

**COMM 3100: Communication Research Methods**  
Fall 2014

**Instructor:**

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Department of Communication Studies

**Teaching Assistant:** Brittany Pailthorpe

**Required Text:**

Davis, C. S., Powell, H. P., & Lachlan, K. (2012). *Straight talk about communication research methods*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Dubuque, IA: Kendall-Hunt Publishing.

**Purpose of Course:**

This course is designed to introduce you to the scientific, interpretive, rhetorical, and critical research methods we use to study communication problems and processes. We will focus on the critical analysis, evaluation, and use of quantitative and qualitative communication research methods. The goals of the course are to assist you in acquiring the ability to understand communication research methods, critique and analyze the value of communication research studies you read, and to conduct basic research to answer communication questions and solve communication problems.

**General Objectives:**

Upon completion of this course, the student should:

1. Be a critical evaluator of research.
2. Be able to read and understand research reports.
3. Have a working knowledge of the different types of communication research methods.
4. Be able to formulate research questions and design a research study using the appropriate methods to answer those questions.
5. Be able to carry out a research project.
6. Be able to use primary sources for communication scholarship.
7. Be able to write and present a research report using the appropriate style guidelines.

**Course Mission:**

This is a writing intensive course as designated by the Department of Communication Studies. The assumption guiding the writing process is that writing is best accomplished over time during which a dialogue about the writing process happens between students and instructors. We learn to write through writing. You will have many writing assignments in this class. Plan on spending a significant amount of time writing this semester. Please utilize the university's Writing Center if necessary.

**Grading:**

Assignment	Total Number of Points
Tests (4, 10 points each)	40
Annotated Bibliography Exercise	5
Literature Review Part 1	10
Literature Review Revision	15
Quantitative Research Project	10
Qualitative Research Project	10
Group Presentation of Methodology	5
Participation	5

90-100 points = A

80-89 points = B

70-79 points = C

60-69 points = D

0-59 points = F

**Course Assignments:**

Tests: You will have 4 tests in this class. Each test will be based on all assigned reading and lecture materials since the previous test. The final is **not** cumulative. The tests will consist of 25-30 multiple-choice questions. Each will be worth (up to) 10 points.

Annotated Bibliography Exercise (worth up to 5 points):

As a lead-in to your literature review exercise, you will fill out a worksheet that will require you to: choose a topic of your choice, conduct a library search, and answer a series of questions that will lead to an annotated bibliography of at least 10 good sources.

Literature Review Part 1 (worth up to 10 points):

You will take your annotated bibliography, then synthesize the information into a literature review. You should expect to write from 8-10 pages (including title page and references) and to use a minimum of 10 references.

Literature Review Revision (worth up to 15 points):

This class is writing intensive, and as such, requires writing and revising a paper. You will revise your literature review based on my feedback and turn in back in for a second grade. Note that the second grading of your literature review requires you to have made the revisions suggested.

Quantitative Research Project (worth 10 points):

You will take your topic from your literature review, write a RQ appropriate for a QUANTITATIVE methodology related to that topic, and design a study, administer it, statistically analyze the data, and write up the findings. You will:

- Write a Research Question or Hypothesis
- Design the research project to address your RQ (determine the correct sampling methodology, sample size, data collection method, measurement, etc.)
- Conduct the research
  - o Sample the population
  - o Collect the data
  - o Analyze the data
  - o Write up the findings

Your methodology must match your RQ.

Your paper will include sections on:

- Introduction
- Your research question or hypothesis;
- Methodology (approach, population, sampling, measurement, validity/reliability/credibility, ethics, variables, analysis plans)
- Analysis (Statistics)
- Discussion
- Conclusion
- Limitations
- Copy of your instrument or study protocol
- Consent form (if applicable)

See Appendix A of Davis, Powell, & Lachlan for more details and a suggested outline.

Expect to write from 5-8 pages for this assignment.

Qualitative Research Project (worth 10 points):

You will take your topic from your literature review, write a RQ appropriate for a QUALITATIVE methodology related to that topic, and design a study, administer it, statistically analyze the data, and write up the findings. You will:

- Write a Research Question or Objective
- Design the research project to address your RQ (determine the correct sampling methodology, sample size, data collection method, measurement, etc.)
- Conduct the research
  - o Sample the population
  - o Collect the data
  - o Analyze the data
  - o Write up the findings

Your methodology must match your RQ.

Your paper will include sections on:

- Introduction
- Your research question or study objectives;
- Methodology (approach, population, sampling, measurement, validity/reliability/credibility, ethics, variables, analysis plans)
- Analysis (Coding)
- Discussion
- Conclusion
- Limitations
- Copy of your instrument or study protocol
- Consent form (if applicable)

See Appendix A of Davis, Powell, & Lachlan for more details and a suggested outline.

Expect to write from 5-8 pages for this assignment.

Group Presentation of Methodology (worth 5 points)

Your group will teach one of the research methodologies on the assigned day. You will have 30 minutes for your presentation. For your assigned methodology, you will present to the class:

1. A description/definition of the method (its characteristics, how it is conducted, steps, etc.)
2. An example of the method from a published journal – explain how the method was used in the example (remember -- your classmates won't have read the example so explain it/describe it to them)
3. Terminology with definitions and examples

Grades will be based on quality of presentation, thoroughness and accuracy of material, creativity, and individual effort. Group members will rate each other on effort.

Participation (worth 5 points):

Participation points are based on your punctuality and classroom behavior. You will receive a grade for class participation after each lecture and lab session. This will be based on: coming to class prepared; participating in class discussions/exercises; attendance/timeliness; and exhibiting appropriate classroom behaviors. The grades will be averaged for an overall participation grade for the semester.

## Class Schedule

	CONCEPTS	READINGS/ASSIGNMENTS
<b>WEEK 1: INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNICATION RESEARCH</b>		
Lecture 1	Introduction to Course	Go over syllabus; Bring copies of syllabus and forms to class
Lecture 2	Introduction to Communication Research	Read Davis, Gallardo, & Lachlan, "Introduction and Welcome" <b>and</b> Chapter 1: What is Communication Research?
Lab	Introduction to Communication Research	
<b>WEEK 2: PARADIGMS AND METATHEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS/LIBRARY RESEARCH</b>		
Lecture 1	Research Paradigms	Read Davis, Gallardo, & Lachlan, Chapter 2: Metatheoretical Considerations, Research Perspectives, and Research Paradigms
Lecture 2	Reading & Using Research; Using the Library in Communication Research	Read Davis, Gallardo, & Lachlan, Chapter 3: Discovering What's Already Known: Library Research
Lab	Library Searches, Literature Reviews	

<b>WEEK 3: LIBRARY SEARCHES AND LITERATURE REVIEWS, RESEARCH ETHICS</b>		
Lecture	Literature Reviews	Chapter 4: Writing a Literature Review
Lab	Library Searches, Literature Reviews, APA	
<b>WEEK 4: RESEARCH ETHICS</b>		
Lecture 1	Research Ethics	Read Davis, Gallardo, & Lachlan, Chapter 5: Understanding Research Ethics GROUP REQUESTS FOR GROUP PRESENTATIONS ARE DUE TODAY
Lecture 2	TEST 1 ON CHAPTERS 1 - 5	
Lab	Library Searches, Literature Reviews, APA	
<b>WEEK 5: RESEARCH QUESTIONS, HYPOTHESES, VARIABLES</b>		
Lecture 1	Research Questions and Hypotheses	Read Davis, Gallardo, & Lachlan, Chapter 6: Research Questions and Hypotheses ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE
Lecture 2	Understanding Variables	Read Davis, Gallardo, & Lachlan, Chapter 7: Understanding Variables ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY RETURNED TO STUDENTS
Lab	Research Questions, Hypotheses, and Variables	
<b>WEEK 6: SAMPLING, VALIDITY, AND RELIABILITY</b>		
Lecture 1	Sampling	Read Davis, Gallardo, & Lachlan, Chapter 8: Sampling
Lecture 2	Validity and Reliability	Read Davis, Gallardo, & Lachlan, Chapter 9: Ensuring Validity and Reliability LITERATURE REVIEW 1 DUE
Lab	Sampling, Validity, and Reliability	
<b>WEEK 7: SURVEYS</b>		
Lecture 1	TEST 2 on Chapters 6-9	
Lecture 2	Surveys	Read Davis, Gallardo, & Lachlan, Chapter 10: Survey Research Group Presentation on Survey Research
Lab	Surveys	

<b>WEEK 8: QUANTITATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS</b>		
Lecture	Quantitative Content Analysis	Read Davis, Powell, & Lachlan, Chapter 11: Quantitative Content Analysis Group Presentation on Quantitative Content Analysis
Lab	Quantitative Content Analysis	
<b>WEEK 9: QUANTITATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS AND EXPERIMENTS</b>		
Lecture 1	EXPERIMENTS	Read Davis, Powell, & Lachlan, Chapter 12: Experiments Group Presentation on Experiments LITERATURE REVIEW 1 RETURNED TO STUDENTS
Lecture 2	EXPERIMENTS	Read Davis, Powell, & Lachlan, Chapter 12: Experiments
Lab	Quantitative Content Analysis	
<b>WEEK 10: STATISTICS AND QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS</b>		
Lecture 1	Analyzing Quantitative Research	Read Davis, Gallardo, & Lachlan, Chapter 13: Writing, Analyzing, and Critiquing Quantitative Research
Lecture 2	Analyzing Quantitative Research	Read Davis, Gallardo, & Lachlan, Chapter 13: Writing, Analyzing, and Critiquing Quantitative Research
Lab	Experiments	
<b>WEEK 11: QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS</b>		
Lecture 1	Writing and Critiquing Quantitative Research	Read Davis, Gallardo, & Lachlan, Chapter 13: Writing, Analyzing, and Critiquing Quantitative Research
Lecture 2	Writing and Critiquing Quantitative Research	Read Davis, Gallardo, & Lachlan, Chapter 13: Writing, Analyzing, and Critiquing Quantitative Research LITERATURE REVIEW REVISION DUE
Lab	SPSS	
<b>WEEK 12: QUALITATIVE RESEARCH</b>		
Lecture 1	TEST 3 on Chapters 10-13	
Lecture 2	Introduction to Qualitative Research Approaches	Read Davis, Gallardo, & Lachlan, Chapter 14: Qualitative Approaches to Communication Studies Research Group Presentation on Ethnography Group Presentation on Performance Studies
Lab	Qualitative Research	

<b>WEEK 13: QUALITATIVE RESEARCH</b>		
Lecture	Qualitative Research	Read Davis, Gallardo, & Lachlan, Chapter 14: Qualitative Approaches to Communication Studies Research QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH PROJECT DUE Group Presentation on Conversation Analysis (CA) Group Presentation on Textual Analysis
Lab	Qualitative Research	
<b>WEEK 14: COLLECTING QUALITATIVE DATA</b>		
Lecture	Collecting Qualitative Data	Read Davis, Gallardo, & Lachlan, Chapter 15: Collecting Qualitative Data Group Presentation on Focus Groups  Group Presentation on Qualitative Interviewing  Group Presentation on Qualitative Observation
<b>WEEK 15: ANALYZING QUALITATIVE DATA</b>		
Lecture 1	Writing, Analyzing, and Critiquing Qualitative Research	Read Davis, Gallardo, & Lachlan, Chapter 16: Writing, Analyzing, and Critiquing Qualitative Research
Lecture 3	Writing, Analyzing, and Critiquing Qualitative Research	QUALITATIVE RESEARCH PROJECT DUE AT DR. DAVIS'S OFFICE BY 3:30 pm
Lab	Qualitative Coding	
FINAL EXAM	Test 4 on Chapters 14-16	