

Mass Communication Research

JOUR 7075/8075-001

Spring 2015

Meeman Room 106

5:30-8:30 p.m., Monday

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COURSE REQUIREMENTS

CATALOG 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.

COURSE OVERVIEW:

At its core, graduate study is research. To that end, this course develops the understanding and skills needed to conduct research and apply it to a communications problem or phenomenon. Thus, it embraces quantitative, qualitative, and critical methodologies. Students will learn about the kinds of questions research can answer through the scientific method of inquiry. This graduate seminar develops those skills as it discusses the ways to apply research in academic and professional worlds.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK:

Zhou, S., Sloan, W. D. (2011). *Research methods in communication*, 2nd ed. Northport, AL: Vision.

Note: Several additional required readings are posted to Courseware for each week.

GRADING:

Article/method reviews	15 percent
Homework assignments	15 percent
Midterm Exam	15 percent
Final Exam	15 percent
Research Paper	30 percent
Research Paper Presentation	10 percent

Number grades translate into these letter grades: A = 90-100; B = 80-89; C = 70-79; D = 60-69; F = < 60.

ATTENDANCE & CLASS CONDUCT FOR JOUR7075

- Attendance is mandatory and will be taken at the beginning of each class session. Students are allowed two unexcused absences; after two, additional unexcused absences will drop the student's final grade by one letter grade for each absence. Missing a total of six classes will result in the student failing the course. The University's policy for excused absences apply to this course.
- Attendance will be determined by signing the daily sign-in sheet for the course.

ASSIGNMENTS

ARTICLE/METHOD REVIEWS (Four, various deadlines)	15 percent
Students are find one academic article that addresses a specific method throughout the semester. The student should read the article and write a 250-word critique of the article, with particular attention to the method addressed in the article.	
HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS (Various deadlines)	15 percent
Students will complete several homework assignments as needed.	
MIDTERM EXAM (March 16)	15 percent
FINAL EXAM (May 4)	15 percent
RESEARCH PAPER (Various deadlines)	30 percent
Approximately 25-page research paper addressing a phenomenon in journalism and mass communications. Student must conduct original research for the paper.	
RESEARCH PRESENTATION (April 27)	10 percent
Professional presentation of research paper in class. Students will prepare a 15-minute, audio-visual presentation and be prepared for question and answer.	

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT RESEARCH PAPER

PROSPECTUS: Due February 2

1. Your prospectus will begin by **FIRST** writing the questions your paper will attempt to answer.
2. The prospectus will explain your topic briefly (1-2 pages).
3. The prospectus will outline the direction and scope of your paper as well as an overview of the method and analysis procedure.

PROPOSAL: Due March 2

In total, your proposal should be about 10 pages long. It should include the following sections:

1. Begin with a complete introduction that explains the journalism and mass communication problem or phenomenon you are researching. Your introduction should outline the procedure by which you will conduct your research.
2. Write a complete academic literature review about previous scholarship related to your subject. Focus on journalism and mass communication journals, such as *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*, *Mass Communication & Society*, *the Journal of Communication*, *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*, *New Media & Society* and others published by the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication or the International Communication Association. This literature review should support your argument and identify the scholarly gap that your study will answer.

3. Write a methodology that explains the procedure for data collection, sampling, and analysis.
4. Any tools needed for data collection (questionnaire, code book, interview guide, etc.).

RESEARCH PAPER: Due April 27

Build on your proposal and complete an original research project.

1. Your papers will be graded on content, including writing quality, comprehensiveness of research, adherence to complete and proper citation style, grammar, punctuation and spelling. All of these will be analyzed to determine a final paper grade.
2. Use third-person, active voice.
3. Within your paper, you will have sections addressing introduction, literature review, method, results, discussion, conclusion, and references.
4. Your written work will 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. By taking this course, you agree that your paper may be included as a source document in Turnitin.com's restricted access database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

WEEK 1 JAN. 19 NO CLASS

Martin Luther King Day.

WEEK 2 JAN. 26 FOUNDATIONS OF RESEARCH

Ways of knowing. Scientific method of inquiry. What do we research? Disney World and Perry Mason. Keywords, Search Terms, and Folders. Research ideas.

Readings: Z&S 1-2. Chaffee: Explication.

WEEK 3 FEB. 2 RESEARCH PRACTICES

Institutional Review Board. Research ethics. Laws in research. Research questions vs. hypotheses.

Readings: Z&S 3-6.

WEEK 4 FEB. 9 SAMPLING

Simple random sample. Stratified sample. Snowball. Convenience. Purposive. Central limit theorem. Sampling error. Confidence levels.

Readings: Z&S 8.

WEEK 5 FEB. 16 MEASUREMENTS

Scales. Variables. Operationalization. Code books.

Readings: Z&S 7.

WEEK 6 FEB. 23 QUANTITATIVE METHODS

Survey. Content analysis. Experiment.

Readings: Z&S 9-11.

WEEK 7 MARCH 2 QUALITATIVE METHODS

Focus groups. Interviews. Ethnography. Content analysis.

Readings: Z&S 18-19.

WEEK 8 MARCH 9 SPRING BREAK

WEEK 9 MARCH 16 MIDTERM EXAM

WEEK 10 MARCH 23 DOCUMENT-DRIVEN RESEARCH

Legal methods. Historical methods. Document analysis. Visual analysis.
Readings: Z&S 14-15, 17.

WEEK 11 MARCH 30 STATISTICS

Regression. ANOVA. Factor analysis. Post-hoc tests. Scales. Hypothesis testing.
Readings: Z&S 12-13.

WEEK 12 APRIL 6 MIXED METHODS

Grounded theory. Case study.
Readings: Z&S 16.

WEEK 13 APRIL 13 RESEARCH WRITING

Methods sections. Results. Tables. Discussions.
Readings: Z&S 1-6. Chaffee: Explication.

WEEK 14 APRIL 20 WORKSHOP

Review papers. Revise. Analyze.

WEEK 15 APRIL 27 RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS

FINAL MAY 4 5:30-7:30 p.m.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

Case Studies

Tuten, T. L. (2011). Field Observations and case studies. In S. Zhou & S. Sloan (Eds.), *Research methods in communication* (pp. 265-271). Northport, AL: Vision Press.

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/>

[excellent on intercoder reliability]

academic.csuohio.edu/kneuendorf/content

Palo Alto Research Center: www2.parc.com/istl/groups/qca/demos.html

www.car.ua.edu

ReCal: <http://dfreelon.org/utills/recalfront/>

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

Historical Research

Galgano, M. J., Arnt, J. C., & Hyser, R. M. (2008). *Doing history*. Boston, MA: Thompson.

Sloan, W. D. (2001). Historical methods. In S. Zhou & S. Sloan (Eds.), *Research methods in communication* (pp. 245-264). Northport, AL: Vision Press.

Legal Methods

Burriss, L. L. (2011). Legal methods. In S. Zhou & S. Sloan (Eds.), *Research methods in communication* (pp. 227-244). Northport, AL: Vision Press.

Links to Associations for submitting papers

www.ssca.net/links/index.php

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 University: pava.purdue.edu

Power

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

Q Method

www.qmethod.org

Watts, S., & Stenner, P. (2012). *Doing Q methodological research: Theory, method and interpretation*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Qualitative Research

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

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.

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]

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.

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.

Survey Sites and References

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.

U of M Web survey hosting.

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

Darla Keel at dfulton@memphis.edu

Writing Proposals

Bui, Y. N. (2009). *How to write a master's thesis*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

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.

DEPARTMENT POLICIES

PORTFOLIO REQUIREMENT:

All Department of Journalism undergraduate students are required to develop and maintain an active portfolio of their work. Students are to begin the portfolio in JOUR 2121 and contribute to it during every skills course thereafter. The portfolio should contain samples of the student's work from courses and/or professional experience and should develop as the student builds skills. Portfolios will undergo a final review while students are enrolled in the capstone course for their concentration.

EMAIL:

You must have your UM email account activated. If you are using another provider, such as Google, you are required to have your UM email forwarded to that account. Go to <http://iam.memphis.edu> to implement forwarding of UM email. You are required to check your email daily. You are responsible for complying with any email sent to you by your professor or the university. Personal student information, such as grades, is restricted to your UM email address.

MOBILE PHONES AND LAPTOPS:

Some classes require a tablet, laptop or a smartphone to be used during class or to complete class assignments. Others do not allow them. Your instructor will set the policy for his/her specific 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. Your instructor will set the policy for his/her specific class. Students with excessive absences are encouraged to withdraw from the course prior to the drop deadline.

DEADLINES:

All deadlines are firm. Assignments turned in late will **NOT** be accepted unless arrangements have been made with the instructor.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

In addition to university-wide policies stated in the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities, the Department of Journalism considers any fabrication of content and/or sources, misappropriation and plagiarism of facts or other content, turning in substantially the same assignment for credit in two different courses, receiving any assistance from others for work assigned to be completed on his/her own, and violations of copyright law as acts of academic dishonesty punishable to the degree determined appropriate by the course instructor and/or department chair. Penalties might include grade reductions, failure of the course and/or 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).

Intellectual property and copyright guidelines

1. Ideas cannot be copyrighted.
2. Anything set down in a tangible form, i.e., written, is by law copyrighted.
3. If, in a paraphrase, your work is “substantially similar” to a copyrighted work, you are guilty of copyright infringement.
4. A citation indicates where you got material. However, that portion you do not show as a direct quote must be “substantially original” to you. In other words, you can’t just paste in something from another’s work, put a citation at the bottom and call it your own. You need a full rewrite in your own words and syntax so the unquoted material is “substantially original” to you.

Plagiarism: From UM Student Handbook: The term “plagiarism” includes, but is not limited to, the use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work of another person without full or clear acknowledgement. It also includes the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials.

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 me privately to discuss your specific needs. Please contact the Office for Disability Services at 901-678-2880 in 110 Wilder Tower to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

DIVERSITY:

Students are required to respect the differences of others and treat all persons with civility. Discriminatory, derogatory and threatening language or behavior will not be tolerated. Further, students are expected to consider their work through a diverse mind. Mass communication reach a mass audience, and students should be aware of how those messages are received by a diverse audience.

WEATHER POLICY:

Check with local media and the University of Memphis website regarding inclement weather. If the university is closed or classes are canceled, this course will not meet. However, students will still be responsible for that day’s work.

AP STYLE AND GRAMMAR:

All written work should follow the AP Stylebook and accepted rules of grammar and punctuation. If you don’t know the style for a particular phrase, look it up or ask your classmates or the instructor.