

Communication Industry Research Methods (COMM 3163)
Summer 2016 – 4 credits

Instructor: Alex Hedstrom
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Lectures/Labs:

Mon, Tues, Weds, & Thurs: 9:00am – 11:05am
Journalism 216

Office Hours:

Mon & Tues: 11:10am – 1:10pm
& by appointment
Office: Journalism 211
(door is usually closed so knock loudly)

Course Description:

This course introduces major empirical research methods in social and behavioral sciences, and their applications in the media and marketing research industry (e.g., journalism, PR, advertising). It provides hands-on experience with research processes. It serves as a foundation course for communication majors or minors who want to learn how to conduct media research or critically use research data and results.

Course Objectives:

The goal of this course is student-empowerment through enhanced information literacy. It aims to help you: (1) develop a critical understanding of knowledge and the process of acquiring knowledge; (2) understand the language of technical terms used by scientists and media/marketing research companies; and (3) be able to efficiently locate and obtain information for your career development purposes, and critically interpret, evaluate, and use the information.

This means that by the end of the semester, students will be able to: (1) articulate an understanding of the purpose of research and methodologies commonly used, (2) Identify and compare concepts and processes of basic research methods in media/marketing industry and social scientific research, (3) design and conduct research studies (qualitative and quantitative), (4) conduct, analyze, and interpret basic descriptive data analysis in R, and (5) articulate the process of strategic communication evaluation

Course Format

The course is composed of lecture sessions and a lab section. *During lecture, I will discuss a large amount of information that may go beyond the assigned readings (such information will also appear in the exams).* All information covered during both lecture and lab, regardless of it being in the reading, powerpoints, or only presented orally will be considered material for the examinations. Thus, it is important that you attend each session and take good notes.

Required Readings:

- (1) Wimmer, R.D. & Dominick, J.R. (2014). *Mass Media Research: An Introduction* (10th ed.). Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth.
Earlier Editions should be fine, but you will be responsible for locating and updating any and all differences should they arise.
- (2) Gardener, M. (2012). *Beginning R: The statistical programming language*. Indianapolis: John Wiley & Sons.
Available for Free through the OSU Library:
<http://osu.worldcat.org.proxy.lib.ohio-state.edu/title/beginning-r-the-statistical-programming-language/oclc/797837828>
- (3) Occasionally, extra class readings will be put on Carmen/Canvas or in Class Handouts

Additional Resources:

- (1) Google; I will give a brief primer on using Google to search for R answers
- (2) Quick-R: <http://www.statmethods.net/graphs/index.html>
- (3) OSU Library & Google Scholar

Assignments & Grading

	Assignments	Credits	Due Date
Exam 1		15	May 26
Exam 2		10	June 9
Exercise 1: Ways of Knowing		2	May 12
Exercise 2: Library Literacy		7	May 19
Exercise 3: Qualitative Research Design		7	May 26
Exercise 4: Sampling & Sampling Error		7	June 2
Exercise 5: Quantitative Research Design		15	June 9
R Practicum		10	June 13
Final Exam: Research Critique		7	June 16
Final Presentation		10	Last Week
Participation/Responses/Quizzes		10	Random
Total		100	
Extra Credit from class/research participation		Up to 3%	TBA

- Exam review sheets will not be provided. Work in groups to study and construct review sheets. Exams are multiple-choice, true/false, and/or short answer questions.
- Exercises 1-6 are take home. Some lab sessions will be dedicated to help with the exercise development and completion. These exercises are designed to stimulate your thoughts, improve your understanding of concepts learned in lectures and from readings, and to also assess your skills in applying important concepts to actual questions in research and thinking. Guideline for each exercise will be described in class/lab and posted to Carmen/Canvas.

- Participation/Responses/Quizzes are typically administered in-class and will not be available for make-up after that class session is complete. Some will be short answers to a question (50-100 words) while others are group activities administered at some point during the class session beginning in Week 2. They are related to the lecture topics and designed to test critical aspects of the course. Each will count as 1 credit, unless the answer is nonsense or displays a clear lack of attention or thought, then they will receive 0 credit.
- Attendance will not be taken, though it is strongly recommended to attend all class and lab sessions for the full time.
- Extra Credit: To promote class and research participation, there will be opportunities to earn up to 3 credits of extra credit. These will be announced as they become available.

Final Grading Scale:

Grade	Credits
A	93 – 100
A-	90 – 92.9
B+	87 – 89.9
B	83 – 86.9
B-	80 – 82.9
C+	77 – 79.9
C	73 – 76.9
C-	70 – 72.9
D+	67 – 69.9
D	60 – 66.9
E	Below 60

Additional Policies and Procedures

Students are expected to act responsibly and abide by the following policies:

Laptops, cell-phones, and recording devices:

All cell phones must be silenced during class. Students must refrain from reading the newspaper, texting, listening to headphones, e-mailing, or using the Internet during class unless it is part of the lecture. Students may be asked to leave class for such behaviors. Due to the nature of the classroom, this rule will be strictly enforced, especially if they become disruptive.

Laptops and other electronic devices are allowed in class. *However*, they must only be used for taking notes. If a student is using an electronic device for something other than class-related activities and it is distracting to me, I will kick the student out of the class without discussion of the offense, perceived or otherwise.

Any form of audio or video recording is *not* allowed in class. Students are also not permitted to take pictures of the projection screen. The instructor does *not* give permission for the lecture sessions to be recorded (in either an audio or video format). Any violations will result in being immediately dropped from the class.

Slides on Carmen/Canvas. PowerPoint slides will be posted on Carmen/Canvas. However, you need contextual information provided during lecture in order to understand the content on the slides. Students, therefore, should take good notes during lectures.

Special note concerning attendance while having flu symptoms:

Students should *not* attend class while ill with the flu. Students with flu or flu-like symptoms will be asked to leave class. The illness and self-isolation period will usually be about a week. It is very important that individuals avoid spreading the flu to others. Most students should be able to complete a successful semester despite a flu-induced absence. If you are absent due to the flu, you will be provided with a reasonable opportunity to make up missed work. Completion of all assignments and exams assures the greatest chance for students to develop heightened understanding and content mastery. The opportunity to complete all assignments and exams supports the university's desire to enable students to make responsible situational decisions, including the decision to avoid spreading a contagious virus to other students, staff, and faculty, without endangering their academic work.

Students with the flu do *not* need to provide a physician's document. However, ill students should inform me via emails as soon as possible that they are absent because of the flu.

Late Assignments & Assignment Submission

Late assignments will *lose one point for each day they are late*, including weekends. No late work will be accepted after *one week* from the due date. Exceptions may be made for serious illness or other well-documented emergencies. Depending on instructions for each assignment, students should submit their work in class or through Carmen Dropbox. *Email submissions will not be accepted.*

Generally, make-up exams are not permitted. Exams can only be rescheduled with well documented emergencies at the discretion of the instructor.

Revisions of Assignments

I will be happy to give you feedback on your work *at least 24 hours before* the assignment is due. Once the assignment is due, no revision is allowed.

Office Hours & E-Mail

Office hours are the best place to ask in-depth questions about course readings or lectures, as well as any question about grades. E-mails should be used to schedule an appointment outside of office hours or for *short* questions clarifying class assignments or specific items from lectures. Before emailing your instructor, please be sure to check the syllabus to make sure that your question is not answered there. If the information is adequately represented in the syllabus, you may not receive a response. Expect a response within 24 hours of any email, unless noted in class of any disruptions. If no response is given within that time window, either the answer is on the syllabus or the email has been eaten by a daemon and you may need to try emailing again. I apologize in advance for the daemons, they are typically sporadic in their appearances and are never up to any good.

Academic Misconduct

Information regarding academic dishonesty can be found in the *Code of Student Conduct* (http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/resource_csc.asp). Academic dishonesty can result in anything from an F on an assignment to expulsion from the university. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the Committee on Academic Misconduct (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). In this class, any suspected violation of the *Code* will be referred to the Committee on Academic Misconduct (see <http://oaa.osu.edu/coam.html>) immediately. No exception will be made. All students at the OSU are responsible for being familiar with the *Code*, and ignorance of the *Code* is not an excuse for violating it. Please ensure that you are familiar with the *Code* and familiarize with “*Ten Suggestions for Preserving Academic Integrity*” (<http://oaa.osu.edu/coamtensuggestions.html>). *If you are ever in doubt about what constitutes academic misconduct, please come and talk to me immediately.*

As a college student, you should have already been very familiar with rules regarding academic misconduct, including plagiarism. However, we will still use our first lab session to help remind you of the basic principles because these are extremely important— especially for a research course.

Students with Special Needs

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. Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss your specific needs. Please contact the Office for Disability Services at 614-292-3307 in room 150 Pomerene Hall, 1760 Neil Avenue; TDD 614-292-0901; <http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu/> as that office coordinates accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

Being Firm and Fair

Graduating seniors (and other students) who “need” this course to graduate should work especially hard to ensure that they will pass this course. To be fair to all students in the class, there will *not* be opportunities for students to re-take exams or re-complete assignments in order to raise their grades. *It is the student’s responsibility* to ensure that he or she receives a passing final grade by working diligently and responsibly throughout the semester. *Exceptions will not be made.*

Tentative nature of this syllabus:

This syllabus is an agreement between the instructor and the student. Events that transpire over the semester may require me to modify the syllabus. In the event I need to modify the syllabus, I will announce the modification in class. However, it is your responsibility to keep up with any such modifications and be aware of current policies, deadlines, etc. By staying enrolled in this class, the student agrees to abide by the policies described in the syllabus.

Course Schedule:

Please note changes may be made due to class progress or other circumstances. Readings should be completed *before* the class for which they are assigned. Exams and assignments are underlined. *Readings* are *italicized*.

Week 1: Introductions

May 11 (Day 1) – Lecture

Course Overview/Syllabus

Introduction to Research and Ways of Knowing

Introduction to R Book/Software & RStudio

Exercise 1: Ways of Knowing ASSIGNED

May 12 (Day 2) – Lab

Lab Introduction

Literature Search Review, APA Style, Plagiarism

Introduction to R/RStudio

Chapter 1 (Gardener)

Exercise 1: Ways of Knowing DUE

Week 2: Scientific Method & Qualitative Methods

May 16 (Day 3) – Lecture

Scientific Method: Theory, Hypothesis, Concepts, Measurement, Validity, Reliability

Chapters 1 & 2 (Wimmer)

Exercise 2: Library Literacy ASSIGNED

May 17 (Day 4) – Lab

Concept Implementation and Practice

Introduction to R: Continued

Exercise 2 Workshop (if time permits)

Chapter 2 (Gardener)

May 18 (Day 5) – Lecture

Qualitative Methods:

Field observations, Focus groups, Intensive interviews, & Case studies

Content Analysis

Chapters 5 & 6 (Wimmer)

May 19 (Day 6) – Lab

Content Analysis Activity

R Practice: Importing/Cleaning/Checking Data

Chapter 3 (Gardener)

Exercise 2: Library Literacy DUE

Week 3: Sampling, Basic Data Analysis, & Hypothesis Testing

May 23 (Day 7) – Lecture

Sampling, Sampling Techniques, & Sampling Error

Chapter 4 (Wimmer)

Exercise 3: Qualitative Research Design ASSIGNED

May 24 (Day 8) – Lab

Sampling Activity and R Implementation

R Practice: Basic Statistics and Graphing

Chapters 4, 5, & 7 (Gardener)

May 25 (Day 9) – Lecture

Basic Data Analysis and Statistics

Hypothesis Testing

Chapters 10, 11, & 12 (Wimmer)

May 26 (Day 10) – Lab

R: Basic Statistics and Graphing Continued

Chapter 4, 5, & 7

Unit 1 Exam (Second-half of Lab)

Exercise 3: Qualitative Research Design DUE

Week 4: Quantitative Methods

May 30 (Day 11) – MEMORIAL DAY – NO CLASS

May 31 (Day 12) – Lecture

Quantitative Methods: Survey Research & Longitudinal Research

Extra Credit Presentations of Qualitative Research Designs

Chapters 7 & 8 (Wimmer)

Exercise 4: Sampling & Sampling Error ASSIGNED

June 1 (Day 13) – Lab

R: Creating Reports and Advanced Graphics

Hypothesis Testing in R

Chapters 6 & 11 (Gardener)

June 2 (Day 14) – Lecture

Experimental and Observational Studies

Chapter 9 (Wimmer)

Exercise 4: Sampling & Sampling Error DUE

Week 5: Research Ethics and Critiques

June 6 (Day 15) – Lab

R Practicum Overview and Practice

Exercise 5: Quantitative Research Design ASSIGNED

June 7 (Day 16) – Lecture

Critical Thinking about Research

Research Ethics

Research Critiques

Chapter 3 (Wimmer)

June 8 (Day 17) – Lab

R Practicum Final Practice and Review

June 9 (Day 18) – Final Presentations & Exam

Unit 2 Exam (Second-half of class)

Exercise 5: Quantitative Research Design DUE

Week 6: Wrapping Up

June 13 (Day 19) – Lab & Final Presentations

Extra Credit Presentations of Quantitative Research Designs

R Practicum

Final Exam: Research Critiques ASSIGNED

June 14 (Day 20) – Final Presentations

June 15 (Day 21) – Final Presentations Continued

June 16 (Day 22) – Final Presentations Continued

Final Exam: Research Critiques DUE

Extra Credit Projects DUE