Arizona State University

Hugh Downs School of Human Communication

Syllabus for:

Communication 508 – Class # 83474

Quantitative Research Methods in Communication

Spring Semester 2013

3:00 – 4:15 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays

EDB [Payne Hall] 120

Instructor: Dr. Paul A. Mongeau
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Office Hours: 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Wednesdays and Thursdays
                 And By Appointment

COURSE GOALS

This course focuses on the statistical analysis of quantitative data. Specifically, the class covers several univariate statistical issues and techniques that are commonly used in Communication (and other forms of) research. The vast majority of the course focuses on how statistics are calculated; understanding the substantive meaning of statistical results; using and understanding SPSS for Windows as a statistical software package; and being able to describe these results in writing. No previous experience in statistics is assumed or required.

This course is cross-listed with COM408 and typically includes more undergraduates than graduate students. COM408 and COM508 differ in the nature of the homeworks (students in 508, but not 408, will perform analyses using SPSS) and the data collection project. (In 508, the project will be more detailed and students will have to attain IRB approval.)

If you are taking COM508, I presume that you have graduate standing at Arizona State University. A familiarity with research methods (but, again, not specifically statistics) is assumed. There will a brief overview of methods at the beginning of the semester and how methods and statistical results relate will be a consistent issue throughout the semester.

REQUIRED TEXTS

There is one required textbook for this class:

Privitera, G. J. (2012). *Statistics for the behavioral sciences*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

In addition, you must also have easy access to a recent working copy of *SPSS for Windows.* Class discussions will focus on versions 19 through 21, but other versions should provide the same results. *SPSS for Windows* is available on all classroom computers, in all campus computer labs and is available through ASU's *MyApps* service.

REQUIREMENTS: ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Assignment	Number	Points Each	Total Points
Examinations	4	50	200
Homeworks	6	25	150
Data Collection Project	1	200	200
		Total	550

NOTE: STUDENTS MUST COMPLETE *ALL ASSIGNMENTS* IN ORDER TO RECEIVE A PASSING GRADE IN THE COURSE. That is, no one may receive a passing grade (D or above) without completing *all* assignments.

Examinations will be a combination of multiple-choice and short-answer essay questions, statistical calculations; and interpretation of statistical results. Examinations will cover material from both lectures and the text. Lectures will *not* come directly from the text. Exams (including

the final) will *not* be cumulative, however, the course content is cumulative, so understanding early concepts is important for fully capturing latter concepts. Each examination will cover approximately one-quarter of course material. The homework assignments will typically involve problems taken from the end of the chapters in Privitera, problems developed by your instructor, as well as producing and interpreting statistical output from *SPSS for Windows*. The data analysis assignment will involve designing a quantitative data collection, collecting the data, analyzing those data using *SPSS for Windows,* and writing a report describing the rationale, methods, results, and discussion of the project. A handout describing this assignment is provided later in the syllabus.

There are 550 points available in this class. The number of points you accumulate throughout the semester will determine your final grade. Final grades will be determined using the following scale.

544.5 – 550 = A+	[99% - 100%]
511.5 – 544.4 = A	[93% - 98.9%]
495.0 – 511.4 = A-	[90% - 92.9%]
478.5 – 494.9 = B+	[87% - 89.9%]
456.5 – 478.4 = B	[83% - 86.9%]
440.0 – 456.4 = B-	[80% - 82.9%]
423.5 – 439.9 = C+	[77% - 79.9%]
385.0 – 423.4 = C	[70% - 76.9%]
330.0 – 384.9 = D	[60% - 69.9%]
0 0 – 329.9 = E	[0.0% - 59.9%]

POLICIES

Attendance - Although no portion of your grade comes directly from attendance and class discussion, I have found that classroom attendance correlates positively with final grades. In courses like statistics and foreign language, you cannot take a week off and expect to come back to class and follow course material. As exams come from primarily from lectures and PowerPoint slides (and to a lesser extent from the text), attending class is important to fully understanding course material and performing well on assignments. Studying PowerPoint slides without attending the class will likely provide a less than ideal understanding of course material. Students who miss class have the responsibility of getting class notes from another student(s) and determining if an assignment was distributed.

Incomplete– An instructor gives a mark of "I" (incomplete) only when a student who is otherwise doing acceptable work is unable to complete a course because of illness or other conditions beyond the student's control. Instructors grant the mark of "I" only when the student can complete the unfinished work with the same instructor. Students, however, may complete an incomplete ("I") with an instructor designated by the Hugh Downs School Director if the original instructor later becomes incapacitated or is otherwise not on campus. Students are required to arrange an incomplete with the instructor (i.e., come to a written agreement concerning the completion of course requirements) *before the end of the semester*

Late Penalty - It is not fair to those students who complete material on time that late work is accepted without penalty. All assignments are due at the beginning of class on the specified date. The instructor *will* deduct points from all late work. The extent of the deduction will depend upon the degree of lateness, the reason provided, and the particular assignment that is late.

Accommodation For Disabilities – Arizona State University encourages qualified persons with disabilities to participate in its programs and activities. If you anticipate needing any type of accommodation in this course or have questions about physical access, please privately inform the instructor before the end of the second week of class.

Academic Dishonesty – See also: http://provost.asu.edu/academicintegrity

This statement describes different forms of academic dishonesty and does not contradict ASU, College of Liberal Arts and Science, or Hugh Downs School policy. Academic dishonesty could take any of several forms in this class. Perhaps the three most common forms of academic dishonesty are collusion, cheating on an exam, and plagiarism.

Collusion on homework includes one student copying answers from another student's work. Collusion on an exam would include (although this is not a comprehensive list) copying another student's answers, exchanging information during an exam, and other similar activities. Collusion generally occurs when two students hand in homework assignments or exams with identical sets of (incorrect) answers. By placing this statement into my syllabus, I do not want to eliminate study groups or several individuals working together on homeworks. What I do *not* want is for one person to do the work and more than one person to hand it in. In short, it's fine to work together, but when it comes time to write up your homework, it is important that you work individually.

Cheating on an exam (see also collusion on an exam, above) would include a sidelong glance at a fellow student's work, the preparation and use of a "crib sheet," stealing a copy of the exam, arranging for a substitute to take an exam, using unauthorized material (e.g., a textbook, cell phone, I-Pod, computer) as information sources, and talking during an exam.

Plagiarism is using someone else's words or ideas without giving proper credit to that source. The instructor assumes that a paper submitted by a student represents the student's own words and to represent his or her own ideas, unless certain words and ideas are specifically credited to a proper authority. A paper bearing a student's name that does not do this represents plagiarism and reflects misrepresentation and dishonesty.

Plagiarism can also occur in many forms. Word-for-word copying of another work without the use of quotation marks or citing that source, paraphrasing another person's ideas without proper citation of that work, providing a misleading citation, and handing in another group's work (e.g., a paper from a previous semester) would all be considered plagiarism.

It is important to note that the original format and location of the original material is irrelevant in determining plagiarism. Copying material from the World Wide Web is the same form of

plagiarism as copying material from a book or journal article found in the library. Copying an article from a journal is functionally equivalent to copying a friend's (or your own) paper from a previous semester.

Your instructor will follow university guidelines when academic dishonesty is suspected. Your instructor strongly recommended that you become familiar with these sections of the appropriate policies.

**Student Conduct** – I want to build a classroom climate that is comfortable for all. In a communication class, it is especially important that we (1) display respect for all members of the classroom – including the instructor and students, (2) pay attention to and participate in all class sessions and activities; (3) avoid unnecessary disruption during class time (e.g., having private conversations, reading the newspaper, surfing the internet, doing work for other classes, making/receiving cell phone calls, text messaging, etc.); and (4) avoid racist, sexist, homophobic or other negative language that may unnecessarily exclude members of our campus and classroom. This is not an exhaustive list of behaviors; rather, it represents examples of the types of things that can have a dramatic impact on the class environment. Your final grade may be reduced by 1% each time you engage in these sorts of behaviors. Further, students who are verbally or physically aggressive toward the instructor, or another student before, during, or after class will have their grade lowered by 25% each time they engage in this sort of behavior (and, students engaging in such behaviors will be permanently removed from the class and the proper authorities notified).

Students are required to adhere to the behavior standards listed in the Arizona Board of Regents Policy Manual Chapter V – Campus and Student Affairs: Code of Conduct:
> **https://eoss.asu.edu/dos/srr/codeofconduct**

and the ACD 125: Computer, Internet, and Electronics Communications:
> **http://asu.edu/aad/manuals/acd/acd125.html**

Students are entitled to receive instruction free from interference by other members of the class. An instructor may withdraw a student from a course when the student's behavior disrupts the educational process under USI 201-10 (http://www.asu.edu/aad/manuals/usi/usi201-10.html). As noted in this document, "An instructor may withdraw a student from a course with a mark of "W" or "E" when the student's behavior disrupts the educational process. Disruptive classroom behavior for this purpose is defined by the instructor." In cases where disruptive behavior does not warrant removal from class, at the instructor's discretion a student's final grade will be lowered by 25% instead.

Final Examination – The final examination for this class is scheduled for Thursday, December 12th at 2:30 p.m.

COMMUNICATION 508 (83474) - FALL SEMESTER 2013
TENTATIVE SEMESTER SCHEDULE

WEEK	DATES	TOPIC(S)	READINGS
1	*August* 22	Introduction to Course	
2	8 – 27, 29	Introductions to Statistics and SPSS	Privitera: Chapter 1
3	*September* 3, 5	Univariate Frequency Distributions	Privitera: Chapter 2
4	9 – 10, 12	Central Tendency and Dispersion Review	Privitera: Chapter 3
5	9 – 17, 19	**Exam 1** Central Tendency and Dispersion	Privitera: Chapter 4

<u>*EXAM 1: TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 17TH*</u>

6	9 – 24, 26	Normal Distribution & z-Scores	Privitera: Chapter 6, 7
7	*October* 1, 3	Hypothesis Testing	Privitera: Chapter 8
8	10 – 8, 10	Chi-Square tests (i.e., χ^2) **Exam 2**	Privitera: Chapter 17

<u>*EXAM 2: THURSDAY, OCTOBER 10TH*</u>

9	10 –17		

<u>No Class Tuesday, October 15th: Fall Break</u>

10	10 – 22, 24	t-tests	Privitera: Chapter 9
11	10 – 29, 31	t-tests	
12	*November* 5, 7	Analysis of Variance **Exam 3**	Privitera: Chapter 12

<u>**EXAM 3: THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 7TH**</u>

13	11 – 12, 14	Analysis of Variance	

***COMMUNICATION 408** (70998) **- FALL SEMESTER 2012**
**TENTATIVE SEMESTER SCHEDULE (Cont.)*

WEEK	DATES	TOPIC(S)	READINGS
14	11 – 19	Correlation	Privitera: Chapter 15

<u>No Class Thursday, November 21st: National Communication Association</u>

15	11 – 26	Correlation and Regression	Privitera: Chapter 16

<u>No Class Thursday, November 28th: Thanksgiving</u>

16	*December* 3, 5	Wrap-up and Review	

<u>FINAL EXAM: THURSDAY, DECEMBER 12TH, 2:30 P.M.</u>

COM508 DATA COLLECTION PROJECT
DUE THURSDAY, DECEMBER 12TH

The primary goal of this assignment is to provide graduate students with experience in designing and conducting a quantitative Communication research project, collecting data, performing statistical analyses, and writing up the results. This group project will entail several major steps. First, you are to decide, as a group, what you want to study and review the relevant literature(s). You are then to develop a (set of) testable research question(s) and/or hypothesis(es) that focus on important issues left unanswered in the literature. Second, you are to gain IRB approval for your study, through formal university channels, before collecting data. Third, you are to collect, code, enter, and analyze the data following the guidelines described in class. Finally, you are to write a research report for submission to the instructor. The research report should be prepared in a manner consistent with the sixth edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (i.e., APA). As such, the research report should have a cover page, abstract, and the traditional sections of a social science research report (e.g., abstract, rationale, methods, results, and discussion). Each part of the report (including citations, references, headings as well as tables and figures) should be prepared consistent with *APA* guidelines.

Evaluation will center upon the quality of the final research report. The quality of the effort that went into the final research report determines the final grade (rather than how interesting the results turn out to be). The quality of the research report, however, depends strongly on the extent to which each step in the research process was performed adequately. Grading criteria will also focus on the extent to which the project follows APA guidelines for a social science research report (especially the material as presented in class, i.e., methods and statistics). Evaluation will also center on stylistic issues. *Mongeau's General Criteria for Evaluating Papers* outlines stylistic criteria in detail later in the syllabus. It is assumed that the project will be of sufficient quality to be presented at a regional or national Communication conference (e.g., WSCA, NCA, etc.) some time in the future. I encourage groups to develop and perform their project with potential submission to a professional conference and, ideally, publication in mind.

This paper is worth 200 points. Each group submits a single paper. The instructor assigns both group and individual grades. Individual grades will be determined from peer evaluations of each member's performance. Individuals evaluated as performing more of the work will receive an individual grade that is higher than the project grade. Individuals evaluated as doing less of the work will receive an individual grade that is lower than the group grade. The paper shall be a maximum of 25 pages of text (i.e., not including cover page, abstract, references, tables, figures, etc.).

I am very open to assisting groups in any way that I can throughout the project. I will be available to give advice and, within reason, read preliminary drafts of the paper (and/or various sections thereof). Expect a one-week turnaround time for the return of all class materials. This implies that I will be unable to provide feedback on a draft the night before the project is due.

MONGEAU'S GENERAL CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING PAPERS

Across the various classes that I teach, some of the criteria that I use in evaluating papers are specific to the particular assignment. Specifically, I will focus on the quality with which students fulfill each of the tasks outlined in that particular assignment. On the other hand, while the specific content of the various papers differ, some of the *general criteria* that I use to evaluate them remain pretty much the same. I want to spend a bit of time here discussing these general criteria. These criteria are not mutually exclusive (e.g., a lack of organization influences perceptions of clarity); however, I hope that this gives you a good idea of what yardsticks I use when I grade papers. I generally use five general criteria in evaluating student papers.

CRITERION 1: CLARITY

The primary criterion that I use when I evaluate a paper (a draft of my own work, a manuscript that I receive as a reviewer for a professional journal, or a [undergraduate or graduate] student's paper) is *clarity*. Simply put, are you communicating whatever it is that you are trying to say clearly? It does not matter if you are trying to describe a relationship that you've been part of, a reaction to a lecture, or reviewing the theoretical literature on relationship development, you must do so clearly. Saying something simply is better than saying something using complex, convoluted, language. Don't feel as though you have to use a lot of technical jargon because the research you've read does it. If I consistently cannot understand what you are trying to say, your grade is going to suffer as a result.

CRITERION 2: COMPLETENESS

I evaluate completeness on two levels. First, I evaluate completeness on a *macro* level. Most of my paper assignments require multiple parts. When I evaluate completeness on the macro level, I am looking for the extent to which you actually perform each of the tasks that I require. Failure to complete a major part of a paper is a serious error that will result in substantial point deductions. Therefore, it is important that I know what you are doing as you work your way through your paper. It is in your best interest to inform me where you are and what you are doing in your paper. Signposting, (sub)headings, and transitions between parts helps immensely in keeping readers informed as to what you are doing in your paper.

I also evaluate completeness on a *micro* level. Completeness on a micro level represents the extent to which you adequately tackle each of the tasks required in the paper. The question here is how well did you perform each of the tasks required? How completely you should describe something, of course, depends on the nature and length of your paper. For example, it does not make sense to spend 5 pages of your seven-page paper describing how you measured your variables. You need to complete <u>all</u> parts of the assignment given the page restrictions.

CRITERION 3: ORGANIZATION

The third criterion I use in evaluating papers is organization. Your ideas should develop in a logical manner. Words should fit together to form phrases. Phrases should fit together to form

sentences. Sentences should fit together to make paragraphs. Paragraphs should fit together to form the major sections of your paper. What I do not want is a paper that rambles from point to point without any connection between them. The paper assignments suggest a particular organizational scheme for the major parts of your papers and I strongly suggest that you stick to them. Within major sections, the choice of an organizational scheme is up to you.

CRITERION 4: VALIDITY

The fourth major criterion I use in grading papers has to do with the validity of the presented arguments. The arguments that you make in your papers must be valid. This means that the conclusions of your arguments must follow from the premises. Further, the premises and conclusions that you draw should be explicit. I should not have to dig through a paper to identify and understand the arguments you are trying to make.

Part of the validity of an argument has to do with the data supporting a particular conclusion. Specifically, properly document all statements of fact from a reputable primary source. For example, if you are making the claim that men and women communicate differently in some important ways, you need to support that conclusion (or claim) with a reference from a reputable and primary source.

CRITERION 5: MECHANICS

My evaluation of written work also focuses on the technical (or stylistic) aspects of the paper. I expect that submitted drafts should be devoid of grammatical errors, typographical errors, misspellings, punctuation errors, sentence fragments, and so on. In this respect, it would be helpful to develop the habit of completing rough drafts of your work and then spending time cleaning and polishing your writing. If you try to write the entire paper the last day or two before it is due, you will almost certainly encounter stylistic problems, not to mention substantive ones.

I will also evaluate presentational aspects of papers (e.g., spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc.). This mechanics criterion includes evaluating the format of source citations and references provided. The format of the paper, source citations, and reference lists must be consistent with the sixth edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association.*