

Communication 201  
**Introduction to Communication Research Methods**  
Summer 2016

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Email: [smikucki@uwsp.edu](mailto:smikucki@uwsp.edu) (This is the best way to reach me. I will respond to you within 24-hours, but observe email me free evenings, starting at 7:00 p.m., and weekends).

Office hours: By appointment (physical and online)

### **Course Overview**

#### **Course Description**

Introduction to Communication Research Methods will familiarize you with the conceptual and operational underpinnings of communication research. Because this class satisfies the Quantitative Literacy (QL) category of the GEP it will focus on quantitative rather than qualitative research methods. Additionally, since this course is a requirement of all communication majors, all research understandings will be rooted in communication rather than another discipline.

#### **Learning Outcomes**

This class is required for all Communication majors. It is designed to address the following major competency:

1. Students should be able to plan, evaluate, and conduct basic research.

This class also satisfies the Quantitative Literacy category of the GEP. As such, students who complete the course successfully should be able to do the following:

1. Select, analyze, and interpret appropriate numerical data used in everyday life in numerical and graphical format.
2. Identify and apply appropriate strategies of quantitative problem solving in theoretical and practical applications.
3. Construct a conclusion using quantitative justification.

#### **Required Readings**

The following required textbook is available through text rental:

Merrigan, G., & Huston, C. L. (2015). *Communication research methods* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Additional readings and video clips will be posted to D2L.

## Class Structure

Although this is an online course, I try to create some structure so students can get the most out of the course, stay on pace, and avoid procrastination. As a result, content is released on a weekly basis starting at 6:00 p.m. Sunday evening. Students then have until 11:59 p.m. the following Sunday to listen to all lectures, complete the readings, and take the weekly quiz (more info below). Thus, you have seven days to listen to lectures and complete all required readings and assignments.

I will record lectures to help us “unpack” and understand dense material. Not all elements of chapters will correspond with a recorded lecture. Additionally, some materials covered in online lectures complement, but do not necessarily reiterate the readings. Thus, reading the assigned chapters as well as listening to online lectures is critical to your success in the course. Quizzes will cover both lecture and readings. All written assignments are expected to adhere to American Psychological Association (APA) 6<sup>th</sup> edition style guidelines. Copies of the manual can be purchased at a reasonable price through amazon.com. I encourage you to purchase a copy, especially if you are a communication major.

## Grading

Your grade will be calculated based on your scores from weekly micro-tests and your two papers:

Chapter quizzes	40%
Final exam	20%
IRB training	10%
Research proposal	30%

## Grading Scale

The following grading scale is used to determine your final grade.

100% - 94% = A	79% - 77% = C+	59% or less = F
93% - 90 = A-	76% - 74% = C	
89% - 87% = B+	73% - 70% = C-	
86% - 84% = B	69% - 67% = D+	
83% - 80% = B-	66% - 60% = D	

## Assignments

**Chapter Quizzes:** Weekly multiple choice/true-false quizzes will assess your general understanding of course material through questions testing your ability to remember, understand, and apply course material. As this is an online course, quizzes are, by default, open book/notes/lecture.

Quizzes will be online and randomly generated (meaning no two students will receive the same questions). Additionally, all quizzes will be timed and must be completed within the given 1-hour time frame, no exceptions. Therefore, I encourage you to do all the readings and listen to the lectures *before* beginning the quizzes. Also, it should be noted that you only have ONE attempt at each quiz. As soon as you begin the test that counts as your one attempt and your timer starts. Thus, you cannot attempt to peak at the test in advance. Finally, ***quizzes must be completed by 11:59 p.m. every Sunday, unless noted otherwise (see calendar for due dates).***

**Final Exam:** The final will be comprehensive, and rely primarily upon information presented in your textbook. Similar to all quizzes, the final exam will be online, randomly generated, and timed. However, you will have two hours to complete the final exam as opposed to one hour.

**IRB Training:** Social science research typically uses people as sources of data, which can have some serious ethical implications. To show me you know how some of these ethical dilemmas might arise, as well as how to anticipate and deal with them, you will need to complete the training provided by our Institutional Research Board, at <http://www.uwsp.edu/acadaff/orsp/irb/Pages/training/main.aspx>. Once you complete the training, you will have an opportunity to send someone confirmation that you have done so. Consider me your supervisor and have that confirmation e-mailed to me by **11:59 PM on Sunday, June 27<sup>th</sup>**. The website says the training takes approximately 3 hours to complete, this is no joke! So, don't leave this until the last minute.

**Research Proposal:** Unfortunately, we will not have time for you to prepare and conduct a full research project during the class. We will, however, have time for you to plan a project that *would* allow you to collect quantitative data of some sort, perhaps even a project that you can conduct in your capstone course when you get there. To give you an idea of what to expect, the proposal will need to address the following areas: your interest in conducting the study, a very limited review of existing research in your area of interest (i.e., what we already know), your research questions and/or hypotheses, who you'd study and why, how you'd find them, what you would make them do and which types of test(s) you could use on the data you would collect to answer your questions or test your hypotheses. To help plan your project I have developed "thinking guides" that correspond with textbook chapters. Completing relevant sections of the "thinking guides" at the times suggested will keep you on track to complete your proposal and help you study for each chapter quiz.

## **Course Guidelines and Policies**

### **Attendance and Late Work**

As this is an online course, you can "attend" class whenever and wherever you like! However, as previously noted, all tests and assignments must be completed by their given deadline (see calendar). No exceptions. Please review the calendar and plan accordingly.

### **Grade Inquiry for Quiz Items and Writing Assignments**

Students are encouraged to take action if they believe a quiz question or paper section was scored inaccurately. Students should submit a typed essay within one week after the quiz or paper is returned in class. Essays should cite class material to convincingly argue for why the quiz answer or paper section should be re-evaluated.

### **Email Etiquette**

Email is a quick and convenient way for us to communicate outside of class. Remember, however, that you are still communicating with your professor. That being said, I expect all emails to be professional and courteous. Please make sure that all emails include a subject, a salutation (e.g., Dear Dr. Mikucki-Enyart, Hello Professor, etc.), content that is free of grammatical and spelling errors, a close (e.g., From, Sincerely, etc.), and your name. Also, be mindful of the tone of your email. I will not respond to any emails that lack any of these basic elements of email decorum.

### **Academic Integrity**

Academic integrity is central to the mission of higher education in general and UWSP in particular. Academic dishonesty (cheating, plagiarism, and helping others commit violations) is taken very seriously and will not be tolerated. The *minimum* penalty for a violation of academic integrity is a failure (zero) for the assignment. Students who violate the university's academic code will be rigorously sanctioned. For more information, please visit:

<http://www.uwsp.edu/stuaffairs/Documents/RightsRespons/Academic%20Integrity%20Brochure.pdf>

*\*\*To protect against cases of academic dishonesty, all writing assignments will be submitted through Dropbox via D2L and checked against Turnitin.\*\**

### **Disability Issues**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal law requiring education institutions to provide reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. For more information about UWSP's policies, please visit:

<http://www.uwsp.edu/stuaffairs/Documents/RightsRespons/ADA/rightsADAPolicyInfo.pdf>

If you have a disability and require classroom and/or exam accommodations, please register with the Disability and Assistive Technology Center and then notify me in writing within the first two weeks of the semester. I am happy to help in any way that I can. For more information, please visit the Disability and Assistive Technology Center, located on the 6<sup>th</sup> floor of the LRC. You can also find more information here: <http://www4.uwsp.edu/special/disability>