

**COMMUNICATION STUDIES 601
PROBLEMS AND METHODS IN COMMUNICATION RESEARCH
FALL 2012**

Days/Time Thursdays 6:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
Location 261 Smith Hall
Instructor Dr. Jill Cornelius Underhill
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Office/Hours MWF 11:00 – 12:00, T 9:30 – 1:30, R 3:30 – 6:00

University Policies

By enrolling in this course, you agree to the University Policies listed below. Please read the full text of each policy by going to www.marshall.edu/academic-affairs and clicking on “Marshall University Policies.” Or, you can access the policies directly by going to http://www.marshall.edu/academic-affairs/?page_id=802

Academic Dishonesty/ Excused Absence Policy/ Computing Services Acceptable Use/ Inclement Weather/ Dead Week/ Students with Disabilities/ Academic Forgiveness/ Academic Probation and Suspension/ Academic Rights and Responsibilities of Students/ Affirmative Action/ Sexual Harassment

Course Description

Communication researchers and practitioners are frequently called upon to create and evaluate knowledge. Therefore, this class focuses on developing critical thinking in regards to the way social scientific investigation can inform communication research and practice. To accomplish this goal, we will first define some of the essential features of communication as a science, review the major contexts within which communication is studied, and discuss methods used to investigate communication within these contexts.

Course Student Learning Outcomes

	How students will practice each outcome in this course:	How student achievement of each outcome will be assessed in this course:
Students will find, read, and understand peer-reviewed, primary research studies conducted to answer communication questions.	Chapter readings, class discussion, meeting with instructor	Research Proposal: -developing hypotheses -bibliography construction
Students will critically analyze research questions, methods, and findings that you encounter and understand the strengths and weaknesses of different methods of primary data collection used in communication.	Chapter readings, class discussion, in-class exercises.	Quiz questions Exam questions Research Proposal: -method rationale draft -final draft

Students will create strategies for applying research methods and findings to answer questions that arise in communication practice.	Chapter readings, class discussion, in-class exercises, drafting proposal in sections	Quiz questions Exam questions Research Proposal: -method rationale draft -method section draft -final draft
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Required Texts, Additional Reading, and Other Materials

Required:

Wrench, J. S., Thomas-Maddox, C., Richmond, V. P., & McCroskey, J. C. (2008). *Quantitative research methods for communication*. New York: Oxford University Press. **ISBN-13:** 978-0195337471

Optional (Highly Recommended):

Booth, W. C., Colomb, G. G., & Williams, J. M. (2008). *The craft of research* (3rd ed). Chicago: University of Chicago Press. **ISBN-13:** 978-0226065663

Course Requirements / Due Dates

1. FIVE "TAKE-HOME" QUIZZES (10 POINTS EACH = 50 POINTS)

These quizzes will help you understand your own knowledge level in the course. The quizzes are worth 10 points and will contain 'application' questions. Whereas you are welcome to use all course resources available, please complete the quizzes individually. Quizzes will be posted on-line and completed on Blackboard. Once you open the quiz, you will have 20 minutes to complete the true/false, multiple-choice, and short answer questions. You must complete the entire quiz in one session.

Due dates: by 6:00 p.m. on 9/27, 10/18, 11/8, 11/15, 11/29

2. RESEARCH PROPOSAL (TOTAL = 100 POINTS)

Throughout the semester you will work on a research proposal. You will develop hypotheses, find peer-reviewed literature backing up your logic for making these hypotheses, develop a method section, and propose appropriate analysis for data collected. You will write up a report in APA style (see 6th ed. guidelines). All elements of the proposal will be turned in via the dropbox function on Blackboard.

- **DEVELOP HYPOTHESES/RESEARCH QUESTIONS (10 POINTS):** First, locate and read 10 peer-reviewed research articles in an area of communication research that is interesting to you. Then, propose 2-4 hypotheses or research questions for empirical investigation. Schedule an appointment to meet with me to review your proposed hypotheses. Thereafter, turn in the hypotheses with a bibliography of the literature reviewed.
Due date: 9/20 @ 6:00 p.m.
- **DRAFT RATIONALE AND MODIFIED HYPOTHESES/RESEARCH QUESTIONS (10 POINTS):** Draft a rationale for the study that includes the following items: revised hypotheses/research questions, justification for the study, and the importance of the results (who needs this information?).

Finally, propose the type of empirical investigation you believe should be conducted to answer the hypotheses/research questions (e.g., survey, experiment, content analysis) and justification for why you chose this method. Attach a bibliography of the sources used to draft the hypotheses, rationale, and method section justification.

Due date: 10/4 @ 6:00 p.m.

- **DRAFT METHOD SECTION, INSTRUMENT, & PROPOSED ANALYSIS (20 POINTS):** Turn in a full draft of your method section. At the top, put your revised and expanded research questions/hypotheses and rationale. Then write the method section. Make sure you justify your method in the first paragraph and then give detailed step-by-step directions for how you will conduct your study. Write in the future tense. Follow the method templates handed out in class. Make sure to attach your instrumentation; that is, if you propose doing a survey, you must turn in your questionnaire. If you propose doing an experiment, you must turn in your stimuli and assessment. For the analysis, how would you test each hypothesis or answer each research question? Which statistical test would be most appropriate to analyze your data? Write in future tense.

Due Date: 11/1 @ 6:00 p.m.

- **FINAL PAPER (60 POINTS):** For your final paper, you will include the revised version of the rationale, hypotheses, method, and analysis of pilot data. Guidelines for collecting pilot data will be discussed at length in class. For the final paper, please also include your revised instrument as Appendix A. Please include tables where appropriate. Papers should be 8-10 pages long. Please use formal APA format. There should be an APA formatted coversheet and reference section.

Due date: 12/2 @ 11:59 p.m.

3. TWO EXAMS (MIDTERM & CUMULATIVE FINAL; MIDTERM = 50 POINTS; FINAL= 100 POINTS)

You will take 2 exams in class.

Midterm: 10/25

Final: 12/13

Grading Policy

A = 100-90%	300 – 270 POINTS
B = 89-80%	269 – 240 POINTS
C = 79-70%	239 – 210 POINTS
D = 69-60%	209 – 180 POINTS

Your work is expected to be completed on time. Late written work will result in a 10% grade reduction for each day.

Attendance Policy

Regular attendance is expected for this course. If possible, you should speak to me prior to known future absences, and as soon as possible after the absence to arrange for makeups.

You are strongly encouraged to complete your readings and think about them before attending class. I expect you to read ahead of time and make notes of the reading. Think of interesting examples to share. Think of important questions to ask. Come to class prepared.

Course Schedule

SESSION	TOPIC FOR THE WEEK	READINGS FROM TEXT	WHAT IS DUE?
SEPT 7	INTRO AND WAYS OF KNOWING	TEXT CHAPTER 1	
SEPT 13	SCIENTIFIC METHOD AND THEORY DEVELOPMENT	TEXT CHAPTER 2	SCHEDULED MEETING WITH JILL
SEPT 20	HYPOTHESES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS, AND VARIABLES	TEXT CHAPTER 6 Reinard Chapter 2 (BB)	HYPOTHESES/RESEARCH QUESTIONS + BIBLIOGRAPHY
SEPT 27	CAUSALITY & MEASUREMENT	TEXT CHAPTER 7 Additional reading TBA	QUIZ 1
OCT 4	MEASUREMENT CONTINUED & SAMPLING METHODS	TEXT CHAPTER 9 Oates, Blades, & Gunter (2001; Blackboard)	RATIONALE & MODIFIED HYPOTHESES/RESEARCH QUESTIONS
OCT 11	VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY	TEXT CHAPTER 10 TEXT CHAPTER 14 Additional reading TBA	
OCT 18	EXPERIMENTAL RESEARCH	TEXT CHAPTER 13 Turner & Underhill (2012; Blackboard)	QUIZ 2
OCT 25	ETHICS	TEXT CHAPTER 3	MIDTERM
NOV 1	SURVEY RESEARCH	TEXT CHAPTER 11 Bakker & de Vreese (2011; Blackboard)	DRAFT METHOD SECTION AND INSTRUMENT
NOV 8	ANALYZING DATA DESCRIPTIVE STATS	TEXT CHAPTERS 15, 8	QUIZ 3
NOV 15	T TESTS, ANOVA & CORRELATION	TEXT CHAPTERS 17, 18, 19 + pp. 413-416 ON Factorial ANOVA	QUIZ 4
NOV 22	NO CLASS		THANKSGIVING!
NOV 29	WRAP UP		QUIZ 5 FINAL PAPER DUE 12/2 @ 11:59 p.m.
DEC 6			Dead Week
DEC 13			FINAL EXAM

