

Office BSB 1140A
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Course description

This course is designed to introduce you to communication research methodologies. We begin by addressing the theory and research fundamentals of the communication field, then address research principles and procedures, and cover both qualitative and quantitative methods of research used in communication and related areas. In this class, you will learn how to conceptualize, plan and execute a research study. At the end of the class, you will be able to better understand and critique research, but also to conduct your own research.

Course Objectives

- To introduce students to social scientific and humanities-based research methods used in communication.
- To allow students to experience the research process by planning, conducting, and writing up a research project on a specific communication phenomenon.
- To improve students' writing skills.
- To help students become critical readers of communication and other research.

Reading materials

Babbie, E. (2010). The practice of social research. Washington: Wadsworth, 11th Ed.

Rubin, R. B., Rubin, A. M., Haridakis, P. & Piele, L. J. (2010). Communication research: Strategies and sources. Washington: Wadsworth, 7th Ed.

I strongly recommend that you purchase the latest American Psychological Association citation manual. You will also be using APA style sheets available at no cost online.

All texts are available online, used or new through various online vendors. Any additional readings will be available via the blackboard site to the class, to which you are automatically enrolled.

Requirements

This is a graduate seminar. Class meetings will consist of a small amount of lecture material, presentations, and a lot of discussion. Please come to class having completed all the assigned readings and prepared to talk about them further. We will also read and critique examples of research that have been published, and we will frequently break into groups to discuss projects, problems, questions and other issues regarding your research projects. Your course grade will be based on the following:

Assignments

Research Project – to be completed in five parts

1. **Outline:**

Formulate a research question, review the relevant theory and research, and outline a written presentation of this information

2. **Literature Review:**

Transform this outline into a full text presentation leading into your research questions

3. **Method:**

Devise and write a description of a research plan to investigate the question, and carry out (at least part of) the plan

4. **Results and Discussion/Conclusion:**

Write a description of the results and conclusions of the study.

5. **Paper Presentations:**

Create a presentation and/or multimedia summary of your work and present to the class, during the last two class meetings. Presentations will be followed by question and answer sessions.

As each part of the project is turned in, earlier parts will be revised as necessary during the semester, until the final version is turned in at the end of the semester. Only the final version of the paper and your presentation will be graded. Late submissions throughout the semester are not accepted. **40% for final version, 10% for presentation**

Two Research Article Reviews

Select two methods we have covered. Find a recently published academic article utilizing the method, and write a page long (single-spaced) critique of the article. You should focus mostly on how the authors explicate the concepts in the literature review and critique the methods used. Due dates are listed on our schedule. You need only complete two of these. No extra points awarded for additional reviews completed. **20% each**

Participation

This includes class discussions, exercises in class and involvement in group projects (if applicable). Your attendance and participation to class discussions is essential and expected. This is a graduate seminar, meant to inform you on this topic but to also teach you to articulate your own opinions with confidence. All readings should be completed before the assigned date, and you should come to class prepared to talk. Material missed will not be made up. **10%**

Special Needs

It is our desire that all students participate fully in the curriculum of our department. If you have a disability or special condition that compromises your ability to successfully participate in this class, please notify me as soon as possible and make sure you register with the appropriate University office. All efforts will be made to accommodate your needs.

Honor Code

All students are expected to read and observe the UIC Honor Code Policy concerning academic integrity.

Plagiarizing

When facts or other material are obtained from an outside source, that source should be cited properly in the text and the bibliography/references section of your work. Plagiarism is defined as taking the words or ideas of another person and presenting them as one's own without proper credit. Plagiarizing is considered cheating, and a student who plagiarizes will receive a zero for that assignment and/or a failing grade for the course. If you are not certain that you are citing materials properly, feel free to double check your citations with me.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Reading assignments should be completed prior to the date for which they are assigned. You should come to class prepared to discuss what you have read. This schedule is tentative – you will be advised of changes.

DATE	TOPICS	READINGS
Jan. 10	Course overview	
Jan. 17	Scientific Methods Forming Questions	Babbie, Ch. 1, 2 Rubin et al. Ch. 1, Ch. 9, 10, 11, 12
Jan. 24	Concept Explication Validity and Reliability Levels of Measurement	Babbie, Ch. 4, 5, 6 Project Version 1 due (Outline)
Jan. 31	Literature Reviews Library Research Reading Research Ethics in Research	Rubin et al. Ch. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 Babbie, Ch. 3, 17, App. A
Feb. 7	Sampling Measures of central tendency Measures of dispersion APA basics	Babbie, Ch. 7 On reserve Bourhis et al.
Feb. 14	Content & Textual Analysis	Babbie, Ch. 11 On reserve Project version 2 due (Lit. Review/Theory added)
Feb. 21	Surveys & Questionnaires	Babbie, Ch. 9 Content or Textual analysis review due (pick two)
Feb. 28	Guide to common statistical symbols Overview of stats tools & techniques Basic Analyses Correlation	On reserve Survey review due (pick two)
Mar. 6	Experiments	Babbie, Ch. 8
Mar. 13	Regression The t-test One-way analysis of variance Two-analysis of variance Interpreting a significant F value	On reserve Experiment review due (pick two)
Mar. 20	No class	SPRING BREAK
Mar. 27	Ethnographies, life histories	Babbie, Ch. 10, 13 Project Version 3 due (methods added)
Apr. 3	Network Analysis	On reserve
Apr. 10		Research Meetings – Network or Ethnography/Life Histories review due (pick two)
Apr. 17		Paper presentations (proposals)
Apr. 24		Paper presentations (completed studies)

COMPLETE PAPERS DUE APRIL 30, by 5pm