

**COM 386: Communication Research Methods**  
**Spring 2014**  
**Dr. Joann Keyton**  
**North Carolina State University**

**TEXTBOOK:**

Keyton, J. (2011). *Communication research: Asking questions, finding answers* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

**COURSE PURPOSE AND LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

Scientific investigation is both an art and a science. Developing skills to pose answerable questions and developing research designs to find defensible answers are the objectives of this course. It is my intention to train you to think critically about questions and solutions. Research is the heart of social inquiry. Thus, the goals of this course are *to develop your ability to think like a communication researcher, critically consider information you read about communication, and apply communication research techniques in your work and community lives*. This course is an exploration of how the very essence of communication (via symbols, messages, and meanings) can be explored with quantitative methodologies. The course is competency based—that is, your grade is based on your performance of research activities. You will have opportunities to *practice* in class and in other ungraded assignments.

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

1. explain the role research plays in the advancement of knowledge about communication
2. understand the basic principles of communication research,
3. understand basic research design concepts, [notice that items 1 through 3 have nothing to do with statistics]
4. have a basic understanding of the role of statistics and other analytical techniques in the research process
5. critically evaluate published research
6. apply basic research principles to your own research designs

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

**ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATION:** The following evaluations will allow you to demonstrate your competencies in the course:

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|---|-------------------------|
| 1. Successful completion of Human Subjects Training | Required; no exceptions |
| 2. Check in exam; online                            | 10%                     |
| 3. Literature review worksheet                      | 10%                     |
| 4. Quantitative research design worksheet           | 10%                     |
| 5. Stats worksheet                                  | 10%                     |
| 6. Quantitative article analysis worksheet          | 10%                     |

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| 7. Research article   | 25% |
| 8. Final exam; online | 25% |

**TENTATIVE SCHEDULE:**

TH Week 1	Introduction to course, instructor, and semester class project	
TU Week 2	Keyton at conference; online learning	Read chapter 1, review Chapter 1 Powerpoints, and <i>take online quiz for chapter 1; post at least two questions you want answered or discussed (see Moodle)</i>
TH 2	Keyton at conference; online learning	Read chapter 2, review Chapter 2 Powerpoints, and <i>take online quiz for chapter 2; post at least two questions you want answered or discussed (see Moodle)</i>
TU Week 3	Understanding journal articles; APA style	Chapter 2; see Moodle
TH Week 3	Quantitative basics	Chapter 3
TU Week 4	Ethical conduct in communication research	Chapter 5 and IRB
TH Week 4	<i>Check in exam</i>	On Moodle during class time
TU Week 5	Doing literature reviews on CMMC database	Communication and Mass Communication Complete
TH Week 5	Measuring communication	Chapters 6; <i>complete PWG survey before coming to class; see Moodle</i>
TU Week 6	Course research project	
TH Week 6	Populations and sample size  <i>Successful completion of Human Subjects Training by September 26th 1 pm; see Human Subjects Training on moodle.</i>	Chapter 7
TU Week 7	Course research project <i>Literature review worksheet due</i>	
TH Week 7	Designing quantitative experiments	Chapter 8
TU Week 8	Designing quantitative experiments	Chapter 8
TH Week 8		
TU Week 9	Designing surveys	Chapter 9
TH Week 9	Designing surveys	Chapter 9
TU Week 10	Analyzing literature and writing arguments <i>Research design worksheet due</i>	

TH Week 10	Descriptive statistics and significance levels	Chapter 10
TU Week 11	Statistical differences	Chapter 11
TH Week 11	On line learning	
TU Week 12	Statistical relationships and statistical review	Chapter 12
TH Week 12	Course research project – collect data	
TU Week 13	Course research project – collect data <i>Stats worksheet due</i>	
TH Week 13	Analyzing and interpreting our data Keyton skypes into class	
TU Week 14	Analyzing and interpreting our data <i>Quantitative article analysis worksheet due</i>	
TH Week 14	Writing the research report	Chapter 17
TU Week 15	Catch up – and answering questions about your research article	
TH Week 15	Exam review <i>Research article due</i>	
	<i>Final Exam 1:00 to 4:00</i>	<i>Moodle</i>