Quantitative Research Methods

JRSM 7080
Spring 2026
Class Meeting: Tuesday 5:30pm – 8:30pm MJ106

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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 primarily 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
Keyton, J. (2019). *Communication research: Asking questions, finding answers*. New York, NY: McGraw Hill.

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

Grading
A: 90% or above
B: 80% - 89%
C: 70% - 79%
D: 60% - 69%
F: < 60%

Grading Philosophy
A = Professional quality work that could be use with little or no modification
B = Good to excellent work and exceeds requirement, but would require revision to be used professionally
C = Satisfactory work and adequately meets requirement, but would need significant revision
D = Barely satisfies minimum requirement and below average quality
F = Unsatisfactory work and does not meet minimum requirement

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

Grade Distribution

Assignment	% of Grade
Guest Speaker & Colloquium	10%
Journal Article Summary & Critique	30%
Exercise	20%
Research Project	40%

Intellectual Property
1. Ideas cannot by 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. Attendance will be determined by signing the daily sign-in sheet for the course.

Mobile and electronic devices
The use of electronic devices is permitted, as this class focuses on design and technology. 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 Canvas. Deadlines are also listed in the Class Schedule. All work should be turned in via Dropbox in Canvas unless otherwise noted. All work is due at the start of class, 11:59 p.m. CT on the Friday of the week assigned, unless otherwise noted.

Journal Article Summary and Critique (25%)
Each student will do two journal article critiques throughout the semester. Students will sign up for their weeks in advance. The student responsible for a given article is expected to distribute a handout and make a 25-minute presentation of the article in the class, followed by 5 minutes of questions from the instructor and fellow students. ****You should upload both your PowerPoint presentation and your handout (word document) to Canvas at least 24 hours before the class starts.**

Each critique will be graded on a 10-point scale as follows: 1 point each for correct identification of concepts and statement of research question, 3 points for description of methods used, 2 for interpretation of results, and 3 points for a detailed methodological critique of the study (which includes coming up with creative alternative explanations and discussion points for the class to think about as a way to expand/redesign). The quality of your participation in other students' paper critiques is also important. That is, when they critique their article in class, it is important for you to have read the assigned article ahead of time and come prepared with questions, probes, suggestions, etc.

Exams (10%)
There will be two exams: mid-term and final exam.

Assignments (5%)
Assigned throughout the semester based on the topic under discussion. Some will be statistics related, and others will be sampling technique related.

Guest Speaker and Colloquium (10%)

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 (50%)

Groups of 2 or 3 students will be formed to facilitate peer learning and collective brainstorming through the research process. Each group will discuss relevant methodological issues during class meetings and conduct a research project by the end of the semester. **Each group should have no more than 3 students.** Details on the Research Project will be spelled out as the semester progresses.

LIST OF READINGS

Aarestad, S. H., Flaa, T. A., Griffiths, M. D., & Pallesen, S. (2023). Smartphone Addiction and Subjective Withdrawal Effects: A Three-Day Experimental Study. Sage Open, 13(4), 21582440231219538. https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440231219538

Anghelcev, G., Sar, S., Martin, J. D., & Moultrie, J. L. (2021). Binge-Watching Serial Video Content: Exploring the Subjective Phenomenology of the Binge-Watching Experience. Mass Communication and Society, 24(1), 130–154. https://doi.org/10.1080/15205436.2020.1811346

Brooks, M. E., Bichard, S., & Craig, C. (2016). What's the Score?: A Content Analysis of Mature Adults in Super Bowl Commercials. Howard Journal of Communications, 27(4), 347–366. https://doi.org/10.1080/10646175.2016.1206046

Dillard, J. P., & Spear, M. E. (2010). Knowledge of Human Papillomavirus and Perceived Barriers to Vaccination in a Sample of US Female College Students. Journal of American College Health, 59(3), 186–190. https://doi.org/10.1080/07448481.2010.493189

Dou, X., Walden, J. A., Lee, S., & Lee, J. Y. (2012). Does source matter? Examining source effects in online product reviews. Computers in Human Behavior, 28(5), 1555–1563. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2012.03.015

Floyd, K., Mikkelson, A. C., Hesse, C., & Pauley, P. M. (2007). Affectionate Writing Reduces Total Cholesterol: Two Randomized, Controlled Trials. Human Communication Research, 33(2), 119–142. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2958.2007.00293.x

Guo, M., & Sun, F.-S. (2020). Like, Comment, or Share? Exploring the Effects of Local Television News Facebook Posts on News Engagement. Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media, 64(5), 736–755. https://doi.org/10.1080/08838151.2020.1851125

Haigh, M. M., & Bruce, M. (2017). A comparison of the visual and story frames Al Jazeera English and CNN employed during the 2011 Egyptian revolution. International

Communication Gazette, 79(4), 419–433.
https://doi.org/10.1177/1748048516682141

Hou, Y., Xiong, D., Jiang, T., Song, L., & Wang, Q. (2019). Social media addiction: Its impact, mediation, and intervention. Cyberpsychology: Journal of Psychosocial Research on Cyberspace, 13(1). https://doi.org/10.5817/CP2019-1-4

Kim, S.-H., Thrasher, J. F., Kang, M.-H., Cho, Y. J., & Kim, J. K. (2017). News Media Presentations of Electronic Cigarettes: A Content Analysis of News Coverage in South Korea. Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly, 94(2), 443–464. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077699017696881

Kim, W., Ryoo, Y., Lee, S., & Lee, J. A. (2023). Chatbot Advertising As a Double-Edged Sword: The Roles of Regulatory Focus and Privacy Concerns. Journal of Advertising, 52(4), 504–522. https://doi.org/10.1080/00913367.2022.2043795

Kross, E., Verduyn, P., Demiralp, E., Park, J., Lee, D. S., Lin, N., Shablack, H., Jonides, J., & Ybarra, O. (2013). Facebook Use Predicts Declines in Subjective Well-Being in Young Adults. PLoS ONE, 8(8), e69841. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0069841

Lee, K. M. (2004). Presence, Explicated. Communication Theory, 14(1), 27–50. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2885.2004.tb00302.x

Liao, M., Wang, J., Chen, C., & Sundar, S. S. (2025). Less vigilant in the mobile era? A comparison of information processing on mobile phones and personal computers. New Media & Society, 27(5), 2657–2683. https://doi.org/10.1177/14614448231209475

Liu, B. (2021). In AI We Trust? Effects of Agency Locus and Transparency on Uncertainty Reduction in Human–AI Interaction. Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, 26(6), 384–402. https://doi.org/10.1093/jcmc/zmab013

Moss, C. E., & Waddell, T. F. (2025). Happiest streaming platform on earth: The role of presumed influence in the parental control decision process. New Media & Society, 27(5), 2846–2864. https://doi.org/10.1177/14614448231215486

Neuman, W. R., Davidson, R., Joo, S.-H., Park, Y. J., & Williams, A. E. (2008). The Seven Deadly Sins of Communication Research. Journal of Communication, 58(2), 220–237. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2008.00382.x

Parry, D. A., & Coetzee, B. (2025). Do mindsets really matter? A second look at how perceptions of social media experiences relate to well-being. Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, 30(4), zmaf011. https://doi.org/10.1093/jcmc/zmaf011

Sar, S. (2013). The effects of mood, gender, and ad context on type of elaboration and product evaluation. Journal of Marketing Communications, 19(5), 308–323. https://doi.org/10.1080/13527266.2011.632641

Wang, R., & Haigh, M. (2024). News reading on smartphones: How do mood, modality interactivity, and news story length influence news engagement? Behaviour & Information Technology, 43(16), 4192–4207. https://doi.org/10.1080/0144929X.2024.2306483

Wang, R., & Huang, Y. (2022). How Do Narrative Structure and Format Influence a 360 Degree Video Ad? Journal of Promotion Management, 28(6), 774–794. https://doi.org/10.1080/10496491.2021.2015511

Wang, R., Yang, F., Zheng, S., & Sundar, S. S. (2016). Why Do We Pin? New Gratifications Explain Unique Activities in Pinterest. Social Media + Society, 2(3), 2056305116662173. https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305116662173

Wang, R., Yang, J., & Haught, M. (2023). User engagement with consumer technology video ads on YouTube: A study of content analysis and experiment. Telematics and Informatics Reports, 12, 100107. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.teler.2023.100107

Wang, R., & Yu, N. (2018). Friending instructors on Facebook: Exploring the role of privacy on student-instructor connection on cyberspace. Telematics and Informatics, 35(5), 1215–1221. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tele.2018.02.004

Wang, W., & Shen, F. (2019). The effects of health narratives: Examining the moderating role of persuasive intent. Health Marketing Quarterly, 36(2), 120–135. https://doi.org/10.1080/07359683.2019.1575061

Yang, H., & Sundar, S. S. (2025). AI anxiety: Explication and exploration of effect on state anxiety when interacting with AI doctors. Computers in Human Behavior: Artificial Humans, 3, 100128. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chbah.2025.100128

Yoon, H. J., & Tinkham, S. F. (2013). Humorous Threat Persuasion in Advertising: The Effects of Humor, Threat Intensity, and Issue Involvement. Journal of Advertising, 42(1), 30–41. https://doi.org/10.1080/00913367.2012.749082

Yu, N., & Kong, J. (2016). User experience with web browsing on small screens: Experimental investigations of mobile-page interface design and homepage design for news websites. Information Sciences, 330, 427–443. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ins.2015.06.004

Yu, N., Song, Y., & Xu, Q. (2023). Public Discourse of Genetically Modified Organisms in China: An Investigation of Commenting and Reposting Behaviors on Social Media. Emerging Media, 1(1), 70–92. https://doi.org/10.1177/27523543231196341

Zhang, B., & Gearhart, S. (2020). Collecting Online Survey Data: A Comparison of Data Quality among a Commercial Panel & MTurk. Survey Practice, 13(1), 1–10. https://doi.org/10.29115/SP-2020-0015

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 Canvas.

WEEK 1, Jan 20 - 23, Research fundamentals
Nature of scientific inquiry

WEEK 2, Jan 26 - 30, Conceptualization and Operationalization.
Defining concepts. Research questions vs. hypotheses.
Guest Speaker (Dr. Jinping Wang, Florida) 1/27 5:40pm – 6:10pm

WEEK 3, Feb 2 - 6, Measurement
Scales. Variables.
Guest Speaker (Dr. Guolan Yang, UIUC) 2/3 5:40pm – 6:10pm

WEEK 4, Feb 9 - 13, Sampling
Simple random sample. Stratified sample. Snowball. Convenience. Purposive. Central limit theorem. Sampling error. Confidence levels.
Guest Speaker (Dr. Yan Huang, Houston) 2/10 5:40pm – 6:10pm

WEEK 5, Feb 16 - 20, Research Ethics
Institutional Review Board. Research ethics. Laws in research.

WEEK 6, Feb 23 - 27, Content Analysis
Selection. Coding. Reliability testing. Code books.

WEEK 7, March 2 - 6, Survey
Populations. Scales. Factor Analysis.

WEEK 8, March 9 – 13, Spring Break
Mid-Term Exam

WEEK 9, March 16 - 19, Experiment
Setup. Organization. Analysis.

WEEK 10, March 23 - 27, Descriptive Statistics
Central tendency. Frequencies.

WEEK 11, March 30 – April 3, Inferential Statistics
Chi Square, ANOVA, T-tests, Correlation.

WEEK 12, April 6 - 10, Data Analysis
Results. Discussions.

WEEK 13, April 13 - 17, Data Interpretation
Data interpretation.

WEEK 14, April 20 - 24, Workday
Work on your research project

WEEK 15, April 27 – May 1, Presentations
10-minute presentations of research.

Final Paper Due: Tuesday, May 5, Midnight

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

Student 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.