: Assessing police behavior under the US Constitution. *Criminology & Public Policy*, 3, 315-362.

Higgins, G. E. (2009). Quantitative versus qualitative methods: Understanding why quantitative methods are predominant in criminology and criminal justice. *Journal of Theoretical and Philosophical Criminology*, 1(1), 23-37.

Kleck, G., Tark, J., & Bellows, J. J. (2006). What methods are most frequently used in research in criminology and criminal justice. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 34, 147-152.

Lowman, J., & Palys, T. (2001). The ethics and law of confidentiality in criminal justice research: A comparison of Canada and the United States. *International Criminal Justice Review*, 11(1), 1-33. <https://doi.org/10.1177/105756770101100101>

Oakes, J. M. (2002). Risks and wrongs in social science research: An evaluator's guide to the IRB. *Evaluation Review*, 26, 443-479.

Payne, B. K., & Chappell, A. (2008). Using student samples in criminological research. *Journal of Criminal Justice Education*, 19, 175-192.

Roberts, J., & Wells, W. (2010). The validity of criminal justice contacts reported by inmates: A comparison of self-reported data with official prison records. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 38, 1031-1037.

Vickovic, S. G., Griffin, M. L., & Fradella, H. F. (2013). Depictions of correctional officers in newspaper media: An ethnographic content analysis. *Criminal Justice Studies: A Critical Journal of Crime, Law and Society*, 26, 455-477.

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Wilkes, N., Anderson, V. R., Johnsons, C. L., & Bedell, L. M. (2022). Mixed methods research in criminology and criminal justice: A systematic review. *American Journal of Criminal Justice*, 47(3), 526-546.

Wright, K. A., & Bouffard, L. A. (2016). Capturing crime: The qualitative analysis of individual cases for advancing criminological knowledge. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, 60, 123-145.

Wright, R., Decker, S., Redfern, A. K., & Smith, D. (1992). A snowball's chance in hell: Doing fieldwork with active residential burglars. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, 29, 148-161.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will provide students with the fundamentals of conducting and evaluating research in criminal justice. These topics include, defining research problems, ethics in criminal justice research, selecting and measuring variables, stating hypotheses, sampling, and developing experimental research design.

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Identify basic study designs used in research.
2. Demonstrate an understanding of how to conduct research.
3. Discuss ethical issues in criminal justice and social sciences research.
4. Comprehend the format of research articles and gain practice reading them.
5. Analyze the methods and results sections of material examining crime and delinquency.
6. Collect and compile research (e.g., scholarly articles or governmental statistics) on topics related to criminology or the criminal justice system.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Minimal Technical Skills Needed

- **Computer System:** Windows or Macintosh desktop or laptop computer purchased within the last 5 years. Chromebooks and mobile devices may not provide full online access.
- **Operating System:** Windows-based computers must be running Windows 10 or newer. Macintosh computers must be running OS 10.13 (High Sierra) or higher.
- **Required Software:** Microsoft Office 365; Adobe Acrobat Reader DC
- **Web Browser:** Use a recently updated internet browser.
- **Learning Management System (LMS):** See below for requirements.

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INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS

This course is fully asynchronous (i.e., completely online) through BrightSpace. You can access the course any time, day or night, from anywhere that you have an internet connection. You should login to the course on BrightSpace on a regular basis to keep up with class assignments. Each module will end Sunday at 11:59 PM. The next module begins Monday morning.

The course is divided into eight substantive modules where we will be focusing on key topics related to social science research. Within these modules, you will find a variety of tools to facilitate your learning journey, including recorded lectures, my PowerPoint slides, peer-review articles, and links to additional resources. Additionally, you will find a variety of activities and assignments associated with each module, including a description of each assessment (see below for a more detailed explanation of each), grading criteria and rubrics, and the appropriate submission portal.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES OR TIPS FOR SUCCESS IN THE COURSE

Taking an online class is different from taking a face-to-face class. You will largely be teaching yourself using materials I provide. The roles of the teacher and the student are somewhat reversed, where I am a facilitator, guide, coach, or resource, and am responsible for creating an effective learning environment. Your job is to use that environment to learn, whether that is interacting with the materials, constructing and sharing information, and critically thinking through assignments. Importantly, this is what life-long learning is all about. Therefore, here are some tips that should help jump start the process.

1. **Review the Syllabus and the Course Schedule** to keep up to date on requirements for the course.
2. **Read announcements and check email!** I will send updates about the courses through D2L, so check regularly.
3. Create a **personal organization system** to keep track of specified due dates.
4. **Communicate regularly** with your instructor and peers.
5. **Create a study and/or assignment schedule** to stay on track.
6. Set aside **regular times** in which you can do your classwork with minimal interruptions or distractions. Avoid multitasking while studying.
7. Learn about and use the student resources available to you! You can get free assistance from the [A&M-Library](#), [IT Support](#), [the Writing Center](#), and more.

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ASSESSMENTS

Activities

The purpose of these activities is to provide students with an opportunity to apply key concepts related to research methods. There are four separate activities scheduled for this course.

Activity 1 (Research Reflection)

This activity is a short writing assignment that probes your experience with research. You will need to reflect on your current knowledge base surrounding research. There is no page limit for this particular activity; however, this activity is graded upon coherence of thought, grammatical standards, and typographical.

Activity 2 (CITI Training)

You will need to complete the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) program. The CITI training is required for anyone conducting research at the university level and serves as a protocol for ensuring ethical and compliant research is followed. Although this activity is labeled as number two (2), it will not be due until the end of the semester (i.e., 03/08). However, I encourage you to complete the training sooner rather than later as the training is somewhat lengthy. Moreover, the topics covered in the training is quite relevant to this course.

Activity 3 (Measurement and Sampling Critique)

The purpose of this activity is to apply your knowledge of conceptualization and critique conceptualization. You will need to assess issues of conceptualization and measurement among three proposed research projects.

Activity 4 (Research Design Critique)

The purpose of this activity is to apply your knowledge of research methods and design to potential research situations. You will need to examine the chosen methods of three proposed research projects and identify any potential issues with each project.

Assignments

Much of your grade in this class is determined upon completion of a term research proposal. While this task may seem daunting at first, it is quite manageable when this project is broken down into smaller steps. Therefore, the assignments for this course aim to do just that – provide a more manageable experience in creating your research proposal. This approach offers several important benefits, including students understanding the research process from a practical perspective, and students applying knowledge obtained in this class to their project in a digestible manner. Moreover, I can provide specific feedback and guidance on the various parts of the project. My

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expectation is that you will incorporate all of my feedback from the previous assignments to create a more polished proposal. Thus, I have constructed four substantive assignments (see below) that highlight the individual steps leading to the completion of your research proposal due at the end of the semester.

Assignment 1: Topic Selection and Research Question

Provide a brief (about 1 page) overview of the topic you want to focus on for your research proposal. You can focus on any area relevant to criminology and criminal justice. This is an initial topic selection, so there are likely to be changes and refinements as you complete subsequent assignments. This is normal and part of the research process. With that in mind, please try to be as specific on the topic as possible. Make sure to provide at least one initial research question you would like to address with your study.

Assignment 2: Review of the Literature

This assignment involves providing a more detailed description of your choice and the theoretical and practical importance of studying it. You should provide some justification for why your topic is important for further study. This assignment should also identify and review the major studies that have examined this topic in the past. In doing so, this portion should describe major points in the research as well as methodological strengths and weaknesses of prior studies. You should include at least 7 references in your literature review and these references should be from peer-reviewed journals, scholarly books, and governmental reports. These references should conform to APA standards and the literature review should be approximately 5-7 pages in length.

Assignment 3: Hypotheses, Sampling, and Research Design

The third assignment focuses on your hypotheses. Based on your review of the literature, develop a refined version of your research question(s). In doing so, you will also be developing hypotheses based on your question(s). These hypotheses clearly define your independent and dependent variables, as well as the relationship among these variables. Last, but not least, you will explain the preliminary research design and methodology that is most appropriate for your study. This should include your target population, sampling design, unit of analysis to test your hypotheses, methods of data collection and why you have chosen that method, and specific description of your research design. The length of this document is dependent on the number of research questions, hypotheses, and variables you are examining. I anticipate the length of this assignment should be approximately 5-7 pages in length.

Assignment 4: Research Proposal Presentation

Your fourth assignment will be a research proposal that addresses a criminological or criminal justice problem. As part of the last week of the course (module eight), students are required to present on their research proposals. These presentations should

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typically follow the outline of the proposal (i.e., introduction, purpose, review of the literature, hypothesis and research questions, research design, and limitations). Presentations should be about 10-15 minutes in length. Students are encouraged, but not required, to use any means to facilitate their presentation including, PowerPoint, Prezi, Panapto, and other visual aids.

Discussion Boards

There are seven interactive discussion boards. For each discussion board, students should submit an initial post of approximately one page addressing the topic under consideration for the module. After submitting their initial post, students are required to submit two reply posts in response to other students' initial posts. Each reply post should be at least one complete paragraph. Importantly, initial posts are due every Friday and reply posts are due every Sunday, except for the final week of class.

Discussion Leaders

During the first week, students are required to sign up as a discussion leader for a particular week in the semester. This role will require students to record a short presentation of themselves summarizing, analyzing, and critiquing one of the assigned readings for that week. These recordings should parallel an example provided during the first week (I will be critiquing various articles) to give a sense on how to successfully complete this assignment. Students are encouraged, but not required, to use any means to facilitate their presentation including, PowerPoint, Prezi, Panapto, and other visual aids, as well as provide handouts to their peers (e.g., bullet point summaries of their readings).

Final Exam

The exam will assess your overall understanding of the course material. The exam will be a combination of short answer questions and a single essay. The exam will be open on the final week (week 8) of the class and will be due on the final day of class. Importantly, this exam is open note and open book. This assessment will be graded upon accuracy, coherency, and ability to communicate in written format.

Research Proposal Paper

Your capstone assignment for this class will be a finalized research proposal that addresses a criminological or criminal justice problem. To do so, you will need to write an abstract, acknowledge the limitations of your study, and explain a plan for future research. After writing these sections, you will then need to incorporate your previous completed assignments and all feedback given to create a polished final proposal. Effectively, you have been writing parts of the proposal throughout the semester and are now ready to combine the different sections into a completed proposal for this class. This final proposal should include the following sections:

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- Title Page
- Abstract
- Introduction/purpose/goal/objectives
- Review of the literature
- Hypotheses and research questions
- Research design and methods
- Limitations/plans for future research
- References

Grading

Final grades in this course will be based on the following scale (see Table 1):

Table 1: Grade Cut-Offs		
<i>Grade</i>	<i>Points</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
A	360-400	90.00% – 100%
B	320-359	80.00% – 89.99%
C	280-319	70.00% – 79.99%
D	240-279	60.00% – 69.99%
F	Below 240	Below 60.00%

Total points corresponding to the final letter grades (see Table 2):

Table 2: Assessments and Their Values		
<i>Assignment</i>	<i>Points</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Activity 1-4 (25 points each)	100	25% (6.25% each)
Assignment 1-4 (30 points each)	120	30% (7.5% each)
Discussion Boards (7 total at 7 points each)	49	12.25% (1.75% each)
Discussion Leaders	31	7.75%
Final Exam	50	12.5%
Research Proposal Paper	50	12.5%

Grades can be accessed on D2L.

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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

Zoom Video Conferencing Tool

https://inside.tamuc.edu/campuslife/CampusServices/CITESupportCenter/Zoom_Account.aspx?source=universalmenu

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.

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 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>

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Interaction with Instructor Statement

Communication will be held either in-person, email, or through D2L.

What to call me – Please refer to me as “Professor Purdon” or “Dr. Purdon.”

Look for the answer first. When questions arise during the course of this class, please remember to check these two sources for an answer *before* you contact me:

- Course Syllabus
- Announcements in D2L

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Course Specific Procedures/Policies

Citation Style

Students are required to use the citation style and format of the American Psychological Association (APA). Review the *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.) or similar APA Citation Style online resource. It is acceptable to cite legal materials (cases, statutes, regulations, etc.) in accordance with the style specified in *The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation* (21st ed.) in all papers.

Extra credit

Please do not ask for extra credit. Although an extra credit assignment may be offered to the whole class, no individualized extra credit work will be permitted. Why? Extra credit is unfair to the students who do their work diligently all semester long.

Late or Missed Assignments

Written assignments are to be submitted on the due date by the times specified (Central Time). Late submissions will not be accepted unless: (1) an extension was granted by the professor in advance of the due date; or (2) documentation of an unforeseeable excused absence (as assessed in the professor’s sole discretion) is provided. Alternatively, the instructor reserves the right to accept a late assignment for good cause (even if that cause does not rise to the level of warranting an unforeseeable excused absence) and reduce the grade on the assignment by a full letter grade for each day the assignment is late. In other words, that is a **10%** deduction for each calendar day the assignment is late.

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.

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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>

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](#)

[Undergraduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/documents/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateStudentAcademicDishonestyForm.pdf>

[Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/academics/graduateschool/faculty/GraduateStudentAcademicDishonestyFormold.pdf>

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

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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

Velma K. Waters Library Rm 162

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

Fax (903) 468-8148

Email: studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu

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

<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.

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A&M-COMMERCE SUPPORTS STUDENTS' MENTAL HEALTH

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

AI Use IN COURSES

Texas A&M University-Commerce acknowledges that there are legitimate uses of Artificial Intelligence, ChatBots, or other software that has the capacity to generate text, or suggest replacements for text beyond individual words, as determined by the instructor of the course.

Any use of such software must be documented. Any undocumented use of such software constitutes an instance of academic dishonesty (plagiarism).

Individual instructors may disallow entirely the use of such software for individual assignments or for the entire course. Students should be aware of such requirements and follow their instructors' guidelines. If no instructions are provided the student should assume that the use of such software is disallowed.

In any case, students are fully responsible for the content of any assignment they submit, regardless of whether they used an AI, in any way. This specifically includes cases in which the AI plagiarized another text or misrepresented sources.

13.99.99.R0.03 Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty
13.99.99.R0.10 Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty

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COURSE SCHEDULE

ACTIVITIES/ASSIGNMENTS	PERCENTAGE	DUE DATE
WEEK 1: Foundations for Social Science		
Readings: Syllabus, Chapter 1 and 2 Readings: Higgins (2009) and Kleck et al. (2006)	--	
Discussion Board 1	1.75%	01/19
Activity 1 – Research Reflection	6.25%	01/19
WEEK 2: Ethics		
Readings: Chapters 3 Readings: Lowan & Palys (2001) and Oakes (2002)	--	
Discussion Board 2	1.75%	01/26
ASSIGNMENT 1 – Research Topic and Questions	7.5%	01/26
WEEK 3: Sampling and Literature Review		
Readings: Chapter 5 Readings: Wright et al. (1993) and Denney & Tewksbury (2013)	--	
Discussion Board 3	1.75%	02/02
Activity 2 – CITI Training Opens	6.25%	03/08
Week 4: Measurement and Causation		
Readings: Chapters 4 and 6 Readings: Roberts & Wells (2010) and Gau (2014)	--	
Discussion Board 4	1.75%	02/09
ASSIGNMENT 2 – Review of the Literature	7.5%	02/09
WEEK 5: Experimental Designs and Survey Research		
Readings: Chapters 7 and 8 Readings: Payne & Chappell (2008) and Braga et al. (2014)	--	
Discussion Board 5	1.75%	02/16
Activity 3 – Measurement and Sampling Critique	6.25%	02/16
WEEK 6: Qualitative Research		
Readings: Chapters 9 and 10 Readings: Wright & Bouffard (2016) and Vickovic et al. (2013)	--	
Discussion Board 6	1.75%	02/23
ASSIGNMENT 3 – Research Design	7.5%	02/23
WEEK 7: Mixed Methods		
Readings: Chapters 11, 12, and 13 Readings: Gould & Mastrofski (2004) and Wilkes et al. (2021)	--	
Discussion Board 7	1.75%	03/01
Activity 4 – Research Design Critique	6.25%	03/01

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WEEK 8: Wrap-up		
Readings: None	--	
ASSIGNMENT 4 – Research Proposal Presentation	7.5%	03/08
Research Proposal Paper	12.5%	03/08
FINAL EXAM	12.5%	03/08

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