

Mass Communication Research Methods

JOUR 7075-M50

Fall 2014

5:30 – 8:30 p.m. Mondays

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COURSE REQUIREMENTS

CATALOG / COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Familiarization with content analysis, survey research, data analysis, and field studies as practiced by reporters, editors, and public relations decision makers; modern research techniques and class project using computer analysis.

PREREQUISITE: Graduate status

TEXTBOOKS

- Wimmer, Roger D., & Dominick, Joseph R. (2014). *Mass media research: An introduction*, 10th ed. Published by Cengage Learning. (note: 9th edition of the book and even 8th edition are acceptable for this course. There might be some minor differences in content and pagination, but essential concepts remain the same.)
- Salkind, Neil J. (2012). *Statistics for people who think they hate statistics*. (5th or 4th or 2nd). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- *APA Publication Manual*, 5th eds. [Please note that other graduate classes, history and law, for example, use other citation styles.]
- Cronk, Brian. (2014). *How to Use SPSS: A Step-by-Step Guide to Analysis and Interpretation*. Glendale, CA: Pyrczak.

SOFTWARE:

IBM SPSS Statistics Standard v22 Student Grad Pack

You are entitled to have access to SPSS 21 or SPSS 20 via citrix.memphis.edu. Citrix XenApp is a kind of technology that installs application on a server, then accesses the application without having to install anything on the client apart from the Citrix client software. In our case, it is SPSS 21 or SPSS 20. Basically, you, as a client, launch SPSS 20 or SPSS 21 (installed on the campus server) from your computer interface using the Internet. If you have a good and reliable Internet, this might be a good option for you because it is free and you don't have to pay a penny. However, if you don't have a reliable Internet access and if you are very uncomfortable handling computer and networking issues, you might be better off with the purchase of SPSS 22. Note that only SPSS 22 is on the current market, there is no place to purchase SPSS 20 or SPSS 21. The minor differences among the different versions of SPSS are tolerable for this class. But I will have to rely on SPSS 21 (the campus server latest version) to do my demo in class.

Comparing SPSS prices

[For your reference only. I don't have any information on which one of the followings provide better and quick services. The list is copied from IBM website. <http://www-03.ibm.com/software/products/en/spss-stats-gradpack>]

- Creation Engine
IBM SPSS Statistics Premium GradPack 22 (for sale to college students only, disk version, 12-month license) Mac/Windows. \$99.95
- JourneyEd.com
IBM SPSS Statistics Base GradPack v22 Academic (Authorized User DVD - 12 Month License) \$72.99
- OntheHub
IBM® SPSS® Statistics 22: (not DVD but downloads. But it offers 6-month and 12-month rental service) price varies
- Studica
IBM SPSS Statistics Standard v22 Student Grad Pack - For Students Only - 12 Month Fixed Term DVD. \$85.95.
- StudentDiscount
IBM SPSS Statistics Grad Pack 22.0 STANDARD DOWNLOAD - Windows or Mac - 12 month license - can install on up to 2 computers. \$91.99
- ThinkEdu
IBM SPSS Statistics Standard Grad Pack v.22.0 - WIN/MAC (12 Month. \$89.95

CLASSROOM FORMAT:

Seminar / synchronous Internet Chat using Adobe Connect

Please read the assigned chapters **before** class. The instructor may distribute extra readings to supplement the textbook content.

CLASS PARTICIPATION:

An *education* is more than taking tests and getting a grade. In graduate seminars, your *informed input* is critically important, especially in online class. Please read, reflect and contribute to the discussion. I expect every one of you ask questions, make comments and respond to others when we are meeting online. Your silence is not welcome in this online class. At the end of the semester, you will present your research paper (using PowerPoint) to the entire class.

Quizzes. There will be a weekly quiz based on the previous week's discussion. It will test your comprehension of the material in the text, lectures, discussion, and handouts. The quiz takes the following formats: true or false, multiple choices and matching items.

Journal Article Critique. You will be provided with three academic journal articles to critique. For each article, you will write a critique report showing that you understand the basic concepts of the method. I will give you a *Word* document with the particular format information. Given the nature of this class, you will want **to focus on the research design**. Consider *what questions* the author(s) attempted to address and *how* they got the answer. Then you need to evaluate the way the author addressed the questions: appropriate, reasonable, creative and to the point.

Research Paper. The paper will be a full-scale research paper on journalism/communication. This is your opportunity to choose a topic (and appropriate method) that interests you and develops into a graduation thesis or professional project. This paper should be between **20 and 25 double-spaced**, typed pages (not including the references and attachments, e.g., draft surveys). Pretest any survey instrument you might propose.

The paper will consist of:

- Cover page (Use APA thesis style)
- Introduction
- Literature review – what other studies have found about the issue or problem
- Hypotheses or research questions
- Method – including research questions or hypotheses. Include your instrument, code sheet and Excel spreadsheet with variables at the top of the columns.
- Results – findings in terms of numbers and presentation of tables and figures if any
- Conclusion – summary of findings in text and conclusions of the research project and its significance for the journalism/mass communication field.
- References (Use APA style)
- Appendices, e.g., surveys, cover letter for survey, instructions to participants in an experiment, interviewers guide, moderators guide for a focus group, draft codebook for content analysis.

Turn in drafts for comments as shown on the semester plan. Include the **cover sheet**, **introduction** and **references** (or end notes, if applicable) with *each* submission to help orient me to what I am reading. Previous sections will not be reevaluated.

Writing quality is important in journalism. Follow your American Psychological Association (APA) style guide (5th ed.). **Note your style version on the paper's cover sheet.**

Attendance. Journalism Department policy requires attendance at all classes. Your grade will be adversely affected by absences, which takes up 10 percent of the grade. Plan to join the online discussion sessions every week. Each absence will result in one percent deduction of this attendance grade. For instance, one absence will result in 9% of the grade. Three absence will result in 7%. We have 13 class sessions in total this semester.

This is a professional program for journalists who are expected to understand, and comply with deadlines. All assignments are due at or before the start of class on the day assigned.

Extra Readings. I will post the extra readings and assignments on elearn.memphis.edu It is your responsibility to check the posted items frequently so that you won't miss any readings and assignments.

GRADEs

Attendance	10%
Lead discussion	10%
Weekly quizzes	12%
Test	10%
Journal article critiques (3 articles)	18%
Research paper	40%
Introduction & lit review	10%
Method	10%
Results	10%
Conclusion	10%

Number grades on tests and quizzes translate into these letter grades:

- A 90.0 - 100
- B 80.0 - 89.9
- C 70.0 - 79.9
- D 60.0 - 69.9
- F below 60.0

TENTATIVE TIMETABLE:

Note. This timetable is tentative. The professor reserves the right to change the order or the content of each week based on the class progress. The professor strongly suggest students log into elearn>content to check the updated posts, assignments and topics for each week. This one is simply a general overview or plan of what the class would cover for this semester.

Week 1 Aug 25

Find A Research Topic and Write out your Research Questions or hypotheses. Wimmer & Dominique Chapter 1, Chapter 2, Chapter 13-16 Mass Media Research, Determining Topic Relevance, Theoretical framework, Research Applications

Week 2 Sept 1

Labor Day Holiday No Class

Week 3 Sept 8

Introduction & Research Questions Due Presentation on Reviewing Literature; Wimmer & Dominique Chapters 2 & 4, Elements of Research & Sampling, Central limit Theorem, Sampling Error; Confidence Level; Salkind Chapter 7 Curve

Week 4 Sept 15

Wimmer & Dominique Chapter 5 Qualitative Research: Field Observation, Focus Groups, Intensive Interviews, Case studies, Ethnography; Presentation on Sampling in Qualitative Research

Week 5 Sept 22

Literature Review Due; Wimmer & Dominique Chapter 6, 7, 9: Quantitative Research: Survey, Content Analysis, Experiment; Wimmer & Dominique Chapter 2: measurement; Salkind Chapter 16 Understanding Reliability and Validity; Cronk Chapter 8 Test Construction; Assignment of three critiques

Week 6 Sept 29

Wimmer & Dominique Chapter 4 Sampling, Chapter 7 Survey

Week 7 Oct 6

Survey Critique Due; Wimmer & Dominique 6 Content Analysis; Chapter 10 Intro; Statistics; Cronk Chapters 1 & 2 & 3 Data Entry, Descriptive; Salkind Chapters 2 & 3 Averages and Variability

Week 8 Oct 13

Fall Break

Week 9 Oct 20

Method Due Cronk Chapter 4 Graphing Data; Salkind Chapters 5 Correlations; Wimmer & Dominique Chapter 1: Reliability and Validity

Week 10 Oct 27

Content Analysis Critique Due; Salkind Chapters 9 and 10: t-tests; Cronk 6 t-test and ANOVA; Wimmer & Dominick Chapter 9 Experiment;

Week 11 Nov 3

Experiment Critique Due Salkind Chapters 15: Chi-squares; Cronk 7 Chi-square; Presentation on how to write research reports, Wimmer & Dominique Chapter 11 Hypothesis Testing;

Week 12 Nov 10

Normal Distribution; Salkind Chapter 7; APA Styles;

Week 13 Nov 17

Results Due Plagiarism; Wimmer & Dominique Chapter 3 Research Ethics; Presentation on Preparing Research Reports

Week 14 Nov 24

Conclusion Due & Full Research Paper Due; Presentation on Quantitative and Qualitative Research Comparison; Comprehensive Test Day.

Week 15 Dec 1

Your presentation of your research papers to your classmates

OTHER SOURCES

Statistics

SPSS Website www.spss.com/tech/stat/Articles.htm [see especially their articles on survey methods]

www.spss.com/academic

<http://insideout.spss.com/> [SPSS Blog]

Statistics website at www.statistics.com

davidmlane.com/hyperstat/index.html

www.seeingstatistics.com

Warner, R. M. (2008). *Applied statistics*. Los Angeles: Sage.

Effect Size

www.researchconsultation.com/how-to-calculate-effect-size-help.asp

www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/documents/00002182.htm

www.wilderdom.com/research/effectsizes.html

Power

www.researchconsultation.com/power-analysis-sample-size-calculation-help.asp

Repositories for social science questions

Social science archives www.icpsr.umich.edu/gss

www.irss.unc.edu/data_archive

American Assn. for Public Opinion Research www.aapor.org [see: “response rate calculator” under Survey Methods. Lots of links in Resources on the Web, also under Survey Methods.]

Roper Center www.ropercenter.uconn.edu

Public Opinion Lab felix.iupui.edu [see: Completed Studies – results available from some studies. see: Links – useful references in many areas.]

National Survey www.wisc.edu/uwsc [see: Projects – actual Qs in national survey since 1988]

Style Guides (cheap, but far from complete). Recommended only until you get your copy of the APA manual.

Electronic citations,

APA www.apa.org

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>

<http://www.psywww.com/resource/APA%20Research%20Style%20Crib%20Sheet.htm>

<http://research.lesley.edu/apa>

References for writing proposals

- Bui, Y. N. (2009). *How to write a master's thesis*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Krathwohl, D. R. (1988). *How to prepare a research proposal: Guidelines for funding and dissertations in the social and behavioral sciences*. 3rd ed. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press.
- Leedy, P. D. (2004). *Practical research planning and design*, 8th ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Locke, L. F., Spirduso, W. W., & Silverman, S. J. (2000). *Proposals that work*, 4th ed. Newbury Park, CA: Sage. [www.sagepub.com]
- Ogden, E. H. (1993). *Completing your doctorate dissertation or master's thesis in two semesters or less*, 2nd ed. Lancaster, PA: Technomic.

Replication

Thompson, B. (1994). The pivotal role of replication in psychological research: Empirically evaluating the replicability of sample results. *Journal of Personality*, 62(2), xx-xx.

Qualitative Research

Lindlof, T. R., & Taylor, B. C. (2011). *Qualitative Communication Research Methods*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Content Analysis

Krippendorff, K. (2004). *Content analysis: An introduction to its methodology*, 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Neuendorf, K. A. (2002). *The content analysis guidebook*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Riffe, D., Lacy, S., & Fico, F. G. (1998). *Analyzing media messages: Using content analysis in research*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Content Analysis Web Sites (with sample code books)

Intercoder reliability. <http://astro.temple.edu/~lombard/reliability/academic.csuohio.edu/kneuendorf/content>

Palo Alto Research Center

www2.parc.com/istl/groups/qca/demos.html

www.car.ua.edu

Survey Sites and References

Survey Monkey.com The journalism department has an account. Ask for User Name and Password.

Time-sharing Experiments for the Social Sciences (TESS). Apply to have them gather data for you via Internet or phone (national sample).

www.experimentcentral.org

“Think aloud” protocol. See: S. Presser et al. (2004). Methods for testing and evaluating survey questions. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 68(1), pp. 109-131.

History as a tool

Galgano, Michael J, J. Chris Arnt, & Raymond M. Hyser (2008). *Doing History*. Boston: Thompson.

Other “tools”

www.ets.org/testcoll Database of scales, inventories, surveys and such used in research articles
Directory of Unpublished Experimental Mental Models. Index of more than 1,700 unpublished instruments. Available in McWherter Library. [2009]

Other special Web sites / Print resources

- Communication Studies Resources www.uiowa.edu/~commstud/resources
- First Amendment Handbook www.rcfp.org/handbook/index.html
- Freedom Forum www.freedomforum.org
- History of the Mass Media in the United States. 2000 is latest. P92.U5 H55 1998
- journalism.org
- Media and Communication Studies www.aber.ac.uk/media
- Museum of Broadcast Communications Encyclopedia of Television. 2000 is latest. PN1992.18 .M874 1997.
- Social Science Network www.socialpsychology.org
- Public Affairs Video Archives. Purdue Univ. pava.purdue.edu

Social Science Methods (all)

The Sage encyclopedia of social science research methods. (2004). H62.L456 2004 in reference collection, McWherter Library. Explanations of 1,000 methods.

Thesis Ideas

What others are doing for their thesis or dissertation? www.ajjmc.org/abstracts/index.html

U of M Web survey hosting.

Visit the Office for Institutional Research. Admin, room 411, 678-2231.

Darla Keel at dfulton@memphis.edu

Links to Associations for submitting papers

www.ssca.net/links/index.php

ASSESSMENT

PROFESSIONAL VALUES AND COMPETENCIES FOR JOUR 7075:

- Think critically, creatively and independently;
- Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work;
- Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;
- Apply basic numerical and statistical concepts;
- Apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.

HOW PROFESSIONAL VALUES AND COMPETENCIES WILL BE MET FOR JOUR 7075: Cognitive Objectives To Be Mastered (Ability To Explain, Analyze, Understand, Think Critically):

- Become aware of the process of social science and of the “tools” used in journalism/mass communication research.
- Critically evaluate the research work of others and propose research for yourself.
- Write a research proposal in academic style for a project, a thesis, or write an original research paper on a topic you negotiate with your instructor.
- Understand and apply basic statistical concepts to social science problems.
- Demonstrate your ability to work with survey data in SPSS. Propose statistical manipulation, where appropriate, of your own research.

Performance Standards To Be Met (Demonstrable Skills, Abilities, Techniques, Applied Competencies):

- Write a proposal for a thesis or project, or write a paper on one of the methods studied in class.
- Clean, analyze and interpret data in SPSS
- Demonstrate knowledge of principles on periodic tests.

HOW ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING WILL BE MET FOR JOUR 7075 / 8075.

Awareness:

- Become aware of the process of social science.

Understanding:

- Understand where and how the “tools” of social science are correctly applied.
- Understand basic statistical concepts used in data manipulation and presentation.

Application:

- Select the most appropriate social science “tool” for your own research.
- Write three critical reviews of the work of others.
- Pass the statistics portion of periodic exams.
- Propose statistical manipulation, where appropriate, of your own research.
- Write a research proposal for your own research.

PROFESSIONAL VALUES AND COMPETENCIES FOR JOURNALISM PROGRAM:

The Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication requires that, irrespective of their particular specialization, all graduates should be aware of certain core values and competencies and be to

- understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press, for the country in which the institution that invites ACEJMC is located, as well as receive instruction in and understand the range of systems of freedom of expression around the world, including the right to dissent, to monitor and criticize power, and to assemble and petition for redress of grievances;
- demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications;
- demonstrate an understanding of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and, as appropriate, other forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to mass communications.
- demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society.
- understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information;
- demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;
- think critically, creatively and independently;
- conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work;
- write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;
- critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;

- apply basic numerical and statistical concepts;
- apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.

ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING FOR JOURNALISM PROGRAM:

The Council seeks to promote student learning and encourages experimentation and innovation. Assessment is a system of evaluation of student learning at the course or unit level (as opposed to grading at the individual level). Three criteria should guide assessment of student learning:

- Awareness: familiarity with specific information, including facts, concepts, theories, laws and regulations, processes and effects.
- Understanding: assimilation and comprehension of information, concepts, theories and ideas.
- Application: competence in relating and applying skills, information, concepts, theories and ideas to the accomplishment of tasks.

DEPARTMENT POLICIES

E-MAIL:

You must have your UM e-mail account activated. If you are using another provider such as Google, you are required to have your UM e-mail forwarded to that account. Go to the <http://iam.memphis.edu> website to implement forwarding of UM e-mail. You are required to check your e-mail daily. You are responsible for complying with any email sent to you by your professor or the University.

CELLPHONES:

You must turn them off during class.

ATTENDANCE:

Class attendance is mandatory in the Department of Journalism. You may be assigned a failing grade for the semester for nonattendance, or habitual late arrival. No late work will be accepted without prior arrangements, which are acceptable to your professor. Students may not be permitted to make up any missing work unless it is for an absence due to illness or other catastrophic emergency such as a death in the family that can be documented (e.g., with a doctor's note or a copy of the newspaper obituary). This is a professional program for journalists who are expected to understand and comply with deadlines. If you have some problem making it to class on time make arrangements to fix the problem or consider taking another class. You should consider this class your "job" in the educational process and be on time just as you would elsewhere.

CHEATING:

In addition to university-wide policies stated in the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities, the Department of Journalism considers making up quotes from sources, turning in substantially the same assignment for credit in two different courses, or a student receiving any assistance from others for work assigned to be done on his/her own, as acts of cheating punishable to the degree determined appropriate by the course instructor and department chair. That may include grade reductions or seeking dismissal of the student from the university.

“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)

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND STUDENT CONDUCT:

Expectations for academic integrity and student conduct are described in detail on the website of the Office of Student Judicial and Ethical Affairs (<http://saweb.memphis.edu/judicialaffairs>). Please take a look, in particular, at the sections about “Academic Dishonesty,” “Student Code of Conduct and Responsibilities,” and “Disruptive Behaviors.” I will expect students to be aware of these guidelines and to conduct themselves accordingly. [Univ. Policy]

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY PROTECTION:

Lectures, including PowerPoint slides, given/shown in this course are the property of the instructor and the University of Memphis. Class lectures may not be recorded in any form without the prior permission of the instructor and any guest lecturers that may speak in the class. Recordings, including class notes, may not be used for commercial purposes.

ONLINE SETEs:

You are urged to complete the SETEs evaluation of this course. Once your instructor has posted your grade, you can immediately see that grade, provided you completed a teacher evaluation for that class. How to access your evaluation forms: Log in using your UUID and email password; click on the gray “Student” tab; complete an evaluation for each course listed and hit the “Submit” button at the bottom of the form. It will only take a few minutes of your time. We take the evaluations very seriously and use them to improve courses and instructional quality. Your feedback is essential and will be appreciated.

DISABILITY:

Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the Office for Disability Services at (901) 678-2880 in 110 Wilder Tower Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.