

COMM 201: INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNICATION RESEARCH
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN - STEVENS POINT, SUMMER '15
(Online)

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All requirements for this class can be met via D2L. Should questions, need for additional personalized instruction or a face-to-face meeting arise, please address your questions to me / contact me via e-mail. I check e-mail regularly Monday through Friday until 7:00PM.

Course Description and Purpose

Scientific research is considered to be the most powerful means to advance knowledge, yet researchers often disagree and scientists often present contradictory findings. Professionals in any field must rely on information based on scientific research in their everyday work. This course will help you understand and interpret research-based information and become a better communication professional.

Professional Standards

Regarding research, the Division of Communication, UWSP identifies the following learning outcome for the Communication Major:

Students should be able to plan, evaluate and conduct basic (quantitative and qualitative) research

In line with this learning outcome, this course seeks to help students develop and explore the followings:

Enduring Understanding – students will understand that...

- Research is a systematic way of learning about the world / a powerful way of knowing
- Various quantitative and qualitative research methods offer different avenues to learning about the world
- Familiarity with research methods enables them to become a competent consumer of research both in their civic and professional lives

Essential Questions

Over the course of the semester we will be exploring the following essential questions about research:

- How does research help us learn about the world / what makes research a powerful way a knowing?
- How do the respective strengths and limitations of various quantitative and qualitative research techniques guide our choices during research process?
- How does competency in research enable someone to become a more competent citizen and professional?

Knowledge – students will be able to ...

- Explain the logic of scientific method as applied to the field of Communication
- Identify and explain the respective strengths and limitations of various quantitative and qualitative research methods

Skills – students will be able to ...

- Design basic quantitative research, including
 - posing appropriate research questions
 - posing research hypotheses
 - constructing adequate measures
 - identifying appropriate methods of data collection and analysis

Required and Recommended Texts

There is one required textbook to this course:

- Treadwell, D. (2014) *Introducing Communication Research: Paths of Inquiry*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE (2nd ed.)

The book is available through text rental.

Activities and Grading

Your final grade will be based on the following assignments and activities:

Entry and Exit Quizzes	10%
Graded Chapter Quizzes	40%
Final Exam	20%
Research Proposal	20%
<u>IRB Training</u>	<u>10%</u>
Total	100%

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+	

Assignment Descriptions:

Entry and Exit Quizzes (10% of course grade): I will use these to determine your level of knowledge at the beginning of class and again at the end. These quizzes technically are not “graded.” If you take both with a good faith effort, you will receive full credit for this portion of the class. These quizzes are mandatory. If you do not take one of these quizzes, your final course grade will be reduced by one full letter grade (ex: from a B+ to a C+). If you do not take either of these quizzes, your final course grade will be reduced by two full letter grades.

Graded Chapter Quizzes (40% of course grade): You can’t get better at understanding ideas about quantitative data without being exposed to them regularly. You will take a quiz over the material from each chapter’s readings and notes. Most testing material will be drawn from the textbook. I will drop your lowest two (2) scores for this portion of the class grade. Quizzes will include recall, application and analytical material, and will take the form of T/F, multiple choice, and short answer questions. These will prepare you for the final exam. Each quiz will be timed. Once started, each quiz must be completed within one (1) hour.*

Final Exam (20% of course grade): The final will be comprehensive, and rely primarily upon information presented in your textbook. The final exam will be timed. Once started, the final must be completed within two (2) hours.*

Research Proposal (20% of course grade): 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. A template for planning your project can be found in D2L. Completing relevant sections of the template at the times suggested will keep you on track to complete your proposal and help you study for each chapter quiz.

IRB Training (10% of course grade): 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 <https://www4.uwsp.edu/special/irb/start.htm> . 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 (tbodor@uwsp.edu) by 11:59 PM on Friday, June 19. The website says the training takes 40 minutes to complete. Most people should be able to complete it in 15-30 minutes. To be safe, however, don't leave this until the last minute.

Missed/Late Assignments:

I do not accept late work under most conditions. If your assignment is not submitted prior to the deadline, you will receive a grade of ZERO for that assignment. If you have an extremely compelling reason for needing to turn in your work late, you must inform me before the assignment is due to have any chance of receiving credit. However, telling me ahead of time does not guarantee that I will give you credit for the assignment.

*If you receive accommodations through Disability and Assistive Technology Services and typically get extra time to take exams, e-mail me a copy of the normal paperwork at the start of class. I can adjust the time allowed for you to take the test after I receive that paperwork.

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*.

Course Schedule

Note: This sample schedule will keep you on track to complete all course requirements on time. However, as long as you have work submitted by each deadline, you may follow any schedule that works for you.

Week 1

15-Jun	What is research?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Ch. 1 • Submit Mandatory Entry Quiz by 11:59 PM • Complete Chapter 1 section of Research Proposal Template
16-Jun	How do I start doing research?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Ch. 2 (pp. 32-36) • Complete Chapter 2 section of Research Proposal Template
17-Jun	How do I measure what I want to know?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Ch. 5 (pp. 77-82)
18-Jun		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Ch. 5 (pp. 82-87)
19-Jun		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Ch. 5 (pp. 87-92) • Complete IRB training and have confirmation of completion e-mailed to me by 11:59 PM (see assignment description on syllabus for more detail).
21-Jun		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete Chapter 5 section of Research Proposal Template • Submit Graded Quizzes for Chapters 1, 2 and 5 by 11:59 PM

Week 2

22-Jun	How do I collect my data? Surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Ch. 9 (pp. 152-159)
23-Jun		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Ch. 9 (pp. 159-170) • Complete Chapter 9 section of Research Proposal Template
24-Jun	How do I collect my data? Experiments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Ch. 10 (pp. 173-180)
25-Jun		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Ch. 10 (pp. 182-188) • Complete Chapter 10 section of Research Proposal Template
26-Jun	How do I collect my data? Content Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Ch. 12 (pp. 215-220)
27-Jun		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Ch. 12 (pp. 220-230) • Complete Chapter 12 section of Research Proposal Template
28-Jun		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit Graded Quizzes for Chapters 9, 10 and 12 by 11:59 PM

Week 3

29-Jun	Who or what will give me my information?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How do I summarize my data?
30-Jun		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read Ch. 8 (pp. 142-150)• Complete Chapter 8 section of Research Proposal Template
1-Jul	How do I summarize my data?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read Ch. 6 (pp. 93-101)
2-Jul		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read Ch. 6 (pp. 102-113)• Complete Chapter 6 section of Research Proposal Template
4-Jul		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enjoy the fireworks!
5-Jul		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Submit Graded Quizzes for Chapters 8 and 6 by 11:59 PM

Week 4

6-Jul	How do I test my RQs and hypotheses?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read Ch. 7 (pp. 114-127)
7-Jul		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read Ch. 7 (pp. 127-132)
8-Jul		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complete Chapter 7 section of Research Proposal Template
9-Jul		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Submit Graded Quiz for Chapter 7 by 11:59 PM
10-Jul		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Submit Mandatory Exit Quiz by 11:59 PM
11-Jul		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Submit Final Exam by 11:59 PM• Submit Research Proposal by 11:59 PM