

University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film

COMS 313 (L02): Communication Research Methods

FALL 2019: September 5 to Dec. 6 (excluding Oct. 14 and Nov. 10-16)

Lecture: Mondays and Wednesdays 15:30 to 16:45

Instructor:	Maria Victoria Guglietti
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Web Page:	D2L available through MyUofC portal
Office Hours:	Fridays 11:00 to 2:00 pm or by appointment.

Course Description

A critical introduction to communication research methods. Students will explore, practice, and critique selected quantitative and qualitative research methods and perspectives on the processes of knowledge production.

Additional Information

The weekly schedule of topics and readings can be found at the end of this outline or on D2L. Students are responsible for reading and following all course and university policies discussed in this outline.

Objectives of the Course

By the end of this course, students should be able to identify and understand:

- the difference between scientific research and other practices of knowledge production,
- common research orientations and designs in social sciences,
- the strengths and limitations of common communication research methods
- the potential bias introduced by different method of sampling,
- common ethical implications of communication research projects,
- different types of qualitative and quantitative data analysis,
- the constitutive elements of a literature review and its role in the context of a research project,
- the components of a research proposal and the characteristics of a good proposal in the context of communication research.

Textbooks and Readings

Seale, C. (2018). *Researching society and culture* (4th ed.). London, U.K.: Sage.

Policy on the use of Electronic Communication Devices

Laptops, tablets, and mobile phones may be used in class and tutorials only for course-related purposes and only if their use is not distracting others or negatively impacting the learning environment. No audio or video recording is allowed in any class without the instructor's permission.

Assignments and Evaluation

Weight	Assessed Components	Due
35%	<p>Group Activities: in groups of max. 4 members, students will complete five problem solving activities that require the identification, critique and/or design of different aspects of the communication research process. The activities will be completed in class and handed in at the end of the day via dropbox submission. Students will have the entire lecture time to complete the activity.</p> <p>Group activities are open book. The instructions will become available the day the assignment is introduced in class.</p> <p>To complete the activity, students must be present in class.</p>	Sep. 18, 30, Oct. 21, 28 AND Nov. 27
5%	<p>TCPS Tutorial: Students are required to complete the TCPS2 online tutorial for ethics certification. The tutorial is found here: http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/eng/education/tutorial-didacticiel/</p> <p>Students need to submit proof of completion (i.e. certificate of completion) by uploading a digital version of the certificate to the D2L dropbox assigned.</p> <p>Estimated duration of the tutorial: 2 hours.</p>	Oct. 7
25%	<p>Midterm analysis of academic research: open book, 2-3 pages long, dropbox submission.</p> <p>Students will complete a questionnaire that requires the identification and evaluation of research orientation, design, method and ethical implications of an academic study in the area of communication studies assigned by the instructor.</p> <p>Further instructions will be posted on D2L.</p>	Nov. 6
5%	<p>Show and tell presentation: individual, 5-7 minutes.</p> <p>Students will choose a communication research paper for an oral analysis before the class. The components of the oral presentation are the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A brief summary of the paper, 2. At least two connections between the paper and the material discussed in class. 3. A summary discussion of the rationale behind the student's choice (i.e. why the paper is a good, curious, bad or significant example of X topic). <p>Further instructions will be posted in D2L.</p>	Ongoing. Students will sign in for this presentation during the first lecture.
30%	<p>Final research proposal: individual, approx.5-6 pages.</p> <p>Students will complete a final research proposal, which will include all the components of a formal academic proposal as outlined in chapter 6 of the textbook (i.e. title, introduction, literature review, aims and objectives, method, data analysis, ethical implications, dissemination strategies, references in APA style).</p> <p>Further instructions will be posted in D2L.</p>	Dec 9, 15:30. Dropbox submission.

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: No

Note: You do not have to complete all the assignments and exams in order to receive a passing grade in this course.

If you miss a required course component, please contact your instructor as soon as possible.

Submission of Assignments

Please include your name and ID number on all assignments and upload them to the D2L dropbox assigned.

Note: It is your responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment and to ensure that you submit the proper version (particularly in courses requiring electronic submission).

Private information related to individual students is treated with the utmost regard by University of Calgary faculty. Student assignments will be accessible only by the authorized course faculty, and personal information is collected in accordance with the ***Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act***. Please note that instructors may use audio or video recorded for lesson capture, assessment of student learning, and self-assessment of teaching practices.

Policy for Late Assignments

Assignments submitted after the deadline will receive a 0.

***The Day of Grace:** One day of grace is available to all students to cover unforeseen problems that prevent them from meeting a deadline such as computer crashes, vehicle breakdowns, lack of printer ink or money, unexpected family obligations, etc. Students may use this day ONLY ONCE during the semester. Students using this day of grace must upload the assignment by 4:30 pm the next calendar day to avoid a late penalty, and write "grace" on their subject line. It should be noted that assignments handed in this manner may be returned 1-2 classes later than those submitted on the due date

Student Accommodations

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

Students seeking accommodation for transient illnesses (e.g., the flu) or another legitimate reason should contact their instructors. Whenever possible, students should provide supporting documentation to support their request; however, instructors may not require that a medical note be presented. For the policy on supporting documentation the use of a statutory declaration, see Section M.1 of the *University Calendar*: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/m-1.html>. Also see FAQs for Students: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/registration/appeals/student-faq>

Expectations for Writing

Department policy directs that all written assignments and, to a lesser extent, written exam responses be assessed at least partly on writing skills. Writing skills include not only surface correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc.) but also general clarity and organization and proper documentation of research sources. For further information, please

refer to the *University of Calgary Calendar* section on writing across the curriculum:
<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/e-2.html>

Grading & Department of Communication, Media and Film Grade Scale

The following table outlines the grade scale percentage equivalents used in the Department of Communication, Media and Film. Final grades are reported as letter grades. For components graded using percentages or numerical scores, those values will be used directly in calculating the final course grade, while for components graded using letter grades, the letter grades will be converted to the midpoint values listed in the final column of the table below in calculating the final course grade.

In this course, final grades are reported as letter grades. All other assignments (group activities, midterm analysis, show and tell presentation and final proposal) will receive a percentage grade.

Grade Point Value	Description	Grade	Dept of CMF grade scale equivalents*	Letter grade % equivalent for calculations*
4.00	Outstanding performance	A+	96 - 100%	98.0%
4.00	Excellent performance	A	90 - 95.99%	93.0%
3.70	Approaching excellent performance	A -	85 - 89.99%	87.5%
3.30	Exceeding good performance	B+	80 - 84.99%	82.5%
3.00	Good performance	B	75 - 79.99%	77.5%
2.70	Approaching good performance	B-	70 - 74.99%	72.5%
2.30	Exceeding satisfactory performance	C+	65 - 69.99%	67.5%
2.00	Satisfactory performance	C	60 - 64.99%	62.5%
1.70	Approaching satisfactory performance	C-	55 - 59.99%	57.5%
1.30	Marginal pass. Insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject	D+	53 - 54.99%	54.0%
1.00	Minimal pass. Insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject	D	50 - 52.99%	51.5%
0.00	Failure. Did not meet course requirements.	F	0 - 49.99%	0%

* Column 4: If percentages are used to calculate final grades, then grades falling within these ranges will be translated to the corresponding letter grades. Column 5: These percentage equivalents will be used for calculating final grades unless an alternative method of final grade calculation is outlined above.

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. These requirements apply to all assignments and sources, including those in non-traditional formats such as Web pages or visual media.

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.

For information on citation and documentation styles (MLA, APA, Chicago, IEEE, etc.), visit the Student Success Centre resource links at <https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success/writing-support> or the Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) Research and Citation Resources at https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/resources.html

If you need help with your writing or have questions about citing sources, please consult your instructor or visit the Student Success Centre, 3rd floor, Taylor Family Digital Library. To book an appointment, go to https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success?utm_source=ssc&utm_medium=redirect&utm_campaign=redirect

Instructor Intellectual Property & Copyright Legislation

Course materials created by the instructor (including course outlines, presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the instructor. These materials may NOT be reproduced, redistributed or copied without the explicit consent of the instructor. The posting of course materials to third party websites such as note-sharing sites without permission is prohibited. Sharing of extracts of these course materials with other students enrolled in the same course section and term may be allowed under fair dealing. Check with the instructor if you have any questions about sharing materials with classmates.

All students are required to read the University of Calgary policy on Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright (www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/acceptable-use-of-material-protected-by-copyright.pdf) and requirements of the copyright act (<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-42/index.html>) to ensure they are aware of the consequences of unauthorized sharing of course materials (including instructor notes, electronic versions of textbooks etc.). Students who use material protected by copyright in violation of this policy may be disciplined under the Non-Academic Misconduct Policy.

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, including surveys, interviews, or observations as part of your university studies, you are responsible for obtaining research ethics approval and for following university research ethics guidelines. In some cases, your instructors may apply for course-based research ethics approval for certain assignments, and in those cases, they must review and approve your research plans and supervise your research. For more information about your research ethics responsibilities, please see <https://arts.ucalgary.ca/research/arts-researchers/resources-researchers-and-instructors/ethics>

Deferrals of Course Work and Requests for Reappraisal

For university regulations and procedures related to deferrals of exams and course work, requests for reappraisals, and other matters, please see the relevant sections in the *University Calendar*: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/academic-regs.html>

Student Support Services and Resources

Please visit <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/registration/course-outlines> for information about student support services and resources, including Wellness and Mental Health Resources, Student Success programs and services, the Student Ombuds Office, the Student Union, and Safewalk.

For resources on D2L, visit <http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students>. IT support is available at itsupport@ucalgary.ca or by calling 403-220.5555.

Schedule of Lecture Topics and Readings

	Mondays 15:30 – 16:45 SA121	Wednesdays 15:30 – 16:45 SA121
Week 1 Sep. 9 & 11	Introduction to course, readings and assignments. Topic: Unpacking research methods.	Topic: Research and Theory Reading: Silverman, pp.25-42 (Chapter 3)
Week 2 Sep. 16 & 18	Topic: Ethics Reading: Ari & Kelly, pp. 43-62 (chapter 4)	Assignment: show and tell presentation, group activity 1
Week 3 Sep. 23 & 25	Topic: Research questions Reading: Kelly, pp. 79-100 (chapter 6) Assignment: show and tell presentation	Topic: Research designs Reading: Robinson & Seale, pp. 101-122. (chapter 7) Assignment: show and tell presentation
Week 4 Sep. 30 & Oct. 2	Assignment: show and tell presentation, group activity 2	Topic: Sampling Reading: Seale, pp. 155-174 (chapter 9) Assignment: show and tell presentation
Week 5 Oct. 7 & 9	Topic: Surveys Reading: Seale, pp. 176-182 (chapter 10) AND pp. 196-208 (chapter 11) Assignment: show and tell presentation	Topic: Qualitative interviewing Reading: Byrne, pp. 217-236 (chapter 12) Assignment: show and tell presentation
Week 6 Oct. 14 & 16	Thanksgiving Day	Topic: Focus Groups Reading: Tonkiss, pp. 237-256 (chapter 13) Assignment: show and tell presentation
Week 7 Oct. 21 & 23	Assignment: show and tell presentation, group activity 3	Topic: Ethnography Reading: Walsh & Seale (chapter 14) Assignment: show and tell presentation
Week 8 Oct. 28 & 30	Assignment: show and tell presentation, group activity 4	Topic: Quantitative Data Analysis Reading: Seale, pp. 352-359 (chapter 20), Seale, pp. 362-

		370 (chapter 21, comparing the means of two groups excluded) AND Seale, pp. 376-382 (only elaboration paradigm, chapter 22) NO show and tell presentation
Week 9 Nov. 4 & 6	Topic: Literature Review Reading: Branley, Seale & Zacharias, pp. 63-78 (chapter 5) Assignment: show and tell presentation	Topic: Qualitative analysis: Content and text analysis Reading: Seale & Tonkiss, pp. 403-428 (chapter 24) Assignment: Midterm analysis due, show and tell presentation
Week 10 Nov. 11 & 13	Remembrance Day	Reading Break
Week 11 Nov. 18 & 20	Topic: Thematic analysis Reading: Riva, pp. 429-454 (chapter 25) Assignment: show and tell presentation	Topic: Discourse Analysis Reading: Tonkiss, pp. 477-492 (chapter 27) Assignment: show and tell presentation
Week 12 Nov. 25 & 27	Assignment: show and tell presentation, group activity 5	Topic: Narrative and phenomenological analysis Reading: Griffin & May, pp. 512-527 (chapter 29) Assignment: show and tell presentation
Week 13 Dec. 2 & 4	Topic: Visual analysis Reading: Ali, pp. 455-476 (chapter 26) Assignment: show and tell presentation.	Topic: Research quality Reading: Seale, pp. 567-581 (chapter 32) Assignment: show and tell presentation.
Week 14 + Dec. 9	Research Proposal due @ 15:30 (dropbox)	