

Sarah Kirk

skxwz@umsystem.edu

Research interests

Life Course Criminology, Community Oriented Research, Peer Influence

Education

Doctor of Philosophy in Criminology and Criminal Justice

- University of Missouri – St. Louis, MO
- Anticipated graduation: May 2026

Master of Arts in Criminology and Criminal Justice

- University of Maryland, College Park, MD
- Thesis: The effects of failed state status on terrorist targeting: A Lebanese case study

Bachelor of Science in Criminology and Criminal Justice Sciences

- Barton College, Wilson, NC
- *Summa Cum Laude*

Research Experience

Graduate Research Assistant

August 2024 – Present

School of Social Work, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, North Carolina

- Delivers computer assisted, researcher administered, structured surveys to individuals aged 18 to 25 that are currently experiencing housing instability on a variety of topics including gun violence, personal characteristics, and social networks in St. Louis, MO.
- Responsible for cleaning the data from the surveys and operates at the team lead on creating new ways to analyze the data.
- Mentors doctoral students and undergraduate students on data cleaning, quantitative data analysis, and content analysis.
- Utilizes Google Street View to identify neighborhood environmental markers contributing to hostile infrastructure for the unhoused individuals that participated in the surveys.
- Develops co-authored peer-review publications, technical reports, and infographics to present comprehensive findings to community partners and other stakeholders.

Graduate Research Assistant

January 2021 – December 2024

Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice, University of Missouri, St. Louis.

- Assisted on a variety of projects including:
 - Community-Based Crime Reduction Grant: Wellston Forward
 - Responsible for cleaning and analyzing quantitative administrative data including crime incidents and calls for service to assess whether crime was decreased due to the implementation of targeted, evidence-based strategies.
 - Assisted with writing the implementation plan and the final evaluation report.
 - Redefining public safety in three U.S. counties

- Utilizing a mixed methods approach, assisted with a content analysis of newspaper articles to assess how the media covers crime trends before developing several working databases in Stata to analyze how these trends may shape public opinion.
- Assisted on the final report writing and created infographics that were disseminated to community stakeholders and members of the community at large.
- Estimating the impacts of proposed senior homeowner property tax relief programs in St. Louis City, MO
 - Using quantitative census data, assisted with estimating the budgetary loss for a local organization and St. Louis City to evaluate the viability of implementing a tax relief program for seniors while identifying which project option would most benefit seniors in the community.
 - Presented findings to the executive board of the local organization and collaborated with team members to ensure accuracy of the finalized report.
- Homicide hot spots in San Francisco: Changes over time and space, 1849-2010
 - Collected quantitative data and helped supervise undergraduate students for data collection.

Standards and Quality Assurance Internship
Community Resources for Justice, Boston, MA.

June – September 2020

- Collaborated with leaders and other supervisors in the Social Justice Services, Community Strategies, and Crime and Justice Institute divisions to assess current program goals.
- Assessed CRJ's current capacity at the corporate level for data analysis and recommended how to improve current data collection methods.
- Proposed refinements and additions to current company wide performance metrics and divisional metrics and presented recommendations to the board of trustees.

Teaching Experience

Graduate Instructor for Research Methods

January 2024 – August 2025

Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice, University of Missouri, St. Louis.

- Developed a syllabus and lesson plans to teach undergraduate students about research design, measurement, and data collection in criminology and criminal justice.
- Assisted students with their own research interests and helps translate these ideas into research projects.
- Graded student coursework, discussion posts, papers, and exams and provided detailed feedback to be incorporated in long term research projects.
- Received average rating of 3.9/4.0 from 50 students evaluating my effectiveness as an instructor.

Graduate Teaching Assistant

January 2021 – December 2023

Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice, University of Missouri, St. Louis.

- Helped grade student coursework, discussion posts, papers, and exams.
- Aided the supervisor with class preparation by gathering required materials.
- Assisted students by reviewing material and answering clarifying questions.

Graduate Teaching Assistant

August 2018 – May 2020

Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice, University of Maryland.

- Facilitated discussion sections each week by introducing new material, reviewing material from class, and assisting students with clarifying questions.
- Graded quizzes, exams, discussion activities, and semester long research papers.

Publications

- Kirk, S.** (2025). The effect of marital status on illicit substance use. *Deviant Behavior, Advance online publication*, 1-25. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01639625.2025.2514620>
- Kirk, S., Slocum, L., & Boxerman, R.** News media and public safety: causes, solutions, and voices. *In progress*.
- Abeling-Judge, D. & **Kirk, S.** (2019). “Selective Incapacitation” in *Controversial Issues in Criminal Justice: An Active Learning Approach*. Cognella Academic Publishing.

Reports

- Slocum, L., **Kirk, S.**, & Boxerman, R. (2024). *Wellston: Safer Together. Final Summary Report for the Byrne Criminal Justice Innovation Grant*. Report prepared for Bureau of Justice Assistance. St. Louis, Missouri: University of Missouri – St. Louis.
- Johns-Wolfe, E., **Kirk, S.**, & Bednar, K. (2023). *Estimated impacts of senior homeowner property tax relief*. Report prepared for St. Louis City Senior Fund. St. Louis, Missouri: University of Missouri – St. Louis.
- Slocum, L., Greene, C., Huebner, B., Bednar, K., Udani, A., Boxerman, R., **Kirk, S.**, Spanoudakis, K., Steingrubby, H., Lyne, E., & Lane, E. (2023). *Redefining public safety in three U.S. counties*. Report prepared for John D and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. St. Louis, Missouri: University of Missouri – St. Louis.
- Kirk, S.** (2023). *Media narratives on increasing violence in St. Louis County, MO and Mecklenburg County, NC* [Infographics]. Supplemental publications to the Redefining public safety in three U.S. counties report and disseminated to the public.
- Slocum, L. & **Kirk, S.** (2022). *Wellston: Safer Together. Implementation Plan*. Report prepared for Bureau of Justice Assistance. St. Louis, Missouri: University of Missouri – St. Louis.

Research Presentations

- Kirk, S.**, Hsu, H. Bender, A., Rice, E., Fulginiti, A. & Lane, E. Poster will be presented at the upcoming National Research Conference for the Prevention of Firearm-Related Harms. Tempe, AZ (November 20, 2025).
- Kirk, S.** Exploring the role of additive effects of turning points on desistance. Paper will be presented at the upcoming annual meeting of the American Society of Criminology. Washington, DC (November 14, 2025).
- Boxerman, B., **Kirk, S.**, Slocum, L. License plate recognition cameras and clearance rates in a small urban police department. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences. Denver, CO (March 14, 2025).
- Kirk, S.** Examining the effect of peers and romantic partners on cocaine use. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Society of Criminology. San Francisco, CA (November 15, 2024).
- Kirk, S.**, Boxerman, R., Slocum, L., Greene, C., & Spanoudakis, K. News media and public safety: causes, solutions, and voices. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Society of Criminology. San Francisco, CA (November 13, 2024).

Kirk, S. The effect of marital status on illicit substance use. Poster presented at the University of Missouri – St. Louis Graduate Research Competition. St. Louis, MO. (April 19, 2024).

Kirk, S. The effect of marital status on illicit substance use. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Society of Criminology. Philadelphia, PN. (November 15, 2023).

Slocum, L., Spanoudakis, K., Greene, C., **Kirk, S.**, Boxerman, R., & Giuffre, A. Safety looks like the bottom of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs": Exploring how diverse stakeholders conceptualize community safety. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Society of Criminology. Philadelphia, PN. (November 15, 2023).

Kirk, S. The effects of state instability on terrorist targeting strategies: A Lebanese case study. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Society of Criminology. Chicago, IL (November 20th, 2021).

Awards

Travel Award for the National Research Conference for the Prevention of Firearm-Related Harms	October 2025
Charles G. Huber, Jr. Endowed Dissertation Fellowship	August 2025
Graduate Student Summer Fellowship	May 2025
Graduate Research Fair Poster Competition – Second Place Excellence in poster design, research idea, and presentation.	April 2024

Leadership and Volunteer Positions

Mentor for first year graduate students at the University of Missouri – St. Louis (August 2022 – present)

Healthcare Working Group Member at the University of Missouri – St. Louis (January – May 2025)

Judge for the University of Missouri – St. Louis Undergraduate Research Symposium (April 29, 2022; April 28, 2023; April 26, 2024; April 25, 2025)

Vice President for the Criminology and Criminal Justice Graduate Student Government (August 2022 – May 2023)

Student Government Representative for the Criminology and Criminal Justice Graduate Student Government (August 2021 – May 2022)

Mentor for first year graduate students at the University of Maryland (August 2019 – May 2021)