

COM 308: Empirical Research Methods in Communication

Instructor:
Office Hours:
Office:
E-mail:

TA:
Office Hours:
Office:
E-mail:

Course Description and Objectives:

This course examines social scientific methods for studying human communication. The course provides the student with the opportunity to develop a working knowledge of inquiry methods and to develop some preliminary research skills. These skills include the ability to be a critical consumer of scientific research and the ability to design a research project. Furthermore, the course extends the introduction to methods course (COM 207) and serves as a foundation for 400-level coursework in communication. You must have completed the pre-requisites for this course and have the required GPA in order to remain enrolled. If you do not do not drop the course, you will be administratively dropped and will receive less money back from the University.

1. To equip the student with a general knowledge of empirical research methods and objectives.
2. To prepare the student to perform and to critique empirical communication research.
3. To prepare the student to assess the appropriateness of various research methods in response to questions asked by communication researchers.
4. To practice critical thinking skills.

All students are responsible for managing their time in regards to assignments and planned Blackboard outages. Information on [scheduled outages](#) can be found at <http://systemstatus.asu.edu/>. Unplanned system outages will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. Be aware, no late assignments are accepted.

Required Materials:

Communication Research Measures by Gerianne Merrigan and Carole L. Huston. Third edition

Calculator

APA manual

Bases for Evaluation:

There are 600 points possible in the course. No extra credit opportunities are available.

The grading scale in this class is as follows:

A+	595-600	B+	522-539	C+	468-479		
A	558-594	B	498-521	C	420-461		
A-	540-557	B-	480-497	D	360-419	E	0-359

Meeting the requirements of an assignment is considered **AVERAGE** work and earns “C” grades. Demonstrating knowledge above what is required is considered **GOOD** work and earns “B” grades. Going the extra mile and demonstrating superior knowledge is **EXCELLENT** work and earns “A” grades. Work deemed **UNSATISFACTORY** earns “D” grades and **POOR** work earns an “E” grade. Be aware that I grade based on points; therefore, if you earn an 89% (539 points) in the course you have earned a “B+” grade. This percentage is not rounded up.

Examinations

Examination #1	75
Examination #2	75
Examination #3	75
Examination #4	75

Course Project

Topic question and working bib	30
Literature Review	130
Method paper	100

The course project will build upon a single topic throughout the semester. This project will be centered around a single communication topic. Start thinking about what interests you most within the discipline of communication. It will need to be a message focused behavior. First, you will propose a topic. Once that topic has been reviewed, you will begin to write a quantitatively focused literature review complete with a hypothesis on the topic you have selected. Toward the end of the semester, you will design a study to test the hypothesis. Instead of conducting the study, you will write a methods proposal to test the hypothesis from your literature review.

Homework assignments

Experimental Article Critique	20
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This functions like an open note, open book quiz. There are no make ups for missed critiques.

Ethnography Activity	20
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You will conduct a short ethnographic observation and write about it as well as present in class.

Course Policies:

1. Attendance is essential for your success in this course. Poor attendance will result in a lower participation grade. Please note: missing class and/or arriving late/leaving early constitute poor attendance. I will deduct points you have 'earned' for nonattendance. You have two unexcused absences, after that you will have 4 points deducted from your final grade per absence. Parts of this class will be held online. You will need to watch those videos too.
2. All assignments should be submitted on time. NO LATE WORK IS ACCEPTED. There are no "make-ups" for missed examinations or in-class activities. If you are going to miss an exam due to an illness you must call or email me before the exam has started. A makeup will only be allowed in case of an emergency. If you are going to be absent on a non-exam day you DO NOT need to let me know. If you want to find out what you missed please contact a classmate. If you submit a paper late via safe assignment it will not be graded. You will be given a zero. Additionally, you are responsible for what you submit via safe assignment. Double check that you are submitting the correct file.
3. Academic integrity is required of all Arizona State University Students. Please see the School policy on this subject at <http://provost.asu.edu/academicintegrity>
For clarity sake- you must cite from the source if it was not your original idea. Additionally, if you have turned the work in for another class (even if you wrote it) it is considered self-plagiarism and also violates the University policy. Please submit your own, original work for a grade. Plagiarism will result in a failing assignment, failing grade in the course, an XE for the course, or expulsion from the University.
4. 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 tell the instructor on or before the second class period.
5. Classroom Civility: We 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., arriving late, having private conversations, reading the newspaper, using a laptop for anything other than taking notes or completing relevant in-class assignments, doing work for other classes, receiving cell phone calls or text messages, 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, they represent the minimal standards that help make the classroom a productive place for all concerned. Your final grade will be reduced by three points each time you engage in these sorts of behaviors.

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.

Specifically, 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 (http://www.abor.asu.edu/1_the_Regents/policymanual/chap5/index.html), and the ACD 125: (<http://asu.edu/aad/manuals/acd/acd125.html>) addressing Computer, Internet, and Electronics Communications. As such, students who are verbally or physically aggressive towards 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. In addition, I will take action to permanently remove any student engaging in aggressive behaviors from the class and will notify the proper authorities. Examples of aggressive behavior include, but are not limited to, cursing, raising your voice, and using nonverbals (e.g., proxemics, facial expressions, and hand gestures) in ways that could be reasonably interpreted as intimidating.

6. All written work must be typed, double-spaced, in 12 point times new roman font, and in APA format. Papers will need to be submitted by midnight on the due date to be accepted. All papers will be submitted and returned in rtf format on safe assignment. Make sure to check for scheduled outages in blackboard. Be aware that computer problems are not an excuse. It is a good idea to keep a back up copy of all of your assignments. I will NOT accept papers via email. **Additionally, you are**

responsible for the assignment you submit. If you submit the wrong draft, you will have that draft graded. If you plagiarize in the assignment you submit you will be penalized for that. Turn around time on written work is approximately three weeks.

7. Please ensure that all communication(s) that take place in this course, including e-mails to me, are professional and well written. I will not respond to e-mails that are poorly written (meaning incoherent, acronym-filled and/or grammatically flawed). I do understand that people make mistakes, as none of us is perfect; however, it is generally obvious when you do not read over your communication before transmitting. The subject line of all e-mails should accurately reflect the reason for the message. If your e-mail is of an urgent nature, please put "URGENT" in the subject line, followed by the subject of your message. Emails may not be checked over the weekend. If we have not responded to your email after two business days, please resend. Your emails to myself and to classmates should be respectful. This includes addressing us by name and being courteous in your overall tone. I will not reply to messages I consider to be rude in nature.