



CJ576.02W: Data Analysis and Interpretation

COURSE SYLLABUS: Spring 2026

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Jess Garcia, Ph.D.

Office Hours:

Online via appointment

University Email Address: Jessica.Garcia@etamu.edu

Preferred Form of Communication: E-mail (I do not check D2L's messaging system, please use email only)

Communication Response Time: 24 hours or sooner during normal M-F business hours.

COURSE INFORMATION

Schedule: Online, Asynchronous

Textbook(s) Required

The course uses a *creative commons* textbook, meaning that it is freely available for students to use for academic purposes. A copy of it has been placed on D2L under the "content" tab.

Sheppard, Valerie. 2021. *Research Methods for the Social Sciences: An Introduction*. (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

Assigned readings (provided by instructor; accessible on D2L)

Software Required

Microsoft Office (or compatible) word processor

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Course Description

This course continues students' exploration of research in criminal justice established in CJ575 (Research Methods). In this course, students are exposed to different methods of data collection and the principles of data analysis. Emphasis will also be placed on teaching students how to interpret data as presented in published reports, articles, and books.

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Evaluate the strengths and limitations of various data analysis techniques, justifying the selection of specific methods based on research questions and data characteristics
2. Synthesize interpreted data and analytical findings into clear, well-supported conclusions and recommendations relevant to the research problem.
3. Critique the data interpretation and reporting practices in published research, identifying potential sources of bias, misrepresentation, or methodological error.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

GRADING

Final grades in this course will be based on the following scale:

A = 90%-100%

B = 80%-89%

C = 70%-79%

D = 60%-69%

F = 59% or Below

Final course grades will be based on the criteria outlined below.

Course Evaluation (100%)

Midterm Quiz	10%
Metanalysis Assignment	15%
Data Interpretation Worksheet	15%
Survey Design Assignment	30%
Research Report/Executive Summary	30%

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Assessments

***Please check your ETAMU email account and D2L daily because important information about this class could be emailed or uploaded to you. A breakdown of course requirements and how each will contribute to your course grade is included below. *Assignments and exams may be made up without penalty if they are missed due to an excused absence.*

Midterm Quiz (10% of total grade)

During Week 4, students will be responsible for completing a 10-question quiz through D2L (quizzes tab). Students will be provided with a review guide that will identify the topics that will be covered. To accommodate work and family schedules, the midterm quiz will be available for 48-72 hours.

Metanalysis Assignment (15%)

A meta-analysis attempts to statistically analyze a large collection of studies on a topic for the purpose of integrating the different findings into a coherent story (Berman & Parker, 2002). Students will be given a concise metanalytic study on the correlates of citizen satisfaction with law enforcement and be tasked with summarizing the findings for lay people, with a specific emphasis on identifying remaining questions and issues (critique).

All course writing assignments will be submitted online through D2L and utilize plagiarism software. Papers should be in Times New Roman, size 11 font, one- inch margins and double-spaced. Late assignments will be accepted but will be deducted 10 points for each day (or part of the day) they are late (without approved documentation).

Data Interpretation Worksheet (15%)

Students will complete a guided worksheet that asks them to accurately interpret and report findings from peer-reviewed research. Students should cross-reference chapters 15-16 of the course text to help facilitate this process.

Survey Design Assignment (30%)

Students will utilize their research topic/question established in CJ 575 to develop a professional survey. Based on your previous work, you should have completed a literature review and an annotated bibliography.

As discussed extensively in Chapter 8 of the textbook, survey design can be a difficult task, with many young researchers failing to address their research questions or biasing their own questions. Refer to this chapter consistently as you progress through this assignment.

Students will develop 12-15 survey questions, including a justification as to why it exists, how it was worded, and why it maintains reliability and validity.

Research Report/Executive Summary (30%)

This assignment requires students to synthesize their research topic into a concise, professional Executive Summary. The goal is to utilize data interpretation and analysis skills to distill complex research into a document immediately useful to policymakers, agency heads, or stakeholders who

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require a quick, clear understanding of the project's key takeaways, supporting evidence, and actionable recommendations. A full rubric will be available on D2L.

Makeup Exam Policy: I understand that life happens. Students that experience exceptional circumstances which cause them to miss a scheduled exam or assignment should contact me ASAP. Students that have a university approved absence or otherwise produce written documentation regarding their absence will be scheduled for a make-up time. Students that have not reported their absence or spoken to me within 2 days of the exam will be considered unexcused and receive a "0" score for that exam.

Classroom Guidelines

Electronic Device Policy: Please refrain from the use of electronic devices during class, as it is distracting not only to you, but also to your instructor and peers. Laptops should only be used for note taking unless they are part of the instructor assignment and discussion for the class day.

Classroom Civility, Respect and Tolerance: University study is largely about exposure to a diverse range of worldviews and lived experiences. **This course relies on challenging and critiquing deeply held societal beliefs over a wide range of sensitive topics.** Students should engage in discourse with other students and the instructor respectfully. **My classroom is predicated on principles of mutual respect** and students are expected to exhibit this same respect for the diversity of ideas. **Forms of incivility towards other students or the instructor will not be tolerated.**

Instructor Error: Because instructor errors can and do occur, students should keep an extra copy of any work they submit. In addition, make sure to keep and safeguard graded assignments and tests until final course grades have been posted.

Course Policies

Access to Grades: All grades will be available in D2L. Please note that I am unable to furnish any information about grades or student status via e-mail or telephone. This is considered a violation of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), even with student permission or at student request. Verify your D2L grades often. Discuss grade posting errors/omissions with me immediately.

Borderline Grades: Students will not be awarded extra points at the discretion of the instructor. Be aware at the outset that this course has a firm policy against grade "bumping". However, students will be automatically rounded to a higher letter grade at the .5 threshold (i.e., 89.5% is an A).

Incompletes: Grades of "incomplete" are given only under rare circumstances when students provide detailed documentation of a significant crisis (e.g., serious illness of the student or death in the immediate family) near the end of the semester and which render them unable to finish the course. Incomplete grades will not be given under any other circumstances. Students with circumstances

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negatively affecting their class performance should discuss the situation with me immediately so that we can identify and implement strategies for managing the problem(s).

PowerPoint: Students with approved documentation from Student Disability Services may receive hard copies of the PowerPoint presentations used to develop the online videos. Email the instructor for more information.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

LMS

All course sections offered by East Texas A&M University 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

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.

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 ETAMU 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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COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Course Specific Procedures/Policies

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>

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>

ETAMU 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 East Texas A&M University 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>

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

East Texas A&M University

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

East Texas A&M University 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 East Texas A&M University 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 ETAMU 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 ETAMU campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

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Counseling Center Services

The Counseling Center at ETAMU 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

ETAMU Supports Students' Mental Health

The Counseling Center ETAMU, 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 policy [Draft 2, May 25, 2023]

ETAMU 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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CJ576 Tentative Course Calendar

Week (Dates)	Topics, Videos, and Activities	Readings	Assignments
1 MAR 16-20	Video 1: Intro to data collection and analysis Syllabus, course structure, and assessment		<u>Due 03/22 (11:59PM):</u> Class Introduction (D2L Discussion Board)
2 MAR 23-27	Video 2: Qualitative Data Collection & Analysis Video 3: Quantitative Interviews	RMSS, Ch. 10 [pp. 237-271] RMSS, Ch. 11 [pp. 275-289]	<u>Due 03/29 (11:59PM):</u> Metanalysis Assignment
3 MAR 30 – APR 3	Video 3: Field Research	RMSS, Ch. 12 [pp. 293 – 314]	
4 APR 6-10	Video 4: Unobtrusive Research: Quant and Qual Approaches	RMSS, Ch. 13 [pp. 321 – 343]	<u>Due 04/12 (11:59pm):</u> Midterm Quiz (opens 04/08 at 10AM)
5 APR 13-17	Video 5: Analysis of Survey Data	RMSS, Ch. 9 [pp. 221-233]	
6 APR 20-24	Video 6: Sharing Your Research	RMSS, Chapter 15 [pp. 365-377]	<u>Due 04/26 (11:59pm):</u> Survey Design Assignment
7 APR 27 – MAY 1	Video 7: Data Interpretation	RMSS, Chapter 16.1-16.2 [pp. 381-389] Assigned Reading (D2L)	<u>Due 05/3 (11:59pm):</u> Interpretation Worksheet
8 MAY 4-8	Executive Summary (Finals Week)	<i>Sample Executive Summary</i>	***FINAL SUMMARY DUE WEDNESDAY May 6 AT 11:59PM***

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Important University Dates – Spring 2026 8-Week Term

March 16	First Day of Class
March 23	Census Date/Drop Deadline (100% Refund)
April 17	Drop Deadline (no refund/Q grade)
May 8	Last Day of Class
May 11	Final Grades Due (from instructor)

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