

## **RESEARCH METHODS IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE**

*Professor: Elizabeth Cass, Ph.D.*

Welcome. I'm Dr. Liz Cass, and I'll be your instructor for Research Methods in Criminal Justice. I spent 20 years as a researcher, starting off at the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice. My first task there was to evaluate the residential boot camps. The major question we were trying to answer when we evaluated boot camps was were they more, less, or equally effective in reducing recidivism among juvenile delinquents.

What we were looking for was whether boot camp graduates were rearrested at lowered rates, or equal rates, or even possibly higher rates than youth from a comparison group. As a researcher, you go into the project having an open mind about what you might find. This is critically important to being a researcher.

This is only one example of the types of research we do in the field of criminal justice to help us answer questions about what the most effective way of doing things are.

Throughout this course you'll be learning about the research process, and you'll come to understand how this type of research is conducted. In terms of the structure of the course, I think it's pretty straightforward. Each week you're going to read a chapter from your textbook, you're going to listen to a lecture, you're going to read an article that has been published on the topic of college students, drugs, and alcohol, and you're going to complete an assignment that's going to help you apply what you've been learning about.

I recently took an online course myself. I am even more convinced that the importance of answering e-mails quickly. My policy is to try to answer emails from you as soon as I see them. Obviously, this is not always possible, but I do my best to do that. I know how frustrating it is to have a question that you need answered in order to go on with your assignment. So I'll try my best.

I love teaching research methods. I'm convinced it makes my students smarter. I think it will teach you how to think more carefully, concisely, and critically. These are skills you need in all aspects of criminal justice.