

Quantitative Research Methods

JRSM 7080-S01

Spring 2022

Class Meeting: Tuesday 5:30–8:30 p.m.

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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.

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. This course explores the three primary methods of quantitative research: content analysis, survey, and experiment. Students will learn the common scientific methods of inquiry. This graduate course lays a foundation to conduct a research project in either professional or academic settings.

Prerequisites

JRSM7050

Textbooks, Software and Required Materials

Zhou, S., & Sloan, D. (eds.) (2017). *Research Methods in Communication*, 3rd edition. Vision Press: Northport, Alabama.

APA Style Manual, 7th Edition.

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

Grading

A+: 97-100; A: 92-96.9; A-: 90-92.9

B+: 87-89.9; B: 82-86.9; B-: 80-82.9

C+: 77-79.9; C: 72-76.9; C-: 70-72.9

D+: 67-69.9; D: 60-66.9

F: Below 60

NOTE: Students in Journalism and Strategic Media must earn a B or better to earn credit in the

course.

Grade Distribution

Assignment	Percent of grade
Discussions	10%
Journal Article Critiques	20%
Exams	20%
Assignments & Colloquium	20%
Research Paper	30%

Intellectual Property

1. Ideas cannot be copyrighted, but the way they are described can.
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The term “plagiarism” includes, but is not limited to, the use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work of another person without full or clear acknowledgement.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.

Attendance & Class conduct

Attendance is mandatory and will be taken at the beginning of each class session. Students are allowed three unexcused absences; after three, additional unexcused absences will drop the student’s final grade by one letter grade for each absence. Missing a total of seven classes will result in the student failing the course. University policy for excused absences apply to this course. Tardiness will not be tolerated. After two tardiness, one percentage point will be deducted from the student’s final grade for each additional tardy.

Students who attend graduate courses online meet in real time via the videoconferencing program Zoom and must plan to spend three hours a week in class, per class. Students will need an Internet connection, speakers and a mic (or a headset with a built-in mic). This form of instruction is referred to as "synchronous" and is the signature teaching method at The University of Memphis.

Online students must have a dedicated Internet connection with stable signal to support video conferencing. Students must be in a quiet place where they can fully participate in the courses. Zoom cameras must be turned on for the duration of the class period.

Mobile and electronic devices

The use of electronic devices is permitted, as this class focuses on technological tools. Mobile telephones must be turned to vibrate during class and should be used only for emergencies. Excessive text messaging will not be tolerated.

Deadlines

All deadlines are firm. This is journalism and mass communications. Assignments turned in late will be deducted a letter grade for each day late. Exceptions will be made for reasonable circumstances if the student notifies the instructor prior to or on the due date.

Assignments

This section is meant as a general guideline to the major assignments within the class. More detail will be provided in class and on eCourseware. Deadlines are also listed in the Class Schedule. All work should be turned in via Dropbox in eCourseware unless otherwise noted. All work is due at 11:59 p.m. CT on the Saturday of the week assigned, unless otherwise noted.

Discussions (10%)

Students will write a 200-word reaction to each week's readings on Canvas.

Journal Article Critique (20%)

Students will find a published, peer-reviewed journal article using each of the three methods we discuss in class. The instructor must approve the article before the student begins work. Student will read the article and write a 250-word critique of the article, with particular attention to the method addressed in the article. Articles should be drawn from journalism and mass communication journals, such as *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*, *Mass Communication & Society*, *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.

Exams (20%)

Midterm and final exams take 20% of the final grade.

Assignments and Colloquium (20%)

Assigned throughout the semester based on the topic under discussion. Some will be statistics related and others will be sampling technique related. Graduate students must attend and write a one-page reflection paper about at least one Research Colloquium sponsored by the Department. Attendance and papers of the colloquium will count for 2% of the assignments and colloquium grade. Those who cannot attend will receive instructions about remote viewing from your instructor.

Research Project (30%)

Approximately 20-page research paper addressing a phenomenon in journalism and mass communications. Student must conduct original research for the paper.

Additional information about research paper

PROSPECTUS (1 to 3 pages double spaced) (10%)

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. 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).

- Propose your research questions or hypotheses at the very end of this prospectus. Make sure your research questions or hypotheses are clear. List them as RQ1, RQ2, RQ3 etc., or H1, H2, H3, H4 etc.

PROPOSAL (25%)

In total, your proposal should be about 8-10 pages long. It should include the following sections:

- Begin with a brief introduction that explains the journalism and mass communication problem or phenomenon you are researching.
- Write an 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).
- 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.
- Write a methodology that explains the procedure for data collection, sampling, and analysis.
- Any tools needed for data collection (questionnaire, code book, interview guide, etc.).

RESEARCH PAPER (60%)

Build on your proposal and complete an original research project.

- 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.
- Use third-person, active voice.
- Within your paper, you will have sections on short introduction, short literature review, full method, full results, full discussion, full conclusion, and complete references.
- 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.

RESEARCH PRESENTATION (5%)

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

COURSE SCHEDULE

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 eCourseware.

WEEK 1, August 23, Research fundamentals

Nature of scientific inquiry

WEEK 2, August 30, Conceptualization and Operationalization.

Defining concepts. Research questions vs. hypotheses.

WEEK 3, September 6, Measurement

Scales. Variables.

WEEK 4, September 13 Sampling

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

WEEK 5, September 20, Research practices

Institutional Review Board. Research ethics. Laws in research.

WEEK 6, September 27, Midterm exam

Institutional Review Board. Research ethics. Laws in research.

WEEK 7, October 4, Content Analysis

Selection. Coding. Reliability testing. Code books.

WEEK 8, October 11, Fall break

WEEK 9, October 18, Survey

Populations. Scales. Factor Analysis.

WEEK 10, October 25, Experiment

Setup. Organization. Analysis.

WEEK 11, November 1, Descriptive Statistics

Central tendency. Frequencies.

WEEK 12, November 8, Inferential Statistics

Chi Square, ANOVA, T-tests, Correlation.

WEEK 13, November 15, Analysis & Conclusions

Results. Discussions.

WEEK 14, November 22, No class

WEEK 15, November 29, Presentations

10-minute presentations of research.

JOURNALISM AND STRATEGIC MEDIA 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 graduate students are to begin in JRSM 7002. Students are to contribute to it in every skills course thereafter. The portfolio should contain samples of the student's work from courses and/or professional experiences and should develop as the student builds skills. Portfolios will undergo a final, external review while students are enrolled in their capstone courses.

Students may use any type of web hosting for their portfolios, but it must have an independent and professional URL. Students may use any content management system, but students are encouraged to use WordPress, Wix or Squarespace. Students are encouraged to consider purchasing a URL and hosting if they plan to use the portfolio for a long term, but they 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 lives, via a common email service, such as Gmail.

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 writing 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

Students must have their UofM email accounts activated. Students using another provider, such as Google, are required to have all UofM email forwarded to that account. Students should go to the <http://iam.memphis.edu> website to implement forwarding of UofM email. Students are required to check their email daily. They are responsible for complying with any email sent to by professors or others in the University.

Electronic devices

Some classes require a tablet, laptop or a smartphone. Others do not. Instructors will set the policy for their specific classes.

Attendance

Class attendance is mandatory in Journalism and Strategic Media. Students may be assigned a failing grade for the semester for nonattendance or habitual late arrival. No late work will be accepted without prior arrangements with the class 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). Journalism and Strategic Media is a professional program, and students are expected to understand and comply with deadlines. Students who have some problem making it to class on time should make arrangements to correct the problem or consider taking another class. Students should consider this class as a "job" in the educational process and be on time just as they would elsewhere.

Course repetition

Majors and minors who fail to earn the minimum passing grade ("C-") in a class required by their program of study in Journalism and Strategic Media more than three times will be dropped from the program.

Students may not use or submit work from a previous course, even if it is the same course being repeated, to fulfill requirements for assignments in another course. If students wish to substantially rework the original submission, or to work with the same general idea, that may be permissible upon discussion with and written approval from the professor of the current course. All written work will be checked for policy adherence via TurnItIn.com. All creative work will be checked for policy adherence by the professor and judged against previous submissions. The only exception to this policy is the student's online portfolio and its attendant pieces (for example, the résumé and logo).

Academic integrity

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 students receiving any assistance from others for work assigned to be done on their own, as acts of cheating punishable to the degree determined appropriate by the course instructor and department chair. Punishment may include grade reductions or seeking dismissal of the student from the University.

Further, as this is a journalism and strategic media 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 rating originality of your ideas. Also to evaluate proper use and assignment of sources. As part of this process, you may require to submit electronic as well as hard copies of your work. Other instructions to follow may also be given. By taking this course, you agree that all assignments may undergo this review process. The assignment may be included as a source document in Turnitin.com's restricted access database. It is solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism in such documents. Assignments not submitted according to the instructor's procedures may be penalized or may not be accepted at all. (*Office of Legal Counsel, October 11, 2018*)

Online SETEs

Students are urged to complete the SETEs evaluation of this course. Once the instructor has posted grades, student can immediately see that grade, provided they have completed a the SETE for that class.

To access evaluation forms, students should log in to MyMemphis using their UUIDs and email passwords; click on the gray “Student” tab; complete an evaluation for each course listed and hit the “Submit” button at the bottom of the form. Completing the SETE will only take a few minutes. Faculty take the evaluations very seriously and use them to improve courses and instructional quality. Student feedback is essential and is appreciated.

Deadlines

All deadlines are firm. This is journalism and strategic media. Students needing an extension on an assignment must receive approval from the 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 must follow the AP Stylebook and accepted rules of grammar and punctuation. Students are responsible for learning these rules and checking their work for errors.

Disability and accommodations

Students who need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the Office for Disability Resources for Students at 901-678-2880 in 110 Wilder Tower Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

Diversity and inclusivity

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. Media 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.

Student support

Students who are experiencing personal or academic challenges including, but not limited to food or housing issues, family needs, or other stressors, should visit the Office of Student Accountability, Outreach & Support page to learn about resources that can help: <https://www.memphis.edu/saos/sos/crisis-resources.php>. Any student who faces personal challenges including, but not limited to securing their food or housing and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact the Office of Student Accountability, Outreach & Support (901-678-2187) located in the University Center, Suite 359 for assistance. Students may also talk with course instructors about the challenges they are experiencing. Instructors may be able to assist in connecting with campus or community support.

COVID-19 protocols

If a student tests positive for COVID-19, they need to notify the Dean of Students Office at deanofstudents@memphis.edu and notify the University of their result. Faculty are expected to be accommodating with extra time for assignments; however, decisions will vary on a case-by-case basis according to the severity of the student's illness. To prevent the spread of COVID-19, students are encouraged to wear masks indoors, wash hands frequently and wipe down their workstations with sanitizing wipes before and after class.