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# COMM 4372: RESEARCH METHODS IN COMMUNICATION

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## TERM AND INSTRUCTOR INFO

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Term: Spring 2019A (Jan 22 – March 10, 2019)

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- When sending email, please mention what course you are in. I have three online courses and I've found that it's hard to remember who is in what class, especially because I don't have the advantage of knowing you face-to-face. You do not need to include your student ID number on any emails.

Office Hours: I am available by email, typically within 5-6 hours on weekdays and 24-48 hours on weekends. I am also available for phone/Skype conferences by appointment if needed.

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## COURSE OVERVIEW

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The goal of this course is to increase the understanding of basic concepts and principles regarding the methodologies used in communication studies and research. This course will introduce you to the research and methods in the area of quantitative and qualitative research methods in communication. The course will also focus on other research methods in communication such as critical and cultural methods. The course will improve your understanding of communication from different research perspectives. Thus, the course will emphasize a broad approach to communication, and will address the significance of having and knowing various methods for communication research.

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## COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

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Upon completion of this course, you should be able to:

- Outline the study of communication and its history
- Summarize research methodologies in communication

- Differentiate among research methodologies and compare the strengths and weaknesses of each
- Develop a working vocabulary of terms and concepts that relate to the methodologies used in traditional and contemporary communication research
- Select appropriate research methodologies based on your understanding of their influence on discoveries, conclusions, and outcomes
- Identify the requirements for reporting academic research and apply them to your own work
- Achieve gains in your communication, confidence, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills

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## TEXTBOOK

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Leslie, Larry Z. 2018. *Communication Research Methods in Postmodern Culture: A Revisionist Approach*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Routledge.

Additional readings are located on Blackboard and/or the Library Guide for this course.

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## LEARNING SYSTEM

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- We are using Blackboard Learn as our Learning Management System. Blackboard has a lot of video tutorials available to learn about its features, or you may contact [UTEP Tech Support](#) if you need assistance with Blackboard.
- You will need a computer with basic audio/video output equipment, a good internet connection, and Microsoft Office or similar software.

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## COURSE SCHEDULE

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<b>Date</b>	<b>Textbook Chapters</b>	<b>Assignments (all deadlines in El Paso/ Mountain Time)</b>
Jan 22 (Week 1)	Ch. 1, "Welcome" Ch. 2, "Understanding Culture and Research"	Discussion 1.1 and 1.2 Assignment 1.1: Ethical Research Activity: Practice Activity
Jan 28 (Week 2)	Ch. 3, "Getting Started" Ch. 4, "Designing a Research Study" Ch. 13, "An Individual Research Project"	Discussion 2.1 Assignment 2.1: Validity of Research Questions Assignment 2.2: Methodology Activity: Practice Activity

		Research Proposal: Topic and research question due
Feb 4 (Week 3)	Ch. 5, "Focus Group Research" Ch. 6, "Survey Research"	Discussions 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3 Assignment 3.1: Survey Research in Organizations Assignment 3.2: Open-ended questions in focus groups Assessment: Reading Quiz
Feb 11 (Week 4)	Ch. 7, "Historical Research" Ch. 10, "Internet and Social Media Research"	Discussions 1.1 and 1.2 Assignment 4.1: Bottom-Up/Top-Down History Assignment 4.2: Oral History Activity: Practice Activity Research Proposal: Literature Review due
Feb 18 (Week 5)	Ch. 8, "Text Analysis"	Discussion 5.1: Content Analysis Assignment 5.1: Deconstruction Assessment: Reading Quiz Research Proposal: Methodology and Data-gathering Plan due
Feb 25 (Week 6)	Ch. 9, "Feminist Methodology"	Discussion 6.1: Rhetorical Analysis Discussion 6.2: Feminist Criticism Assignment 6.1: Feminism and Feminist Theory Activity: Practice Activity
Mar 4 (Week 7)	Ch. 11, "Writing Style" Ch. 12, "Report Format"	Discussion 7.1: Research Report Basics Assignment 7.2: Writing Styles and Report Formats Assessment: Final Research Proposal

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## GRADING AND EVALUATION

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- **Discussions, 30%.** You will have a total of 12 discussion board assignments that are worth 30% of your grade.
  - Discussion posts. For each prompt, you will write a post in response to the prompt, as well as responses to at least one of your peers' posts. All posts and responses must be relevant, substantive, and thoughtful. Rubrics for discussion grades are posted with each assignment.
- **Journal, 20%.** Each week, you will have a journal prompt. Your journal entries are 20% of your grade.
- **Activities and Quizzes, 30%.** You will have a weekly activity or quiz related to the readings.
- **Research Proposal, 20%.** Throughout the semester, you will develop a research proposal on a communication-related topic that uses one of the research methodologies we've studied in class. Details about the research proposal requirements will be given. Your proposals are graded on content as well as structure, grammar, and correct spelling and language usage. I recommend that you work with the [University Writing Center](#) to polish your papers before submitting them.
- Writing Expectations: You are in a senior class in the Communication Department. I expect you to write in a formal tone and to use correct grammar, spelling, sentence structure, etc. I also expect your writing to be clear, specific, and well-organized. If you feel you may need help in these areas, please contact me EARLY or contact the University Writing Center EARLY.
- I do not offer extra credit. If you are concerned about your grade, complete all assignments on time and ask me for help as soon as possible. Do not wait until late in the semester to seek help.
- Grading is on a ten-point scale:
  - A = 90-100
  - B = 80-89
  - C = 70-79
  - D = 60-69
  - F = 0-59
- Late Policy:
  - Our class depends on timely participation from all students to function successfully. **Late discussion posts/ responses are not acceptable and you will receive zero credit for posts made after the deadline.**
  - Please note that all deadlines are given in El Paso (Mountain) time. If you are working/submitting from a different time zone, please make the necessary adjustments. Also, I've noticed with a few students in the past that if you are using the Blackboard app, it may give you notices and due dates/time in the local time of your current location. Make sure you have everything set to Mountain time.

- Your submissions are time-stamped to the minute. I don't enjoy giving students a zero for an assignment that's been submitted a few minutes late, but I will strictly enforce deadlines. Give yourself enough time to write and submit your assignments so that you won't lose credit.
- If you intend to request an extension on any assignment (other than a discussion post), you must notify me in advance about the reason why you need an extension. I do not accept extension requests after deadlines have passed. Extensions are granted at my discretion and you may be asked to provide documentation/evidence along with your request.

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## PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENT

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This is a senior-level course condensed into a seven-week session. Your willingness to carry the workload and engage with the materials, instructor, and other students in this course is vital to having the best experience possible. You should log into the course at least several times a week for a minimum of 9 to 12 hours (not including the time you'll need to research, write papers, or study).

**Your weekly participation in discussions, journals, and activities/quizzes is worth a combined 80% of your final grade**, so interacting with other students and the instructor is critical to successful completion of the course. I cannot overstate how important it is that you submit quality posts and responses on time, every week.

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## ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

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Academic dishonesty is prohibited and is considered a violation of rules articulated in UTEP's Handbook of Operating Procedures. It is also contrary to the process of organizational leadership itself, and includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, and collusion.

- Cheating may involve copying from or providing information to another student, possessing unauthorized materials, falsifying research data, etc
- Plagiarism occurs when someone intentionally or unknowingly represents another person's words or ideas as his or her own. You must cite your sources in discussion posts and papers.
- Collusion involves the unauthorized collaboration with another person or group to commit any academically dishonest act. Unless specifically stated in the instructions for a particular assignment, all work should be completed by you alone.

Any sort of academic dishonesty attempted by a UTEP student is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Violations will be taken seriously. Students will receive a zero on any assignment where there is a reasonable suspicion of cheating, plagiarism, and/or collusion. Additionally, students who are suspected of academic dishonesty will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution for possible disciplinary action. Students may be suspended or expelled from UTEP for such actions. More information can be found in the UTEP *Handbook of Operating Procedures*, under the heading "Alleged Student Scholastic Dishonesty" and the UT System Regent's Rules and Regulations.

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### "NETIQUETTE" (ONLINE ETIQUETTE)

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Leaders understand that words matter. Indeed, effective leadership is enacted through the process of communication, and to some of us, leadership IS communication. It is important to consider carefully the words you use in interactions with other students, to ensure a positive online communication environment. We must also be conscious of how we communicate while working at a distance and using good *netiquette*, that is, online communication etiquette.

- Clearly identify yourself when posting a comment or discussion entry. Your classmates may not know who is posting a comment.
- Avoid using all capital letters or text in different colors.
- Focus on the topic at hand and be SUBSTANTIVE, not personal.
- Remember the human – there's a person on the side of the computer screen, so be tactful and don't say things you wouldn't say to their face.
- Remember your words are WRITTEN and STORED. Don't say things you'll regret.
- Don't use offensive language or profanity (the instructor has the final say on whether or not something is offensive).
- Share your expert knowledge.
- Respect privacy – this class is a closed, private group. Don't copy/share/etc posts from this class with the outside world.

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### STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

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The Americans with Disabilities Act requires reasonable accommodations be made for students with documented special needs, and that all materials needed for a course be made available to all students in that course, whether it is face-to-face or online. If you have any special needs

that require accommodations, please let me know as soon as possible. In order to receive accommodations, you will need to make a formal request by contacting the Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) at [cass@utep.edu](mailto:cass@utep.edu) or visit <https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/cass/>.