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## CRIM 862 TERM RESEARCH PROJECT PRELIMINARY GUIDELINES/SPECIFICATIONS

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My biggest wish is that you have a truly enjoyable time doing your research for this course. The important thing is to find a **research site** that interests you, that you have easy access to, and that you can visit repeatedly. Examples are your book club; your weekly pick-up hockey group; a political organization or event; casino; work site; meetings of a club or group of hobbyists; dog parks; garage band practices; hockey rink; the SPCA; a particular individual; a season's worth of shows from *The Ultimate Fighter*; your attempts to quit smoking. The site(s) you investigate and the people you talk to can be in the real or virtual world. The more you are sincerely curious about your research, the more enjoyable it will be for you, and the better your eventual report will be. Options for projects will be discussed in class. Some basic ground rules, however, include the following:

1. Your project must be primarily "**qualitative**" and must involve the creation of **new data**. The topic does not need to be explicitly "criminological."
2. Your research project must undergo ethics review before you can begin *formally* collecting data. This does not preclude you contacting prospective participants to look into feasibility, determine preferences on various ethics issues, and so on.
3. I have been delegated ethics review for "**minimal risk**" projects as defined by the [SFU ethics policy](#). Any research project that is "greater than minimal risk" would need to be submitted to the university Research Ethics Board (REB). "Minimal risk" does not preclude you asking about criminal activity.
4. Avoid situations/institutions/agencies where you have to apply for permission to do your research; otherwise the semester will be over and you will still be awaiting approval. Pick research sites/samples that are public and/or involve people you already know (e.g., work colleagues; fellow students; the collection of James Bond films you've saved).
5. Do not undertake research in an Indigenous community to which you are a stranger.
6. Do not undertake research that involves information that is subject to mandatory reporting laws (e.g., regarding children in need of protection, venereal disease).
7. Do not undertake research that involves deception as to your "true" motives in undertaking the research or the "real" focus of study. However, this does not preclude you doing research in settings where people do not know that they are being researched.
8. Unless there is an ethical reason for doing so, *do not* use signed consent forms. In some cases it might be appropriate to prepare a brief (i.e., less than one page) "information sheet" you can show to, read to, or distribute to prospective participants that explains the purpose of your research, what their participation will involve, what you will do with their data, and any other considerations you think might influence their willingness to participate.
9. Beyond the above, you will live up to the ethical principles outlined in the Tri-Council Policy Statement, the SFU Ethics Policy, and your disciplinary ethics policy.