

Kutztown University of Pennsylvania
COM 340CTWI
Communication Research & Writing
Spring 2020

Prerequisites: COM 140, COM 240

Section 010

Room: LC225

Class time: T/Th 9:30-10:50

Section 120

Room: LC126

Class time: T/Th 1:30-2:50

Professor: Dr. Urszula Pruchniewska

Email: pruchnie@kutztown.edu

Office: LC 232A

Office Phone: 3-4563

Office Hours: Tuesday 3-4:30; Wednesday (VIRTUAL HOURS*) 1-3; Thursday 12-1:30 and by appointment (*email me to set up a phone call or video chat for virtual hours)

Course Overview

Course Description

This course introduces students to the methodologies and methodological considerations associated with the field of communication studies, including qualitative, quantitative, rhetorical/textual, and mixed-methods approaches. Students will learn key terms, ethical considerations, and the principles of data collection and analysis while applying research principles in class projects.

Scope of Course

This course provides a comprehensive overview of key communication research methodologies. Through discussions, activities, research, writing, and presentations, students will develop an understanding of research methodologies in general, as well as knowledge of specific methodologies appropriate for their own research proposal and final capstone project. Being familiar with and understanding how to conduct research in communication and culture is an essential part of your development as a future professional and an aware member of contemporary society. This course will introduce you to a variety of research methodologies that are used to study, evaluate, critique, and make sense of communication and its impact on contemporary life, our cultures, and our identities. Cultural sensitivity and ethical practices are highlighted in accomplishing these goals.

Course Objectives

Upon successfully completing this course, students will be able to:

- Define the role that method plays in research.
- Demonstrate familiarity with methodologies associated with communication studies.
- Demonstrate an awareness of ethical considerations relevant to research.
- Analyze, critique, and practice specific communication research methods.
- Analyze data collected as part of the research process.
- Develop a research project proposal (prospectus).

Required Textbooks and Course Materials

- Course syllabus, any supplemental readings, handouts, assignment sheets, and D2L course page
- **Textbook:** *Communication Research: Asking Questions, Finding Answers* (4th or 5th edition) by Joann Keyton. McGraw Hill. ISBN: 978-0-07-803961-0
- **Supplemental website with chapter PowerPoints:** www.mhhe.com/keyton4e or www.mhhe.com/keyton5e

Course Format

The course will be conducted in a lecture/discussion/activity format. Each class session will involve discussion of the assigned readings/content, presentation of supplementary material, activities, and media clips that illustrate the content. Students are expected to:

- 1) Attend class
- 2) Complete all reading assignments prior to attending class
- 3) Actively participate in class discussion and activities
- 4) Complete assignments, projects, and exams on the assigned day
- 5) Turn in the final, professional version of each assignment on time

Assessment

Activities (15%) – The following in-class activities will ask that you apply what we have learned in class. These activities will help prepare you for conducting your study in Senior Capstone (COM 380). More information for each activity will be provided. If you are absent during an activity and it is *unexcused*, you will earn a zero. If you are absent and it is *excused*, you may submit the activity by the end of the week for full points.

- What is research?
- Finding sources
- Research ethics
- Interview – data collection
- Interview - data analysis
- Observation/ethnography – data collection
- Observation/ethnography – data analysis
- Textual/Rhetorical analysis
- Selecting a sample
- Measurement
- Content analysis
- Experiment
- Survey design
- Descriptive statistics
- Inferential statistics

Exams (45%) – There will be two (2) exams over the course of the semester – a midterm (20%) and a final (25%). Each exam will cover material from readings, class discussions, and activities.

Prospectus/Research Proposal (30%) – This semester, you will be writing the research prospectus (proposal) for COM 380 Senior Capstone. Starting with your literature review from COM 240 Survey of Communication Theory, you will further develop your research questions and/or hypotheses. You will propose how you will carry out and conduct your research. There will be

multiple steps in this process that will be going on concurrently with the course content. These include:

- Updated Literature Review (10%)
- Methods Draft (20%)
- Rough Draft (20%)
- Final Prospectus (50%)

If you are successful at completing these steps, you will be ready for COM 380 Senior Capstone!!

Participation (10%) – A lot of this course depends on your participation. Attendance and *positive contributions* to the class will assist you in polishing important skills needed for effective communication. Do not assume that the full 10% will automatically be awarded to all students or that participation is solely based on attendance.

“Full points participation” requires excellence in *all* of the following:

- Participating actively, regularly, and respectfully in class discussion.
- Active and regular contributions to group and class dynamics by sharing ideas, asking questions, eliciting feedback from others, and helping to keep your group on task.
- Listening respectfully when others talk: in groups, during presentations, and in class
- Remaining focused and attentive during lectures/discussions and while others are speaking/giving presentations.
- Prompt and regular attendance.

Grading Scale:

93-100% = A
90-92.9% = A-
87-89.9% = B+
83-86.9% = B
80-82.9% = B-
77-79.9% = C+
70-76.9% = C
60-69.9% = D
Less than 60% = F

Course Policies

Attendance

Regular attendance in class is important for fulfilling our course objectives. You are expected to attend class every day, arrive on time, and actively participate in class discussions and activities. Unexcused absences will not be tolerated. **Each unexcused absence will drop your final grade by one point. For example, if you have earned a 90 in the class, but you have five unexcused absences, your final grade earned is an 85.**

To obtain an excused absence, you need to email me to let me know that you will not be attending class and provide an acceptable reason for your absence **before class** (unless it is an emergency). Acceptable reasons include: sickness, family illness or death, attending mandatory professional/school events, jury duty, etc. Note that some material, which may be in the exams,

will only be covered in class. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to catch up on the material that you missed.

IMPORTANT: Winter Weather

Many of you commute, as do I. Bearing that in mind, if winter weather occurs and it is bad enough that driving is dangerous, **we will still hold class, but online through D2L and/or Zoom.** This applies whether the University is officially closed or not. In the event of severe weather, I will decide whether class will be held online or in person at least TWO HOURS before class and will make that announcement through D2L. Therefore, it is important that you regularly check D2L for updates, and especially during periods of bad weather.

Late Assignments

Late assignments will NOT be accepted, unless there is an emergency or an unavoidable conflict, in which case you need to let me know in advance to make alternate arrangements.

Class Rules

I am easy-going in class and like to have fun. However, I also take our course content seriously. I expect you to work hard, come to class prepared (having read the readings) and on time, and actively participate in class discussions and activities. I also expect you to not use your phone or computer when it is not for class purposes. Texting or other inappropriate technology use during class time will negatively affect your participation grade.

General Writing Guidelines

All assignments should be typed, double-spaced, with 1" margins on all sides. A 12-point font should be used. **ALL PAPERS SHOULD BE SUBMITTED ONLINE THROUGH D2L.**

Application and assimilation of discussion and readings should be evident in all assignments. I admire and reward good writing skills. The use of introductions and summaries, good transitions between paragraphs, and logical arguments is encouraged. **Be sure to proofread your work.** Poor grammar and spelling distract from good communication and will be graded down. I am willing to help you with your writing skills during office hours. Additionally, you might request help from the Writing Center on campus.

Writing Center

The University Writing Center is a free service for students, offering advice and assistance with writing assignments from any course or subject. Tutors can assist you in improving your composing process, as well as with difficulties with development, organization, style, documentation, and mechanics. The UWC is located in Rohrbach Library 100C on the main floor. Its hours are Mon-Thurs 11-9, Fri 11-5, and Sunday 2-9. Please call 610-683-4733, email wrcenter@kutztown.edu, or come in to Rohrbach Library 100C to set up an appointment. Walk ins are welcome!

Accommodations

It is the policy of Kutztown University to accommodate students with disabilities, pursuant to federal and state law. Any disabled student who needs accommodations (e.g., seating placement, arrangements for examinations, etc.) should inform the instructor at the beginning of the course. If you have already disclosed a disability to the Disability Services Office (215 Stratton Administration Building) and are seeking accommodations, please feel free to speak with me privately so that I may assist you. If you have an injury sustained during military service including PTSD or TBI, you are also eligible for accommodations under the ADA and should contact the Disability Services Office.

Students with disabilities must also contact the Office of Disabled Student Services located in the Stratton Administration building, Room 215. They can be reached at 683-4108.

Academic Dishonesty

All work should be your own. Assignments should be individual efforts. Plagiarism includes copying or paraphrasing someone else's words as your own or excessively collaborating with someone and presenting the work as yours alone. College regulations regarding academic dishonesty, as set forth in the Kutztown University student handbook and other College documents and publications, will be strictly enforced. A student caught plagiarizing on an assignment will receive an F for that assignment. A student caught cheating on a test will receive an F for the course.

University Policy on Title IX and Mandatory Reporting

In order to comply with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and university policy, Kutztown University's faculty and staff must report incidents of sexual violence, sexual harassment, dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking, including relevant details, such as the names of those involved in the incident, to the Department of Public Safety and Police Services and to Jesus Peña, Title IX Coordinator. The only exceptions to the faculty member's reporting obligation are when the previously listed offenses are communicated by a student during a classroom discussion, in a writing or other creative assignment for class or as part of a university-approved research project. Faculty members are obligated to report sexual violence or any other abuse of a student who was, or is, a child (a person under 18 years of age) when the abuse allegedly occurred to the person/entity designated in the university's protection of minors policy. Information regarding the reporting of sexual violence and resources available to victims of sexual violence is set forth at: <http://www2.kutztown.edu/about-ku/administrative-offices/social-equity/title-ix-information.htm> and <http://www.kutztown.edu/prebuilt/apps/policyregister/policy.aspx?policy=GEN-005>.

Diversity

This course encourages different perspectives related to such factors as gender, race, nationality, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, and other relevant cultural identities. This course seeks to foster understanding and inclusiveness related to such diverse perspectives and ways of communicating.

Course Schedule

*****This is a tentative schedule that is subject to change. Announcements will be made in class and on D2L*****

Week 1

1/21 Introduction to Course
READ: Syllabus

1/23 Getting Started
READ: Ch 1

Week 2

1/28 Literature Review Workshop
READ: Ch 2
BRING: Your Literature Review from COM240

1/30 Research Ethics
READ: Ch. 3

Week 3

2/4 Introduction to Qualitative and Quantitative Research
READ: Ch. 14 & Ch 4

2/6 Qualitative Research Design
READ: Ch 15

Week 4

2/11 Interviewing: Data Collection
READ: Ch 16 (up to Collecting Narratives)

2/13 Analyzing Interview Data
READ: Ch 17 (leave out Grounded Theory)
DUE: UPDATED LITERATURE REVIEW BY MIDNIGHT ON D2L

Week 5

2/18 Observation and Ethnography: Data Collection
READ: Ch 16 (from Collecting Narrative)

2/20 Analyzing Observation Data

Week 6

2/25 Textual/Rhetorical Analysis
READ: Brennen (D2L) up to p. 208

2/27 Conducting a Textual/Rhetorical Analysis

Week 7

3/3 Midterm Exam Review

3/5 **MIDTERM EXAM**

Week 8

3/10 **SPRING BREAK – no class**

3/12 **SPRING BREAK – no class**

Week 9

3/17 Prospectus Workshop: Picking Research Questions and Method
Bring: Your prospectus

3/19 Measurement and Populations
READ: Ch 5 & 6

Week 10

3/24 Content Analysis
READ: Ch 12

3/26 Conducting a Content Analysis

Week 11

3/31 Experiments
READ: Ch 7

4/2 Surveys
READ: Ch 8
DUE: METHODS DRAFT BY MIDNIGHT ON D2L

Week 12

4/7 Analyzing Quantitative Data: Descriptive Statistics
READ: Ch 9

4/9 Analyzing Quantitative Data: Inferential Statistics
READ: Ch 10 (Stop at ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE)
READ: Ch 11 (Stop at REGRESSION)

Week 13

4/14 Peer Review of Prospectus
BRING: Edited prospectus PRINTED OUT

4/16 **NO CLASS: Use this time to work on your prospectus**
DUE: ROUGH DRAFT PROSPECTUS BY MIDNIGHT ON D2L

Week 14

4/21 Reading and Writing Research Reports

READ: Ch 13

READ: Ch 18

4/23 Honing Your Method

READ IN CLASS: Journal article assigned in class

Week 15

4/28 Final Review of Prospectus

BRING: Edited prospectus

4/30 Review for Final Exam

BRING: Your questions regarding the final exam

DUE: FINAL PROSPECTUS BY MIDNIGHT ON D2L

Finals Week

FINAL EXAM

5/7 8am-10am Section 010 (Class time: T/Th 9:30-10:50)

5/7 11am-1pm Section 120 (Class time: T/Th 1:30-2:50)