COMM 3160
COMMUNICATION RESEARCH METHODS
Spring 2025

Faculty Instructor:

Professor Joyce Wang, Ph.D. [pronouns: she/her/hers] [wang.1243@osu.edu]

Office hours: email me to make an appointment [Zoom Link] [PW: 573518]

Graduate Student Instructors:

Brook Bennington [pronouns: she/her/hers] [bennington.56@osu.edu]

- In-Person Labs
  - Mondays, 8:00-9:50am in Journalism 342
  - Mondays, 10:05-11:55am in Journalism 342
- Office hours: TBA in the first lab session

Katie Snelling [pronouns: she/her/hers] [snelling.24@osu.edu]

- In-Person Labs
  - Mondays, 12:10-2:00pm in Journalism 342
  - Mondays, 2:15-4:05pm in Journalism 342
- Office hours: TBA in the first lab session

Course description

This online course provides a broad overview of quantitative research methods as they apply to communication research. Students will gain an understanding of how to conduct research, as well as hands-on experience with data collection and data analysis. **The lecture portion of the course (3 credits) is delivered asynchronously online, while the lab is delivered in-person (1 credit).**

Course learning goals and outcomes

At the conclusion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Describe research methods used by social and behavioral scientists.
2. Propose and evaluate research designs.
3. Identify appropriate statistical procedures for different research scenarios and data.
4. Analyze and interpret quantitative research data using Microsoft Excel and JASP.
5. Create and administer simple online surveys/experiments using Qualtrics.

Mode of delivery

This lecture component of the course is asynchronous and is delivered online. The lab component of the course is delivered in-person, with meetings occurring once per week on Mondays.

How this course works

- **Each week, a new module will become available (on Sunday)** on the course Carmen site that contains all of the online requirements associated with the coming week. Each module will include a series of lecture videos pertaining to key course concepts, as well as instructions for completing the weekly readings and activities due that week.
- Lecture videos are posted to YouTube, and links to each required video are posted to the associated weekly module on Carmen. Closed captioning is available for these videos.
- **Each Monday, you will participate in a live (i.e., synchronous) lab session taught by a graduate student instructor (see above for contact information).** The lab session will review key course concepts, provide an overview of all course assignments, and offer help conducting data analyses using Microsoft Excel and JASP.
- **All assignments and quizzes are due 11:59pm EST on Sundays.**

Course materials

- **The textbook associated with the course is:** Boyle, M. & Schmierbach, M. (2019). *Applied Communication Research Methods: Getting Started as a Researcher* (2nd Edition). New York: Routledge. [Publisher Link] [Amazon Rental] [Barnes & Noble]
    - You can access the textbook online for **FREE** via the OSU library: [Library Link]
    - The 1st Edition is also acceptable for the course.
- Access to a computer/laptop, a high-speed Internet connection, current web browser with video-related plugins, speakers/headphones, Microsoft Excel (available via this external URL), JASP (available via this external URL), Qualtrics (available via this external URL), and TopHat (available via this external URL). These software programs are all **FREE** to OSU students.
    - Students with accessibility needs should speak directly to me about using JASP. Depending on your needs, we might need to identify an alternative program for you to use or alternative assignments for you to complete.

Grading

This class has 100 possible points, which are distributed as follows:

Checkpoints (x5)	10 points
Online Quizzes (x5)	50 points
Lab Proposals (x3)	15 points
Lab Analyses (x3)	15 points
Lab Participation	10 points

Assignments

- **Checkpoints (2pts x 5).** Periodic "checkpoints" serve to assess your understanding of key course concepts. Each checkpoint consists of open-ended questions on Carmen. You will receive instructor feedback on these assignments. There are five checkpoints in total, and they are graded out of two points for thoroughness and completion (2 = satisfactory, 1 = needs improvement, 0 = incomplete).

- **Online Quizzes (10pts x 5).** Students have the opportunity to take **six quizzes** during the semester. Quizzes will assess your knowledge and understanding related to (1) lecture video material and (2) course readings. Quizzes are **not** cumulative.
    - Each quiz is worth 10 points and has 10 questions. The quizzes will rigorously test your knowledge about the topics covered in the previous two weekly modules. I have designed the quizzes to be difficult for two reasons. First, the difficulty will motivate you to keep up with the material each week and to study as you would for a standard, in-person exam. Second, all quizzes are open book and open notes.
    - **Your lowest quiz score will be dropped.** In other words, only **your five highest quiz** scores will count toward your final grade.
    - Students will only have one 30-minute attempt to complete each quiz. I do not allow group work on the quizzes and doing so constitutes academic misconduct. Please prepare well and do not wait until the last minute to start a quiz, as technological issues can occur. If students have questions about the quizzes generally, they should use the General Discussion Board available in Carmen or email me or your lab instructor.
    - **On quiz weeks, Carmen will automatically open the quiz at 12:01am EST on Monday and close the quiz at 11:59pm EST on Sunday.** The automated quiz system draws questions from a validated pool of questions, meaning that each student's quiz will be slightly different. Missing a quiz earns you a zero for that week's quiz. Lateness penalties apply to quizzes. This means that you can take quizzes after the deadline, but you will suffer a point penalty.

- **Lab Proposals (5pts x 3).** You will write three research proposals focused on research methods taught in lecture and lab. You are encouraged to be creative with these proposals. Lab instructors will provide more details and guidelines about these proposals.

- **Lab Analyses (5pts x 3).** You will complete three sets of statistical analyses that employ skills using Microsoft Excel and JASP. These programs and procedures will be modeled during lecture and lab. Lab instructors will provide more details and guidelines about these analyses.

- **Lab Participation (1pt x 10).** A participation grade will be assigned by your lab instructors at the end of the course based on your active participation in the weekly lab activities. There will be one TopHat activity for each weekly lab session. You will receive 1 point for completing each activity during lab. Prior to your first lab meeting, you should create a TopHat account. For assistance using Tophat, visit this link.

Late assignments

All deadlines are in Eastern Standard Time (EST). Late work is not accepted and will receive a zero.

Grading scale

Please note that Carmen Canvas, OSU's grading and class management software, does not round fractions up. Please take that into account in computing grades. I do not manually round up grades. The official grading scale is as follows:

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

University Policies

Student Academic Services

Arts and Sciences Advising and Academic Services' website provides support for student academic success. Information on advising issues such as tutoring, transfer credits, academic standing, and contact information for Arts and Sciences advisors can be obtained through this website. The site is: http://advising.osu.edu.

Student Services

The Student Service Center assists with financial aid matters, tuition and fee payments. Please see their site at: https://contactbuckeyelink.osu.edu/

Copyright Disclaimer

The materials used in connection with this course may be subject to copyright protection and are only for the use of students officially enrolled in the course for the educational purposes associated with the course. Copyright law must be considered before copying, retaining, or disseminating materials outside of the course.

Additional Disclaimer

This syllabus represents a contract "in the works." Events that transpire over the semester may require modifications to the course. In the event of a change, I will announce the change and update the syllabus on Carmen. Ultimately it is your responsibility to keep up with any such modifications and to be aware of current policies, deadlines, etc. I reserve the right to modify course policies throughout the semester.

Diversity

The School of Communication at The Ohio State University embraces and maintains an environment that respects diverse traditions, heritages, experiences, and people. Our commitment to diversity moves beyond mere tolerance to recognizing, understanding, and welcoming the contributions of diverse groups and the value group members possess as individuals. In our School, the faculty, students, and staff are dedicated to building a tradition of diversity with principles of equal opportunity, personal respect, and the intellectual interests of those who comprise diverse cultures.

Title IX

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories (e.g., race). If you or someone you know has been sexually harassed or assaulted, you may find the appropriate resources at http://titleix.osu.edu or by contacting the Interim Ohio State Title IX Coordinator, Molly Peirano, at titleix@osu.edu

Mental Health

As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce a student's ability to participate in daily activities. The Ohio State University offers services to assist you with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing. If you are or someone you know is suffering from any of the aforementioned conditions, you can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via the Office of Student Life's Counseling and Consultation Service (CCS) by visiting ccs.osu.edu or calling 614--292--5766. CCS is located on the 4th Floor of the Younkin Success Center and 10th Floor of Lincoln Tower. You can reach an on-call counselor when CCS is closed at 614-292-5766. If you are thinking of harming yourself or need a safe, non-judgmental place to talk, or if you are worried about someone else and need advice about what to do, 24-hour emergency help is also available through the Suicide Prevention Hotline (Columbus: 614-221-5445)

Academic integrity policy

Policies for this online course

- **Written assignments**: All written assignments, communications, and posts should be your own original work. In formal assignments, you should follow **APA** style to cite the ideas and words of your research sources. You are encouraged to ask a trusted person to proofread your assignments before you turn them in – but no one else should revise or rewrite your work.
- **Reusing past work**: In general, you are prohibited in university courses from turning in work from a past class to your current class, even if you modify it. If you want to build on past research or revisit a topic you've explored in previous courses, please discuss the situation with me.
- **Falsifying research or results**: All research you will conduct in this course is intended to be a learning experience; you should never feel tempted to make your results or your library research look more successful than it was.

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/

Requesting accommodations

The university strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions, please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. To establish reasonable

accommodations, I may request that you register with Student Life Disability Services. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion**. SLDS contact information:** slds@osu.edu; 614-292-3307; 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Avenue.

PART I: Foundations of Research Methods

Modules [Start/Mon.] [End/Sun.]	Weekly Topics	Assignments (due on Sundays @ 11:59pm)

Week 1
Jan. 6
Jan.12
	Introduction to Research Methods
	• Textbook Readings
	  ○ Ch. 2: Concepts of Research (pg. 13-35)
	• Lecture Videos
	  ○ Theories and Hypotheses (14 mins)
	• *No Lab on Monday*
		Checkpoint #1

Week 2
Jan. 13
Jan. 19
	Concepts and Measurement
	• Textbook Readings
	  ○ Ch. 5: Concept Explication (pg. 101-115)
	  ○ Ch. 6: Reliability & Validity (pg. 123-145)
	• Lecture Videos
	  ○ Concepts and Measures (18 mins)
	  ○ Intro to Survey Questions (10 mins)
	• Monday In-Person Lab (proposal workshop)
		Quiz #1

Week 3
Jan. 20
Jan. 26
	Special Topic: Psychophysiological Measures
	• No Textbook Readings
	• Lecture Videos
	  ○ Psychophysiological Measures (11 mins)
	  ○ Finding a Validated Measure (21 minutes)
	• *No Lab on Monday (MLK Day)*
		Lab Proposal #1

Week 4
Jan. 27
Feb. 2
	Introduction to Data Analysis
	• Textbook Readings
	  ○ Ch. 14: Descriptive Statistics (pg. 359-379)
	• Lecture Videos
	  ○ From Survey to Data (17 mins)
	  ○ Data Reduction (14 mins)
	  ○ Descriptive Statistics (17 mins)
	  ○ Calculating Descriptive Statistics (25 mins)
	Monday In-Person Lab (analysis workshop)
		Lab Analysis #1

Week 5
Feb. 3
Feb. 9
	Sampling and Generalizability
	• Textbook Readings
	  ○ Ch. 8: Sampling (pg. 187-215)
	• Lecture Videos
	  ○ Introduction to Sampling (13 mins)
	  ○ Types of Sampling (13 mins)
	• Monday In-Person Lab (review day)
		Quiz #2

PART II: Designing Correlational Studies

Modules [Start/Mon.] [End/Sun.]	Weekly Topics	Assignments (due Sundays @ 11:59pm)

Week 6
Feb. 10
Feb. 16
	Surveys and Self-Reports
	• Textbook Readings
	  ○ Ch. 7: Effective Measurement (pg. 153-179)
	• Lecture Videos
	  ○ Survey Construction (15 mins)
	  ○ Survey Recommendations (16 mins)
	• Monday In-Person Lab (introduction to JASP)
		Checkpoint #2

Week 7
Feb. 17
Feb. 23
	Interpreting Survey Results
	• Textbook Readings
	  ○ Ch. 15: Inferential Statistics (pg. 387-417)
	• Lecture Videos
	  ○ Correlations (11 mins)
	  ○ NHST (19 mins)
	  ○ Mean Differences (17 mins)
	  ○ Effect Sizes (16 mins)
	• Monday In-Person Lab (review day)
		Quiz #3

Week 8
Feb. 24
March 2
	Data Analysis for Surveys
	• No Textbook Readings
	• Lecture Videos
	  ○ Introduction to JASP (4 mins)
	  ○ Selecting Analyses for Surveys (16 mins)
	  ○ Interpreting Survey Results (18 mins)
		Lab Analysis #2
		Checkpoint #3

	○ Conducting a Correlation Test (14 mins) ○ Conducting a Paired T-Test (10 mins) • Monday In-Person Lab (analysis workshop)	
Week 9 March 3 March 9	**Special Topic: Real-World Surveys** • Textbook Readings ○ Ch. 10: Survey Research (pg. 261-279) • Lecture Videos ○ Real-World Surveys (20 mins) ○ The Many Names of Mobile Surveys (3 mins) ○ Starting an Experience Sampling Study (3 mins) • Monday In-Person Lab (proposal workshop)	Lab Proposal #2
March 10 *March 16*	***SPRING BREAK*** • *No assignments! Have a safe and relaxing break!*	*NONE*
Week 10 March 17 March 23	**Confounds and Controls** • Textbook Readings ○ Ch. 16: Multivariate Statistics (pg. 427-433) • Lecture Videos ○ Confounds and Study Designs (26 mins) • Monday In-Person Lab (review day)	Quiz #4

PART III: Designing Experimental Studies

Modules [Start/Mon.] [End/Sun.]	**Weekly Topics**	**Assignments** (due Sundays @ 11:59pm)
Week 11 March 24 March 30	**Designing Survey Experiments** • Textbook Readings ○ Ch. 9: Experiments (pg. 223-240 only) • Lecture Videos ○ Survey Experiments (16 mins) • Monday In-Person Lab (introduction to Qualtrics)	Checkpoint #4

Week 12
March 31
April 6
	Data Analysis for Experiments
	• Textbook Readings
	  ○ Ch. 16: Multivariate Statistics (pg. 433 -439)
	• Lecture Videos
	  ○ Selecting Analyses for Experiments (9 mins)
	  ○ Interpreting Experimental Results (21 mins)
	  ○ Conducting an Independent T-Test (9 mins)
	  ○ Conducting an ANOVA (16 mins)
	• Monday In-Person Lab (analysis workshop)
		Lab Analysis #3

Week 13
April 7
April 13
	Laboratory Experiments & Causality
	• Textbook Readings
	  ○ Ch. 9: Experiments (pg. 240-252 only)
	• Lecture Videos
	  ○ Lab Experiments (18 mins)
	  ○ Between vs. Within-Subjects Designs (14 mins)
	  ○ Limitations to Lab Experiments (21 mins)
	• *No Lab on Monday*
		Quiz #5

Week 14
April 14
April 20
	Special Topic: Natural & Field Experiments
	• Textbook Readings
	  ○ Ch. 4: Ethical Research (pg. 81-94)
	• Lecture Videos
	  ○ Natural & Field Experiments (15 mins)
	• Monday In-Person Lab (proposal workshop)
		Lab Proposal #3

Week 15 April 21 (last day of class)	**Conclusions and Takeaways** • No Textbook Readings • No Lecture Videos • *No Lab on Monday*	Quiz #6 Checkpoint #5