Draft of “Topic Overview”

*Identify and Prepare a Written “Statement of the Problem.”* This is a detailed description of the topic/issue/problem and why it is important to examine it. It is expected that this section of the paper will be well developed and cite reliable sources, both non-peer-reviewed and peer-reviewed.

Ultimately, this submission will turn into the "Topic Overview" section of your [Synthesis Paper](https://moodle.mhu.edu/mod/assign/view.php?id=380734).

"Topic Overview"

This section of your paper should give a comprehensive summary of previous research on a topic. The literature review surveys scholarly articles, books, and other sources that are relevant to a particular area of research. The review should enumerate, describe, summarize, objectively evaluate, and clarify previous research. A portion of these sources should have been previously identified and summarized in earlier assessments (e.g. [Topic Approval](https://moodle.mhu.edu/mod/assign/view.php?id=380727), Checkpoints).

Topic Overviews should:

* Clearly state the major research topic that will be discussed and identify the broad problem area without being too global.
* Discuss the general importance of your topic for the field of criminology/criminal justice.
* Include research that is most relevant to the topic and variables being studied. Use the studies in your literature review as “evidence” that research on the topic, or a research question, is important. Research that explains the relationship between variables should be included. Do not attempt to cover everything written on your topic.
* Define any specialized terms.
* Be organized. There are several ways that you can format a literature review:

o *Topical order* – organize by main topics or issues; emphasize the relationship of the issues to the main “problem”

o *Chronological order* – organize the literature by the dates the research was published.

o *Problem-cause-solution order* – organize the discussion so that it moves from the problem to the solution.

o *General-to-specific order* – examine broad-based research first and then focus on specific studies that relate to the topic.

o *Specific-to-general order* – discuss specific research studies so conclusions can be drawn.

o *Known-to-unknown order* – examine the current literature about the problem and then identify at the end what still is not known.

o *Comparison*-*and-contrast order* – show how research studies are similar and different.

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Remember: *This section is essentially a "Literature Review" that is specific to your TOPIC AREA* (not the theory you are using as a framework for your paper).

Grading rubric:

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| Background and context | 1 Point | Provides a clear and broad overview of the topic. Includes a well-defined context that sets the stage for understanding the problem. |
| Review of relevant literature | 5 Points | Briefly introduces relevant literature or trends that show the importance of the topic, using credible sources (peer-reviewed and non-peer-reviewed). |
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| Citations and references | 1 Point | Includes appropriate in-text citations and a complete reference page. Sources are reliable and include both peer-reviewed and non-peer-reviewed. |
| Writing style and clarity | 1 Point | Writing is clear, concise, and logically organized. Ideas flow smoothly, and the reader can easily understand the topic and problem. |
| APA formatting | 1 Point | Correctly follows APA 7th edition formatting guidelines (e.g., font, margins, citations, reference page, and structure). |
| Length and depth | 1 Point | The section is at least 3 pages in length, providing a sufficient foundation for the research topic. |