

CRJS 395: LGBTQ People, Crime, and Justice Spring 2016, Final Project Prompts



Josh Edelson/AFP/File

Your final project for this course will be a written product, but could take one of three forms depending on your interests and career objectives.

Your role and purpose: You will write your project as if you are an emerging expert on your topic (after all, you will be by the time you're done!), and must write convincingly and with authority in order to educate your audience on a pressing topic related to LGBTQ youth and/or adults that is broadly related to crime, victimization, or justice. This will also expand your own knowledge not only about your substantive topic, but on how to communicate about justice-related issues regarding LGBTQ populations more generally. This is of critical importance in today's diverse world.

Audience: Your intended audience is an adult member of the general public who has little specialized knowledge of LGBTQ issues. This means that you will have to explain terminology (e.g., "transgender") or complex concepts in order to help your audience connect with your material. Thus, your writing should be broadly accessible to fairly diverse adult audiences. You should not think of this assignment as writing to me, because often, you will have to explain difficult material to individuals who are not as well-versed in the topic as your instructor.

Genre: There are three different project options: a traditional research paper; a paper about a policy change; or a "zine" (small DIY magazine) and a short research paper. You will be able to choose which option you complete, as well as your topic.

Format: The written component of this assignment is a formal document that must follow established writing conventions, including standard spelling and grammar, as well as utilizing in-text citations for outside sources. You may use "I statements" (such as "I argue," "I will show," or "I experienced"), but not opinion-based statements (such as "I think/believe/feel"). The zine allows more flexibility with regard to your presentation of material.

Due Dates for All Project Options

- February 3: After you have reviewed the following three course options, you will come up with a topic you are interested in studying. You will email me (Dr. Panfil, at ypanfil@odu.edu) your preferred project option and topic. We need to discuss the feasibility and scope of your project before you can begin work on it, and I will help point you in the right direction.

- February 5: I will reply by this date to approve your project and give you suggestions for moving forward, or to help you refine your project. Be sure to reply in a timely manner so there are no delays.

- If I have not heard from you by February 5, I will assign a project and topic to you, so it is in your best interest to communicate with me early and often regarding your preferences. Alternately: You may prefer for me to assign a topic to you, which you can opt into simply by not submitting one.

- February 17: You will submit via Blackboard a list of potential academic sources (at least 10) that you have found that relate to your topic.

- On/by February 19: I will provide you with feedback on your list of sources, and will suggest any major ones you have missed.

- March 2: You will submit via Blackboard an outline of your project. It is in your best interest to be as detailed as possible so that I can give you feedback that is as constructive as possible! This outline should also include a proposed title, as well as your thesis statement or thesis question.

****Please note: If you do not submit an outline, you will lose 5% of your final course grade (1/5 of 25%, which is the value of your final course project).

- On/by March 16: I will provide you with feedback on your outline.

- April 13: All students will give a short (5 minute) presentation on their final projects to the class. This will count as your class participation for the day, and cannot be used as your freebie day (where you are excused from class attendance/participation). Thus, if you are not in class and do not give a presentation, you will lose 2.5% of your 30% participation grade.

- April 13: All students will also turn in their first full draft of their final project, if one has not already been submitted by that time.

****Please note: If you do not submit a first draft, you will lose 5% of your final course grade (1/5 of 25%, which is the value of your final course project).

- I will return feedback on the first drafts in class on April 20.

- April 27: All students must submit a hard copy of their final project. I will be in our classroom during the final exam period (7-10pm on Wednesday, April 27) for you to drop off your project. I must receive it by 10pm that day, but you are free to submit it earlier if you would like.

***You must also submit the hard copy of your first draft with my comments and suggestions for revision.

Option 1: Traditional Research Paper with Future Directions

This option entails the completion of a research paper on a topic related to LGBTQ individuals' experiences with crime, victimization, the criminal or juvenile justice systems, as justice system professionals, and so on. You may also choose to focus on one particular group of LGBTQ people, such as lesbians or gay men.

You will first write a persuasive literature review regarding the state of our knowledge on the subject. Next, you will take this one step further by identifying major gaps or contradictions in the literature and making concrete suggestions about how addressing those research gaps could improve the circumstances of LGBTQ people.

This assignment is asking you to answer the following major questions:

1. What do we know about this subject?
2. How does the existing literature help us make sense of LGBTQ people's experiences?
3. What don't we know about this topic/what could we know more about?
4. What purposes would this information serve?

Examples of specific topics could be:

- Intimate partner violence in gay and lesbian relationships
- Bias crime prevalence, characteristics, and outcomes
- Experiences of LGBT law enforcement officers
- A particular form of offending (e.g., sex work, drug use/sales)
- Anything relevant that interests you – feel free to suggest your own topic!

Additional notes about this project option:

- You should plan for your written product to be about 10-12 pages in length, utilizing 10-15 academic sources. Such sources could include scholarly articles, reports from research or advocacy agencies, detailed news coverage of current events, and so forth.
- Your review of the relevant literature (questions 1 and 2) will likely be about 2/3 of your paper, with the future directions for research and practice (questions 3 and 4) likely about 1/3 of your paper, but this isn't a hard-and-fast rule. Consult with me if you are concerned your ratio will be drastically different.

Formatting and citing:

- Papers should be double-spaced in a font that does not exceed 12 point. Papers should also be carefully proofread for spelling and grammar errors.
- Be sure to use in-text citations for quotes and material that did not originate in your brain. Anything else is plagiarism. You may use any citation style as long as you are consistent, but APA is preferred. For a helpful resource regarding APA citing, please consult this website: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/02/>. In APA, the in-text citation format you can use is (Author, year, p. ##). You will also need to include a Works Cited page.

Option 2: Policy Change and Evaluation

This option entails the completion of a paper on a policy change that was intended to impact the lives of LGBTQ people, particularly with respect to their criminalization or victimization.

Your paper will take basically a case study format to explore how and why legislative/policy changes happen, and to what effects. In so doing, you'll explore how such changes are often the result of democracy, social activism, evolving public opinion, organizational or political imperatives, judicial intervention, international pressure, and other factors.

This assignment is asking you to answer the following major questions:

1. What was it like before the change happened – what were LGBTQ people experiencing?
2. *Why* and *how* did the change come about? (Who made it happen and how?)
3. What is it like now that the change has happened – what are LGBTQ people experiencing now? It is substantially different from before?
4. Does the change seem to have been effective (have its intended outcomes happened)?

Examples of specific topics could be:

- Removal of “Homosexuality” from the DSM
- Supreme Court invalidation of remaining domestic sodomy laws
- Passage and repeal of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell”
- Hate crime legislation (e.g., Matthew Shepard & James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act)
- Enactment of the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA)
- Anything relevant that interests you – feel free to suggest your own topic!

Additional notes about this project option:

- You should plan for your written product to be about 10-12 pages in length, utilizing 10-15 academic sources. Such sources could include scholarly articles, reports from research or advocacy agencies, detailed news coverage from the time period, and so forth.
- Depending on the change you select and when it happened, the length of your paper will probably not be evenly distributed across the 4 questions. Consult with me if you are concerned that you’re spending too much time on one question.

Formatting and citing:

- Papers should be double-spaced in a font that does not exceed 12 point. Papers should also be carefully proofread for spelling and grammar errors.
- Be sure to use in-text citations for quotes and material that did not originate in your brain. Anything else is plagiarism. You may use any citation style as long as you are consistent, but APA is preferred. For a helpful resource regarding APA citing, please consult this website: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/02/>. In APA, the in-text citation format you can use is (Author, year, p. ##). You will also need to include a Works Cited page.

Option 3: Critical, Creative, and Queer

This option entails creating both a zine and a written product that further discusses the content and themes of your zine. You'll pick a topic that is related to LGBTQ people's criminalization, victimization, or discrimination, and create a zine that presents and ultimately critiques this issue through evocative images.

Additional notes about the zine:

- The format of the zine itself is open. Zines are basically short, do-it-yourself magazines. As such, you can utilize your own drawings, artwork, photography, digital creations, or borrowed images. There is no specific length, shape, or style that is required, but rather, it just needs to engage critically (and creatively!) with an important theme.
- The creative component is worth 40% of your grade, which I will evaluate NOT on your artistic ability but instead on the basis of the clarity/effectiveness of its message; the innovativeness of its content or design; and especially its engagement with LGBTQ-related scholarship or social/legal movements.

Additional notes about the paper:

- You should plan for your written product to be 5-6 pages in length, utilizing at least 10 academic sources. Such sources could include scholarly articles, reports from research or advocacy agencies, news coverage of current events, and so forth.
- The written component is worth 60% of your grade, which I will evaluate on your ability to explain in a scholarly way the main issues and themes you have decided to address in your zine, the research that exists on the subject, and its meaning for LGBTQ people's lives.

Examples of zine topics could be:

- Problematic media coverage of LGBTQ people
- Queer youth homelessness
- Harassment/victimization experiences of LGBTQ youth in schools
- Queer prison abolition movements
- Anything relevant that interests you – feel free to suggest your own topic!

Formatting and citing:

- Papers should be double-spaced in a font that does not exceed 12 point. Papers should also be carefully proofread for spelling and grammar errors.
- Be sure to use in-text citations for quotes and material that did not originate in your brain. Anything else is plagiarism. You may use any citation style as long as you are consistent, but APA is preferred. For a helpful resource regarding APA citing, please consult this website: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/02/>. In APA, the in-text citation format you can use is (Author, year, p. ##). You will also need to include a Works Cited page.
- If you are using borrowed material within the zine (e.g. images pulled from magazines or the Internet), you should cite these at the end of your paper. You are not required to place citations directly within the zine, but you must cite them SOMEWHERE. The same goes for facts or statistics in the zine: you can leave off their citations as long as you also cite them in your paper.

Helpful info about how to make a zine: <http://www.undergroundpress.org/pdf/Zines101.pdf>