

OCT 06 2000

REQUEST FOR APPROVAL TO USE W-DESIGNATION

LSC # 202
Action _____

COVER SHEET: Request for Approval to Use W-Designation

TYPE I. PROFESSOR COMMITMENT

- Professor Dennis Giever Phone 7-5600
- Writing Workshop? (If not at IUP, where? when?) IUP 5/15-16 2000
- Proposal for one W-course (see instructions below)
- Agree to forward syllabi for subsequently offered W-courses?

TYPE II. DEPARTMENT COURSE

- Department Contact Person _____ Phone _____
- Course Number/Title _____
- Statement concerning departmental responsibility _____
- Proposal for this W-course (see instructions below)

TYPE III. SPECIFIC COURSE AND SPECIFIC PROFESSOR(S)

- Professor(s) _____ Phone _____
- Course Number/Title _____
- Proposal for this W-course (see instructions below)

SIGNATURES:

Professor(s) Dennis Giever

Department Chairperson Dr. Dennis Giever by BC 10/9/2000

College Dean [Signature] 10/9/2000

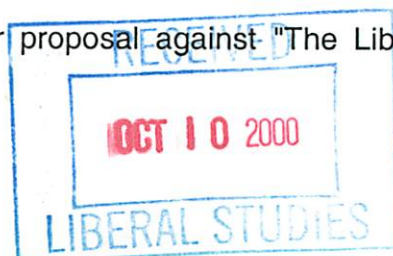
Director of Liberal Studies Theresa [Signature] 10/26/2000

COMPONENTS OF A PROPOSAL FOR A WRITING-INTENSIVE COURSE:

- I. "Writing Summary"--one or two pages explaining how writing is used in the course. First, explain any distinctive characteristics of the content or students which would help the Liberal Studies Committee understand your summary. Second, list and explain the types of writing activities; be especially careful to explain (1) what each writing activity is intended to accomplish as well as the (2) amount of writing, (3) frequency and number of assignments, and (4) whether there are opportunities for revision. If the activity is to be graded, indicate (5) evaluation standards and (6) percentage contribution to the student's final grade.
- II. Copy of the course syllabus.
- III. Two or three samples of assignment sheets, instructions, or criteria concerning writing that are given to students. Limit: 4 pages. (Single copies of longer items, if essential to the proposal, may be submitted to be passed among LSC members and returned to you.)

Please number all pages. Provide one copy to Liberal Studies Committee.

Before you submit: Have you double-checked your proposal against "The Liberal Studies Committee's Most Frequently Asked Questions"?



CHECK LIST FOR WRITING-INTENSIVE PROPOSALS

The Liberal Studies Committee's Most Frequently Asked Questions,
Based on the Senate Criteria for Writing-Intensive Courses

For All Writing-Intensive Courses:

- Are the writing assignments integral parts of the course, rather than exercises that seem tacked on artificially? Are they assignments that promise to enhance student learning?
- Have you considered various forms of writing such as case studies, laboratory reports, journals, letters, memos, formal essays, research articles, project or grant proposals, and so forth?
- Does one of your course objectives explicitly mention the improvement of writing?
- Will you distribute written instructions, including criteria for evaluation, for major assignments?
- Will students receive guidance in conceiving, organizing, and presenting written material in ways appropriate to the subject being studied?
- Will students produce at least 5000 words (15-20 typed pages) of writing that you evaluate? Have you clarified this by giving us the minimum number of pages that you expect for each writing assignment?
- Are there at least two, and preferably more, different writing assignments?
- Will students revise at least one assignment after receiving your review comments?
- Does at least one assignment require students to produce finished, edited prose (as differentiated from whatever informal or draft writing you have included)?
- Are written assignments (in-class; out-of-class) worth at least 50% of the course grade?

For Type I (Professor Commitment) Writing-Intensive Courses:

- Have you attended a writing workshop either at IUP or elsewhere? [If not, have you indicated at least equivalent preparation based on such things as graduate education, teaching experience in writing courses, publications, conference attendance, or other professional activities?]

For Type II (Departmental) Writing-Intensive Courses:

- Does your "statement of departmental responsibility" explain how the department will ensure that the writing component is present regardless of who is teaching? Does it identify the specific department group or individual who is responsible for ensuring this?

CRIM 306: Criminological Research Methods (Writing Intensive)
Dr. Dennis Giever
Writing Summary

CRIM 306: Criminological Research Methods is proposed for identification as a “W” course. Multiple sections of this course are offered every fall and spring semester, and at least one section of this course is offered over the summer. This course is listed as an upper-level Criminology core course required of all majors. Most students in this course are junior and senior Criminology majors. Class size is limited to 20 students.

There are four types of writing assignments that will take place in this course:

1. **Writing for Evaluation:** There are three exams for the course, each covering approximately one-third of the course material. These exams will have two types of questions, short answer and essay (see sample test). Each exam will be completed during the regularly scheduled class period, and students will be given an idea of what to expect (e.g., types of questions, material to study, grading procedures, etc.) during a review session in the class immediately preceding the exam. Students will be informed that the grading of these exams include both the content of the answer (clarity and completeness) as well as writing skills (spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc.). Each exam will be worth 50 points and the combined total is worth 37.5% of the final score for the class.
2. **Writing to Enhance Reading:** Students will be expected to write seven critical reviews of research articles in the field of criminology and criminal justice. They will be guided in these exercises. Students will be allowed to pick a topic of interest for the first review, and subsequent articles will be suggested based on their level of ability and their areas of interest. They will be instructed to not start on the next review until the previous one has been returned graded. It is expected that students will build on their strengths and work through their weaknesses in these assignments. They will also gain a good understanding of some of the important research that is being conducted in our discipline. These critical reviews will make up 26.25% of the total score for the class.
3. **Writing to Stimulate Thought:** Class attendance is an important component in a class as detailed as research methods. Class time will be devoted to small group exercises and classroom discussions. To facilitate participation, 5% of the student’s total grade is assessed through class participation. Students are expected to come to class prepared, having read the required material and be willing to share insights into what they have learned. I have also included in the course requirements a pop quiz component. This is done to encourage students to both attend class and always come prepared having read all assigned material. It is expected that the quizzes will be used for hammering out fine points during the course of the semester. The quiz component accounts for 6.25% of the total score for the class.

4. **Writing to Record Information:** Students will be encouraged to take their notes in double-entry format, with one side of the page used for recording of lecture material and the other side for recording personal thoughts, questions, and insights. At least twice during the semester student notebooks will be collected and graded.

5. **Writing to Integrate Theory, Research, and Public Policy:** Students will be required to write a full research proposal. They will be allowed to choose a topic within our discipline. The content of this research proposal is outlined in the enclosed "Guidelines for the Project Proposal." This proposal will allow students to demonstrate their ability to clearly identify a problem within our discipline and present a concise method for conducting research to test assumptions they develop. Students will have to develop an argument for why their topic or research question is an important one, detail what research already exists in this area, and finally demonstrate that they have a grasp of how one might empirically test assumptions from this research topic. The total project accounts for 25% of the student's total grade, but one-half of that total is divided up in four drafts that students will turn in to be graded and build on. As each section is completed, it will be graded and turned back to students. Students will in turn rework those sections and add the next section before the next due date. Students will be graded on both their current work and the progress they are making in the overall assignment.

SYLLABUS
CRIM 306
Criminological Research Methods
XXXX - 2000

Instructor: Dennis Giever
Office: G1-D McElhaney Hall
Phone: 357-6941
E-Mail: dgiever@grove.iup.edu

Office Hours: Monday x:00 – x:00
x:00 – x:00
Tuesday x:00 – x:00
Wednesday x:00 – x:00
x:00 – x:00
Thursday x:00 – x:00
x:00 – x:00

Or by appointment

The instructor's office hours are scheduled for the exclusive use of students. Feel free to utilize this time. At times other than the specified hours you are welcome to visit the instructor's office, but you may find that other commitments preclude extended discussions. The instructor believes that informal discussions between students and instructors are an important part of the university experience and, therefore, encourages it through the maintenance of this "open door" policy.

Course Description:

An introduction to the basic criminological research methods designed to prepare the student to understand and participate in quantitative and qualitative research.

Course Objectives:

This course introduces the student to the basic methodologies for conducting research in criminology and criminal justice. Doing scientific research involves seeking the most trustworthy answers possible to certain kinds of interesting or important questions. As we will see, the trustworthiness of the answers depends on the procedures used in obtaining them. This class is designed to prepare the student to understand and participate in criminological research.

Students will be expected to submit a research proposal in this class. In this writing assignment students will demonstrate that they have a firm grasp of the necessary elements to perform a quality research study in criminology. Students should carefully read the Leedy text for guidance in this task. Students will be assessed throughout the semester on this assignment with an overarching goal of improvement of the overall proposal. Multiple graded drafts of this assignment will be turned in during the course of the semester.

Students will also be expected to write a number of critical reviews throughout the semester. Students will have the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to critically assess research conducted in the fields of criminology and criminal justice.

Prerequisites:

CR 102

Required Text:

- Maxfield, Michael G. & Babbie, Earl (2001). *Research Methods for Criminal Justice and Criminology*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thompson Learning.
- Fink, Arlene (1998). *Conducting Research Literature Reviews*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Leedy, Paul (1992). *Practical Research: Planning and Design*. New York, NY: MacMillan.
- Supplemental reading will be handed out in class or placed on reserve in the library.

Course Requirements and Grading:**Attendance:**

In accordance with university policy (p. 26 of the 1999-2000 Undergraduate Catalog), students are expected to attend classes regularly. It is difficult for students to comprehend a subject as complex as research methods unless you attend class. While there is no specific attendance policy for this course, I will take attendance each day.

It is my hope that each of you will keep up with the class readings and be prepared to discuss the material in class. Quizzes and exams will draw heavily from both the readings and lectures, so it is in your best interest to come to class having read all material. While I have opted against penalizing students for missing class, I strongly encourage attendance.

Exams:

There will be three (3) exams throughout the semester, each worth 50 points. Each exam will contain questions (short answer, and essay) from both your book and from class lectures and discussions. Exam dates are provided on the syllabus.

Students who miss an exam with a legitimate excuse and/or prior arrangements with the instructor will be able to take a makeup exam. Legitimate excuses include: absences due to personal illness (documentation required), a death in the family, and participation in university activities, such as athletics and artistic performances. Excuses should be given to me the day you return to class. For institutional activities, prior notice is required. Legitimate excuses are grounds for making up exams. In other cases, missing an exam without a legitimate excuse will result in a grade of zero.

Critical Reviews:

Each student will turn in seven (7) critical reviews during the semester. Each of these assignments will be worth 15 points. The format for these critical reviews will be handed out in class two weeks prior to the first due date. After the first critical review is turned in, subsequent reviews will be assigned when the graded review is returned (topic areas will be assigned at that time as well). It is expected that students will show progress in writing and critical thinking in each of these assignments.

Quizzes:

There will be at least two (2) pop quizzes during the semester. The total possible for all pop quizzes will be 25 points. These pop quizzes are intended to quickly assess your understanding of important topics discussed in class or covered in the text. These quizzes will be unannounced and will consist of short essay questions.

Research Study:

Each student will prepare a proposal for a research study that theoretically could be undertaken (for this class, please do not collect any data). This assignment is worth 100 points. Students will receive half of the credit for this assignment in rough drafts and the final full proposal will be worth 50 points. The purpose of this assignment is to have the students develop a possible study

that could be undertaken. This assignment will be discussed at length in class and a handout will be provided during the first week of class. This assignment will be due on Dec. ?.

Class Participation:

Students can receive up to 10 points for class participation. Participation can take many forms from class attendance, asking and answering questions, paying attention, arguing points, and generally contributing to classroom discussions. It is my hope that each student will come to class prepared and willing to participate.

Summary and Final Grades:

The four components contribute to the student's final grades in the following manner:

- Exams – maximum of 150 points
- Critical Reviews – maximum of 105 points
- Quizzes – maximum of 25 points
- Research study – maximum of 100 points
- Class participation – maximum of 20 points
- TOTAL – maximum of 400 points

Letter Grade Values:

- A = 360 – 400 points
- B = 320 – 359 points
- C = 280 – 319 points
- D = 240 – 279 points
- F = below 239*

Reading Assignments and Exam Schedule

<u>Date</u> MWF	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Assignment</u> Maxfield and Babbie
Day 1	Course Introduction	
Day 2 - 3	Crime, Criminal Justice and Scientific Inquiry Critical Review Outline	Chapter 1
Day 4 - 5	Theory and Criminal Justice Research	Chapter 2
Day 6 - 7	Causation and Validity Day 7 – First Critical Review is Due	Chapter 3
Day 8 - 10	General Issues in Research Design Draft of Introduction and Problem Statement is Due (Worth 10 Points)	Chapter 4
Day 11 - 13	Concepts, Operationalization, and Measurement	Chapter 5
Day 14	Review and Catch-up	
Day 15	Exam 1	
Day 16 - 17	Measuring Crime	Chapter 6

Second Draft of Introduction and First Draft of Theoretical Framework are Due
(Worth 10 Points)

Day 18 - 20	Introduction to SPSS Class will meet in ??? – Computer Lab	Handouts
Day 21 - 23	Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs	Chapter 7
Day 24 - 26	Ethics and Criminal Justice Research Draft of First Four Sections of Research Study are Due (Worth 15 Points)	Chapter 8
Day 27 - 29	Overview of Data Collection and Sampling	Chapter 9
Day 30	Review and Catch-up	
????	Individual course withdrawal deadline (W grade)	
Day 31	Exam 2	
Day 32 - 34	Survey Research and Other Ways of Asking Questions Draft of Research Study is Due (Worth 15 Points)	Chapter 10
Day 35 - 36	Field Research	Chapter 11
Day 37	Agency Records, Content Analysis and Secondary Data	Chapter 12
Day 38	Agency Records, Content Analysis and Secondary Data (Continued)	Chapter 12
Day 39 - 40	Evaluation Research and Policy Analysis Your Final Research Study is Due on ?? (Worth 50 Points)	Chapter 13
Day 41 - 43	Interpreting Data	Chapter 14
Day 44	Review and Catch-up	
Final Exam:		

Indiana University of Pennsylvania
Liberal Studies Program

Certifies that

Dennis M. Giever

has participated in the *IUP Writing Workshop*
with facilitator Dr. Robert Yagelski

May 15 and 16, 2000



A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Mary E. Sadler", is written over a horizontal line.

Mary E. Sadler
Director
Liberal Studies

Guidelines for the Project Proposal
CRIM 306 Writing Intensive
Dr. Dennis Giever

1. A research proposal is a plan that clearly states how you will carry out a specific research project in the future. A good example of a research proposal is the process you might go through in planning a summer vacation. First, you need to determine where it is you want to go, then you figure out the best approach to getting there. You must also plan for who will be going with you, where you intend to stay, what to do once you are there, when to come back (if ever), what to expect as a result of the trip, and what to be careful of. Although a research proposal covers something much different than a trip, the idea or orientation is the same. Both are schemes that are designed to describe something that will be done in the future. It is a plan or a recipe. As such, it must be clearly written and organized in a coherent fashion.
2. Generally speaking, in your research proposal, you need to clearly identify a problem or question you are planning to study, justify why you want to conduct this study, and designate the procedure you intend to undertake in conducting the study. Remember, what you are doing is writing a **Proposal**, not a research paper as you might have done in other classes. The difference between the two is while the first focuses on a plan which is something you will do in the future, the second one discusses something that you have accomplished or realized in the past. Due to the constraint of time, you are not to implement your proposal in this class. In other words, **do not collect any data for this class.**
3. Please get in touch with me any time you are having problems or questions. It is in your best interest to start this project early in the semester.
4. The following guidelines are provided to give you a general idea for writing your proposal. While minor adjustments can be made based upon the specific needs of your project, your proposal should be organized into the sections indicated below.

I. Introduction and Problem Statement

The introduction and problem section is a broad overview of the problem to be studied. It should include several aspects.

- A. **Statement of problem.** The first sentence should state the problem of the study, i.e., "The purpose of this study is to . . ." The statement of the problem should be a concise sentence which identifies the goals of the study and sets the direction for the study. All of the variables to be studied should be carefully and clearly defined so that there can be no misunderstanding concerning the exact subject matter or the questions the research hopes to address. The statement of the problem serves as the basis from which the purposed study is drawn.

- B. It should acquaint the reader with the nature of the subject matter. It should point out the scope and dimensions of the topic to be discussed. It should also serve to attract and stimulate the reader's interest in the proposal.
- C. It should describe the significance of the problem with reference to the following criteria: a) permits generalization to more general social, psychological, social interaction, and/or b) relates to a practical problem, e.g., a problem in criminal justice practice.

The introduction and problem statement section should be between three and five pages in length and should conclude with a smooth transition to the theoretical framework.

II. Theoretical Framework

This section should include the following aspects:

- A. It should describe the relationship of the problem to a theoretical framework. Theories on which your study is based should be formally defined. The content of the theories should be related to the research topic. These theories should explain the problem directly or indirectly.
- B. It should indicate what research has been done on the problem, that is, locate research studies that have addressed this issue or similar issues in the past. You should always point out how these theories and previous studies are related to your study.

The theoretical framework should be between three and five pages.

III. Hypotheses and the Variables

This section should include the following aspects:

- A. It should clearly state all hypotheses you are testing in your proposed study.
- B. The operational definitions of your independent and dependent variables should be provided. That is, the instruments used to measure your independent and dependent variables must be clearly discussed. You will include a copy of your instruments in the appendix. In this section you should provide the rationale for all questions asked.
- C. If additional questions are asked (control variables), you should provide the rationale for these questions.

- D. You should discuss the methods you will employ to test the validity and reliability of your measures.

This section should be between three and five pages.

IV. Research Design

This section should include the following aspects:

- A. You should clearly outline the steps that will be undertaken to conduct the research study. This section should include a description of your population, how a sample will be drawn from that population, how large a sample will be drawn, and how you will measure your variables from that sample. You should indicate the advantages and potential problems of your research design.
- B. In this section you should clearly outline how you plan to conduct your analysis once data is collected. What steps are you going to follow once you have collected your data to test the hypothesis you outlined above? What type of statistical analyses will be employed to test the hypothesis? Justify your choice.
- C. This section should read like a road map clearly describing for the reader exactly what steps will be undertaken in this study. A good way to look at this section is to ask yourself this question “could the reader recreate my study if they read this section?” If your answer is yes, then you have done a good job with this section. Another way to look at this section is as a recipe. By following these steps the reader would end up with the same project.

This section will be between five and seven pages.

V. Limitations

In this section briefly acknowledge limitations to your study. No study is perfect, your job here is to acknowledge the shortcomings of your research design.

This section is often no more than one page.

VI. Bibliography

Please follow APA publication style for this assignment.

Appendix: Questionnaire

Develop a complete questionnaire, including your cover letter. Please append this

document to your proposal.

CRIM 306: Criminological Research Methods
Sample Questions for Essay Exams

1. List and discuss the criteria of causality. Next, develop your own example where one variable causes something to happen in a second variable. Finally, how would you attempt to convince others that you are correct in stating that the variable does, in fact, cause the second variable to do something?
2. As a director of a community-based juvenile outreach program, you realize that the structured activities of your facility need to be driven by a theory of delinquency. Outline a conventional theory of delinquency by discussing its major concepts. Next, supply operational definitions for each concept identified. Supply activities that you believe should help the juveniles of your facility, which are based on the operationalized concepts described. Finally, state why you believe that the manner in which you have operationalized your concepts will produce reliable measures needed to justify your program.
3. Research suggests that child neglect is associated with a number of negative consequences, including substance abuse. Individuals who were neglected as children appear to be at increased risk for substance abuse problems later in life. Describe how you would approach the study of this relationship if you were restricted to conducting a cross-sectional study. Discuss the limitations of your design and the consequences of these limitations to your final conclusions.
4. Briefly describe how you would approach a similar research question using a longitudinal design. Discuss how this design would control for limitations in the above design and point out limitations still present. Make sure you specify the type of longitudinal study you would conduct (i.e., trend, cohort, or panel).

Writing a Critical Review

CRIM 306 Writing Intensive

Critical reviews of existing research are very important in order to help researchers determine the usefulness and applicability of studies.

A critical review examines the relative merit of a study. A critical review of a study reveals its strengths and weaknesses. There is no perfect study, so critical reviews are important. A sample format follows:

1. Abstract
2. Adequacy of the review of the literature
3. Threats to the study's internal and external validity
4. Clarity of operationalization
5. Presence and adequacy of control
6. Level of support for conclusions
7. Alternative explanations
8. Suggestions for follow-up studies

Let's look at what each section means:

1. **Abstract**
The first step in a critical review is to abstract the article. An abstract is like a summary of an empirical research article, with a few modifications. It is like a summary because it is a shorter version of the article. It is different, however, because abstracts include certain information necessary for us, as researchers, such as the methods the researcher used in the study. Abstracts are usually quite short, ranging from half a page to one page in length. For this assignment, you cannot use the abstract published with the article. A general abstract format follows:
 - A. **THE BASIC QUESTION OF THE RESEARCH:**
What is the basic question of the research? What were the authors trying to find out? What is the study about? This information is usually found in the section labeled "Introduction" or Literature Review."
 - B. **DATA SOURCE/SAMPLE:**
Where did the authors get their data? Who or what was studied? If you do a study on students' attitudes toward IUP, your data source would be students enrolled at IUP. If you analyze arrest reports from the Pittsburgh Police Department, your data source would be those actual records. This information is usually found in the section labeled "Methods."

C. METHODS:

What methods did the author use? How did the authors collect their data? There are many different ways to collect data. This section is where you tell how the researcher(s) in your article did their study. Did the study involve:

- a survey to determine if students like their classes?
- interviews to gauge peoples' voting behavior?
- a secondary analysis of arrest reports?
- observations of children playing in a park?
- an experiment on sentencing?
- or another method?

This information is usually found in the section labeled "Methods."

D. FINDINGS:

What were the authors' findings? What did the authors find out after they analyzed their data? Did they find that students liked their classes, people said they are going to vote for a write-in candidate in the next senatorial election, robberies are more likely to be cleared than burglaries, children appear to have informal ball-sharing norms when playing in parks, or minorities receive harsher sentences than whites? This information is usually found in the section labeled "Findings," but is sometimes found in the section labeled "Conclusions."

E. CONCLUSIONS:

What did the authors conclude? What did they infer from their findings? What did the researchers say was important about their findings? Why was their study important? Did the researchers conclude that because blacks, on average, had longer prison sentences than whites, that blacks were treated more harshly? That because children have informal norms while playing ball, they may have informal norms in other areas of their lives? This information is usually found in the section labeled "Conclusions" or "Discussion."

Doing an abstract is not difficult:

- a. Select an appropriate article - this will usually have something to do with your research topic for the class.
- b. Read the article thoroughly. It helps to know what elements are important for the abstract, so you can underline or highlight important parts of the article as you read.
- c. Cite the article. For CRIM 306, you will write out a full cite at the top of your abstract, using standard citation format (APA Style).

- d. Answer the questions posed above. You don't have to belabor the point and discuss every little thing about the article. Answer each question in three to five sentences. Don't use the article wording unless it is absolutely necessary, and then you must use quotation marks. If you reword the material, you don't have to cite the article because this is an abstract; it is accepted that everything you say comes from the article you are abstracting.

2. Adequacy of the Review of the Literature:

Is the review of the literature adequate (i.e., can the author make specific predictions about expected findings based on the literature review)? A good literature review should cover both sides of any argument. If authors only discuss research that supports their views, their literature review may be lacking. The literature review should also discuss earlier studies and build a framework for the current study. Readers should not have to wonder why a researcher included a certain variable or formed a particular hypothesis.

3. Threats to the Study's Internal and External Validity:

What are the threats to the study's internal validity? What are some factors that could account for the findings other than those that the researchers cited? For example, did the researchers find that African Americans received harsher sentences than whites because they included only whites who had attorneys (i.e., because of selection bias)? What about the threats to external validity? Would this study's findings apply to other research settings and samples (i.e., would the findings apply to the "real world" out there)?

4. Clarity of Operationalization:

Is the operationalization clear? Why or why not? Did the authors explain any unclear concepts they used in their study? For example, did the authors just assume that all readers would know what they meant by "substantial disparity between sentences?" Even concepts like "racial minority" can be difficult to fully understand if they are not explained. For example, did the authors mean that African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians were minorities? Just African Americans? All non-whites?

5. Presence and Adequacy of Controls:

What controls are used and are they adequate? Why or why not? What control factors should the researchers have included in their study? Did they include those

necessary controls? For example, were the African Americans in the sample sentenced more harshly because they committed more serious offenses than the whites in the sample? Should the researchers have considered gender or whether the person was from a rural or urban setting or any other control variables?

6. **Level of Support for Conclusions:**

Are the conclusions supported by the reported findings? Why or why not? When you read the conclusions, did you feel they were based on the findings or did you feel there “was a lot of reaching” by the authors? For example, did the authors conclude that bias in sentencing was due to actions by white judges even though they didn’t include judicial ethnicity in their study? It’s okay for authors to make educated guesses about the source of their findings (like saying that the sentencing bias they found may be due to judicial ethnicity), but conclusions should be based on hard facts.

7. **Alternative Explanations:**

Briefly discuss at least one rival hypothesis (i.e., alternative explanation) for the results. Provide another reason the researchers may have found what they found. For example, did the researchers find bias in sentencing because they did not include all minorities in their analysis, because they did not consider employment status, or because their sample was atypical?

8. **Suggestions for a Follow-Up Study:**

Suggest a follow-up study that will improve the current study (e.g., increase the generalizability of the study, control for an alternative explanation, shift the focus of attention to a related question, or improve the study in general). You should discuss your research question, sample, and methods. How will your study improve the current study? Use your imagination. If you had to redo the study, what modifications would you make? You can address something you didn’t like in the study, include new variables, use a different sample, collect different data, or perform different analyses.