Instructor: Jason C. Coronel, Ph.D.
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Office phone: 614-242-9062
Office hours: Friday 10:15 to 11:15 or by appointment
Office: 3127 Derby Hall

Course location: Derby Hall 3116
Course time: Tuesday and Thursday, 5:30-6:50

Course Description

The main goal of the course is to familiarize students with the traditional and some of the emerging research methods used in communication research. The first 4/5ths of the course will be spent concentrating on the process of defining important research questions and the logic of research design along with a survey of the main research techniques employed in empirical studies in communication. The rest of the course will focus on emerging approaches and perspectives.

An entire course can be spent on many of the topics discussed here. Unfortunately, there is always a trade-off between breadth and depth of coverage. The course focuses on breadth and exposure to the basics. However, if successful, this course will provide you with a strong foundation on which you can build as you pursue a research career in communication science.

Finally, good research requires more than an important question and a rigorous design; it also requires good writing. This course will place a high premium on writing and it will be a constant topic of discussion.

The course objectives are as follows:

To become familiar with classic and emerging methods in the field

To encourage students to begin to formulate important research questions

To help students create rigorous research designs in order to answer those questions

To encourage clear, precise, and succinct writing

Course Format

Each session will be a combination of lecture and a class discussion. During lecture, I will discuss a large amount of information that go beyond the assigned readings. Thus, it is important that you attend each session and take good notes.
Course Requirements

(1) **Participation** (10% of final grade). You are expected to attend class and to participate fully in class discussions. This requires that you have read the materials and you have thought seriously about them. Class participation is mandatory and *everyone* will be expected to contribute to class discussions.

(2) **Assignments** (10% of final grade). There will be several take-home assignments over the course of the semester.

(3) **Weekly questions** (10% of final grade). For every class session, you are required to generate three discussion questions from any of the readings. You will begin submitting these questions in week two.

(4) **Midterm** (25% of final grade). Your midterm exam will mirror the format of a qualifying exam. It will be a take-home exam and you will have several days to complete it. It will test and improve your skills in (1) making clear and compelling arguments (2) integrating ideas across different course readings and (3) thinking deeply about the “big picture” and study-specific issues in research methods/design (i.e., seeing both the “forest” and the “trees”).

(5) **Research design proposal** (40% of final grade). You will write a research design proposal (15 to 20 pages without references) that employs at least one of the methods covered in the course. It should answer an important question in the field and you are encouraged to be creative and come up with your own topic. Your grade will be based on scientific merit, creativity, feasibility, quality of the writing, and the extent to which you were able to incorporate material that was covered in the course. I will provide more details and guidelines about the research design proposal at various points during the semester.

(6) **Presentation of research design proposal** (5% of final grade). You will give a 15 minute presentation of your research design proposal in front of class. It will be followed by a 15 minute question and answer section. Everyone will be required to provide both constructive and critical feedback. The Q&A is meant to improve your skills in responding to criticisms of your study.

**Academic Misconduct**

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term “academic misconduct” includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct [http://studentlife.osu.edu/csc/](http://studentlife.osu.edu/csc/)
Disability Services

Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office for Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. The Office for Disability Services is located in 150 Pomerene Hall, 1760 Neil Avenue; telephone 292-3307, TDD 292-0901; [http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu](http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu)

Tentative Course Schedule

Tuesday August 23: Introduction to the course

Thursday August 25: Theory and hypotheses


Tuesday August 30: Concept and measurement; Validity and reliability


Thursday September 1: General introduction to causation; Introduction to experiments and observational studies


Tuesday September 6: Internal and external validity; Self-selection


Thursday September 8: Lab experiments: Bringing the real world into the lab


Tuesday September 13: Lab experiments: Simulating possible worlds


Thursday September 15: Field experiments


Tuesday September 20: Natural experiments; Designs that combine lab and field experiments


Thursday September 22: Observational studies part 1: Matching; Before-After Studies; Interrupted Time Series


Tuesday September 27: Observational studies part 2: Cross-sectional comparisons; Differences-in-Differences Strategies


Thursday September 29: Immutable characteristics


Tuesday October 4: Take home midterm exam

Thursday October 6: Sampling part 1

Tuesday October 11: Sampling part 2


Thursday October 13: Fall break

Tuesday October 18: Surveys part 1


Thursday October 20: Surveys part 2


Tuesday October 25: Content analysis part 1


Thursday October 27: Content analysis part 2; Content analysis exercise

Tuesday November 1: Replication/Reproducibility part 1

Thursday November 3: Replication/Reproducibility part 2


Tuesday November 8: Behavioral measures


Thursday November 10: Psychophysiological measures part 1


Tuesday November 15: Psychophysiological measures part 2


Thursday November 17: Qualitative methods (guest lecture)

Tuesday November 22: Discussion of research papers

Thursday November 24: Thanksgiving

Tuesday November 29: Research design presentations

Thursday December 1: Research design presentations
Tuesday December 6: Research design presentations

Thursday December 8: Research design presentations

Tuesday December 13: Final papers due