

University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film

COMS 313 (L01)

Communication Research Methods

Winter 2020

Mon., Jan. 13 – Wed., April 15 (excluding Feb. 17-19 & April 13)

MW 9:30-10:45

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| Instructor: | Maria Victoria Guglietti |
| Office: | SS220 |
| Office Phone: | (403)- 220-3381 |
| Email: | mvguglie@ucalgary.ca |
| Web Page: | D2L available through MyUofC portal |
| Office Hours: | <i>Available via email anytime/ Zoom conference upon request.</i> |

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.

The changes introduced to accommodate a remote delivery of this class are the following:

1. The lecture will be uploaded on Monday and Wednesday as a narrated ppt.
2. Optional video conferences will be scheduled for every Wednesday beginning at 10:15 AM.
3. Discussion threads will be available for students to share their comments about the content discussed in the lectures and in the group presentations.

Additional Information

The weekly schedule of topics and readings can be found at the end of this outline and 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.
(recommended)

Internet and 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% | 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. Group activities are open book. The instructions will become available the day the assignment is introduced in class. | Jan. 22; Feb. 5, Mar. 4, 11 AND April 6 (end of the day) |
| 5% | TCPS Tutorial: Students are required to complete the TCPS2 online tutorial for ethics certification. The tutorial is found here: https://tcps2core.ca 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. Estimated duration of the tutorial: 2 hours. | Feb. 10 (end of the day) |
| 15% | Quizzes: take-home- individual Students will complete a take-home quiz in the form of short questions. The quiz instructions will be posted on D2L at least three business days before the quiz deadline. Each quiz is worth 3% of the grade and has approx. 9 questions. | Jan. 27, Feb. 12, Mar. 2, 23 AND April 8 |
| 20% | Take-home midterm analysis of academic research: open book, 2-3 pages long, dropbox submission. 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. The midterm analysis is a take-home assignment. Further instructions will be posted on D2L. | March 4 (end of the day) |
| 5% | Show and tell presentation: individual, 5-7 minutes. Students will choose a communication research paper for remote presentation . The format of this presentation will be determined by students according to their technological access (i.e. narrated ppt, video recording). Students are encouraged to discuss with the instructor the format of their presentation before submitting. The components of the oral presentation are the following: 1. A brief summary of the paper, | Ongoing except for Jan. 27, Feb. 12, Mar. 2, 16, 23 AND April 8 Students will sign in |

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| | <p>2. At least two connections between the paper and the material discussed in class.</p> <p>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> <p>Students must submit their presentation to the appropriate D2L dropbox by the original deadline of their presentation.</p> | for this presentation during the first lecture. |
| 20% | <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> | April 15, 11:00 AM. 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.

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/legalservices/foip/foip-hia>

Note: It is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment and to ensure that the proper version is submitted (particularly in courses requiring electronic submission). Including a version date in your file name may be useful.

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.

Note that given the difficult circumstances we are living in, students are encouraged to discuss with the instructor **before the original deadline of the assignment a potential extension of the day of grace.**

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.pdf>.

Students seeking accommodation for transient illnesses (e.g., the flu) or for 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, please see the following:

- Section N.1 of the *University Calendar*: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/n-1.html>
- FAQs for Students at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/registration/appeals/student-faq>

Note that 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 that of another assignment or test.

For information on deferrals, see the following sections in the *University Calendar*:

- Section G.7 Deferral of Term Work at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-7.html>

Section G.6 Deferral of Final Exam at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-6.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.

In this course, final grades are reported as letter grades. All other assignments (group activities, quizzes, 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% |

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| 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% |

* If percentages are used to calculate final grades, then grades falling within these ranges will be translated to the corresponding letter grades.

** These percentage equivalents will be used for calculating final grades unless an alternative method of final grade calculation is outlined above.

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. 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 support services in the Student Success Centre (3rd floor, Taylor Family Digital Library). Visit the website for more details: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>

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 at <https://ucalgary.ca/ssc/resources/writing-support/436>. Research and citation resources are also available on the Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) website at <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/> If you have questions about citing sources, please consult your instructor or visit the writing support services in the Student Success Centre (3rd floor, Taylor Family Digital Library, at <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, including surveys, interviews, or observations, as part of your university studies, you are responsible for following university research ethics guidelines. Your instructor must review and approve your research plans and supervise your research. For more information about your research ethics responsibilities, see <http://arts.ucalgary.ca/research/resources/ethics>

Important information, services, and contacts for students

| For information about . . . | Visit or contact . . . |
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| ARTS PROGRAM ADVISING (ASC) | SS 102 403-220-3580 https://arts.ucalgary.ca/advising |
| CAMPUS SECURITY & Safewalk Program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calgary Police Service • Emergency Text Messaging • Emergency Evacuation & Assembly | 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 |
| 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 • Events & Info for Students | 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 Ombuds | 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"> • Health Services • Mental Health Services • Distress entre 24/7 CRISIS LINE • Online resources and tips | 403-210-9355 (MSC 370), M-F, 9:00–4:30 pm http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/health http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/counselling 403-266-HELP (4357) http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/healthy-campus 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 Lecture Topics and Readings

| | Mondays 9:30 – 10:45 SH 274 | Wednesdays 9:30 – 10:45 SH 274 |
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| Week1 Jan. 13 & 15 | Introduction to course, readings and assignments. | Topic: Research and Theory |

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| | Topic: Unpacking research methods. | Reading: Silverman, pp.25-42 (Chapter 3) |
| Week 2 Jan. 20 & 22 | Topic: Ethics Reading: Ari & Kelly, pp. 43-62 (chapter 4) Assignment: show and tell presentations | Assignment: show and tell presentations, group activity 1 |
| Week 3 Jan. 27 & 29 | Topic: Research questions Reading: Kelly, pp. 79-100 (chapter 6) Assignment: quiz 1 (15') NO SHOW AND TELL PRESENTATIONS | Topic: Research designs Reading: Robinson & Seale, pp. 101-122. (chapter 7) Assignment: show and tell presentations |
| Week 4 Feb. 3 & 5 | Topic: Research designs (cont'd) Reading: Robinson & Seale, pp. 101-122. (chapter 7) Assignment: show and tell presentations | Assignment: show and tell presentations, group activity 2 |
| Week 5 Feb. 10 & 12 | Topic: Sampling Reading: Seale, pp. 155-174 (chapter 9) Assignment: show and tell presentations TCPs tutorial due | Topic: Surveys Reading: Seale, pp. 176-182 (chapter 10) AND pp. 196-208 (chapter 11) Assignment: quiz 2 (15'), NO SHOW AND TELL PRESENTATIONS |
| Week 6 Feb. 17 & 19 | Family Day | Reading day |
| Week 7 Feb. 24 & 26 | Topic: Surveys (cont'd) Reading: Seale, pp. 176-182 (chapter 10) AND pp. 196-208 (chapter 11) Assignment: show and tell presentations | Topic: Qualitative interviewing Reading: Byrne, pp. 217-236 (chapter 12) Assignment: show and tell presentations. |
| Week 8 Mar. 2 & 4 | Topic: Focus Groups Reading: Tonkiss, pp. 237-256 (chapter 13) Assignment: quiz 3 (15'), NO SHOW AND TELL PRESENTATIONS | Assignment: show and tell presentations, group activity 3' Midterm analysis due. |
| Week 9 Mar. 9 & 11 | Topic: Ethnography Reading: Walsh & Seale (chapter 14) Assignment: show and tell presentations | Assignment: show and tell presentations, group activity 4 |
| Week 10 Mar. 16 & 18 | Topic: Quantitative Data Analysis Reading: Seale, pp. 352-359 (chapter 20), Seale, pp. 362-370 (chapter 21, comparing | Topic: Content and text analysis Reading: Seale & Tonkiss, pp. 403-428 (chapter 24) |

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| | the means of two groups excluded) AND Seale, pp. 376-382 (only elaboration paradigm, chapter 22) NO SHOW AND TELL PRESENTATIONS | Assignment: show and tell presentations |
| Week 11 Mar. 23 & 25 | Topic: Literature Review/ Final guidelines (No reading) Assignment: quiz 4 (15') NO SHOW AND TELL PRESENTATIONS | Topic: Thematic analysis Reading: Riva, pp. 429-454 (chapter 25) Assignment: show and tell presentations |
| Week 12 Mar. 30 & Apr. 1 | Topic: Discourse Analysis Reading: Tonkiss, pp. 477-492 (chapter 27) Assignment: show and tell presentations | Topic: Narrative and phenomenological analysis Reading: Griffin & May, pp. 512-527 (chapter 29) Assignment: show and tell presentations |
| Week 13 Apr. 6 & 8 | Assignment: show and tell presentations, group activity 5 | Topic: Visual analysis Reading: Ali, pp. 455-476 (chapter 26) Assignment: quiz 5 (15') NO SHOW AND TELL PRESENTATIONS |
| Week 14 + Apr. 13 & 15 | Easter Monday- No CLASS | NO CLASS- Research Proposal due @ 11AM (dropbox) |