

COMM 201: INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNICATION RESEARCH
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN - STEVENS POINT, SPRING '20
(TTh 2:00-3:15PM, 204 CAC)

Professor: Dr. Tamás Bodor
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Office Hours: M 9:30-10:30AM; W 12:00–1:00PM - and by appointment
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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. As a result of being uninformed about the capabilities and limitations of various research methods, a great deal of confusion about scientific research persists in the general public. Yet, 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 professional in your field of communication.

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 and conduct basic quantitative and qualitative research, including
 - posing appropriate research questions
 - posing research hypotheses
 - constructing adequate measures
 - collecting and analyzing data
- Communicate / present research findings (in the form of a research presentation and /or a written report)

Dispositions – students will be able to ...

- Differentiate between research of good and of questionable quality
- Differentiate between research of high and of questionable ethical standard

It's not a very reading-heavy course. Yet, you won't get away with not doing the readings.

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. Additional required and recommended readings (short articles) and study materials shall be made available via D2L.

Required Equipment

It is your responsibility to have a working clicker at hand every class.

This class uses “Turning Point Cloud” to do interactive polling. You will need to purchase a Turning Technologies code from within your Turning Point account for \$9.53 or the bookstore for \$21.40 (with a \$10 rebate) to participate in the class. You will be required to check out a clicker from the **UWSP IT Service Desk** to respond to polling.

Check out of the clicker is at the **UWSP IT Service Desk in room 108A ALB, basement of the UWSP Library**. Device checkout is **free of charge**.

Returning clickers: Clickers must be returned to IT Service Desk before the end of finals. Students with unreturned clickers will be billed a late fee and/or may be billed the replacement cost of the clicker.

For Service Desk hours: <http://www.uwsp.edu/infotech/Pages/HelpDesk/default.aspx>

You will need your UWSP Student ID to get your clicker.

Turning Point Account

You will need to create or connect your Turning Point account through the Course in Canvas. Click on the Turning Point account activation link in the course in Canvas to get started.

You can find help with Turning Point Cloud here:

<https://www.turningtechnologies.com/support/turningpoint-cloud>

Activities and Grading

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

- Term Project:** **20%**
Communication researchers are driven by questions they seek to answer at the end of their research endeavors. The best way to learn about communication research is carrying out a research project. Over the course of the semester you'll learn how to turn your research question into a research project. Your research project will give you the opportunity to learn about various phases of research, including developing hypotheses, constructing adequate measures, gathering and analyzing data. During the semester each of you will develop a literature review. Also, at the end of the semester, as part of a group project assignment, you will deliver your research findings to the whole class in the form of a research presentation.
 1. Literature review (group project): 10%
 2. Research presentation (group project): 10%

- Online quizzes & homework assignments:** **25%**

- Exams*:** **45%**
 1. Exam 1: 20%
 2. Final Exam (online, cumulative)*: 25%

- In class (mostly clicker) quizzes and participation in class:** **10%**

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

You must be present in class in order to understand the assignments and carry them out effectively. Also, if you are not present you cannot participate in class discussions and help others with your feedback. Therefore, more than 2 unexcused absences will result in a reduction of one letter grade. Thus, for instance, if you were receiving a B- and you have 3 unexcused absences, your grade will be C-. 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.

Missed/Late Assignments

It is your responsibility to stay informed about upcoming Canvas quizzes, exams and assignment deadlines via monitoring the official schedule in the syllabus and Canvas.

- If you miss a Canvas quiz or an exam, it will be impossible to make it up.
- 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 Canvas or at the end of the class as specified by the assignment. Late assignments receive a failing grade.
- If you miss an in-class quiz or any 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 2:00PM for the class sessions, by which I will be ready to teach. I consider lateness disruptive. Accordingly, I close the classroom door at the beginning of the class session. Late arrivals are asked to wait by the door until an appropriate time to enter. I signify the appropriate time by opening the door.
- For both the lecture and the discussion sessions, students must be equipped with their clickers. Those without clickers won’t be able to fully participate in class discussions, take short in-class quizzes, and establish a strong attendance record. Please note that it is your responsibility to make sure you learn how to use your clicker and that your equipment functions properly. Improper use or dysfunction of your clicker may prevent you from obtaining credit for class participation and in-class quizzes.
- 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.
- UWSP is committed to providing reasonable and appropriate accommodations to students with disabilities and temporary impairments. If you have a disability or acquire a condition during the semester where you need assistance, please contact the Disability and Assistive Technology Center (DATC) on the 6th floor of Albertson Hall (library) as soon as possible. DATC can be reached at 715-346-3365 or DATC@uwsp.edu.

Ask me about research supporting my tech. use policy!

E-mail Policy

As a future communication professional, you need to develop and practice professional e-mail etiquette. E-mail communication with your professor is expected to conform to a professional standard. Thus, your e-mails addressed to me need to:

- identify a subject in the subject line
- start with an appropriate salutation (Dear/Hello Prof./Dr./Mr. Bodor etc.)
- contain a message written in **full** sentences
- end with a close (e.g. Sincerely,) and your name

Note the differences between your professor and Google...

Emails that do not conform with the above standard may not be answered. Also, in your e-mails refrain from asking for information that is already available in the syllabus or has been communicated via Canvas. I check my emails at least twice a day and do my best to reply within 24 hours. I do not deal with emails after 4:00PM and during weekends and holidays.

Office Hours

Your success in learning is my priority. Therefore, should you have any question or concerns about the class, you are strongly encouraged to stop by during my office hours or set up an appointment with me. Also, note that my office door is often open, and you are most welcome to stop by any time when I'm around.

Thus, email me NOT questions about schedule and deadlines.

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
21-Jan	Class introduction; The field of communication research; Getting started	Ch1
23-Jan	Variables and the nature of causation; First decisions: what, why, how? Research ethics	Ch2; ch3
28-Jan	Research questions workshop; Reading research	Ch4
30-Jan	Measurement; Observation & content analysis	Ch 5; ch11; ch12;
4-Feb	Observation & content analysis 2	
6-Feb	Surveys 1	Ch9;
11-Feb	Surveys 2, review for exam 1	Annotated bibliography due
13-Feb	Sampling	Ch8; Exam 1
18-Feb	Descriptive statistics 1	Ch6
20-Feb	Descriptive statistics 2	
25-Feb	Inferential statistics 1	Ch7
27-Feb	Inferential statistics 2	Literature review due
3-Mar	Writing and presenting research; Data analysis workshop 1	Ch 14
5-Mar	Data analysis workshop 2	
10-Mar	Research presentations 1	
12-Mar	Research presentations 2	
13-Mar	Final exam (online)*	

As you know, some online exams are technically "open-book". Yet, on these ones you won't have time to look up the answers. Prepare!

* Note: Online exams are administered via Canvas. They are typically composed of multiple choice, 'true or false', multi-select, short answer, and short essay questions randomly drawn from a question pool individually for each student. All online exams/quizzes have time limit; with no option of moving back to previously answered / seen questions.