

Mass Communication Research Methods

JRSM 7075-001, M50

Spring 2018

Meeman Room 202

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

Jin Yang, Ph.D.

Office: MJ 310

Office hours: TR 2:25 to 4:25 p.m. or by appointment

Phone: 901-678-5148

Email: jinyang@memphis.edu

Robert Byrd, Ph.D.

Office: MJ 328

Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 3:30 to 5 p.m.; or by appointment.

(901) 678-2404 (office)

(901) 258-5965 (cell, text is best)

Email: rdbyrd@memphis.edu

Twitter: @rdbyrd80

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 mass communication research and apply it to a communications problem or phenomenon. The course will cover both qualitative and quantitative approaches to communication research. Students will learn the common scientific methods of inquiry. This graduate course lays a foundation to conduct a research project in either professional settings or academic settings.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK:

Lindlof, T.R. & Taylor, B.C. (2019). *Qualitative Communication Research Methods*, 4th ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Wimmer, R. D., & Dominick, J. R. (2014). *Mass media research: An introduction*, 10th ed. Boston, MA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.

APA Style Guide

Purdue Online Writing Lab (n.d.). *APA Style*. Retrieved Jan. 3, 2018 from <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/10/>

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

GRADING:

Article/Method Reviews + Assigned Topic Presentation	20 percent
Research Paper Components percent (Prospectus, Method, Results, Discussion and Conclusion)	15
Statistical Exercises and Various In-Class Exercises percent	8
Research Colloquium	2 percent
Weekly Quizzes	15 percent
Comprehensive Exam percent	10
Research Paper	25 percent
Research Paper Presentation percent	5

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

ASSIGNMENTS

ARTICLE/METHOD REVIEWS + Assigned Topic Presentation (Four Reviews: 2 on qualitative and 2 on quantitative, various deadlines; one assigned topic presentation) **20 percent**

Students are to be assigned four research articles to review 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; each student will be assigned one topic to present to the class

Research Paper Components (Prospectus, Method, Results, Discussion and Conclusion) **15 percent**

Statistical Exercises and Various Other Exercises **8 percent**
(Throughout the semester, based on the topic under discussion, there will be various related exercises for students to work on. They may be statistics related or they may be sampling technique related)

Research Colloquium Attendance and Reflection Paper **2 percent**

Graduate students must attend and write a one-page reflection paper about at least one Research Colloquium sponsored by the Department. Attendance and papers will count for at least 2% of your course final grade. Those who cannot attend will receive instructions about remote viewing from your instructor.

Weekly Quizzes (Various deadlines) **15 percent**

Comprehensive EXAM (May 1) **10 percent**

RESEARCH PAPER (Various deadlines) **25 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 23)**5 percent**

Professional presentation of research paper in class. Students will prepare a 10-minute presentation and be prepared for question and answer.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT RESEARCH PAPER**PROSPECTUS: Due Jan. 29 (3 to 5 pages double space please)**

1. Begin with a brief introduction that explains the journalism and mass communication problem or phenomenon you are researching.
2. Write a very brief 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 brief literature review should support your argument and identify the scholarly gap that your study will answer (in-text citations and references are needed).
3. Propose your research questions or hypotheses at the very end of this prospectus. Make sure your research questions or hypotheses are clear with one question only. List them as RQ1, RQ2, RQ3 etc., or H1, H2, H3, H4 etc.

PROPOSAL or Prospectus + Research Questions or Hypotheses + Method: Due March 5

In total, your proposal should be about 7-8 pages long. It should include the following sections:

1. Begin with a brief introduction that explains the journalism and mass communication problem or phenomenon you are researching.
2. Write a very brief 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 brief literature review should support your argument and identify the scholarly gap that your study will answer (in-text citations and references are needed).
3. Propose your research questions or hypotheses at the very end of this prospectus. Make sure your research questions or hypotheses are clear with one question only. List them as RQ1, RQ2, RQ3 etc., or H1, H2, H3, H4 etc.
4. Write a methodology that explains the procedure for data collection, sampling, and analysis.
5. Any tools needed for data collection (questionnaire, code book, interview guide, etc.).

RESEARCH PAPER: Due April 28

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 on short introduction, short literature review, full method, full results, full discussion, full conclusion, and complete 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

Note: This schedule is subject to change based on the class situations. The professor reserves the right to change the schedule. Please get the updated details about assignments, reading materials, and related class materials from elearn courseware.

WEEK 1	JAN. 15	MLK Holiday No class
WEEK 2	JAN. 22	Define Research and Library Search (Assign Prospectus)
WEEK 3	JAN. 29	Qualitative Research: Textual Analysis (Prospectus due)
WEEK 4	FEB. 5	Dr. Byrd Qualitative Research: Participant Observation
WEEK 5	FEB. 12	Dr. Byrd Qualitative Research: Focus Group
WEEK 6	FEB. 19	Dr. Byrd Qualitative Research: Qualitative Interviewing
WEEK 7	FEB. 26	Dr. Byrd Quantitative Research: Content analysis Sampling Techniques Statistic Analysis (Assign Method)
WEEK 8	MARCH 5	SPRING BREAK (Method + Prospectus due)
WEEK 9	MARCH 12	Quantitative Research: Survey Statistic Analysis
WEEK 10	MARCH 19	Quantitative Research: Content Analysis Again Statistic Analysis (Assign Result)
WEEK 11	MARCH 26	Experiment Statistic analysis (Result due)
WEEK 12	APRIL 2	Reliability & Validity Statistic analysis (Assign Conclusion & Discussion)
WEEK 13	APRIL 9	Ethics Statistic analysis (Conclusion & Discussion due)
WEEK 14	APRIL 16	APA Style WORKSHOP Statistics Reviews Q&A
WEEK 15	APRIL 23	PAPER PRESENTATION (Entire paper due April 27)
Week 16	MAY 2	Comprehensive EXAM (online) 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.

HYBRID CLASSROOM FORMAT

- Blue Jeans is a web-based video conferencing platform. Students in the M50 section will receive an invitation to join Blue Jeans from your instructor.
- This hybrid class, with students on campus and also online synchronously, operates in a seminar format.
- Online students must have a stable Internet connection, speakers and a microphone (or a headset with a built-in mic). Headsets can be purchased for approximately \$20. Students will need to be able to have video turned on for the entire class. Online students will not be permitted to attend class using a cellphone.
- Class time will primarily be spent in discussion of theories, issues, and applications. To that end, on campus and online students must complete the assigned readings and be prepared to discuss the night's topic. Please note that failure to attend class or to actively take part — even if all your assignments are turned in on time and done acceptably — will significantly affect your final grade.

DEPARTMENT POLICIES

PORTFOLIO REQUIREMENT:

All students in the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media are required to develop and maintain an active portfolio of their work. Undergraduate students are to begin the portfolio in JRSM 3900 and contribute to it from every course thereafter. The portfolio should contain samples of the student's work from his/her courses and/or professional experience and should develop as the student builds skills. Portfolios will undergo a final, external review while students are enrolled in the capstone course for their majors.

Students may use any type of web hosting for their portfolios, but it must have an independent and professional URL. The department requires students to use WordPress to build their portfolio sites. Students are encouraged to consider purchasing a URL and hosting if they plan to use the portfolio for a long term, but must keep the portfolio active for six months following graduation from the University of Memphis.

Students should have a professional email address they plan to use throughout their professional life, via a common email service, such as Gmail or Yahoo.

All portfolios must contain the following items:

- Samples of work from courses and/or professional activities. (Example: Broadcasting students must include a video reel)
- A current résumé
- A personal profile
- Contact information/means of contact
- Social media links

Students might wish to include a blog, video reels, photograph galleries, SoundSlides presentations, design PDFs, audio files, and Storify pieces as examples of professional work. The professional work should ultimately be tailored to the career the student seeks after graduation. Thus, each student's portfolio should show a unique blend of work.

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 the <http://iam.memphis.edu> website 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.

MOBILE PHONES AND LAPTOPS:

Some classes require a tablet, laptop or a smartphone. Others do not. Your instructor will set the policy for her/her specific class.

ATTENDANCE:

Class attendance is mandatory in the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media. 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 because of 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 and Strategic Media 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.

Further, as this is a journalism/mass communication class, students are expected to comply with copyright law, and must have sufficient permission to use any copyrighted materials used in creative projects, unless otherwise informed in cases of exercises or reproduction.

“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)

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.

DEADLINES:

Remember there’s a reason “DEAD” makes up half the word “deadline.” All deadlines are firm. This is journalism and strategic media. If you get into trouble, talk to your instructor. Exceptions will be made for reasonable circumstances if the student notifies the instructor prior to the due date.

AP STYLE AND GRAMMAR:

All written work in this class 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.

DISABILITY:

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

DIVERSITY:

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

WEATHER POLICY:

Always 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.