

COM 382

Social Scientific Approaches to Communication Research

SUMMER 2018 Full Term

Monday 8:30 – 10:40am

Wednesday 8:30 – 10:40am

CMU 228

Instructor: Yunkang Yang

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Office hours in CMU 123

4:00-5:00pm Friday

By appointment

Course Description

Knowledge can be generated via many ways, but the dominant and perhaps the best way to produce useful and reliable knowledge in the modern era is science. This class focuses on the application of social scientific approaches to communication research. It aims to provide students with a general understanding of the way in which social scientific research methods are employed in the study of communication. Students will learn the basics of research design, familiarize themselves with different research methods, and evaluate the way in which various methods are employed to address different research questions. This course will cover basic principles of social scientific research, qualitative research methods such as interviews and ethnography, and quantitative research methods such as survey methods.

Organization

The class is organized in a workshop manner, which means that we will alternate between the explication of concepts and ideas and the application of those concepts and ideas. The first part of this course will cover the basic building blocks and principles of conducting social scientific research. In the second part, we will focus on a few qualitative and quantitative research methods that are commonly used in communication research. Prior experience in statistics is not required, nor should fear of mathematics be a bar to success in

this course. At the end of the class, students will be pointed to more advanced inter-disciplinary method classes on campus.

Activities

This course is based largely on the premise that one *learns by doing*. Other than quizzes and homework assignments, many in-class activities are structured in a way that requires small group discussions and teamwork on various aspects of the research process. We will also have a lab session on using R to conduct basic descriptive statistics and regression.

Learning Objectives

At the end of the course, students should be able to:

Read and interpret data-driven reports in contemporary news media in a critical manner.

Conduct an effective search of available scholarly literature.

Identify research methods that are appropriate to address specific research questions.

Articulate questions about social phenomena involving media and/or communication via specific research questions and hypotheses.

Apply the scientific foundations and principles presented in this course to systematically measure communication concepts and collect data.

Required Readings

Students need to complete the assigned readings before coming to class. There is one required text for this course, available at the Bookstore, online, or on reserve at the library:

Remler, D. K., & Van Ryzin, G. (2014). *Research methods in practice: Strategies*

for description and causation (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

You can go to the UW library by following this link.

<https://www.lib.washington.edu>

Complementary readings listed below are available on the Canvas course website:
<https://canvas.uw.edu/courses/1205042>

Neuendorf, K.A. (2017). Defining content analysis. In K. A. Neuendorf (Ed.), *The content analysis guidebook* (pp. 1-26). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Recommended Material

For guidance on how to cite properly, please see <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/> (for APA Style). A helpful website for people involved in applied social research and evaluation is <http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/>.

Course Management Site

Course readings, and communication will be on Canvas:
<https://canvas.uw.edu/courses/1205042>

If you need help, please visit <https://depts.washington.edu/uwcanvas/help/>.

The gradebook will be maintained but may not always be immediately up to date. Please be patient when waiting for grades to be posted. If you believe a grade that is posted is inaccurate, please contact me immediately. Due to technical issues, please do not send emails via Canvas to me.

Evaluation / Grading Items

Your final grade for this course will be based on the evaluative criteria below:

Exams	Exam 1 90 pts. (33% of total class grade) Exam 2 90 pts. (33% of total class grade)
Assignment & Activities	Syllabus quiz 5 pts. (less than 2% of total class grade) Ethics certification 5 pts. (less than 2% of total class grade) Qualitative research methods assignment 5 pts. (less than 2% of total class grade) Quantitative analysis 5 pts. (less than 2% of total class grade) 4 In-class activities 5 pts. each (less than 7% of total class grade) 11 in-class quizzes 5 pts. each with the lowest dropped (18% of total class grade) TOTAL 270 pts. 100%

Exams are non-cumulative. Under normal circumstances missed exams cannot be made up (e.g., students should be aware that transportation problems or travel plans are not an excuse to miss an exam that has been scheduled since the beginning). If you know you will be unable to make an exam in advance or encounter an extreme emergency, we may be able to make alternative arrangements. If you contact me immediately. If you contact me after missing an exam, there will be no make up exams. Only extraordinary circumstances will merit taking an exam at an alternate time. Otherwise, you will not be able to get credit for the missed exam.

Final grade: Your performance on the grading criteria noted above will determine your final grade. Below is an abridged version of how your combined performance across the various criteria translates into your final grade.

96% or more 4.0	76% 2.0
95% 3.9	75% 1.9
94% 3.8	74% 1.8
93% 3.7	73% 1.7
92% 3.6	72% 1.6
91% 3.5	71% 1.5
90% 3.4	70% 1.4
89% 3.3	69% 1.3
88% 3.2	68% 1.2
87% 3.1	67% 1.1
86% 3.0	66% 1.0
85% 2.9	65% 0.9
84% 2.8	64% 0.8
83% 2.7	63% 0.7
82% 2.6	62% or less 0.0
81% 2.5	
80% 2.4	
79% 2.3	
78% 2.2	
77% 2.1	

Course Policies and Grade Concerns

Punctuality: All students are expected to come to class on time, having finished the assigned readings and prepared with questions, viewpoints, or examples to contribute to the discussion. Everyone should pay attention and participate fully in discussions, neither dominating nor allowing others to carry the intellectual load.

Classroom behavior: You can expect to be treated with respect in this class. You are also expected to treat your classmates and instructors with respect. If you are rude or consistently behave in ways that interfere with others' ability to learn, you will be asked to leave the classroom. Serious or repeated violations

are grounds for academic misconduct charges. If this class takes place in a computer lab classroom, you should not bring food or drinks inside.

Diversity: Consideration for each other is very important in this classroom. This includes being open to listening to new perspectives and ideas as well as being respectful of diversity of all kinds: race, ethnicity, sex, gender, sexual orientation, disability, etc. The diversity that each of us brings to the classroom allows us to be exposed to other points of views.

Policy for late assignments: Late assignment will not be accepted.

Communication, media and technology use: This is a communication course. Generally speaking, you are expected to communicate and use digital media appropriately and thoughtfully. Please also keep in mind that lab computers should be used for class work only. On weekdays, I will try to respond to emails within 24 hours. Questions for which the answer can be found in the syllabus or on Canvas will be considered lowest priority. It is to your benefit to carefully examine both the syllabus and Canvas before emailing. When you send me an email, please put “COM 382” followed by your query (e.g., “question about exam 1”) at the beginning of the subject line.

Grade concerns: All grade concerns should be addressed either during office hours or during an appointment. Privacy concerns prevent me from discussing your grades via email. If you believe you have been graded incorrectly, you must bring this to my attention (explaining clearly and logically why the grading is incorrect) within one week of the assignment being returned in class. After that, I will not review grades that have been assigned.

Academic Integrity

All students are expected to adhere to UW’s academic integrity and code of conduct policies as detailed in WAC478-120-024(3). Academic misconduct includes:

(a) "*Cheating*," which includes, but is not limited to:

(i) The use of unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, or examinations;
or

(ii) The acquisition, use, or distribution of unpublished materials created by

another student without the express permission of the original author(s).

(b) "*Falsification*," which is the intentional use or submission of falsified data, records, or other information including, but not limited to, records of internship or practicum experiences or attendance at any required event(s). Falsification also includes falsifying scientific and/or scholarly research.

(c) "*Plagiarism*," which is the submission or presentation of someone else's words, composition, research, or expressed ideas, whether published or unpublished, without attribution. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to:

(i) The use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment; or

(ii) The unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or acquired from an entity engaging in the selling of term papers or other academic materials.

(d) *Prohibited collaboration*. (e) *Engaging in behavior specifically prohibited* by an instructor in the course of class instruction

or in a course syllabus.

(f) *Multiple submissions of the same work in separate courses* without the express permission of the instructor(s).

(g) *Taking deliberate action to destroy or damage another's academic work* in order to gain an advantage for oneself or another.

(h) *The recording of instructional content* without the express permission of the instructor(s), and/or the dissemination or use of such unauthorized records.

Academic misconduct in this course also includes *self-plagiarism* (using material that you wrote for another class); and *collaborating with other students on non-group assignments*. This is a serious topic and all assignments will be reviewed for integrity. Please familiarize yourself with these policies.

<http://www.washington.edu/uaa/advising/help/academicintegrity.php>

<https://depts.washington.edu/pswrite/plag.html>

<https://depts.washington.edu/grading/pdf/AcademicResponsibility.pdf>

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/02/>

Most academic integrity violations will result in a zero on that assignment and are likely to be brought to the Division of Community Standards and Student Conduct.

Accommodations / DRS

Students with disabilities should register with *UW's Disability Resources for Students (DRS) Office* and meet with the instructor about accommodations. For further information, see <http://www.washington.edu/students/drs/>

Campus Resources

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender is a civil rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, etc. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find the appropriate resources here:

- <http://f2.washington.edu/treasury/riskmgmt/compliance/titleIX>
- <http://depts.washington.edu/livewell/saris/sexual-assault/>
- <https://www.washington.edu/counseling/> (Counseling Center)
- <http://www.washington.edu/safecampus/> (SafeCampus)

Timetable

Day	Topic	Readings	Assignments
6/18	Introduction Syllabus review & logistics Epistemology	Syllabus Textbook Chapter 1	

	How research works		
6/20	Starting research	Textbook Chapter 2	Syllabus Quiz In class quiz In class activity
6/25	Literature review Guest lecture	Textbook Chapter 17	In class quiz
6/27	Ethics	Textbook Chapter 16	In class quiz
7/2	Sampling	Textbook Chapter 5	In class quiz
7/4	No class		
7/9	Measurement	Textbook Chapter 4	In class quiz
7/11	Exam review session		Ethics certification due
7/16	Exam 1		
7/18	Content analysis	Neuendorf (2017)	In class activity In class quiz
7/23	Qualitative research methods Guest lecture	Textbook Chapter 3	In class activity In class quiz
7/25	Survey methods Guest lecture	Textbook Chapter 7	In class activity In class quiz

7/30	Experiments	Textbook Chapter 14 & 15	In class quiz
8/1	Statistics 1	Textbook Chapter 8	In class quiz Qualitative research methods assignment due
8/6	Statistics 2	Textbook Chapter 9	In class quiz
8/8	Lab: Statistical programming in R Location: SAV (117)		
8/13	Exam 2 review session Course evaluation		Quantitative analysis assignment due
8/15	Final exam		

Minor changes to the schedule might apply, but will be announced with advance notice.