

COMMUNICATION RESEARCH METHODS

COMX 460

Spring 2019

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This course looks at the methods commonly used in human communication research and the assumptions that underpin research design. There will be an opportunity to design and implement a research project with your peers, to analyze data, and to report results in the professional format expected of scholarly researchers. By the end of the course you should have an introductory comfort level with using these methods and the ability to decide which methods are most appropriate to your professional and scholarly interests.

Course Objectives:

The purpose of this course is to introduce you to ways of conducting research on human communication. By finishing this course, you should be able to:

- Comprehend and accurately use research vocabulary
- Locate, read, and write about peer-reviewed research on human communication
- Develop questions about human communication that can be answered through research
- Apply communication research methods to research questions
- Analyze and interpret data at a basic level
- Evaluate the quality of research findings

Required Materials:

- UM student ID card - you must have this photo id with you for every exam.
- At least 4 skinny red scantrons sold at the Bookstore (ParSCORE test form no. F-289-PAR-L)
- At least one #2 pencil
- Treadwell, D. (2017). *Introducing Communication Research: Paths of Inquiry*. 3rd edition. McGraw Hill.

Policies:

Attendance & Participation - Class is conducted in order to share important information. By missing class, you not only are missing out on that information, but the rest of the class is missing out on information that you may have been able to share. If you choose to miss class, you must take responsibility for your choice. I give lectures only once, so you will need to gather the information from class in some other way. Although attendance will not be taken, classes may begin or end with an assignment. These exercises cannot be made up late and cannot be done early.

Think of learning as a chance to grow. Allow yourself to participate in discussion and don't sabotage other people's opportunities for education by discouraging them from participating. Be open to other people and be willing to respond to ideas that are different from what you believe is "normal." Dialogue is how we advance knowledge. Believe that your ideas are as important as everyone else's and share them with us. Do not be afraid to speak up during class, but please do think carefully about what insight/relevance you are offering in personal anecdotes. Personal accounts should be relatively brief and should help the rest of the class understand/critique a concept.

Deadlines and Accommodation: All assignments and exams (including dates and deadlines) will be announced during class and/or on the course website. No assignment or exam may be turned in late nor made up (except for the very rare instance approved by Dr. Yoshimura, generally in advance). Please note that no late students will be allowed in to take an exam after the first person to finish an exam has left the room, so be sure to come to class on time.

For requests of alternate testing accommodations through DSS, **please approach Dr. Yoshimura in office hours by the second week of class in order to be effectively accommodated** for the entire semester. Of course, if needs arise through the semester you are welcome to come discuss how we can best meet your needs for the remainder of the semester.

Academic Integrity: All students taking this course must adhere to the University of Montana's academic dishonesty policy as presented in the Student Conduct Code (SCC). As noted in the code, students are expected to practice academic honesty. Any actions that include, but are not limited to, the following behaviors are reasons for pursuing academic and university sanctions: plagiarism, copying another student's exam, allowing another student to copy from your exam or work, sharing information with another student during testing sessions, acquiring or possessing an exam without the instructor's permission, tampering with course materials or resources (including library references) submitting false information (data, quotations, citations, etc.), representing someone else's work as your own, clicking for someone else in the response section of our course, putting someone's name on work they haven't done, etc. Students will be charged with academic dishonesty for any breach of these standards. No work done for credit in any other class may be turned in for credit in this class. The *minimum* consequence for engaging in cheating or plagiarism is failure on the related assignment, but this type of activity usually results in failure in the entire course. At worst, academic misconduct can result in expulsion, denial of your degree, and/or revocation of a degree that has already been awarded. See the Student Conduct Code for definitions and consequences of cheating and plagiarism. The unabridged student conduct code is located at: [Student Conduct Code](http://www.umt.edu/student-affairs/dean-of-students/Student%20Conduct%20Code%20-%20FINAL%20-%2008-24-18.pdf) (<http://www.umt.edu/student-affairs/dean-of-students/Student%20Conduct%20Code%20-%20FINAL%20-%2008-24-18.pdf>)

Philosophy and Consideration – I am committed to fairness. I generally abide by the ethical system of the categorical imperative – something is just and fair if it can be applied to everyone in the same circumstance. I created the policies in this syllabus to be applied to everyone in the course – I do not grant exemptions, extensions, or extra credit to one person if we cannot do so for the entire class. The entire class is being held to the policies in this syllabus, and the timeline and schedule for this course – please make sure that you are willing to accept this if you choose to continue in the course.

The overall atmosphere in the class should be that of respect - for yourself and everyone else in the class. In the course of our discussions, personal information may be disclosed. Please do not repeat this information or use it to harm others. Help foster a classroom where education and consideration for one another are valued. Please understand that harassment of any kind is both inappropriate and intolerable, and disciplinary action will be taken should it occur.

E-Mail – Although you may come meet with me during office hours, many people choose to communicate via e-mail. Please always put COMX 460 in the subject of your e-mail, especially if you are not emailing from your university email account. Please allow up to 48 hours for me to reply to any email. Generally, I will reply well before 48 hours is up, however, you should not email questions the night before an exam. You may or may not receive a reply. When emailing, please write professionally and courteously. This means forming complete sentences, with appropriate punctuation and capitalization, as well as formulating your questions or requests in a considerate way. I will reply to you in the same manner. If your e-mail deviates too far from these expectations, I will reply by gently pointing you back to this section of the syllabus and asking you to try again.

Contesting Grades - I am willing to go over any assignment or exam with you to discuss concerns that you might have. I ask that you abide by three guidelines, all of which make it easier to concentrate on your concerns. 1) Please contact me a minimum of 24 hours after an assignment/test grade has been posted and a maximum of two weeks after an assignment/test grade

has been posted. 2) Please write your concerns and your backing for these concerns down so that we can look them over as we meet. 3) Please approach me only during office hours or during an appointment that we've scheduled - discussing your grade in class violates your privacy and doesn't provide an environment where we can adequately focus on your concerns. If you wish to contest a grade, you must make an appointment to do so within one week after the assignment has been returned. **Please note that grades on all in-class assignments will be posted on our course website within a week after the assignment has been turned in.** Do not worry or contact me to find out your grade until this week has passed.

Grading:

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Total Points</u>
Writing in APA – mini lit review	50
Group Project Contribution	100
Exams (3 @ 100 pts)	300
Group Evaluation	50
Participation in/out of class	200

The class is worth 700 total points. **I do not use the +/- system in this class, nor do I curve grades.**

Exams:

The exams in this class are not cumulative, and each will cover only a portion of the class. You will be provided with a study guide and/or review prior to each exam. Exams may include any of the following: multiple choice, true/false, or matching.

Participation Assignments:

Frequently I will begin or end class with an activity designed to reinforce course concepts. These assignments should prove useful to you as students as well as to me as an instructor. If you decide not to come to class or leave class early you risk the possibility that you will lose the points associated with these assessments.

Group Project:

This assignment will be explained as we move forward through the class.