

University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film
COMS 313 (L01): Communication Research Methods
Fall 2020: Sep. 9 to Dec. 9 (excluding Oct. 12 & Nov. 9-13)

Lectures: MW 9:30-10:45

(Lectures will be synchronous Zoom sessions on Mondays and Wednesdays)

IMPORTANT NOTE ON COURSE DELIVERY FOR FALL 2020:

This Fall 2020 course will be offered entirely online as part of the University's plan to ensure everyone's safety during the Covid-19 pandemic. Please read the outline carefully to see which course components will be offered synchronously (where you are expected to participate at the usual scheduled course time) and which components will be offered asynchronously (to be completed on your own time). Synchronous course sessions will normally be hosted on Zoom, a video-conferencing program. To access scheduled Zoom course sessions, go to D2L, click on the COMMUNICATION tab, and select Zoom 5 or 10 minutes before class is scheduled to begin.

If you will not be able to participate in scheduled synchronous class sessions owing to time differences, then you should arrange to take this course when it is offered in person in the future.

Note that the time indicated on course outlines for all timed quizzes and exams in CMCL, COMS, and FILM courses includes 50% extra time to allow for technical difficulties.

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| Instructor: | Maria Victoria Guglietti |
| Email: | mvguglie@ucalgary.ca |
| Web Page: | D2L (access via MyUofC portal) |
| Office Hours: | <i>Available via email anytime/ Zoom conference upon request.</i> |

Course Description

A critical introduction to communication research methods. Students will explore, practice, and critique selected quantitative and qualitative research methods and perspectives on the processes of knowledge production.

Additional Information

The weekly schedule of topics and readings can be found at the end of this outline or on D2L.

The class has a hybrid format. Narrated lectures will be posted **by Friday noon** to allow students to prepare for Zoom discussions, where the instructor will answer questions and discuss a case study that addresses the reading of the week. **Zoom discussions are considered an essential component of the class**, as they will provide students with training in critical thinking and analysis.

In order to make the Zoom discussion more manageable, **students will be divided in two groups (A and B) during the first week of class and, once again, on week 7.** Each

group will be assigned a meeting day (either Monday OR Wednesday) during the scheduled hours (9:30 to 10:45). Zoom sessions will be recorded and posted on D2L.

Students are responsible for reading and following all course and university policies discussed in this outline.

Objectives of the Course

By the end of this course, students should be able to identify and understand:

- the difference between scientific research and other practices of knowledge production,
- common research orientations and designs in social sciences,
- the strengths and limitations of common communication research methods
- the potential bias introduced by different method of sampling,
- common ethical implications of communication research projects,
- different types of qualitative and quantitative data analysis,
- the constitutive elements of a literature review and its role in the context of a research project,
- the components of a research proposal and the characteristics of a good proposal in the context of communication research.

Textbooks and Readings

Seale, C. (2018). *Researching society and culture* (4th ed.). London, U.K.: Sage.
(recommended)

Learning Technologies and Requirements & Policy on the Use of Electronic Communication Devices

This is an online course. In order to complete online (or blended) courses, University of Calgary students are required to have reliable access to the following technology:

- A computer with a supported operating system, as well as the latest security and malware updates, with current antivirus software enabled;
- Broadband internet connection, and a current and updated web browser;
- A webcam (built-in or external);
- A microphone and speaker (built-in or external), or headset with microphone.

Most current laptops will have a built-in webcam, speaker and microphone. If you need access to other software programs to complete assignments, your instructor will provide relevant information and links.

If you have technical difficulties, contact the university's IT department. For more information, see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/student-campus-services-information-technologies-it.html>

Instructors may arrange to record synchronous zoom class sessions for lesson capture; however, students are not to share recordings with others. Please carefully review the section on Instructor Copyright at the end of this outline.

Assignments and Evaluation

| Weight | Assessed Components | Due |
|--------|--|--|
| 24% | <p>Group Activities: in groups of max. 4 members, students will complete three problem solving activities that require the identification, critique and/or design of different aspects of the communication research process. Each activity will consist of 4 to 6 questions. The activities will be handed-in via dropbox submission.</p> <p>Group activities are open book. The instructions will be available approximately two weeks before the deadline.</p> | September 28; October 27 AND December 3 by 11:59PM (dropbox submission) |
| 5% | <p>TCPS Tutorial: Students are required to complete the TCPS2 online tutorial for ethics certification. The tutorial is found here: https://tcps2core.ca</p> <p>Students need to submit proof of completion (i.e. certificate of completion) by uploading a digital version of the certificate to the D2L dropbox assigned.</p> <p>Estimated duration of the tutorial: 2 hours.</p> | September 26 by 11:59PM (dropbox submission) |
| 10% | <p>Participation quizzes: open book- approx. 15 minutes- multiple choice</p> <p>Students will complete a brief D2L quiz five times during the term. Most quizzes will be multiple-choice though they may also include short answers or a short activity. The goal of this assignment is to provide students with an instrument for self-assessment. Quizzes will be posted approx. a week before their deadline.</p> <p>Each quiz will receive a Pass/Fail grade worth 2% of the final grade if students complete the full assignment on time. Each quiz has approx. 9 questions. Note that students cannot use their day of grace extension for this assignment.</p> | September 24, October 8, 29, November 19, AND December 5 by 11:59PM (D2L quiz) |
| 25% | <p>Take-home midterm analysis of academic research: open book, 2-3 pages long</p> <p>Students will complete a questionnaire that requires the identification and evaluation of research orientation, design, method and ethical implications of an academic study in the area of communication studies assigned by the instructor.</p> <p>The midterm analysis is a take-home assignment.</p> <p>Further instructions will be posted on D2L.</p> | November 3 by 11:59PM (dropbox submission) |
| 6% | <p>Final proposal's abstract: individual, 150/200 words</p> <p>Students will write the abstract of their final proposal's project (approx. 150/200 words). The abstract should include an overview of the proposed study, including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a brief introduction of the topic (why this topic, why now?) the research question sampling method method of data collection method of data analysis a brief explanation of how the findings will be applied (what can we do with the findings? Why are they important?) <p>The goal of this assignment is to provide students with timely feedback about the direction of their final proposal.</p> <p>Further instructions will be posted on D2L.</p> | November 17 by 11:59PM (dropbox submission) |
| 5% | <p>Show and tell presentation: individual, 5-7 minutes.</p> <p>Students will choose a communication research paper for an oral analysis. The components of the oral presentation are the following:</p> | Ongoing. Students will sign in for this |

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| | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A brief summary of the paper, 2. At least two connections between the paper and the material discussed in class. 3. A summary discussion of the rationale behind the student's choice (i.e. why the paper is a good, curious, bad or significant example of X topic). <p>Students may create a narrated ppt, video or audio file. Presentations must be uploaded to D2L.</p> <p>Further instructions will be posted in D2L.</p> | <p>presentation during the first week of class.</p> |
| 25% | <p>Final communication research proposal: individual, approx.5-6 pages.</p> <p>Students will complete a final research proposal, which will include all the components of a formal academic proposal as outlined in chapter 6 of the textbook (i.e. title, introduction, literature review, aims and objectives, method, data analysis, ethical implications, dissemination strategies, references in APA style).</p> <p>Further instructions will be posted in D2L.</p> | <p>December 14 (dropbox submission)</p> |

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: No

Note: You do not have to complete all the assignments and exams in order to receive a passing grade in this course. If you miss a required course component, please contact your instructor as soon as possible.

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Submission of Assignments

Please submit all assignments electronically by uploading them to the designated D2L dropbox (unless instructed otherwise in the assignment guidelines). Include your name and ID number on all assignments. It is your responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment and to ensure that you submit the proper version (particularly in courses requiring electronic submission).

Private information related to individual students is treated with the utmost regard by University of Calgary faculty. Student assignments will be accessible only by the authorized course faculty, and personal information is collected in accordance with the **Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act**. Please note that instructors may use audio or video recorded for lesson capture, assessment of student learning, and self-assessment of teaching practices.

Policy for Late Assignments

Assignments submitted after the deadline will receive a 0.

***The Day of Grace:** One day of grace is available to all students to cover unforeseen problems that prevent them from meeting a deadline such as computer crashes, vehicle breakdowns, lack of printer ink or money, unexpected family obligations, etc. Students may use this day ONLY ONCE during the semester. **Students using this day of grace must**

upload the assignment by 4:30 pm the next calendar day to avoid a late penalty and write “grace” on their subject line. It should be noted that assignments handed in this manner may be returned 1-2 classes later than those submitted on the due date.

Student Accommodations

Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS); SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit www.ucalgary.ca/access/. Students who require an accommodation based on a protected ground other than disability should communicate this need in writing to their Instructor. The full policy on Student Accommodations is available at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy.pdf>.

Students seeking accommodation for transient illnesses (e.g., the flu) or another legitimate reason should contact their instructors. Whenever possible, students should provide supporting documentation to support their request; however, instructors may not require that a medical note be presented. For the policy on supporting documentation the use of a statutory declaration, see Section M.1 of the *University Calendar*: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/m-1.html>. Also see FAQs for Students: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/registration/appeals/student-faq>

Expectations for Writing

Department policy directs that all written assignments and, to a lesser extent, written exam responses be assessed at least partly on writing skills. Writing skills include not only surface correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc.) but also general clarity and organization and proper documentation of research sources. For further information, please refer to the *University of Calgary Calendar* section on writing across the curriculum: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/e-2.html>

Grading & Department of Communication, Media and Film Grade Scale

The following table outlines the grade scale percentage equivalents used in the Department of Communication, Media and Film. Final grades are reported as letter grades. For components graded using percentages or numerical scores, those values will be used directly in calculating the final course grade, while for components graded using letter grades, the letter grades will be converted to the midpoint values listed in the final column of the table below in calculating the final course grade.

In this course, final grades are reported as letter grades. All assignments (group activities, quizzes, midterm analysis, show and tell presentation and final proposal) will receive a percentage grade.

| Grade Point Value | Description | Grade | Dept of CMF grade scale equivalents* | Letter grade % equivalent for calculations* |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------|------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| 4.00 | Outstanding performance | A+ | 96 - 100% | 98.0% |
| 4.00 | Excellent performance | A | 90 - 95.99% | 93.0% |
| 3.70 | Approaching excellent performance | A - | 85 - 89.99% | 87.5% |
| 3.30 | Exceeding good performance | B+ | 80 - 84.99% | 82.5% |
| 3.00 | Good performance | B | 75 - 79.99% | 77.5% |
| 2.70 | Approaching good performance | B- | 70 - 74.99% | 72.5% |

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|-------------|--|-----------|-------------|-------|
| 2.30 | Exceeding satisfactory performance | C+ | 65 - 69.99% | 67.5% |
| 2.00 | Satisfactory performance | C | 60 - 64.99% | 62.5% |
| 1.70 | Approaching satisfactory performance | C- | 55 - 59.99% | 57.5% |
| 1.30 | Marginal pass. Insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject | D+ | 53 - 54.99% | 54.0% |
| 1.00 | Minimal pass. Insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject | D | 50 - 52.99% | 51.5% |
| 0.00 | Failure. Did not meet course requirements. | F | 0 - 49.99% | 0% |

* Column 4: If percentages are used to calculate final grades, then grades falling within these ranges will be translated to the corresponding letter grades. Column 5: These percentage equivalents will be used for calculating final grades unless an alternative method of final grade calculation is outlined above.

Plagiarism

Using any source whatsoever without clearly documenting it is a serious academic offense. Consequences include failure on the assignment, failure in the course and possibly suspension or expulsion from the university. These requirements apply to all assignments and sources, including those in non-traditional formats such as Web pages or visual media.

You must document not only direct quotations but also paraphrases and ideas where they appear in your text. A reference list at the end is insufficient by itself. **In-text citations must be provided, and readers must be able to tell exactly where your words and ideas end and other people's words and ideas begin.** Wording taken directly from a source must be enclosed within quotation marks (or, for long quotations, presented in the format prescribed by the documentation style you are using). Paraphrased information must not follow the original wording and sentence structure with only slight word substitutions here and there.

For information on citation and documentation styles (MLA, APA, Chicago, IEEE, etc.), visit the Student Success Centre resource links at <https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success/writing-support> or the Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) Research and Citation Resources at https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/resources.html

If you need help with your writing or have questions about citing sources, please consult your instructor or visit the Student Success Centre, 3rd floor, Taylor Family Digital Library. To book an appointment, go to https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success?utm_source=ssc&utm_medium=redirect&utm_campaign=redirect

Instructor Intellectual Property & Copyright Legislation

Course materials created by the instructor (including course outlines, presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the instructor. These materials may NOT be reproduced, redistributed or copied without the explicit consent of the instructor. The posting of course materials to third party websites such as note-sharing sites without permission is prohibited. Sharing of extracts of these course materials with other students enrolled in the same course section and term may be allowed under fair dealing. Check with the instructor if you have any questions about sharing materials with classmates.

All students are required to read the University of Calgary policy on Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright (www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/acceptable-use-of-material-protected-by-copyright.pdf) and requirements of the copyright act (<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-42/index.html>) to ensure they are aware of the consequences

of unauthorized sharing of course materials (including instructor notes, electronic versions of textbooks etc.). Students who use material protected by copyright in violation of this policy may be disciplined under the Non-Academic Misconduct Policy.

Academic Misconduct

For information on academic misconduct and its consequences, please see the *University of Calgary Calendar* at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>

Research Ethics

Whenever you perform research with human participants, including surveys, interviews, or observations as part of your university studies, you are responsible for obtaining research ethics approval and for following university research ethics guidelines. In some cases, your instructors may apply for course-based research ethics approval for certain assignments, and in those cases, they must review and approve your research plans and supervise your research. For more information about your research ethics responsibilities, please see <https://arts.ucalgary.ca/research/arts-researchers/resources-researchers-and-instructors/ethics>

Deferrals of Course Work and Requests for Reappraisal

For university regulations and procedures related to deferrals of exams and course work, requests for reappraisals, and other matters, please see the relevant sections in the *University Calendar*: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/academic-regs.html>

Student Support Services and Resources

Please visit <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/registration/course-outlines> for information about student support services and resources, including Wellness and Mental Health Resources, Student Success programs and services, the Student Ombuds Office, the Student Union, and Safewalk.

For resources on D2L, visit <http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students>. IT support is available at itsupport@ucalgary.ca or by calling 403-220.5555.

Schedule of Lecture Topics and Readings

| | Mondays/Wednesdays Zoom session 9:30 – 10:45 |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Week 1 Sep. 9 | <p>Asynchronous components: Introduction to class and assignments (video) Unpacking research methods (recorded lecture).</p> <p>Synchronous component: Zoom discussion (everyone participates-September 9)</p> <p>Assignment: sign in for groups and show and tell presentation; familiarize with the D2L site</p> |
| Week 2 Sep. 14 & 16 | <p>Asynchronous components: Research and theory (readings and recorded lecture).</p> <p>Synchronous component: Zoom discussion (Group A: September 14; Group B: September 16)</p> <p>Assignment: group activity 1 posted</p> |
| Week 3 Sep. 21 & 23 | <p>Asynchronous components: Ethics (mandatory reading and recorded lecture).</p> <p>Midterm instructions are posted.</p> <p>Synchronous component: Zoom discussion (Group A: September 21; Group B: September 23)</p> <p>Assignment: TCPS workshop due September 26 @ 11:59PM Quiz 1 due by Sep. 24 @ 11:59PM</p> |

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| <p>Week 4 Sep. 28 & 30</p> | <p>Asynchronous components: Research question and research designs (readings and recorded lecture). Synchronous component: Zoom discussion (Group A: September 28; Group B: September 30) Assignment: group activity 1 due on September 28 @ 11:59PM (dropbox)</p> |
| <p>Week 5 Oct. 5 & 7</p> | <p>Asynchronous components: Sampling (mandatory reading and recorded lecture). Synchronous component: Zoom discussion (Group A: October 5; Group B: October 7) Quiz 2 due by Oct 8 @ 11:59PM</p> |
| <p>Week 6 Oct. 12 & 14</p> | <p>Asynchronous components: Surveys (mandatory reading and recorded lecture). Synchronous component: Zoom discussion (All participants meet on October 14th) Assignment: group activity 2 posted</p> |
| <p>Week 7 Oct. 19 & 21</p> | <p>Asynchronous components: Qualitative interviewing/ focus groups (mandatory reading and recorded lecture). Synchronous component: Zoom discussion (Group exchange: Group A: October 19; Group B: October 21)</p> |
| <p>Week 8 Oct. 26 & 28</p> | <p>Asynchronous components: Ethnography Synchronous component: Zoom discussion (Group A: October 26; Group B: October 28) Assignment: group activity 2 due Oct. 27 @ 11:59PM Quiz 3 due by Oct. 29 @ 11:59PM</p> |
| <p>Week 9 Nov. 2 & 4</p> | <p>Asynchronous components: Quantitative data (mandatory reading and recorded lecture). Synchronous component: Zoom discussion (Group A: November 2; Group B: November 4) Assignment: Midterm due Nov. 3 @ 11:59PM</p> |
| <p>Week 10 Nov 9 & 11</p> | <p>TERM BREAK- NO CLASSES</p> |
| <p>Week 11 Nov. 16 & 18</p> | <p>Asynchronous components: Literature review (mandatory reading and recorded lecture). Content and text analysis (mandatory reading and recorded lecture). Synchronous component: Zoom discussion (Group A: November 16; Group B: November 18) Assignment: proposal abstract due Nov. 17 @ 11:59PM group activity 3 posted Quiz 4 due by Nov. 19 @ 11:59PM</p> |
| <p>Week 12 Nov. 23 & 25</p> | <p>Asynchronous components: Thematic and discourse analysis Synchronous component: Zoom discussion (Group A: November 23; Group B: November 25)</p> |
| <p>Week 13 Nov. 30 & Dec. 2</p> | <p>Asynchronous components: Narrative and phenomenological analysis (mandatory reading and recorded lecture). Synchronous component: Zoom discussion (Group A: November 30; Group B: December 2) Assignment: group activity 3 due Dec 3 at 11:59PM quiz 5 due Dec. 5 @ 11:59PM</p> |
| <p>Week 14 Dec. 7 & 9</p> | <p>Asynchronous components: Visual analysis (mandatory reading and recorded lecture). Synchronous component: Zoom discussion (Group A: December 7; Group B: December 9) FINAL PROPOSAL SUBMISSION DUE DECEMBER 14 @ 11:59PM (dropbox)</p> |