

COMM 316: Research Methods (Summer)

University of Louisville

Dr. Steve H. Sohn

E-mail: steve.sohn@louisville.edu

Office: Torres de Alba Hotel

Office hours: Period of 30 minutes following each class.

Course Description

This course will examine the relationship of theory and methods, research design, and measurement in communication contexts.

Course Outcome

This course will introduce communication research methods from a social-scientific perspective. It will teach the basic vocabulary of research methods and enhance students' understanding of the theory-research link. This course will present the conceptual foundations, principles, practices, and traditions on which communication research is grounded. At the conclusion of this course, students should:

1. Understand the predominant quantitative and qualitative research designs and methods used by communication scholars
2. Understand deductive and inductive analytical processes
3. Understand basic research procedures and techniques
4. Understand basic statistical concepts
5. Be better consumers of communication research literature encountered in other communication classes

Textbook

Keyton, J.: "*Communication Research: Asking questions, finding answers*" (3rd Edition). New York: McGraw-Hill. (* 2nd Edition of this book, if you can find a copy, will work as well)

Course Requirements

All assignments and exams must be completed and turned in on or before the date assigned.

- **Late work will be accepted but will be graded down 20% per calendar day as a penalty.** A late penalty begins immediately after the class period is over.

Exams and Quizzes

- There will be NINE (9) Daily Quizzes that will be given at the BEGINNING of each class.
- Each quiz will be comprised of T/F, multiple choice, and short answer with total 10 questions.

Assignments

- There is **ONE (1) group research project** and **ONE (1) individual assignment** in this course.

Class Participation

You are expected to come to class having read all assigned chapter(s) and ready to participate in discussions. Also, you are expected to **FULLY participate in group project.**

- **Failure to fully participate in group activity will result in lower participation grade.**

Attendance

Attendance is required for every class period.

If you miss more than ONE (1) class without valid excuses, a penalty of -2 points will be applied to your “attendance/participation” scores for every unexcused absence from the 2nd unexcused absence. In other words, from the 2nd unexcused absence, you will lose TWO (2) points per each occurrence.

Valid excuses of an absence are 1) *participating in University sanctioned events*, 2) a serious illness *that requires hospitalization*, 3) *death in the immediate family*, 4) *birth of your own baby*, or 5) *religious holiday recognized by the University*. You must bring authenticated written proof of such incidences to the instructor on your first day back.

- In case of excused absence, you are still responsible for following up the material you miss.

Any form of off campus work and personal travel will NOT be considered as valid excuses. Doctor’s appointment, court appearance, being in jail, a birth given by your siblings/relatives or friend will NOT be considered as valid excuses. For those occasions, you should utilize those three opportunities you can miss class with no valid excuses.

The attendance will be called at the beginning of class AND after each break time. If you fail to answer to ALL calls, you will be considered as absent for that day.

Tardiness

If you come to class late **for more than 10 minutes** from the starting time, you will be considered as being late. **Two (2) tardiness will be counted as one (1) absence.** So MAKE SURE to come to class on time.

Points Distribution

| | |
|---|---|
| Quiz Quiz | 160 points total 20 points x 8 |
| Group Assignment 1 Hypotheses/RQ Questionnaire | 40 points total 10 points 30 points |
| Group Assignment 2 Final Group Presentation | 60 points total |
| Statistics Homework Assignment | 10 points |
| Attendance Participation | 20 points 30 points |
| Total | 320 points |

Grading Scale

| | | |
|---------------|-------------|-------------|
| A = 93-100% | A- = 90-92% | |
| B+ = 87-89% | B = 83-86% | B- = 80-82% |
| C+ = 77-79% | C = 73-76% | C- = 70-72% |
| D+ = 67-69% | D = 63-66% | D- = 60-62% |
| F = below 59% | | |

Make-up Policy

Missed exam or assignment **may not be made up unless the following conditions are met**: (1) the excuse is valid as explained above; (2) the excuse is made in advance if applicable; and (3) the excuse is documented. Otherwise, you will not be able to make up.

Please take time to look at the schedule: if you cannot make it to the exam on the scheduled day, you must try making arrangement to take it *prior* to the scheduled day & time.

In a case involving death in the immediate family or illness requiring hospital care or a birth of a baby for whom you are a parent, a makeup exam will be granted *without prior notice*. Under such conditions, authenticated written documents must be provided to the instructor

Plagiarism/ Academic Dishonesty

Any student engage in plagiarism (i.e., presenting someone else's work as your own or without proper acknowledgement) or any other type of academic dishonesty (i.e., cheating on an exam) will receive **a zero for the semester**.

Classroom Decorum:

1. During class, please respect the right of your fellow classmates. Do not carry on conversation in class, and **turn off cell phones**.
2. Also, avoid getting to class late and leaving early, as these are very disruptive.
3. **No laptop or any electronic devices such as cell phone and tablet is allowed in class, unless you have a special need that requires the use of an electronic device to take a note.**
4. For your own protection, you are expected to keep a copy of all assignments submitted to the instructor.

All items in this syllabus are subject to change.

The instructor reserves the right to make changes in the syllabus when necessary to meet learning objectives, to compensate for missed classes, or for similar reasons.

COURSE SCHEDULE

| Week | Class | Topic(s) | Chapter(s) |
|------|-------|---|--|
| 1 | 1 | Intro to Quantitative Research *** Group member selection for the project | 3 |
| 1 | 2 | <i>Quiz 1 (Chapter 3)</i> Intro to Qualitative Research Measurements *** Research Questions Due at the BEGINNING of class | 4 6 |
| 1 | 3 | <i>Quiz 2 (Chapter 4 & 6)</i> Survey and Questionnaire | 9 |
| 1 | 4 | <i>Quiz 3 (Chapter 9)</i> Quantitative Research Design | 8 |
| 1 | 5 | <i>Quiz 4 (Chapter 8)</i> Sampling, Significant Level, and Hypothesis Testing *** Survey Questionnaire Due at the BEGINNING of class | <u>7 (& 10, pg 196</u> <u>- 200: 3rd</u> <u>Edition only)</u> |
| 2 | 6 | <i>Quiz 5 (Chapter 7)</i> Descriptive Statistics | 10 |
| 2 | 7 | <i>Quiz 6 (Chapter 10)</i> Quantitative Analysis of Text Designing Qualitative Research *** Statistics Assignment Due at the BEGINNING of class | 13 14 |
| 2 | 8 | <i>Quiz 7 (Chapter 13 & 14)</i> Qualitative Methods of Data Collection Analyzing Qualitative Data | 15 16 |
| 2 | 9 | <i>Quiz 8 (Chapter 15 & 16)</i> Writing for Research | 17 |
| 2 | 10 | *** Final Presentations on your Research Findings | |

Group Assignment Outline

1. You will be a part of a 3-person group (or 2 or 4, depending on the number of students in class).
2. Select a brand that seems workable with people in this class and your friends in your age group as its intended target. Since you will need to conduct a **quantitative survey-based research**, make sure to select a brand that is relevant with your study population of those in your age group.
3. **Research Question formation**
 - Once your group decides on a brand, you will need to come up with TOTAL THREE (3) research questions to investigate through quantitative research procedure (paper and pencil survey).
 - The chosen research questions **MUST** be about human and consumer brand interaction.
4. **Questionnaire**
 - Upon receiving approval on your research questions from me, your group will need to develop your own survey questionnaire that will enable you to find answers to those research questions.
 - Please keep in mind that your questionnaire will actually be used to collect the data and to present your research findings at the end of semester.
 - Thus, **the survey items must be as real, scientific/systematic as possible.**
 - There is no requirement on the minimum number of questions you must have on the questionnaire. It all depends on the variables in your research questions.
 - Construct your survey questionnaire by
 - Considering the most appropriate level of measurement (nominal, ordinal, interval or ratio) for a particular hypothesis/research question. (Referring to the lecture notes on chapter 9.)
 - You will need to collect data from **AT LEAST 10 people** (n=10 as minimum sample size)
5. **Final Presentation**
 - You and your group will need to make a final presentations on your research process and the findings on June 29th.
 - The presentation format will be based on the typical formats of research writing that will be covered in Chapter 17.
 - Research Questions
 - Methodology
 - Results/Findings
 - Discussions/Implications/Weakness/Future research suggestion
 - Conclusions
 - Each group will be given between 10 to 15 minutes to present (going over time limit will be resulting in point deduction)
 - Everyone in group **MUST** present.
 - Grading of your final presentation will be based on 1) presentation contents, and 2) presentation styles and skills.
 - **BE SURE TO PARTICIPATE!**
 - There will be participation evaluation by your group members, and the participation score will count toward the 30-point participation grading criterion.

Individual Assignment Outline: Statistics Homework Assignment

- A stat worksheet will be handed out in class on June 25th. You will have to complete the worksheet and turn in your work the next day, June 26th.