

COMM 702: GRADUATE RESEARCH METHODS  
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN - STEVENS POINT, SPRING '16  
(M 5:30 – 8:00PM; 227 CAC)

Professor: Dr. Tamás Bodor  
Office: CAC 303A  
Office Hours: M 10:00-11:00AM; W 11:00 – 12:00PM; - and by appointment  
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### Course Description and Purpose

Graduate research methods is designed to introduce students to basic quantitative and qualitative approaches to studying communication phenomena. The seminar seeks to offer critical research skills that enable student to pursue graduate studies and independent research projects – including research for their graduate thesis – in communication. Besides reviewing various research and analytical methods, the seminar follows a hands-on, “learning-by-doing” approach. Accordingly, students are expected to get their hands dirty by designing manageable “mini” research projects, collecting and analyzing some data, as well as communicating the findings as shorter written and oral research reports.

### Objectives

In line with the above purpose, upon the completion of this course, student should be able to:

- Identify and explain the respective strengths and limitations of various quantitative and qualitative research methods
- Pose appropriate research questions and hypotheses
- Demonstrate competence in locating, evaluating, and summarizing research
- Construct adequate measures
- Demonstrate basic competence in sampling and data collection
- Demonstrate basic competence in quantitative and qualitative data analysis
- Develop a quantitative research report
- Identify and discuss the ethical components of communication research

### Required and Recommended Texts

There is one required textbook to this course:

- Babbie, E. (2007). *The practice of social research* (12th ed). Belmont, CA: Thompson/Wadsworth.

Additional required and recommended readings and study materials shall be made available via D2L.

## Activities and Grading

Your final grade will be based on the following assignments and activities taking place over the course of the semester:

<b>- Term Project:</b>	<b>35%</b>
1. Literature review:	10%
2. Research presentation:	10%
3. Research report:	15%
<b>- In class quizzes &amp; weekly homework assignments:</b>	<b>30%</b>
<b>- Exams:</b>	<b>25%</b>
1. Exam 1:	10%
2. Exam 2 (cumulative):	15%
<b>- Participation in class discussions:</b>	<b>10%</b>

*Grading scale for final grade:*

95 – 100% = A	84 – 86% = B	74 – 76% = C	60 – 66% = D
90 – 94% = A-	80 – 83% = B-	70 – 73% = C-	< 60% = F
87 – 89% = B+	77 – 79% = C+	67 – 69% = D+	

## Attendance

In this class I do not *regularly* take formal attendance. Therefore, should you be unable to attend class for any reason, you don't need to email / contact me (it your responsibility, however, to bring yourself up-to-date about what missed). It is your best interest to maintain strong attendance: the class meets only once a week, so even missing one class may make you fall behind. You must be present in class in order to understand the assignments and carry them out effectively. Also, if you are absent you cannot participate in class discussions and take the in-class quizzes which could be detrimental to your final grade.

## Missed/Late Assignments

You are expected to give your research presentation on the class day when you are scheduled. If you miss your presentation, it will be impossible to make it up.

Written assignments must be handed in via D2L or at the end of the class as specified by the assignment. Late assignments receive a failing grade.

If you miss a quiz, an exam or an assignment, unless you are granted an excused absence, you will not be permitted to make it up. Excused absences (for illness, death in the family, or other unforeseen circumstances that prevent you from attending class) can be arranged only if proper documentation -- from a physician or a university official -- is presented.

## Academic Honesty

When completing your assignments, you are expected to do original work. That is, you must avoid any form of plagiarism. I consider plagiarism - as defined by *Dictionary.com* – the “use or close imitation of the language and thoughts of another author and the representation of them as one's own original work.” A student caught on plagiarizing shall receive a failing grade for his/her assignment. Further academic misconduct shall be sanctioned in accordance with the *UWSP Chapter 14 – Student Academic Standards and Disciplinary Procedures*.

## Conduct in Class

To provide a fruitful experience and an effective learning environment for all of us, I expect each of you to conduct yourself with respect for your fellow students. Also,

- Students are to be seated in class by 5:30PM, by which I will be ready to teach.
- Any use including the visual display of **cell phones** is not tolerated in this class. By the beginning of class, all cell phones must be **turned off and put away** until the end of class. I consider any use of cell phones, including text messaging, as disrespectful and disruptive.
- Use of **laptop** computers and **tablets** is **not allowed** in class. Exception is made in case of students who are unable to take paper notes due to some documented physical condition.

## Course Schedule

(Note: This schedule is subject to change. Should changes occur, they will be announced in class)

Date	Topics and Activities	Activities & Assignments Due
25-Jan	Course introduction; research topics exercise	
1-Feb	Science; Research paradigms; ethics and politics of research	Babbie ch 1, 2, 3; Curry interview; <i>Research topic proposal due</i>
8-Feb	Quantitative research 1: research design; measurement; SPSS basics; reading and writing research	Babbie ch 4, 5, 17
15-Feb	Quantitative research 2: measures; sampling; survey research	Babbie ch 6, 7, 9; <i>annotated bibliography due</i>
22-Feb	Quantitative research 3: quantitative data analysis	Babbie ch 14, 15
29-Feb	Quantitative research 4: statistical analyses & SPSS 1	Babbie ch 16
7-Mar	Quantitative research 5: statistical analyses & SPSS 2	<i>Literature review due</i>
14-Mar	Quantitative data analysis workshop; <i>Exam 1</i>	
21-Mar	<b>Spring break – No class</b>	
28-Mar	Experimental research;	Babbie ch 8
4-Apr	Qualitative research 1: field research; unobstructive research	Babbie ch 10, 11
11-Apr	Qualitative research 2: conversation analysis; ethnographic	Merrigan & Huston,

	research	Ch 12, 13
18-Apr	Catch-up day & data analysis workshop 1	
25-Apr	data analysis workshop 2; <i>Exam 2</i>	
2-May	Research presentations	
9-May	Online activities – class does not meet	<i>Research report due</i>