

CCI 631: Quantitative Communication and Information Research Methods

Fall 2014 – Tuesday 2:10 to 5:00 p.m.

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Office Hours: By appointment only

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

This course is designed to provide an overview of the concepts and tools used to design, conduct, and interpret quantitative social science research. The primary goal of this class is to give you the skills necessary to critique and produce communication and information research. Specifically, you will be asked to master the vocabulary, become an intelligent consumer of research, and develop the skills necessary for conducting reliable and valid communication research.

REQUIRED READINGS

Babbie, E. (2012). *The practice of social research* (13th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

American Psychological Association. (2009). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: Author

Additional readings will be available on Blackboard. Further readings may be assigned as needed.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Assignments: Over the course of our 15 weeks together there will be numerous short assignments dealing with issues discussed during class. It will be your responsibility to complete these assignments in full and turn them in before the due date discussed in class.

Exams: There will be two in-class exams during this course. The exams will be cumulative and will be composed of multiple choice, short answer, true-false, and essay items. They will cover everything covered in class and all assigned readings.

Peer Review: The peer review process is one of the cornerstones of modern scientific research; therefore, it is important that you start practicing now. Over the last two weeks of class, you will be asked to review two of your fellow students' final papers. For each paper, you must write a two-page review of their work. The goal is to make you better at critiquing work and to help improve the work that you review.

Presentation: At every stage of your academic career you will be asked to present your work; therefore, it is important to start practicing now. Over the last two weeks of class everyone will present their work to the class. The presentations will be 10-12 minutes each (just like most academic conferences) and will allow for questions at the end.

Final Paper: During finals week, you will turn in a 10-15 page research original proposal. The paper should contain an intro, a short literature review, and an in-depth methods section. In writing your final paper, you

should take into consideration the peer review comments and the question and discussion associated with your presentation.

GRADING CRITERIA

		Grade	Percent	Points
Assignments	200 points	A	93% – 100%	930-1000 points
Exam 1	150 points	A–	90% – 92%	900-929 points
Exam 2	250 points	B+	87% – 89%	870-899 points
Peer Review	100 points	B	83% – 86%	830-869 points
Presentation	100 points	B–	80% – 82%	800-829 points
Final Paper	200 points	C+	77% – 79%	770-899 points
		C	73% – 76%	730-769 points
		C–	70% – 72%	700-729 points
Total	1000 points	D+	67% – 69%	670-699 points
		D	60% – 66%	600-669 points
		E	Less than 60%	599 points or less

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Attendance: Attendance is required, and there are no “excused” absences in this class. However, I recognize that people may need to miss a class or two for various reasons. Absences will be dealt with on a per student per situation basis. Please see the “Readings and Participation” and “Missed or Late Exams or Assignments” portions of the syllabus for other important information regarding attendance.

Missed or Late Quizzes and Assignments: By definition, late tests and assignments are below average, and are unfair to those who are prepared. As a general rule, if you do not take the exam or hand in an assignment on the scheduled day and time, you will receive a zero for a grade on that exam or assignment. The tentative assignment due dates are noted on the last page of the syllabus. *The instructor will notify you in class how and when the assignment should be submitted. Assignments not submitted using the specified method or after the specified deadline will not be accepted.* In the rare case when a make-up quiz or late assignment is approved by the instructor, you will still have 10% deducted from your grade for *each day* it is late (including weekends). A few additional things to note regarding late exams and assignments: (1) Students arriving after any other student has finished the current exam will not be permitted to take the exam and will receive a zero; (2) in the rare case when a make-up exam is approved, the exam may contain different questions and/or be in a different format than the original exam; and (3) exam and assignments turned in more than one week late will receive a zero for a grade.

Readings and Participation: All readings should be done prior to the assigned class period. Students are expected to participate *fully and constructively* in class discussions and activities.

Classroom Civility: We want to build a classroom climate that is comfortable for all. In a communication class, it is *especially* important that we (1) display respect for all members of the classroom – including the instructor and students, (2) pay attention to and participate in all class sessions and activities; (3) avoid unnecessary disruption during class time (e.g., having private conversations, reading the newspaper, doing work for other classes, making/receiving cell phone calls, text messaging, etc.); and (4) avoid racist, sexist, homophobic or other negative language that may unnecessarily exclude members of our campus and classroom. This is not an exhaustive list of behaviors; rather, they represent the minimal standards that help make the classroom a productive place for all concerned. Your final grade may be reduced by 1% *each time* you engage in these sorts of behaviors.

Diversity Statement: The College of Communication and Information recognizes and values diversity. Exposing students to diverse people, ideas and cultures increases opportunities for intellectual inquiry, encourages critical thinking, and enhances communication and information competence. When all viewpoints are heard, thoughtfully considered, and respectfully responded to, everyone benefits. Diversity and fairness unite us with the wider professional and global community.

E-mail and Computer Work: We will use electronic mail for class updates. Please read your mail regularly (at least once per day) so you can keep up-to-date on upcoming assignments. In some cases, you may also be required to turn in assignments in electronic format (you will always be notified at least one week in advance when this is the case). Let me know if you need help with this.

Plagiarism: Cheating and plagiarism in any form will not be tolerated. The University of Tennessee's *Academic Standards of Conduct* (pp. 12-14 of Hilltopics) defines plagiarism as: "using the intellectual property or product of someone else without giving proper credit." If I suspect that a student has committed academic misconduct in this course, I am obligated by University Rules to report my suspicions to the University of Tennessee Judicial System (UTJS). If UTJS determines that you have violated the University's *Academic Standards of Conduct*, the sanctions for the misconduct could include a failing grade in this course and suspension or dismissal from the University. If you have any questions about this policy or what constitutes plagiarism or more broadly academic misconduct, please contact the professor or visit the Dean of Students web page at <http://dos.utk.edu>. All policies are also listed in the 2011-2012 edition of Hilltopics.

Reasonable Accommodation Policy: Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office of Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated, and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs (when possible, documentation should be provided no later than the second week of class). The Office for Disability Services is located at 2227 Dunford Hall; Phone 865-974-6087; ods@utk.edu; <http://ods.utk.edu/>.

DISCLAIMER: The information provided in this syllabus constitutes a list of basic class policies. I reserve the right to modify this information when deemed necessary for any reason. You will be notified in class and/or via email if/when any changes occur.

WEEK	DATE	TOPIC	READINGS	WHAT'S DUE
1	8/26	Introduction and overview	Preacher (2003)	
2	9/2	The research process Research ethics and APA format	Babbie Ch 1 – 3 Belmont Report UTK IRB Website APA Ch 1 and 2	
3	9/9	Variables, research questions and hypotheses	Babbie 123 – 146 Hayes Ch 1 Singleton & Straits 81-108	
4	9/16	Measurement	Babbie 147 – 156 and Ch 6 Singleton & Straits Ch 5 Hayes (2005)	Research Topic
5	9/23	Internal and external validity – Establishing causation, sampling, and design choices	Babbie Ch 4 and 7 Mook (1983)	
6	9/30	EXAM 1		EXAM 1
7	10/7	Survey research – overview	Babbie Ch 9 Dillman Ch 1 and 2 Garett (2011)	
8	10/14	Survey research – question wording, survey design and other nuances	Brick (2011) Schwarz (1999)	
9	10/21	Secondary data analysis	Holbert & Hmielowski (2010) Hayes & Myers (2009)	
10	10/28	Experimental research	Babbie Ch 8 Shadish & Cook Ch 1 & 2 Thorson et al. (2012)	
11	11/4	Experimental research	Geidner & D'Arcy w/ reviews Nisbet et al. (Forthcoming) Beam (2013)	Research Update – 1 pg. – include theory, proposed method and key variables
12	11/11	Content Analysis	Babbie (330 – 341) Dylko et al. (2012) Dylko codesheet Krippendorff Ch 4 - 6	
13	11/18	EXAM 2		EXAM 2
14	11/25	Presentations and alternative methods (SNA, ABM, and Computation Social Science)	Lazer et al. (2009) Macy & Willer (2002)	Peer Review or Presentation
15	12/2	Presentations and closing thoughts		Peer Review or Presentation
FINAL	12/4**			Final Paper Due

* The professor reserves the right to alter the schedule. You will be notified in class and/or via email if/when any changes occur.

** The final will be Thursday Dec 4th, 2012 from 2:45 p.m. to 4:45 p.m.