

Communication Research Methods
COMM 3330

Course Description: Examination and application of qualitative and quantitative methods of research. Three hours of lecture, one hour of laboratory per week. PREREQUISITE: COMM 2100 and COMM 2101.

This course is an introduction to qualitative and quantitative methods used to investigate human communication. Students will learn to read and critique communication research. A research proposal is the culminating project.

Student Learning Outcomes: Students will meet the following learning targets:

- Be able to describe and distinguish between qualitative and quantitative research and identify methods of each type.
- Understand the various paradigms and philosophical assumptions of qualitative and quantitative research.
- Be able to read and critically evaluate research reports and critical essays.
- Be able to develop communication research questions and/or hypotheses, identify methods for addressing relevant questions/hypotheses, and develop a formal research proposal.

Required Texts:

- Merrigan, G. & Huston, C.L. *Communication Research Methods, 4th ed.* New York: Oxford University Press.
ISBN-13: 978-0190652746
ISBN-10: 0190652748
- American Psychological Association. (2010). *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 6th ed.* Washington, DC:
ISBN-13: 978-1433805615
ISBN-10: 1433950618
- Kumar, R. *Research methodology: A step by step guide for beginners, 3rd ed.* London: Sage.
ISBN 978-1-84920-300-5
ISBN 978-1-84920-301-2

Assignments:

- **Chapter Knowledge Checks**-This course is reading intensive, so I will check for your knowledge and understanding after each reading assignment each week. These knowledge checks will ask you questions from the Merrigan & Huston text. **These knowledge checks or quizzes are worth 400 points (16 @ 25 points each).**
- **Discussion Board Posts**- Discussions will be related to your research proposal. You will be required to submit an original response and comment on at least 3 of your classmates' responses. **Discussion board participation will be worth 200 points (10@20points each).**
- **Draft of Introduction and literature review**- This is considered the first step of the research proposal. It is worth **100 points.**
- **Draft of Research Problem and Hypotheses**- These parts will be brief, but they are the nucleus of your research. This section will be worth **75 points.**
- **Draft of Study Design**- This section will explain the method of your study. **It is worth 75 points.**
- **Draft of Problems/Limitations**- In this part of the research proposal, you will explain the problems you think you may encounter when conducting your study. It is worth **50 points.**
- **Final Proposal**- This is the final assignment of the course. It is worth **100 points.**

Quizzes= 400 points

Discussions= 200 points

Lit Review=100 points

Research Problem & Hypothesis= 75 points

Study Design/Methodology=75 points

Problems/Limitations=50 points

Final Draft of Proposal=100 points

Total points possible in course= 1000 points.

Final grades will be assigned from the following grading scale:

A+=95-100

A=90-94

B+=85-89

B=80-84

C+=75-79

C=70-74

D+=65-69

D=60-64

F=59 and below

Assignment Submissions: All assignments should be submitted to the Dropbox in the university's eCourseware system. Documents must be submitted in Microsoft Word format (i.e. .doc or .docx file). **Assignments cannot be submitted via email.**

Late Assignments: Due dates for assignments and quizzes/exams have been established and are listed in the syllabus and eCourseware. Should these dates change, students will receive notification. Requests for extensions must be made at least 72 hours before the due date. Late assignments/tests without prior communication and approval from me will not be accepted.

Academic Integrity: I expect the work that you turn in for this class to be original work that you are using for this class and only this class. Please consult me before “recycling” work from other classes.

Plagiarism, cheating, and other forms of academic dishonesty are prohibited. Students guilty of academic misconduct, either directly or indirectly, through participation or assistance, are immediately responsible to the instructor of the class in addition to other possible disciplinary sanctions, which may be imposed through the regular institutional disciplinary procedures.

An instructor who believes a student has committed an act of academic misconduct shall notify the student in writing of the basis for the belief and allow the student five (5) business days to respond to the allegation. The student shall respond to the allegation by scheduling a meeting with the instructor to discuss the matter. After meeting with the student to review the alleged misconduct, the instructor has two options: (a) they may make a decision regarding appropriate action, or (b) they may refer the matter to the Academic Integrity Committee. (*University of Memphis Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities, page 17-18*)

Your written work may be submitted to Turnitin.com, or a similar electronic detection method, for an evaluation of the originality of your ideas and proper use and attribution of sources. As part of this process, you may be required to submit electronic as well as hard copies of your written work, or be given other instructions to follow. By taking this course, you agree that all assignments may undergo this review process and that the assignment may be included as a source document in Turnitin.com's restricted access database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism in such documents. Any assignment not submitted according to the procedures given by the instructor may be penalized or may not be accepted at all.” (*Office of Legal Counsel, October 17, 2005*)

Students with Disabilities: Students with disabilities (including invisible disabilities such as chronic diseases, learning disabilities, and head injuries) are encouraged to notify their instructor of their condition within the first two weeks of the semester. The college and your instructor will make reasonable accommodations for persons with documented disabilities. Any claim of disability must be documented by the office of Student Disability Services in order to qualify for accommodation.

Weekly Course Schedule

Week	Merrigan & Huston	Kumar	Writing Assignments
Week 1:	Ch. 1 "Introduction to the Field of Communication"	Ch. 2: Overview of Research Process	
Week 2:	Ch. 2 "Three Paradigms" Ch. 3 "Ethics and Research"	Ch. 3: Review of Literature	
Week 3:	Ch. 4 "Arguments and Causality" Ch. 5 "Quant. Social Science Research"	Ch. 4: Formulating a research problem	
Week 4:	Ch. 6 "Experimental Research"	Ch. 5: Identifying Variables	
Week 5:	Ch. 7 "Survey Research" Ch. 8 "Content Analysis"	Ch. 6: Constructing a Hypothesis	Literature Review Due
Week 6:	Ch. 9 "Quantitative Data"	NONE	
Week 7:	Ch. 10 "Conversation Analysis" Ch. 11 "Multiple Realities"	Ch. 7: The Research Design Ch. 8: Selecting a Study Design	Draft of Research Question & Hypothesis Due
Week 8:	Ch. 12 "Interviews and Focus Groups"	Ch. 9: Data Collection Ch. 10: Attitudinal Scales	
Week 9:	Ch. 13 "Ethnography"	Ch. 11: Validity and Reliability Ch. 12: Sampling	Draft of Study Design/Methodology Due
Week 10:	Ch. 14 "Discourse Analysis" Ch. 15 "Rhetorical Criticism"	Ch. 13: How to Write a Research Proposal	
Week 11:	Ch. 16 "Critical Studies"	NONE	Draft of Problems & Limitations Due
Week 12:	Revise drafts and work on final draft Schedule personal conferences		
Week 13:	Personal Conferences & Continue Writing		
Week 14:	Final Proposal Due.		
Week 15:	End of semester		

RESEARCH PROPOSAL PROJECT

The final project in this course is a research proposal; i.e., a proposal for a communication research project you would like to undertake. A research proposal includes an introduction, a review of literature, a rationale for your study, research questions or hypotheses, a proposed methods section, and a conclusion. To excel on this project requires a great deal of work outside of class on your part. The following sequence of assignments and drafts is designed to help you keep up with the required work and to get feedback along the way. You should begin thinking of research ideas and doing library research on possible research topics as soon as possible. A sample undergraduate communication research proposal can be found on eCourseware under Content→Course Documents.

Citation and formatting for these assignments are to be done in APA style. See <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>.

General advice and guidelines on writing for communication studies can be found here: <http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/communication-studies/>

Communication & Mass Media Complete database (U of M library, indexes a broad range of communication journals and, in many cases, provides pdf files for articles): <http://bibliotech.memphis.edu/record=e1000318~S4>

Communication Arena (publisher of National Communication Association and regional communication journals, as well as other relevant communication journals): <http://www.communicationarena.com/journals/journals.asp>

International Communication Association journals:

<http://www.icahdq.org/pubs/journals.asp>