

CMST 3570: Quantitative Communication Studies Research Methods

Instructor: Dr. Timothy Curran

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Office Hours: Tuesday 12 – 2 or by appointment

Course overview:

This course examines the process of conducting communication research from a social scientific perspective. We will address the processes of advancing research questions, variable definition and measurement, sampling, survey research, experimental research, writing research reports, and hypothesis testing. One of our major foci will be on learning how to assess human interaction during conflict discussions. Successful completion of this course will help you become a savvy consumer of research, as well as provide you with the foundation necessary to conduct your own research. Even if you do not pursue a career in social science research, the skills that you acquire in this course will be useful in your career, in more advanced methods courses, and in everyday life.

Prerequisites/Restrictions:

CMST 2110 (or permission of instructor) and STAT 1040 or STAT 1045. Please note that although this is not a statistics class (it is a *methods* class), you will be expected to have a basic understanding of hypothesis testing and research results.

Required Materials

Book:

Title: Strait talk about communication about communication research methods

Authors: Christine S Davis, Kenneth A Lachlan

Edition: 3

Copyright: 2017

Copyright Notice

All materials from this course including the syllabus, course notes, activities, paper assignments, exams, etc. are copyrighted as the intellectual property of the instructor (unless otherwise noted and credited) and are not to be duplicated or reproduced without permission.

Evaluation

Your course grade will be based on percentages by combining scores from three sources: exams, homework assignments, and team assignments.

- **Exams: 40% of the final grade (20% each).** The class will have a midterm that contains both multiple-choice and short answer questions. The final exam will be of similar format, yet over the course of 3 hours. Make-up exams are scheduled only in cases of religious holidays and other officially excused absences, as per USU official guidelines. No make-up exams will be given for personal reasons (e.g., work, family events, airline ticket reservations, vacation plans, etc.). **You must send me**

notification at least two weeks prior to the scheduled exam and provide documentation if you hope to reschedule an exam.

- **Homework Assignments: 10% of the final grade.** Four homework assignments will be due throughout the semester. It is expected that you will complete all homework assignments individually without the consultation of your classmates. Homework is due at the beginning of class. **No e-mail homework assignments will be accepted, unless you have received previous permission.**
- **Team Task Assignments: 50% of the final grade.** Each student will pick a team early in the semester. Teams will be comprised of **four** individuals. All team tasks will be related to the major research project focused on a theme relevant to family relationships. Teams will complete 4 assignments.

Course Policies

The syllabus

The syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations may be necessary.

“Firing” Teammates

If one member consistently demonstrates a lack of dedication to the team (by not attending meetings, not doing the required work, or turning in unacceptable work on behalf of the group), the other members have the right to "fire" that member up until the **9th week of classes**. Firing involves a 2 step process: The team (in consultation with me) gives the errant member a warning and that teammate must negotiate with the group how he or she is going to be a better teammate, and (2) if the member continues to act dissatisfactory, that individual will be fired from the group by me. If you are fired, you forfeit all team benefits associated with completing the Team Tasks and the Team Project as a group. You will have to turn in individual assignments (including the research project) from the point of firing on.

Grading

Please keep a record of all grades received. Use the formula below to assess your work and grade in the course. Please keep all graded papers until you receive your final grade in the course. Grades are rounded to the nearest tenth. For example, an 89.89 is rounded to an 89.9 – making that a B+ in the course.

A = 93-100%	B+ = 88-89%	C+ = 78-79%	D+ = 68-69%	F = 0-59%
	B = 83-87%	C = 73-77%	D = 63-69%	
A- = 90-92%	B- = 80-82%	C- = 70-72%	D- = 60-62%	

- **Final Grades.** Your final grade is final. Adjustments will be made only in the case of a mathematical error. Applying subjective standards after the fact to bolster your grade is unfair to your classmates and therefore will not occur.

24/7 Rule

Students that wish to discuss grades on any assignment must wait 24 hours before raising the issue to your instructor. After 24 hours, you have 7 days to discuss the issue before it will no longer be considered for a grade appeal. For example, if you receive an exam grade on a Monday, you must wait a day until Tuesday and you have until the following Tuesday to contact me to discuss the grade. After 7 days the assignment will no longer be eligible for an appeal. Appointments may be scheduled via email, however discussions regarding grades will only be done in face-to-face interactions. You are expected to come to the discussion with concrete comments and/or concerns.

Respect and Etiquette

In-class: In this class we will discuss sensitive topics. Our goal is to have an open and comfortable classroom environment. Comments that are disrespectful will not be tolerated.

Email: Professional communication is essential when constructing emails in this class and others. Please begin emails with by addressing me by “Tim,” have a clear body with proper grammar, and end with your name. This is a good model for all emails you send to instructors. You are responsible for making sure I receive all emails, therefore, I recommend sending yourself a carbon copy of all emails you send.

Cellphone/Computer Use: Computers can be used for notes only.

Academic honesty & the University Honor Code.

Plagiarized work will receive an F for the assignment and may, depending on the severity of the infringement, receive a failing grade for the course and/or expulsion from the university. Refer to the university honesty/honor code for further policies pertinent to this class.

Reasonable Accommodation Policy

If you have a disability, I strongly encourage you to contact the Disability Resource Center and myself so that the classroom environment can be made conducive to your learning style.

Good Things to Know to Do Well in this course:

- **APA style.** All written work that communication scholars submit to their colleagues (in the form of journal articles, conference papers, etc.) must be written in accordance with the most recent guidelines of the American Psychological Association (APA). This standard also holds for most written work submitted for this class. Team tasks must be completed in APA style complete with title pages, abstracts, and reference sections when appropriate. Homework assignments need not be in APA style. The directions for a given assignment will specify if your assignment needs to be in APA style. Papers that do not adhere to these criteria will lose considerable points.
- **Class attendance.** Most of the time, you will not be graded directly according to whether you show up for class or not; however, each class will include both a review of the readings and new material that cannot be made up. If you miss class, you are expected to get the notes and any handouts from one of your classmates. I will not have extra copies of handouts after the class day that they are distributed. Office hours will not be an opportunity to review a lecture that you have missed. Please note that attendance is required on some days (as indicated on the syllabus). If you don't attend class on one of these days and do not have a University-sanctioned excuse, there is a 5% deduction off the

Day	Topic	Major Assignment Info
Aug. 29	Course Introduction	

final grade. There are no exceptions.

- **Homework and team task deadlines.** All homework and team task assignments are due at the beginning of class on the day that they are due as specified on the syllabus. No late assignments will be accepted under any circumstance. No e- mailed assignments will be accepted, without earlier approval from me. If you cannot come to class on the day that an assignment is due, you must turn in your assignment to the main office of the Communication Studies department and have a staff member time stamp the assignment (assignments turned in after class time will receive a zero).
- **Extra Credit.** You may earn up to a 1% increase on your final grade by completing a research project sponsored by the Department of Communication Studies. Each research project completed = .5%.
- **Help.** This class will introduce you to the language, techniques, and procedures for conducting research. The course content is often brand new to students; therefore, this class can be challenging. You are strongly encouraged to form study groups and to review course material frequently.

Aug. 31	Introduction to communication research	
Sept. 5	Research paradigms	
Sept 7	Research paradigms	
Sept 12	Library research and lit reviews	Homework 1 due
Sept. 14	Writing and lit reviews	
Sept. 19	Research questions and hypotheses	Team task 1 due
Sept. 21	Research questions and hypotheses	
Sept. 26	Understanding variables	
Sept. 28	Understanding variables	
Oct. 3	Research ethics	
Oct. 5	Research ethics	
Oct. 10	Sampling	Team task 2 Due
Oct. 12	Sampling	Homework 2 due
Oct. 17	Midterm	
Oct. 19	No class	
Oct. 24	Validity and Reliability	
Oct. 26	Validity and Reliability	
Oct. 31	Survey Research	Homework 3 due
Nov. 2	Survey Research	
Nov. 7	Experiments	
Nov. 9	Experiments	
Nov. 14	Data Analysis	
Nov. 16	No Class	
Nov. 21	Data workshops	
Nov. 23	Thanksgiving break	
Nov. 28	Data workshop	
Nov. 30	Data workshop	

Dec. 5	Group Presentations	Homework 4 due Team task 3 due
Dec. 7	Group Presentations	Team task 4 due
	Final Exam	