

Syllabus

COMM 4372: Methods of Research in Communication

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Course Instructor



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Term: Summer 2017

Office Hours: MTWRF, 9:30 – 2:30 and by appointment

Course Description

An overview of the various social science methodologies used in conducting research in the communication discipline. Includes problems formulation, measurement of concepts, design, collecting, and analyzing data.

Course Overview

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 research methods in communication, and will also introduce you to qualitative research methods. Finally the course will also focus on other research methods in communication such as “critical/cultural” research methods. In other words, 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 research methods for communication research.

Credit Hours: 3

Prerequisite Courses: NONE

Prerequisite Skills and Knowledge: Senior standing

Course Learning Outcomes

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

1. Outline the study of communication and its history.
2. Summarize research methodologies in communication.
3. Develop a working vocabulary of terms and concepts that relate to the methodologies used in traditional and contemporary communication research.
4. Discover the importance of research methods in studying communication.
5. Demonstrate an understanding of the nuances of research and the differences between research methodologies.
6. Recognize the influence of methodologies on research discoveries, conclusions, and outcomes.
7. Identify the requirements for reporting academic research, such as reporting structure, formats, and writing “style.”
8. Demonstrate an understanding of the overall process of communication studies research.

Course Textbook

- Leslie, L.Z. (2010). *Communication Research Methods in Postmodern Culture: A Revisionist Approach*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Required Materials

- All additional required readings will be listed and can be accessed on the Library Guide for this course. The Library Guide can be located at:
<http://libguides.utep.edu/COMM4372>

Course Technology

- Blackboard

Technology Requirements

This course is facilitated on Blackboard. You will need to schedule a minimum of 7–12 hours of computer access each week for seven weeks to be successful and complete this course.

To ensure your success in accessing the course materials and completing your assignments, it is recommended that you ensure your computer setup for this class meets the following minimum requirements:

- Broadband Internet connection, such as cable or DSL
- A modern computer (PC or Mac), no more than four years old, with the following minimum configuration:
 - Processor: Dual-core or better, at least 2 GHZ
 - RAM: 2 GB or better
 - Operating System: Windows 7 or 8, or Mac OS X 10.3.9 or better

Your computer will need the following software:

- A word processor, such as Microsoft Word or Mac's Pages—Regardless of your choice, you must save files in a .doc or .docx file format.
- Presentation-making software, such as Microsoft PowerPoint or Mac's Keynote—Regardless of your choice, you must save files in .ppt or .pptx format.
- Java, which you can download here: <https://java.com/en/download>
- Adobe Reader, which you can download here: <http://get.adobe.com/reader>

Tech Support

The University of Texas at El Paso offers complete technical information and online help desk support at <http://at.utep.edu/techsupport/>.

Method of Evaluation

Grade Breakdown:	
	Discussions (12 @ 2 points) = 24 points
	Assignments (10 @ 2 points) = 20 points
	Reading Quizzes (6 @ 7 points) = 44 points
	Final Exam = 12 points
	Total Points = 100 points

Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Points Earned
A	90-100
B	80-89
C	70-79

Letter Grade	Points Earned
D	60-69
F	0-59

Expectations and Policies

What to Expect from the Instructor

I will log into our course at least once a day, and you can expect responses to e-mails and discussions within 24 hours. Please wait 24 hours to resend e-mails if you have not received a response. I will return graded assignments to you within a week of receiving them.

Participation

This course requires that you have at least 7-12 hours each week of access to a computer with a high-speed Internet connection. You are required to log into the course at least three days each week. Weekly discussions require students to interact with the instructor and classmates on at least two days each week. Timely and regular online participation with your peers is essential to being successful in this course. Participation in an online course can be challenging because it brings together different perspectives and attitudes without a face-to-face connection with one another. We understand that and ask that you work hard to achieve positive interaction with your peers. Students are expected to be respectful and supportive of other students. Many different ideas will be welcomed and encouraged. We will discuss some controversial topics, and students must feel that they are comfortable to express their thoughts. Your participation is vital for discussion and assignments, and it is very difficult to get a satisfactory grade in this course if you do not log into the course at least three times each week. Assignments will be evaluated not only for completion, but also your willingness to engage your classmates in discussion about communication theories and concepts.

Academic Dishonesty Statement

Academic dishonesty is prohibited and is considered a violation of the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures. It includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, and collusion.

- *Cheating* may involve copying from or providing information to another student, possessing unauthorized materials during a test, or falsifying research data on laboratory reports.
- *Plagiarism* occurs when someone intentionally or knowingly represents another person's words or ideas as his or her own.
- *Collusion* involves the unauthorized collaboration with another person or group to commit any academically dishonest act.

Any act of academic dishonesty attempted by a UTEP student is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Violations will be taken seriously and 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 [Regents' Rules and Regulations](#).

Late Policy

All assignments and quizzes/exams are due on the specific due dates that are posted on the syllabus, and due to the nature of the short, "intensive" mini-semester, late work will not be accepted after the due date without written consent from the instructor.

Library Information

Access the UTEP Library by visiting <http://libraryweb.utep.edu/>.

Effective Electronic Communication

It is important to share a word of caution, so we can become wiser about interpersonal distance learning communications. In an online environment, many of the feelings or impressions that are transmitted via body language in face-to-face communications are lost. Consequently, interpreting emotions and innuendos can be difficult. Only what is written, or drawn, carries the message. Often, excitement can be misinterpreted as anger or insult. It is important that we all keep this in mind as we communicate.

Words in print may seem harmless, but they could emotionally injure us when working at a distance. Hence, we must be conscious of how we communicate while working at a distance and use good *netiquette*, i.e., online communication etiquette. For example, your classmates may not know who is posting a comment, so clearly identify yourself when posting to a discussion board. Further, avoid using all capital letters in electronic communication as all caps come across as shouting.

The standard practice ("netiquette") for participation in networked discussion requires that all comments focus on the topic at hand, not become personalized, and be substantive in nature. In other words, you may certainly disagree with others, but you must do so respectfully; you may express strong beliefs or emotions, but you may not get so carried away that you lose all perspective on the course itself.

More information on netiquette, the etiquette of Internet communication, can be found at www.albion.com/netiquette.

Disability Statement

If you have a disability and need classroom accommodations, please contact The Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) at 747-5148, or by email to cass@utep.edu, or visit the office located in UTEP Union East, Room 106. For additional information, please visit the CASS website at www.sa.utep.edu/cass.

Week	Assignments	Due	Points
Week 1	Discussion 1: Introductions	May 16	2
	Discussion 2: Contemporary Life	May 18	2
	Assignment: Ethical Research	May 20	2
	Activity: Practice Activity	May 21	7
Week 2	Discussion: Scholarly Research	May 24	2
	Assignment 1: Validity of Research Questions	May 26	2
	Assignment 2: Methodology	May 27	2
	Activity: Practice Activity	May 28	7
Week 3	Discussion 1: Sampling in Survey Research	May 30	2
	Discussion 2: Use of Focus Groups in Studies	May 31	2
	Discussion 3: Focus Groups and Social Issues	June 1	2
	Assignment 1: Survey Research in Organizations	June 2	2
	Assignment 2: Open-Ended Questions in Focus Groups	June 3	2
	Assessment: Reading Quiz	June 4	8
Week 4	Discussion 1: Historical Research	June 7	2
	Discussion 2: Deeper Understanding	June 8	2
	Assignment 1: Bottom-Up/Top-Down History	June 9	2
	Assignment 2: Oral History	June 10	2
	Activity: Practice Activity	June 11	7
Week 5	Discussion: Content Analysis	June 14	2
	Assignment: Deconstruction	June 17	2
	Assessment: Reading Quiz	June 18	8
Week 6	Discussion 1: Rhetorical Analysis	June 20	2

	Discussion 2: Feminist Criticism	June 22	2
	Assignment: Feminism and Feminist Theory	June 24	2
	Activity: Practice Activity	June 25	7
Week 7	Discussion: Research Report Basics	June 28	2
	Assignment: Writing Styles and Report Formats	July 1	2
	Assessment: Final Exam	July 2	12

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