

Marshall University

Course Title/Number	Problems and Methods in Communication Research/CMM 601
Semester/Year	Spring 2014
Days/Time	Tuesdays 4:00 – 6:20 p.m.
Location	Smith Hall 232
Instructor	Dr. Jill C. Underhill
Office	Smith Hall 250
Phone	(304) 696-3013
E-Mail	underhillj@marshall.edu
Office Hours	Mondays 5:00 – 9:00 p.m. Tuesdays 1:00 – 2:00 p.m. Thursdays 1:00 – 2:00 p.m. Fridays 1:00 – 5:00 p.m. *Please e-mail me in advance for an appointment.
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 for Undergraduates/ 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 Report: -identifying hypotheses -bibliography construction
Students will critically analyze research questions, methods, and	Chapter readings, class discussion, in-class exercises.	Quiz questions Exam questions

findings that you encounter and understand the strengths and weaknesses of different methods of primary data collection used in communication.		Research Report: -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 Report: -synthesizing primary research

Required Texts, Additional Reading, and Other Materials

Required:

Wrench, J. S., Thomas-Maddox, C., Richmond, V. P., & McCroskey, J. C. (2013). *Quantitative research methods for communication* (2nd Ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.

Optional (Highly Recommended):

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

Course Requirements / Due Dates

- 1. PARTICIPATION (100 Points)** You are asked to submit one discussion question about the reading (5 points per week, 10 weeks = 50 points). Questions should be submitted via e-mail to the instructor by 12 p.m. on Tuesdays. Questions should address concepts that you have difficulty understanding or would like us to focus on during class. Please include the page number for the concept in question. If all the concepts were clear to you, pose a discussion question for the class on how a concept in the reading could be applied by communication professionals.

The other 50 points of participation will be earned through communicating during the class session. Participation includes asking and answering questions, commenting on ideas, or adding additional knowledge to the discussion.

Students can earn a maximum of 10 points each class session (submission of question and communication during session).

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

These quizzes will help you understand your own knowledge level in the course, and prepare you for my testing style. The quizzes are 10 questions, 1 point each. Please complete the quizzes individually. Quizzes will be posted on-line and completed on Blackboard. Once you open the quiz, you will have 60 minutes to complete the true/false and multiple-choice questions. You must complete the entire quiz in one session.

3. EMPIRICAL RESEARCH REPORT (TOTAL = 100 POINTS)

For the semester project, you will write an empirical research report that focuses on a communication problem that interests you. The report will provide a rationale for examining the problem, a summary of what is known about the problem through a review of relevant empirical research on the topic, and recommendations for future areas of research.

The report should begin with a clear statement of purpose that identifies the specific area of research literature that will be reviewed. You should then provide a clear argument that identifies who will be able to use the findings from your research report and how. This section should include citations to support your argument. Evidence cited in the introduction can come from a variety of sources; you do not need to restrict yourself to just primary research studies.

The literature review should contain the most relevant empirical literature based on the stated purpose of the brief. You must review at least 20 primary research studies, although you will not provide an in-depth discussion of each. Twelve of the studies must come from peer-reviewed journals; the remaining studies may come from other sources as long as they are primary research studies (report original data and include information about research method and procedures). The studies selected for the review should be clearly related to the stated purpose of the brief. You should create conceptual subtopics within your review by clustering together studies that report findings that address similar concepts. Please use headings to organize your paper into subtopics.

When writing about a study, make sure to focus on the actual findings that are most relevant to your purpose. Include just basic information about the study's method to help the reader understand the nature of the evidence being reported. Avoid summarizing other portions of the article, such as the authors' introduction, literature review, or discussion section. Your task is to extract relevant data from the study's findings, organize it, and make meaning of it in your own, unique way based on the specific purpose you have for reviewing the literature.

The report should end with a conclusion that summarizes the major findings of the reviewed literature. An effective summary will concisely recap for the reader what is known about the topic.

Your brief should be 10 to 12 pages, excluding the cover sheet and references page. Please do not exceed the 12-page limit. Use one-inch margins, 12-point font, and double space your text.

- 4. PRESENTATION OF EMPIRICAL RESEARCH REPORT (50 POINTS)** - You will give a 10 minute presentation of your research report during the last session of class. Guidelines for the presentation will be posted on Blackboard.

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

You will take 2 exams. Details of the exam will be provided during the course of the semester.

Grading Scale

A = 100-90%	450 – 405 POINTS
B = 89-80%	404 – 360 POINTS
C = 79-70%	359 – 315 POINTS
D = 69-60%	314 – 270 POINTS

Class Policies

CONTACTING INSTRUCTOR: If we cannot chat face-to-face, I prefer e-mail to telephone calls. E-mail should be used to set up appointments and ask short questions. I will generally respond to your inquiry in one business day. If I do not respond within 24 hours, please re-send your e-mail.

DUE DATES: Assignments are due by 11:59 pm of the due date via the dropbox function on Blackboard. Please do not submit any hard copies of assignments unless explicitly asked by the instructor.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS: Assignments not received by the due date will be subject to a reduced grading scale. For every day that the assignment is late without the instructor's approval, the assignment grade will drop 20%. The assignment will not be accepted later than 5 days after it is due.

GRADE INQUIRES: All grades will be recorded on Blackboard and can be viewed by the students throughout the semester. All questions about graded assignments, quizzes, or exams must be brought to the instructor within two weeks of the day the grade is posted. We will schedule an appointment to discuss the grade outside of class time.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY: Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Copying another's work without proper citation of the source constitutes plagiarism. Plagiarism in any form will not be tolerated. A student that is found plagiarizing another's work will automatically receive an "F" in the course and may be subject to further university discipline. **Cheating will also not be tolerated.** According to university policy, cheating is defined as the use of any unauthorized materials during an academic exercise to include notes, study aids etc. Cheating also includes the viewing of another person's work or securing any part of an assignment or examination in advance of distribution by the instructor. Cheating will not be tolerated in this class and will result in an automatic "F" for the class and the possible recommendation of suspension or expulsion from the university.

ATTENDANCE POLICY: Regular attendance is expected for this course.

You are strongly encouraged to complete your readings and think about them before attending class. Please read ahead of time and take notes. 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?
January 28	WAYS OF KNOWING SCIENTIFIC METHOD AND THEORY	CHAPTER 1 CHAPTER 2	
February 4	HYPOTHESES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS, AND VARIABLES	CHAPTER 6 CHAPTER 14	QUIZ 1 DUE FEB 9 BY 11:59 P.M.
February 11	MEASUREMENT	CHAPTER 8	
February 18	SAMPLING METHODS	CHAPTER 13	QUIZ 2 DUE FEB 23 BY 11:59 P.M.
February 25	VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY	CHAPTER 9	
March 4	SURVEY RESEARCH	CHAPTER 10	QUIZ 3 DUE MARCH 9 BY 11:59 P.M.
March 11	EXAMINATION		MIDTERM EXAM
March 18	SPRING BREAK!		
March 25	CONTENT ANALYSIS	CHAPTER 11	
April 1	EXPERIMENTAL RESEARCH	CHAPTER 12	QUIZ 4 DUE APRIL 6 BY 11:59 P.M.
April 8	DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS	CHAPTER 7	
April 15	CORRELATION & REGRESSION	CHAPTER 18 CHAPTER 19	QUIZ 5 DUE APRIL 20 BY 11:59 P.M.
April 22	t-TESTS & ANOVA	CHAPTER 16 CHAPTER 17	
April 29	PRESENTATIONS		PRESENTATIONS FINAL PAPER DUE 5/2 BY 11:59 p.m.
May 6	EXAMINATION		FINAL EXAM

This is the only physical or hard-copy of this syllabus you will receive. Electronic versions of this syllabus can be accessed on MU Online (Blackboard) and MyMU under the appropriate course listing.