

CJ RESEARCH PROJECT GCJ-7801(3)

Design and completion of independent research is a key goal of the Criminal Justice MA program. Building on other coursework, the research paper helps develop skills and allows students to demonstrate their ability to conduct research. Students who wish to engage in a more in-depth project, and especially those interested in doctoral studies, should consider the Master's Thesis option.

FORMAT

The Research Paper must contain the following elements:

- 1. Introduction/Statement of the Problem*
- 2. Literature Review*
- 3. Theoretical Framework, Methodology, Research Questions and/or Hypotheses*
- 4. Findings*
- 5. Discussion and Conclusion*

Style: APA for empirical papers, Canadian Uniform Legal Citation (McGill Style) for legal research papers.

Length: 30-45 pages, (about 6,500 minimum to 10,000 word maximum).

Students doing the research paper will examine a criminal justice topic in-depth. Students doing the thesis will make an original conceptual, empirical and methodological contribution to the field.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

Students doing the research paper will be expected to draw from conceptual and theoretical literature to guide their analyses and writing. Students should consult with their supervisor and committee members to discuss the theoretical perspective(s) they plan to work with.

QUANTITATIVE PROJECTS

Students can design a survey or interviews / observations and involve police (public, private), legal actors (judges, Crown and defence lawyers) corrections workers (parole/probation, correctional officers), and offenders (parolees/probationers, provincial or federal inmates. Official records analysis may include publically accessible records such as court documents, including case law, or government data obtained through access to information or other channels. Secondary data analyses are possible through data depositories such as the Canadian General Social Survey, Adult and Youth Corrections Survey Adult Criminal Court Survey and Homicide Survey. Students may also analyze existing data from studies conducted by criminal justice faculty.

QUALITATIVE PROJECTS

Observation can be undertaken of criminal justice processes that might range from police activity, court behaviour and citizen – CJ agent interaction. Depth interviews and transcript analysis could be conducted with police (public, private), legal actors (judges, Crown and defence lawyers) corrections practitioners (parole/probation, correctional officers), and offenders (parolees/probationers, provincial or federal inmates. Content analysis of government documents and other official records is another strategy. Projects may also review case law, using doctrine research methods alone or in conjunction with social science methods.

ETHICS

Studies involving human subjects require approval of the University's Research and Ethics Board (REB). Approval is required from criminal justice agencies prior to being allowed access to facilities, practitioners or offenders, and a record of this approval is needed by the CJ department's research committee or REB prior to any formal approval of a research project will be granted.

PROCESS

Ideally, students will have identified a project supervisor and research area of interest on their application to the MA program. Students will normally complete at least the first draft of the proposal in Seminar in Research Design GCJ-7117(3). The research paper must be supervised by a member of the criminal justice faculty and this arrangement must be formalised by the end of the first term of study for full time students, and the end of Fall term 4 for those enrolled part-time. Students must also find a second reader for their paper. Supervisors or readers outside the CJ department must be approved by the CJ Graduate Program Chair. Formal presentation of the study results is also required. Full-time students must complete the requirements under this option within 24 months (September 1 to August 31), part-time in 48 months.

SCHEDULE FOR FULL-TIME STUDENTS

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|---------------------------------|---|
| <i>Fall/Winter application:</i> | <i>A CJ faculty member and topic area are identified in the student application.</i> |
| <i>Fall Term 1</i> | <i>Student completes course work, meets with Research Project Supervisor to discuss proposal, literature.</i> |
| <i>Winter Term 2</i> | <i>Student completes initial proposal in Research Design GCJ-7117(3).</i> |
| <i>Spring/Summer Term 3</i> | <i>Student submits proposal to their supervisor and second reader. The supervisor will determine that a proposal presentation can proceed. The supervisor will distribute the proposal to faculty and graduate students and arrange a time for a public presentation.</i> <i>After the presentation, the supervisor may approve the proposal and the student may proceed on their research project. This may involve the student submitting the proposal to the University of Winnipeg Research and Ethics Board, if needed.</i> |
| <i>Fall Term 4</i> | <i>Data collection/analysis.</i> |
| <i>Winter Term 5</i> | <i>Enrol in Major Research Paper GCJ-7801(3). Write up research project.</i> |
| <i>Spring/Summer Term 6</i> | <i>Present research findings at formal venue (e.g., Graduate Research Day, Criminal Justice Day, Justice Conference).</i> |

SCHEDULE FOR PART-TIME STUDENTS

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|---------------------------------|---|
| <i>Fall/Winter application:</i> | <i>A CJ faculty member and research topic area are identified in the student application.</i> |
| <i>Fall Term 1</i> | <i>Student completes course work, meets with Research Paper Supervisor to discuss proposal, literature.</i> |
| <i>Winter Term 2</i> | <i>Student completes course work.</i> |
| <i>Spring/Summer Term 3</i> | <i>Student completes course work.</i> |
| <i>Fall Term 4</i> | <i>Student completes course work.</i> |
| <i>Winter Term 5</i> | <i>Student completes research paper proposal in Research Design G CJ-7117(3).</i> |
| <i>Spring/Summer Term 6</i> | <i>Student submits proposal to their supervisor and second reader. The supervisor will determine that a proposal presentation can proceed. The supervisor will distribute the proposal to faculty and graduate students and arrange a time for a public presentation.</i> <i>After the presentation, the supervisor may approve the proposal and the student may proceed on their research project. This may involve the student submitting the proposal to the University of Winnipeg Research and Ethics Board, if needed.</i> |
| <i>Fall Term 7</i> | <i>Student completes course work, data collection/analysis.</i> |
| <i>Winter Term 8</i> | <i>Student completes course work, data collection/analysis.</i> |
| <i>Spring/Summer Term 9</i> | <i>Student completes course work, data collection/analysis.</i> |
| <i>Fall Term 10</i> | <i>Write up research project.</i> |
| <i>Winter Term 11</i> | <i>Enrol in Major Research Paper G CJ-7801(3). Write up research project.</i> |
| <i>Spring/Summer Term 12</i> | <i>Present research findings at formal venue (e.g., Graduate Research Day, Criminal Justice Day, Justice Conference).</i> |

Things to think about:

- It is imperative to find a supervisor and topic. Taking too long to decide, or changing your topic mid-stream, increases the risk you will fail to finish within your allotted program period and you will pay additional fees.
- The research paper is intended to produce a credible study but it is not a Master's Thesis. Talk with your supervisor about what is realistic to accomplish within your program.
- Human subject research is laudable, but if you have not established access to an organizational site or study subjects within the first few months of the program, you may have to rethink your project or submit a new proposal.
- Surveys may require a substantial sample size to be credible, so think carefully about your ability to access a sufficient population and survey them within a reasonable time frame.

RESEARCH PAPER AND MASTER'S THESIS GUIDELINES (CRIMINAL JUSTICE DEPARTMENT)

| THESIS | RESEARCH PAPER |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 80-120 pages | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 - 45 pages |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Original research theoretically-filling clear gap in existing literature | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While theoretically informed, focus is on developing research skills and answering a research question. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designed, researched and written with regular consultations of the supervisor and/or other faculty | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervisor must be consulted at major points of the process but will have a lesser role; other faculty usually not involved until grading |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should represent a distinct and original contribution to the field | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should indicate a strong understanding of the field and an ability to conduct and present research. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formally requires 9 credit hours | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formally requires 3 credit hours. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Takes on average approximately 9 months of full-time work from beginning to completion, but this will vary considerably according to a wide range of factors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Takes on average approximately four months' work on a full-time basis. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defended before a formal thesis board | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graded by the supervisor and one other faculty member |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a distinct contribution to the field, should likely be publishable if it can be summarized into article length | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May or may not be publishable |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will be particularly valuable for students who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Strongly wish to study a particular topic in depth using primary resources -Want to undertake a major piece of research to prepare themselves for eventual PhD studies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will be particularly valuable for students who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Have a wide range of scholarly interests and do not feel strongly drawn to a single topic -Do not plan doctoral study and would rather develop general writing and analytical skills |