

COMM 3160 COMMUNICATION RESEARCH METHODS -- SP 2016

Instructors

Dr. Silvia Knobloch-Westerwick

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Office hours: Fr 9:00am-10:00am, and by appointment

Lorraine Borghetti

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Office hours: Tuesdays, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.,

Wednesdays, 9 a.m. to 11 a.m., and by appointment.

Stefanie Best

3041 Derby Hall,

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Office hours: Thursdays, 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.,

Fridays, 12:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m., and by appointment

Students can visit office hours of either TA, regardless of whether they're enrolled in the lab section taught by a TA.

Class meetings

Lecture: Dr. Silvia Knobloch-Westerwick, Journalism 360, WeFr 11:10AM - 12:30PM

| <u>Lab session time</u> | <u>Location</u> | <u>Instructor</u> |
|-------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Mo 10:05AM - 11:55AM | Journalism Bldg 342 | Stefanie Best |
| Mo 12:10PM - 2:00PM | Journalism Bldg 342 | Stefanie Best |
| Mo 2:15PM - 4:05PM | Journalism Bldg 342 | Lorraine Borghetti |
| Mo 4:20PM - 6:10PM | Journalism Bldg 342 | Lorraine Borghetti |

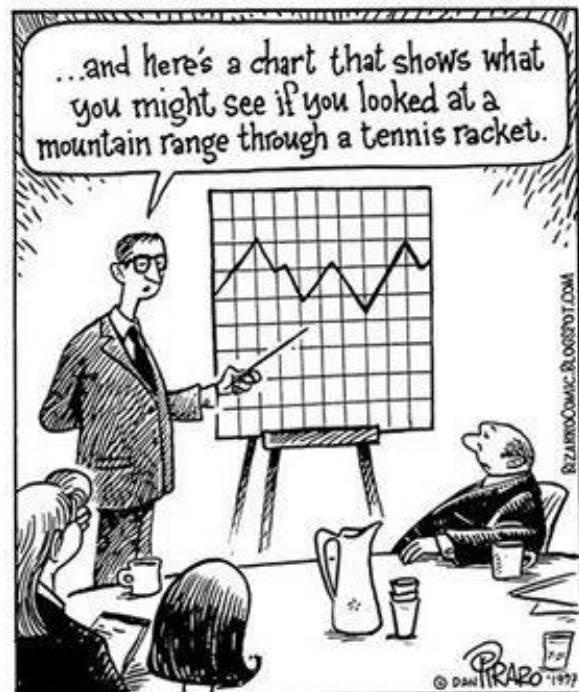
Course description

This course introduces you to research methods that are widely used in communication and in the social sciences. It will help you to read reports of scientific studies and become a better consumer of the claims that people make about the world around you. The course will also prepare you to participate in more specialized upper-division social science research courses as well as to engage in research activities.

There are many research-related activities and skills required in communication careers.

Check out testimonials in CARMEN section "Importance of Research Skills"!

After taking the course, you should be able to tell a well-conducted poll from a poorly conducted one, identify flimsy versus sound claims based on scientific evidence, and generally better understand "the facts" that are presented to you as truths. This term, we will have a variety of lectures, readings, assignments, discussion sections and some research activities that you conduct. As a result of these activities, you will learn to carefully think about and evaluate how we come to know what we know.



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Specific Learning Goals

- **Basic Research Tools:** Know how to access communication journals; Know how to use a journal database.
- **Research Design:** Know the purpose of social science research; Define research concepts and terms; Distinguish between conceptualization and operationalization; Define and give examples of reliability and validity; Identify independent and dependent variables; Write research questions and hypotheses; Assess an experiment.
- **Data Collection:** Distinguish among nominal, ordinal, interval, ratio levels of measurement; Select appropriate measurement methods and defend choices made.
- **Using Computer for Statistics:** Successfully use the statistical features of SPSS.
- **Data Analysis:** Distinguish between the use of descriptive and prescriptive statistics; Calculate basic descriptive statistics (i.e., frequencies, mean, standard deviation); Use chi-squares, correlations, and t-tests; Have a fundamental understanding of ANOVA and regression.
- **Research Reports:** Understand what is in a research report and how it can be useful to you; Write a research report.

NOTE: Students with disabilities

This syllabus is available in alternative formats upon request. Students with disabilities are responsible for making their needs known to the instructor and seeking assistance in a timely manner. Any student who feels he/she may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss your specific needs, or contact the office for disability services at 292-3307 in Room 150 Pomerene Hall to coordinate your documented disabilities.

WHAT DO I NEED TO DO FOR CLASS?

Be there, take your notes, ask questions if you are not sure about a topic, and feel free to comment on things based on your own experiences and ideas. The more you are willing to contribute to class discussions, the better the chance to make it a really good learning experience for all of us.

Textbook

Keyton, Joann (2015). *Communication research: Asking questions, finding answers*. 4th Edition. New York: McGraw Hill Education.

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Course Communication and Class Website

We will use Carmen (<https://carmen.osu.edu>) and for maintaining records such as the syllabus, course announcements, handouts, grades and other useful web-links and materials.

We may use TopHat (<https://tophat.com/>), an interface for student input and interaction via computer, mobile device, or phone. Tophat also serves to take class attendance electronically.

Thus, some course materials will be presented online, and some course communication will use online channels. Hence, it is absolutely essential that you have access to the Internet and a working OSU e-mail address. Online discussions, chat, and other forms of online interaction may be conducted through CARMEN. It is possible that some in-class activities will be performed through OSU Tophat or simply submitted on paper.

You are responsible for all information sent to you via your OSU email account and/or posted on the Carmen website. It is important for you to check your OSU email account regularly and to clear out unnecessary material so that new messages can get through. Check your spam settings to be certain that class emails from us are getting through to your mailbox. Check Carmen regularly for any updates or announcements posted there.

Group work:

Throughout the semester, your work will focus on investigating hypotheses/research questions on a topic of your choice. Most of the related work will happen in your work group, with about 5 students. The work groups will be formed right at the beginning of the semester in lecture—you'll get a sheet with the color code of your lab section to find others from the same lab.

| <u>Lab session time</u> | <u>Location</u> | <u>Instructor</u> | <u>Color code</u> |
|-------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Mo 10:05AM - 11:55AM | Journalism Bldg 342 | Stefanie Best | Yellow |
| Mo 12:10PM - 2:00PM | Journalism Bldg 342 | Stefanie Best | Green |
| Mo 2:15PM - 4:05PM | Journalism Bldg 342 | Lorraine Borghetti | Blue |
| Mo 4:20PM - 6:10PM | Journalism Bldg 342 | Lorraine Borghetti | Pink |

Note that groups are free to exclude a group member for future activities/ submissions due to lack of contributions to the group project. Also, a group member may choose to leave a group to work individually on future assignments.

You will conduct a small-scale research project, which will include the steps outlined in the schedule and more specifically in the assignments posted on CARMEN throughout the semester—so you will be guided through these steps in lectures and lab meetings week by week.

Research topics:

Regarding the research topics that the groups will work on, you can choose from the following options and find a focus of your choice within the topic you select. We're using online communication as overall theme.

Just remember that we are studying COMMUNICATION (not business or psychology phenomena).

- A. Online advertising
- B. Online purchase recommendations
- C. Online politics and news
- D. Online videos/video streaming
- E. Social media & social comparisons/
- F. Online gaming



Technology in the Classroom

We encourage you to bring your laptop computer to class to use it for class exercises, or if you want to use it to make notes or to reference reading materials and PDF files containing the course readings. However, these must be used **ONLY** for the intended purpose of furthering your education and participation in the class and must not become a distraction to yourself or others. That means you should not be using these devices, smart phones or tablets for web surfing, texting, using Skype, playing games or whatever else that is not related to our class discussions and activities. We reserve the right to ban all such devices from the classroom if this rule is abused.

In addition, please turn off phones, PDAs, or other devices that make noise during class (unless you must use the device to submit TopHat responses). When you are in class, it is important to give your full attention to any person who is speaking (e.g., professor, GTA or another student). During class, avoid reading newspapers, sending text messages or email, browsing online, sleeping, talking while others are talking, etc. If you engage in these or other disruptive behaviors during class, you will be asked to leave.

Statistical software

You will be perform statistical analyses in this class. Thus it is recommended that you review what you have learned in the prerequisite statistics class you took before, as preparation. You will use statistical software called SPSS. The computers in the lab classrooms already have this software installed, and you are free to use these computers during lab time for your projects. Also, please obtain SPSS on your laptop or other device *as soon as possible*, because some lectures will be run with SPSS workshop parts to enable you to perform your own analyses. You can get SPSS for free through OSU (see instructions for SPSS download on CARMEN under CONTENT course organization).

Survey software

You will work in groups to set up an online questionnaire. For this purpose, you will use Qualtrics. Please set up a qualtrics account (see instructions for account creation on CARMEN under CONTENT course organization).

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Academic misconduct:

All students at the Ohio State University are bound by the Code of Student Conduct (see http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/resource_csc.asp). Suspected violations of the code in this class, especially pertaining to 3335-23-04 Section 1 on Academic Misconduct, will be taken through the procedures which the university has set up to deal with violations of the code.

The university's [Code of Student Conduct](#) defines academic misconduct as "any activity that tends to compromise the academic integrity of the University, or subvert the educational process."

While many people associate academic misconduct with "cheating," the term encompasses a wider scope of student behaviors which include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Violation of course rules;
- Violation of program regulations;
- Knowingly providing or receiving information during a course exam or program assignment;
- Possession and/or use of unauthorized materials during a course exam or program assignment;
- Knowingly providing or using assistance in the laboratory, on field work, or on a course assignment, unless such assistance has been authorized specifically by the course instructor or, where appropriate, a project/research supervisor;
- **Submitting work under a student's name when the student has not contributed to the assignment, was not present during the lecture or lab**
- Submission of work not performed in a course: This includes (but is not limited to) instances where a student fabricates and/or falsifies data or information for a laboratory experiment (i.e., a "dry lab") or other academic assignment. It also includes instances where a student submits data or information (such as a lab report or term paper) from one course to satisfy the requirements of another course, unless submission of such work is permitted by the instructor of the course or supervisor of the research for which the work is being submitted;
- Submitting plagiarized work for a course/program assignment;
- Falsification, fabrication, or dishonesty in conducting or reporting laboratory (research) results;
- Serving as or asking another student to serve as a substitute (a "ringer") while taking an exam;
- Alteration of grades in an effort to change earned credit or a grade;
- Alteration and/or unauthorized use of university forms or records.

Attendance

Attendance at all lectures and labs is required and will be recorded at instructor discretion. If you miss class, understanding the content presented in later meetings will be more difficult for you, because what you learn will build on knowledge you gained earlier. If you miss class, your student group for the final research paper will be hindered in its progress. As it may be disruptive to arrive late, please make an effort to be on time.

In order to allow for compensation of missed sessions or assignments due to illness etc., the grading policy includes a 'drop lowest score' component or bonus points to make up for absences. You should keep documentation for illnesses or other legitimate reasons for absence, so we can potentially work with you if extended or several absences occur.

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Grading Scheme and Grading Components:

The OSU “standard scheme” of grading as implemented by Carmen is used and we will try to keep the grades on Carmen’s grade book. Here is the OSU “standard scheme” **in percentages:** 93 - 100 (A), 90 - 92.99 (A-), 87 - 89.99 (B+), 83 - 86.99 (B), 80 - 82.99 (B-), 77 - 79.99 (C+), 73 - 76.99 (C), 70 - 72.99 (C-), 67 - 69.99 (D+), 60 - 66.99 (D), Below 60 (E). Note that there is *no rounding* in the points system.

| Here the components of your final grade for the term: | max points in category |
|---|------------------------|
| ----- | ----- |
| Three exams, 33 or 34 points each | 100 points |
| In-class activities in lecture (4 bonus points) | 30 points |
| Twelve lab assignments (drop lowest score) (nine assignments worth 4 pts each, three data analysis assignments worth 6 pts each) | 50 points |
| <u>Final research paper</u> | <u>20 points</u> |
| Total | 200 points |
| ----- | ----- |

There will be no opportunities to re-take exams, re-complete assignments, or complete additional work in order to raise your grade.

Exams and quizzes:

We will have three exams (see schedule of for dates) with multiple choice questions. Exams must be taken on the designated exam dates. No early or late exams are allowed except in the case of an illness or family emergency. In the rare event that an illness or emergency arises, it is your responsibility to inform the professor *before* the scheduled exam time, and provide the professor with written documentation of the emergency.

In-class activity points:

In-class questions and activities will be presented during lectures to allow students to earn points for in-class participation. The activities will be designed to help you learn the class content, exchange ideas with instructors and classmates, and progress with your research projects toward the final research paper. Throughout the semester, you will learn the steps of the research process and gain expertise and skills in communication research methods. These activities will usually be submitted on paper and at the end of class; we cannot accept submissions turned in during class. Points will be posted on CARMEN approx.. every 3 weeks.

Lab assignments:

For each lab section meeting, you will receive instructions on a lab assignment. These will often be performed in groups. Most of these assignments will serve to aid your progress toward your final research paper. By conducting a research project, you will learn the steps of the research process and gain expertise and skills in communication research methods.

Final research paper

The final research paper will consist of components that you develop through the various assignments. At the end of class, you will integrate all these elements into one document and polish to create a **cohesive** research report (see related grading rubric on CARMEN under CONTENT course organization).

The final paper is due on April 25, 6:00 pm, upload to CARMEN dropbox.

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WEEKLY SCHEDULE OF LECTURE TOPICS AND READINGS, ASSIGNMENTS (TENTATIVE, SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

| Wk | Topic/Textbook Chapter | Lecture Activity | Lab Activity (following Monday) | Related Final Research Paper Section |
|--|---|--|---|---|
| What is Your Research Purpose? | | | | |
| Week 1 Jan 13 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Course introduction Introduction to communication research, Chapt. 1, pp. 1-15. | Form groups, Tentative Hypotheses & Research Questions | <i>MLK Day</i> | Introduction page |
| Week 2 Jan 20 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Basic elements of research: Libraries and databases. Chapter 2, pp. 18-36 | Identify relevant articles, fill out synopsis sheet | Jan 25 Annotated Bibliography (4 pt) | Literature Review |
| Week 3 Jan 27 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research ethics and the treatment of human subjects. Chapt. 3, Research ethics, pp. 38-60. Introduction to qualitative research and data collection, Chapt. 14, pp. 261-275, Chapt. 16, pp. 298-326. | Draft interview purpose and guideline | Feb 1: Conduct and reflect on qualitative interview (4 pt) | |
| Week 4 Feb 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction to quantitative research Chapt. 4, pp. 62-79 | Identify relevant constructs and variables | Feb 8: Finalize Hypotheses, Research questions (4 pt), Review for exam 1 | Hypotheses and research questions |
| Designing Your Research Procedure | | | | |
| Week 5 Feb 10 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> EXAM 1 on Wednesday, 2/10 Measurement, Reliability and Validity, Chapt. 5, Measurement, pp. 83-105. | Exercises on data levels | Feb 15: Develop survey questions I (4 pt) | Method section |
| Week 6 Feb 17 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Surveys and Questionnaires, Chapt. 8, pp. 146-170. Populations, samples and sample size, Chapt. 6, pp. 106-121 | Peer-review of survey questions | Feb 22: Develop survey questions II (4 pt) | Measures section in Method section |
| Week 7 Feb 24 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research regulation and conflict of interest Read National Commission for the Protection of | Complete CITI ethics course/certificate | Feb 29: Write method section (4 pt) | Method section |

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| Wk | Topic/Textbook Chapter | Lecture Activity | Lab Activity (following Monday) | Related Final Research Paper Section |
|--|--|--------------------------------------|---|--|
| | Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, <i>The Belmont Report</i> , (Carmen) or at http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/humansubjects/guidance/belmont.html | Complete Omnibus Survey | | |
| Week 8 Mar 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experiments Quantitative research designs, Chapt. 7, pp. 122-145. | Making sense of experimental designs | Mar 7: Read & Evaluate Experiment (4 pt), Review for Exam 2 | Future research in discussion section |
| Making Sense of Your Observations | | | | |
| Week 9 Mar 9 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> EXAM 2 on Wednesday 3/9 Analyzing data: Descriptive statistics, significance levels, and hypothesis testing, Chapt. 9, pp. 171-182 | Generate descriptive statistics | Mar 14: No lab, Spring Break | Measures sub-section in the Method Section |
| Mar 16-20 | <i>No lectures, Spring break</i> | | Mar 21: Descriptive Statistics and Writing Assignment (6 pt) | Measures sub-section in the Method Section |
| Week 10 Mar 23 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyzing data: Comparing groups Chapt. 10, Testing for differences, pp. 189-205 | Generate contingency tables, means | Mar 28: Comparing Groups Statistics and Writing Assignment (6 pt) | Results section |
| Week 11 Mar 30 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyzing data: Correlating/relating variables. Testing for relationships, Chapt. 11, pp. 206-223. | Generate correlation, infographic | Apr 4: Correlating Variables Statistics and Writing Assignment (6 pt) | Results section |
| Week 12 Apr 6 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quantitative analysis of text, Chapt. 12, pp. 229-242. | Develop coding categories | April 11: Content coding/analysis (4 pt) | Results section, future discussion section |
| Publish Your Findings! | | | | |
| Week 13 Apr 13 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewing Exam 3 on Friday, April 15 | Exam reviewing | April 18: Review Research Publication Assignment (4 pt) | Discussion section |
| Week 14 Apr 20 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading and writing the quantitative research report. Chapt. 13, pp. 248-258. | Writing workshop | April 25: Finalize research paper | Overall coherence of paper |
| April 25 (W) | Submit research paper by 6:00 pm, 4/25 | | | |