

University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film

Communications Studies COMS 413, L01
ADVANCED RESEARCH METHODS

WINTER 2016

Weds, Jan 13 - Weds, April 13, 2016 (excluding Feb. 17)
Wednesdays, 14:00-16:45

Instructor: Dr. Shawn J. Mueller
Office: SS 307 (shared office)
Office Phone: N/A
E-Mail: muellesj@ucalgary.ca
Web Page: D2L available through MyUofC portal
Office Hours: Wednesdays, 16:50 (directly after lecture) or by appt.

Course Description

An in-depth study of selected methods for social and cultural research. Students will design and carry out empirical research applying these methods.

Additional Information

This course is strongly recommended to students who intend to apply to Honours or graduate programs or to seek employment in research-intensive industries.

Objectives of the Course

The objective of this course is to assist students in building a thorough understanding of the theoretical and methodological underpinnings of research in the Social Sciences and Humanities. Class time will be split between discussion of these theories and methodologies, and their application to the specific student projects.

Textbooks and Readings

Creswell, John W., *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (4th ed) Sage: 2013. This will be available in the bookstore, but can also be purchased (for a lower cost) as an e-book from Amazon.

Other readings will be assigned via D2L.

Internet and electronic communication device information

No restriction on the use of laptops (ipads, netbooks, etc.) in class if they are used to take notes or find information relevant to the class, and if there is no disturbance of other students or the instructor. Phones must be turned off during class time unless you are a health care or law enforcement professional with appropriate ID.

Assignments and Evaluation

Every research initiative you will undertake, at the university or in the wider world, will require you to produce a series of “deliverables” *en route* to your completed project.

These can include topic identification, project proposal, literature review, ethics application, data collection and interpretation, report creation, and presentation of data. In this course we will endeavor to undertake a *bona fide* research project on a communications related topic. Students will have the opportunity to conduct research involving human subjects, as well as non-intrusive methods such as case study or content analysis. During our first meeting the group will work together to formulate a research question for each student. Each student will then address their research question using three different approaches: (i) Case Study or Content Analysis (student choice); (ii) Survey; and (iii) Participant Observation, and will produce a final research paper (10-15 pages in length) relating solely to their research project, and an oral presentation (approximately 15-20 minutes) which addresses both their research findings and their experience of the research process. The following are the deliverables for this course, the due dates, and the points available for each deliverable:

Item	Due Date	Points
Project Development Assignments		
Statement of Topic and Approaches Selected (2 page maximum)	Weds, Jan. 20	5
Full project proposal (3-4 pages)	Weds, Feb. 3	10
Literature review (~ 5 pages)	Weds, Feb 17	10
Methodology Assignments		
Content Analysis / Case Study (5 pages)	Per agreement	10
Survey	Per agreement	10
Participant Observation	Per agreement	10
Data Analysis & Presentation		
Final Paper	Weds, Apr. 6	25
In-Class Presentation (slides/poster must be submitted)	Weds, Apr. 13	10
Other		
Participation in seminar discussions/reading reflections (in-class exercises)	Every class	10

Students will consult with the instructor regarding the order and timing of the three research methodology assignments.

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: No

All assignments and exams must be completed or a course grade of F may be assigned at the discretion of the instructor.

Submission of Assignments: All assignments are to be submitted via D2L. Submission procedure will be reviewed prior to due date of the first assignment.

Please include your name and ID number on all assignments, and be prepared to provide picture ID to pick up assignments or look at final exams in SS 320 after classes have ended. Personal information is collected in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act*. For more information, see <http://www.ucalgary.ca/secretariat/privacy>

Note: It is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment. For courses in which assignments are submitted electronically, it is the student's responsibility to ensure that the correct copy of the assignment is submitted. (Including the version date or version number in your file name may help you avoid submitting the wrong version of your written assignments.)

Policy for Late Assignments

Assignments submitted after the deadline may be penalized with the loss of a grade (e.g.: A- to B+) for each day late.

Student Accommodations:

Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services; SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For additional information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit www.ucalgary.ca/access/.

Students who require an accommodation in relation to their coursework based on a protected ground other than disability should communicate this need in writing to their Instructor. The full policy on Student Accommodations is available at http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy_0.pdf.

Please note:

1. Students seeking accommodations for transient illnesses (e.g., the flu) should contact their instructors directly. Whenever possible, students should advise their instructors in advance if they will be missing quizzes, presentations, in-class assignments, or group meetings.
2. When accommodations are granted, they may take forms other than make-up tests or assignments. For example, the weight of a missed grade may be added to another assignment or test.
3. For information on Deferrals of Final Exams and Term Work, see sections G.6 and G.7 of the *University Calendar* at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-6.html> and <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-7.html>

Writing Skills Statement

Department policy directs that all written assignments (including, to a lesser extent, written exam responses) will be assessed at least partly on writing skills. For details see <http://comcul.ucalgary.ca/needtoknow>. Writing skills include not only surface correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc) but also general clarity and organization. Sources used in research papers must be properly documented. If you need help with your writing, you may use the Writing Centre. Visit the website for more details: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>

Grading & Grade Scale of the Department of Communication, Media and Film

Final grades are reported as letter grades. However, assignments, exams, and other work in this course will be graded using

- letter grades
- percentage grades
- raw scores (e.g., a score out of 15 for an assignment worth 15 /100 of the final grade)
- GPA values (using any value on the 0 to 4.0 scale, including, e.g., 3.2 or 2.8)
- a combination of the above.

The following grade scale percentage equivalents are used in the Department. If letter grades are used for an assignment or other course component, the percentage equivalent in the final column will be used for calculating the final grade:

Grade Point Value	Description	Grade	Department grade scale equivalents	Letter grade % equivalent for calculations
4.00	Outstanding	A+	96 - 100%	98.0%
4.00	Excellent—superior performance, showing comprehensive understanding of subject matter.	A	90 - 95.99%	93.0%
3.70		A -	85 - 89.99%	87.5%
3.30		B+	80 - 84.99%	82.5%
3.00	Good--clearly above average performance with knowledge of subject matter generally complete.	B	75 - 79.99%	77.5%
2.70		B-	70 - 74.99%	72.5%
2.30		C+	65 - 69.99%	67.5%
2.00	Satisfactory—basic understanding of the subject matter.	C	60 - 64.99%	62.5%
1.70		C-	55 - 59.99%	57.5%
1.30	Minimal pass—marginal performance; generally insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject	D+	53 - 54.99%	54.0%
1.00		D	50 - 52.99%	51.5%
0.00	Fail – unsatisfactory performance or failure to meet course requirements.	F	00 - 49.99%	0%

Plagiarism

Using any source whatsoever without clearly documenting it is a serious academic offense. Consequences include failure on the assignment, failure in the course and possibly suspension or expulsion from the university.

You must document not only direct quotations but also paraphrases and ideas where they appear in your text. A reference list at the end is insufficient by itself. In-text

citations must be provided, and readers must be able to tell exactly where your words and ideas end and other people’s words and ideas begin. Wording taken directly from a source must be enclosed within quotation marks (or, for long quotations, presented in the format prescribed by the documentation style you are using). Paraphrased information must not follow the original wording and sentence structure with only slight word substitutions here and there. These requirements apply to all assignments and sources, including those in non-traditional formats such as Web pages or visual media.

For information on citation and documentation styles (including APA, Chicago, IEEE, MLA, and others), visit the links provided at <https://ucalgary.ca/ssc/resources/writing-support/436> . If you have questions about how to document sources, please consult your instructor or the Writing Centre (3rd Floor TFDL, <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>).

Academic Misconduct

For information on academic misconduct and its consequences, please see the University of Calgary Calendar at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>

Research Ethics

Whenever you perform research with human participants (i.e. surveys, interviews, observation) as part of your university studies, you are responsible for following university research ethics guidelines. Your instructor must review and approve of your research plans and supervise your research. For more information about your research ethics responsibilities, see <http://arts.ucalgary.ca/research/resources/ethics>

This course requires students to conduct primary research involving surveys and observations. Students will be designing and implementing online surveys and conducting participant observation research in public areas. The instructor has received course-based ethics approval from the Faculty Research Ethics Committee; students will not have to apply for ethics approval individually.

Important information, services, and contacts for students

For information about . . .	Visit or contact . . .
ARTS PROGRAM ADVISING (ASC)	SS 102 403-220-3580 artsads@ucalgary.ca
CAMPUS SECURITY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calgary Police Service • Emergency Text Messaging • Emergency Evacuation & Assembly • Safewalk Program 	http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/ 403-220-5333 403-266-1234 Emergency: call 911 http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/textmessage http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints If you feel uncomfortable walking alone at any time, call Campus Security for an escort (220-5333). For more information, see http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/

DESIRE2LEARN (D2L) Support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT help line 	http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students 403-220-5555 or itsupport@ucalgary.ca
STUDENT SUCCESS CENTRE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing Support Services • Student Services Mobile App 	http://ucalgary.ca/ssc http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support http://ucalgary.ca/currentstudents
STUDENTS' UNION CONTACTS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty of Arts Reps • Student Ombudsman 	https://www.su.ucalgary.ca/about/who-we-are/elected-officials/ http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds
SU WELLNESS CENTRE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counselling Services • Health Services • Distress centre 24/7 CRISIS LINE • Online resources and tips 	403-210-9355 (MSC 370), M-F, 9:00–4:30 pm http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/counselling http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/health 403-266-HELP (4357) http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/healthycampus If you're concerned about a friend or your own well-being, it is important to seek help early. Call or visit the SU Wellness Centre or the 24-hour crisis line.

Schedule of Lectures and Readings

Schedule will be posted on D2L