

COMMUNICATION 408-508
Quantitative Research Methods in Communication
Fall Term, 2012
Tentative Initial Syllabus

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Office Hours: 1:20—2:20 M,

& 1:00-1:45 TuTh, preferably by appointment

Room: EDB 120
Tu and Th, 3:00-4:15PM
Schedule Line: 71149 for 408
88943 for 508

Final Exam: 12/13, 2:30-4:20PM

Course Text: . Privitera, G. J. (2012). *Statistics for the Behavioral Sciences* (1st Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. THIS TEXT IS RECOMMENDED [its coverage of SPSS is good], BUT THE MATERIAL FOR TESTS, ASSIGNMENTS, ETC., WILL BE COVERED, ALWAYS, IN POWERPOINTS, HANDOUTS, AND ALTERNATE SITES. Also required will be some course documents on Blackboard; SPSS will be used, but need not be bought. It is available from all campus computers.

Nature of Course: This course is intended to increase your knowledge of and skill using mainly quantitative methods and especially univariate behavioral statistics. The course represents a capstone experience for undergraduate students, and covers in passing some set-up and design issues, but its main focus by far is on the use and meaning of statistical procedures used once you “have the data”. Partly that’s because students are presumed to have covered more general research procedures in Comm 308. However, the course will include some topics addressing quantitative research generally.

This course is primarily a skills and understanding oriented course. At the end of this semester, successful students will have a variety of **skills**, detailed later in the final syllabus. Also, a key goal for the course is **understanding** of main statistical concepts and procedures, so you will need to demonstrate a level of understanding of important research and statistical concepts. I will try to emphasize ideas and reasoning processes that might be relevant in everyday and workplace exposure to statistics, more than calculations by hand or using software.

Grading:

Your grade will be based on basic skill and understanding demonstration, plus extra performance on tests, earned in three main ways:

1. **Tests—400 points total:** There will be 3 tests, each including a variety of question types, including short-answer essay, multiple choice, interpretation of statistical findings, and simple calculations. Worth 100, 150, and 150 points [plus extra calculation points].
2. **Laboratories—mostly 40 points each, 220 points total:** These will consist of assigned data analysis projects using SPSS, working on the data-sets supplied in the CD accompanying the text. To complete most laboratory assignments successfully, you will need to turn in computer output plus a verbal report. There will be voluntary sessions for group ‘pre-performance’ of some labs.
3. **Class Participation—250 points:** The class participation grade will be partly based on the following factors: attendance; answering questions in class; in-class exercises; work on problems in class; and general class citizenship. But another part of the participation grade is unavoidably subjective, dependent on my perception of outstanding (or in rare cases, outstandingly bad)

involvement during lecture and especially discussion. **The participation point total will partly be based on records of attendance, etc., but the subjective portion will be centered on the average of all your other grades in the class.**

4. **Take-Home Exercises—about 10 points each, 130 points total:** Each of these will consist of a few problems in a problem sheet on Blackboard, to be worked out by hand, due on many days other than test days. They are assigned mainly for practice, to get feedback about your understanding and skill related to course concepts, and to fulfill calculation requirements for students with concerns about math. I may end up allocating them a few more points each, if I do not actually assign 13 exercises.

Grade Point Distribution:

First Midterm Test	100
Second Midterm Test	150
Final Exam	150
Laboratories	220
Participation	250
Exercises	<u>130</u>
Total:	1000