

Communication Research Methods * Fall 2007, Wednesdays 2:00-4:40 * C. Knopf

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Office Hours: Tuesday & Thursday afternoons *by appointment*, Mon/Wed/Fri 9:30-10:00 & 11:00-12:30

TEXT: Investigating Communication: An Introduction to Research Methods, 2nd ed. ISBN:0-205-19826-0
By: L.R. Frey, C.H. Botan, & G.L. Kreps

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course is designed to introduce you to the methods used by both scholars and communication professionals to acquire knowledge and test theories. The focus of the course will span both quantitative and qualitative forms of research. (Don't worry, we'll go over what this means.) It is an introduction to (a) the nature of academic inquiry in communication, (b) the basic structure and methodology of professional and academic research, and (c) the resources available for access to published research. In other words, this course will be useful to you when writing papers or reading assignments for other classes and relates to most communication professions you may be interested in entering.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- You will be fluent in reading, summarizing, and writing APA style research reports.
- You will be familiar with APA style of writing research reports, including correct attribution of sources, citing of sources, the use of headings and subheads to organize research reports, and reference sections.
- You will be able to understand the differences, as well as strengths and weaknesses of qualitative and quantitative research in general.
- You will understand the how to conduct qualitative research methods, including interviewing, conducting ethnographic research, and focus groups.
- You will understand the principles of scientific sampling, as well as the strengths and weaknesses of various sampling methods.
- You will be able to construct various forms of social science measurements.
- You will understand the how to conduct quantitative research methods, including experiments, surveys, and content analysis.

ATTENDANCE: Class activities, discussions, and group exercises constitute a major portion of the learning experience in this course. Your experiences and contributions create your course accomplishments. Therefore, missed classes cannot be "recovered" by reading the text or borrowing class notes. I will frequently assign in-class assignments about the day's topic. Because of the topical and interactive nature of the assignments, they **cannot be made up**. End of story. These assignments do count toward your final grade, and thus, your attendance and active participation and completion of all assignments will have a direct bearing on your grade as well as your overall experience in this class. If you cannot avoid missing a class, you are responsible for bringing yourself up to date. Be in class early enough so that you are ready to work when class is scheduled to begin. Tardiness disrupts the class. Attendance and punctuality problems will lead to grade reductions in proportion to the extent of lateness and absence.

I reserve the right to reduce your final course grade by a letter grade if I deem poor attendance or tardiness problems to have interfered with your learning or the learning of others.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING: All assignments must be completed to receive a passing grade. Late assignments will be accepted only in extenuating circumstances and if you have made arrangements with me prior to the due date. Regardless, the final grade will be reduced 10% for each day it is late (including Saturdays and Sundays). I will give feedback on drafts no later than 2 days before due date; rewriting after due date is not an option.

Final Exam: Worth 20% of your final grade

This will demonstrate your familiarity with the terminology and your ability to apply concepts. Will be open book.
The Final Exam is Scheduled for December 12, 2:45-4:45!!!

Literature Review: Worth 20% of your final grade

A 5-10 page paper that summarizes the research and literature available on a communication topic of interest to you. This will be the basis for, and the start of, your final research proposal.

Research Proposal: Worth 40% of your final grade.

A literature review, original research question, proposed methodology, and discussion of likely data. 10-20 pages.

Summary & Question Paragraphs for chapters 1-6: Worth 5% of your final grade

One paragraph summaries of the chapter with a question regarding something you didn't understand or something you'd like to know more about.

Research Paragraphs for chapters 7-10: Worth 5% of your final grade

Descriptions of two possible research projects that could be conducted using a method described in the chapter. Each description will be one paragraph.

(All together, your readings-based paragraphs are worth 10% of your grade)

In-class assignments: Worth 10% of your final grade

We will conduct minor research projects in class in order to demonstrate the methods being discussed.

Grades are figured using the following chart:

4.0	97-100	2.0	77-79
3.7	93-96	1.7	73-76
3.3	90-92	1.3	70-72
3.0	87-89	1.0	66-69
2.7	83-86	0	0-65
2.3	80-82		

REQUESTS FOR REEVALUATION: The burden of proof in any disagreement over evaluation of student performance rests with the student. If you desire reevaluation of a grade for an assignment or activity, you must submit your rationale in writing. Your request should identify the specific change requested and provide a reasoned argument and evidence in support of that change. Any request for reevaluation must be made within one week of receiving the original evaluation.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: You are expected to uphold the college's standards or academic integrity. Plagiarism of any kind is not tolerated in this class and will result in failure of the course.

Calendar of Due Dates

Wednesday	29-Aug	course introduction
Wednesday	5-Sep	ch 1
Wednesday	12-Sep	ch 2
Wednesday	19-Sep	ch 3
Wednesday	26-Sep	ch 4
Wednesday	3-Oct	ch 5
Wednesday	10-Oct	ch 6
Wednesday	17-Oct	ch 7 LITERATURE REVIEW DUE
Wednesday	24-Oct	ch 8
Wednesday	31-Oct	ch 9
Wednesday	7-Nov	ch 10
Wednesday	14-Nov	NCA class activity TBA
Wednesday	21-Nov	RECESS
Wednesday	28-Nov	ch 11-12
Wednesday	5-Dec	ch 13-14 RESEARCH PROPOSAL DUE
	12-Dec	2:45-4:45 FINAL EXAM

