**The Research Proposal Picking a Topic**

***Question:*** Your task for this semester is to choose an of the criminal justice system to understand how it has been impacted by the California Realignment process which, for our class, includes AB 109, Prop 47, and other policies or legislation implemented as part of this process. The first step is to state a question on something about the process – think “how” questions – how has this process impacted on a certain population, how has this process impacted on a certain piece of the cjs system such as probation, how has this process impacted on the quality of programs, etc.

**Finding and Reviewing the Literature**

Recent research will be from peer-reviewed academic journals available through the CSUSM Library Database. Please contact our librarian for more information on this process. Most of your articles should be from the social sciences including sociology, criminology, social justice-oriented journals, and critical theory-based journals***.***

The CSUSM library has general information and assistance for online research and 24/7 online chat and the tab “Research Help “can be found at http://biblio.csusm.edu/

Once you identify five articles, you can transform your initial idea into a research question or formal hypothesis/research question. To do this, you need to review the literature to find out what is known and not known about the topic. Even if you begin with a well-formed hypothesis/ research question, you must review the literature to determine if the hypothesis or question has been investigated and to establish its practical and theoretical importance.

* Find peer-reviewed articles predominantly from the social sciences that are recent research on your topic
* The immediate purpose of the literature review is to find out what is known about a topic, so that you can make a cogent argument that builds on previous research and theory.

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* In addition to helping you identify and build a cogent argument, reviewing published research will enable you

to learn how the topic has been investigated by other researchers, including measures that have been developed providing insight into the different ways and the format of those findings to help understand how to write the literature review.

* Described another way, the literature review *sets up the context for your study*. A properly executed review of the literature in an area lays the foundation for a successful piece of research. In other words, you are using the research that has come before to frame your current argument. So, keep the following in mind:
  + A literature review is a piece of **discursive prose**, not a list describing or summarizing one piece of literature after another. Rather than thinking of it as a book report or summary of the literature, you are **synthesizing** the literature.
  + By reading the literature on a topic you can understand it, and then present that information to a reader in an organized manner that helps build a theoretical, methodological, and compelling framework for your research question.
  + Literature reviews are not organized by specific pieces of literature (i.e. a different paragraph for a different article), but rather they**are organized by themes**. These themes can be theoretical, methodological, etc. This is a key to synthesizing the literature; you understand the literature and then present it to readers in a thematic way that makes them understand the key issues that relate to your research project/question rather than giving them a broad overview of a topic.
* The literature review is the most time-consuming parts of this paper. Plan on it accordingly as it takes time to find the information, request the information, read and digest the information, and synthesizing it into discursive prose as the final step.

**Paper Expectations**

1. double spaced, typed, 10 to 12 point font, 1 inch margins
2. 10-pages (use Header or Footer with your name and page number; Cover Page and Bibliography do not count in the

total page numbers)

1. All research used will be cited according to APA (see Purdue O.W.L.)
2. The paper should make a well-organized argument of the problem and your proposed solution
3. The paper should follow the best practices for organizing a literature review
4. Grammar and spelling are correct – at least do a spell check and address the findings
5. Thoughtful introduction/statement of the problem, pertaining to your topic
6. Thoughtful review of the literature, pertaining to your topic *using themes!*
7. Thoughtful discussion of the theory and application to the topic at hand
8. A reasoned and analytical suggestion for future public policy, based on your lit review findings & the application of

theory

**Three-part Process –** Mandatory submission of all three-parts on time!

**Part A. Introductory Paragraph w/ Short Annotated Bibliography 10 points**

The annotated bibliography portion of this assignment is to begin the work needed to create your paper. This includes developing a hypothesis with your introduction and an initial investigation of pertinent current research on the topic. An annotated bibliography for this part will include your Intro paragraph, Research question & hypothesis; and five peer- reviewed articles with annotations – or short paragraphs that identify a specific information point in the article that addresses your research question and how that point will work w/ other articles in terms of themes/topics to build your Literature Review. All the sources for this requirement must be from PEER REVIEWED journal articles.

This file provides information on annotations. Include in your annotations information on how an article fits in with other articles and your topic in general, look for concepts and specific points made in the articles that will help construct your paper. Annotation Sample and instructions:

http://library.csusm.edu/subject\_guides/research\_guides/annotations.pdf

**Part B. Outline: 50 points** This outline is formatted based on the Section Titles (see matrix), will include ten sources (five should be from Part A). The annotation process of Part A will help you build your argument for your paper. Under the Lit Review portion, you should have three themes stated with two or three citations or paraphrased points your sources.

**Part C. Final Paper 40 points** your paper should be 10 double spaced pages (or 1 1/2 spaced)

1. ***Title page*** *(Not part of page requirement)*
2. **Introduction, Statement of the Problem/Research Question, and Justification for the Research** *(one long or*

*two paragraphs)* Here you would describe the issue, problem, or thesis statement (what you are going to argue). Then, you would convey to the reader why this problem is worth investigating (what impact this problem has on society or a subset of society). At the end of this section, the reader should have a clear understanding of what you are arguing in your paper.

1. **Review of the Literature** *(No more than 5 full pages; Ten (10) PEER REVIEWED articles excluding class material):* This is a critical part of your paper that reviews relevant literature on your topic in a way that frames your current argument. After your literature review, you need to tie the literature to your current argument. In other words, you are setting the stage to show the reader how you came to the thesis of the paper. What do we already know about the world that leads us to make the argument we are making? At the end of the literature review you should again state your thesis statement or argument.
2. **Theoretical Analysis** (No more than 2 full pages; make sure you cite your work): In this section you should present one of the critical theory from our class to analyze the problem at hand. In this section, you should start with a general discussion of the theory (introduce the theory) then apply the theory to the problem. Note that this paper addresses structural changes therefore macro-level theory is required; traditional labeling theory is a micro level theory that tries to explain secondary criminal behavior should be avoided for this paper.
3. **Suggested Future Research, Public Policy, or Programming changes to increase social justice** (no more than 3 full pages): In this section you should make specific suggestions for social change. These policy changes should come specifically from the problem you are discussing and should be mindful of the theoretical framework you are using to analyze/explain the problem. In this section, be as specific as possible and discuss what the implications of these changes might be. You may use a few scholarly articles in this section as well.