University of Calgary

Department of Communication, Media and Film

COMS 313 (L01): Communication Research Methods

SUMMER 2023: June 26 to August 8 (excluding July 3 and August 7)

Lecture: MW 13:00 to 15:45 at TI 110

IMPORTANT NOTE FOR IN-PERSON COURSE DELIVERY

Note: **This course will be delivered in person**. If you are unable to participate in-class owing to time differences or geographical location, please arrange to take this course in a future term.

Instructor:	Amanda Zanco	
Office:	SS240/ SS250	
Email:	amanda.zanco@ucalgary.ca	
Web Page:	D2L (access via MyUofC portal)	
Office Hours:	Tuesdays 9:00-11:00 via Zoom by appointment through this link: https://amanda-zanco.youcanbook.me Wednesday 4:00-5:00 PM in person at SS250	

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. 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
- Qualitative and quantitative research design and orientations in social science research
- Methods of data collection and analysis and their strengths and limitations in communication research
- Ethical considerations in communication research
- Potential bias introduced by a different method of sampling
- The political underpinnings of various methods
- Key vocabulary and key concepts that pertain to methods and methodology
- How to critique the limitations of scholarly studies
- Constitutive elements of a literature review and its role in a research project
- How to develop a proposal and design a communication 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. (Required Textbook) available on U of C Bookstore (digital copy is acceptable).

Learning Technologies and Requirements

In order to complete 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), and a microphone and speaker (built-in or external) or headset with microphone (for online synchronous courses only).

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 IT support services. See https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/student-campus-services-information-technologies-it.html

Policy on the Use of Electronic Communication Devices

Please familiarize yourself with the University's policy on the recording of lectures, which is outlined at https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/e-6.html, and carefully review the section on Instructor Copyright at the end of this outline.

Assignments and Evaluation

Weight	Assessed Components	Due
10%	Participation and engagement in class activities	Ongoing
	The instructor will keep track of attendance and activities throughout the term. The participation assessment will be based on the quality and frequency of verbal participation in class discussions and your contribution to in-class activities.	
	Class Engagement Students are expected to contribute to class discussions and bring insightful, consistent, and informed comments based on the week's topics/readings.	
	In-class activities This component is the student's contributions to in-class structured activities. The instructor will email students with details if the activity needs preparation and/or access to other materials.	
	More information about how the participation grade will be assessed will be posted on D2L.	
5%	Completion of TCPS2 CORE Tutorial (online)	
	Students will be responsible for completing the U of C research ethics training, which is an online tutorial created in accordance with Canadian Tri-Council Research Agencies. The tutorial has eight modules and will take between two and three hours to complete.	July 5 at 11:59 pm on D2L dropbox
	Please submit to the D2L Dropbox the screenshot of your completion certificate to receive credit.	

	TCPS2 CORE Ethics Tutorial is available here:	
	https://tcps2core.ca/welcome	
	<u></u>	
	To be done individually	
20%	Quizzes	OUIZ #4 habs 40
	There are 2 multiple-choice quizzes, each available for 24 hours on D2L. Class time is allotted for students to do the test in the classroom if they wish. All tests are as follows:	QUIZ #1 - July 12 (available online on D2L from July 12- 1 pm to July 13- 1 pm)
	Open book	QUIZ #2- July 26
	To be done individually	(available online on
	Timed, and once open, must be completed in one attempt	D2L from July 26- 1 pm to July 27- 1 pm)
	For each test, the instructor will be in the classroom during regular class hours for students who wish to bring their laptops and complete the test there	pin to daily 27 - 1 pini)
	The instructor will be monitoring emails closely during regular class hours	
	Quiz #1 (10%) on July 12	
	10-15 multiple-choice questions	
	 Covers materials from Week 1, 2, and 3 	
	 Is timed for 30 minutes, but students will have 45 minutes to complete in case of technical difficulties 	
	 Quiz will be open on D2L for 24 hours (from July 12 at 1 pm to July 13 at 1 pm). 	
	Quiz #2 (10%) on July 26	
	10-15 multiple-choice questions	
	Covers materials from Week 4 and 5	
	 Is timed for 30 minutes, but students will have 45 minutes to complete in case of technical difficulties 	
	 Quiz will be open on D2L for 24 hours (from July 26 at 1 pm to July 27 at 1 pm) 	
20%	Padlet for Research Methods	July 26 at 11:59 on
	Students throughout the term will be required to keep an online "journal" of communication research methods. This assignment also aims to encourage students to engage with the course material in a different format (showing their participation beyond the lecture activities and discussions). Also, students can design their Padlet as an easy-to-access guide to research methods including sources, ideas, examples, and links, which will be useful when conducting research communication projects.	D2L dropbox
	Students need to create one entry for each Lecture (#1, #2, #3, #4, #6, #7, #8). No entries for class #5 (quiz), #9 (quiz), and #10 (after assignment due).	
	At the end of each class, the instructor will provide the following:	
	Reflection questions about the lecture topic	
	Ideas from discussion topics that can be expanded on	
	Examples of case studies to engage in a quick analysis	
	Students may choose between these options and write their entry, which must be 200-300 words (1 or 2 paragraphs).	
	Further information about this assignment will be provided in class. *To be done individually*	
10%	Research Project Outline	July 19 at 11:59 pm
	This assignment aims to get students thinking about their final paper and reflecting on how a media artifact can be studied through different methods and perspectives.	on D2L dropbox

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	Students will choose a media artifact that they are interested in studying; then they will write two research questions, propose two different research methods (one for each question), and think about the potential limitations of each method of studying the chosen media example. At the end of the document, students must identify which of the two methods they will use in the final research project. The instructor will provide students with feedback about how to move forward to the Final Research Project Submission.	
	Further instruction will be provided in class and on D2L under Content > Assignment Docs > "Research Project Outline."	
	To be done in groups of 2 to 4 students Note: The name of group members needs to be submitted to the Instructor by July 5 via email. The group will be working together for three assignments: (1) Research Project Outline, (2) Final Research Project, and (3) Presentation.	
	Group members will receive the same grade on assignments; however, the instructor reserves the right to award differential grades based on group peer reviews or information indicating significantly uneven contributions by group members. The instructor will closely monitor the group members' participation by asking each group member to report their contribution to each assignment individually. More information regarding groups will be provided in class.	
10%	Presentation Research Project	August 1st slides
	On the last day of the course, groups will present their Research Proposal to the class in a 10-minute presentation (including PowerPoint/Canva) + extra 5 min for a Q&A section.	deposited at 11:59 on D2L dropbox August 2nd in-
	Further instruction will be provided in class and on D2L under Content > Assignment Docs > " Presentation Research Project"	class presentations
	To be done in a group of 2 to 4 students (same group for: Research Project Outline, Final Research Project, and Presentation)	
	Group members will receive the same grade on assignments; however, the instructor reserves the right to award differential grades based on group peer reviews or information indicating significantly uneven contributions by group members. The instructor will closely monitor the group members' participation by asking each group member to report their contribution to each assignment individually. More information regarding groups will be provided in class.	
25%	Final Research Project	August 9 at 11:59
	Drawing on course material, students will expand on one of the two approaches presented on their Research Project Outline and propose a research project for the chosen contemporary media artifact.	pm on the D2L dropbox
	The Research Proposal is to be 7-8 double-spaced pages of text and include the following sections: (1) Title, (2) Abstract, (3) Background/Introduction, (4) Research question, (5) Brief Literature review, (6) Aims and objectives, (7) Data collection, (8) Data analysis, (9) Ethical considerations, (10) Dissemination, and (11) References.	
	Further instruction will be provided in class and on D2L under Content > Assignment Docs > " Final Research Project"	
	To be done in a group of 2 to 4 students (same group for: Research Project Outline, Final Research Project, and Presentation)	
	Group members will receive the same grade on assignments; however, the instructor reserves the right to award differential grades based on group peer reviews or information indicating significantly uneven contributions by group members. The instructor will closely monitor the group members' participation by asking each group member to report their contribution to each assignment individually. More information regarding groups will be provided in class.	

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.

Submission of Assignments

Please submit all assignments by uploading them to the designated D2L dropbox. Include your name and ID number on all assignments. Be sure to keep a copy of each submitted assignment and to submit the proper version.

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 recording for lesson capture, assessment of student learning, and self-assessment of teaching practices.

Policy for Late Assignments

Assignments submitted after the deadline may be penalized with the loss of 5% or a partial letter grade (e.g.: A- to B+) for each day late.

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. For the full policy on Student Accommodations, see https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/student-accommodation-policy

Students seeking accommodation for transient illnesses (e.g., the flu) or another legitimate reason should contact their instructors

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, letter grades will be used for written assignments (e.g., Research Outline, Padlet Journal, Final Paper and Presentations), while percentage or numerical grades will be used for quizzes and participation grades.

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	Α	90 - 95.99%	93.0%
3.70	Approaching excellent performance	Α-	85 - 89.99%	87.5%
3.30	Exceeding good performance	B+	80 - 84.99%	82.5%
3.00	Good performance	В	75 - 79.99%	77.5%
2.70	Approaching good performance	B-	70 - 74.99%	72.5%
2.30	Exceeding satisfactory performance	C+	65 - 69.99%	67.5%
2.00	Satisfactory performance	С	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, A.I. content generators, or visual media.

Students must adhere to the instructor's course policy regarding the use of A.I. generated content in course work. Unsanctioned use of A.I.-generated content in course work is not permitted and will be reported as academic misconduct.

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, consult your instructor or visit the Student Success Centre, Taylor Family Digital Library. To book an appointment, go to https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success/writing-support

Instructor Intellectual Property & Copyright Legislation

Course materials created by the instructor (including lectures, 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.

To ensure they are aware of the consequences of unauthorized sharing of course materials (including instructor notes & electronic versions of textbooks), all students are required to read the *University of Calgary Policy on Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright* at https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/acceptable-use-material-protected-copyright-policy and the requirements of the *Copyright Act* (https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-42/index.html). 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 deferral of term work, see https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-7.html

For information about deferrals of final examinations, see https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-6.html

For information about requesting a reappraisal of course work or of a final grade, see https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/i.html

Student Support Services and Resources

Please see 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, Zoom, Yuja, etc., see https://elearn.ucalgary.ca/resources-for-students/. (Find the topic menu under the icon to the left of the ELEARN banner.)

Schedule of Lecture Topics and Readings

Week/ Topics	Mondays	Wednesdays	Assignments deadlines		
PART ONE - INTRO TO COMMUNICATION RESEARCH METHODS					
Week 1 Introduction to Communication Research Methods Course	June 26 (Lecture #1) Part I (1:00- 2:15) Introduction to Communication Research Methods Course Break: 15 minutes Part II (2:30-3:45) Starting Out in Researching Society and Culture Reading: No readings	June 28 (Lecture #2) Part I (1:00- 2:15): Research and Theory Research Orientations & Research Designs Break: 15 minutes Part II (2:30-3:45) Research Ethics + Activity Readings: Chapter 3- Research and Theory Chapter 4- Ethics and Social Research Chapter 6- Research Questions and proposals All these readings are from the textbook: Seale, C. (2018). Researching society and culture (4th ed.). London, U.K.: Sage.	No assignments are due this week. Recommended: Watch the documentary "Quiet Rage: The Documentary," available on D2L for the in-class activity on June 28		
	PART TWO- GENERA	TING/COLLECTING DATA			
Week 2 Quantitative and Qualitative Sampling	July 3 NO CLASS Canada Day: July 01 (observed on Monday, July 3)	July 5 (Lecture #3) Part I (1:00- 2:15) Survey Research: Interviews and Questionnaires Break: 15 minutes Part II (2:30-3:45) Qualitative Interview and Focus Group Readings: Chapter 10- Questionnaires and interviews Chapter 12- Qualitative Interviewing Chapter 13- Focus Group All these readings are from the textbook: Seale, C. (2018). Researching society and culture (4th ed.). London, U.K.: Sage.	TCPS2 CORE Tutorial due July 5 (Wednesday) at 11:59 pm on D2L dropbox)		
	July 10 (Lecture #4) Part I (1:00- 2:15) Ethnography	July 12 (Lecture #5) QUIZ #1	QUIZ #1 (open from July 12- 1 pm to July 13- 1 pm on D2L)		

Week 3	Archival/Historical Research	*Covers lecture material and		
Quantitative and Qualitative Sampling	Break: 15 minutes Part II (2:30-3:45) Digital Social Research Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Methods Readings: Chapter 14- Doing Ethnography Chapter 16- Doing historical and documentary research Chapter 18- Digital Social Research All these readings are from the textbook: Seale, C. (2018). Researching society and culture (4th ed.). London, U.K.: Sage	readings from Weeks 1, 2 and 3* (Quiz #1 will be available online on D2L but class time will be allocated for those who want to take the quiz in-class)		
		COINC ANALYSIS		
	PART THREE- L	DOING ANALYSIS	Γ	
	July 17 (Lecture #6)	July 19 (Lecture #7)	Research Project Outline	
	Part I (1:00- 2:15) Quantitative Analysis	Part I (1:00- 2:15) Visual Methodologies	due July 19 (Wednesday at 11:59 pm on D2L dropbox)	
Week 4	Break: 15 minutes	Break: 15 minutes		
Doing Analysis	Part II (2:30-3:45) Content and Text Analysis	Part II (2:30-3:45) Thematic and Discourse Analysis		
	Readings: Chapter 19- Preparing data for statistical analysis Chapter 23- Secondary Analysis Chapter 24- Content and text analysis	Readings: Chapter 26- Visual analysis Chapter 25- Finding themes in qualitative data Chapter 27- Discourse analysis		
	All these readings are from the textbook: Seale, C. (2018). Researching society and culture (4th ed.). London, U.K.: Sage	All these readings are from the textbook: Seale, C. (2018). Researching society and culture (4th ed.). London, U.K.: Sage.		
PART TH	REE- DOING ANALYSIS	PART FOUR- DECOLONIZING METHODS		
Week 5	July 24 (Lecture #8) Part I (1:00- 2:15) Conversation, Phenomenological and	July 26 (Lecture #9) QUIZ#2	QUIZ #2 (open from July 26- 1 pm to July 27- 1pm on D2L)	
Doing Analysis Through Critical	Narrative Analysis Break: 15 minutes	*Covers lecture material and readings from Weeks 3 and 4 *	Padlet due July 26 (Wednesday at 11:59 pm on D2L dropbox)	
Lenses	Part II (2:30-3:45) Bringing all Together Through Critical Lenses: Qualitative and Quantitative Research in Communication Studies Decolonizing Methods: Participation and Research-Creation	(Quiz #2 will be available online on D2L but class time will be allocated for those who want to take the quiz in-class)		
	Readings (required): Chapter 28- Analyzing conversation Chapter 29- Narrative analysis and interpretative phenomenological analysis			
	All these readings are from the textbook: Seale, C. (2018). Researching society and culture (4th ed.). London, U.K.: Sage			
	Additional readings (recommended-available on D2L):			

	Intervention, Analysis and 'Family Resemblances.'" Canadian Journal of Communication 37, no. 1 (2012): 5–26. doi:10.22230/cjc.2012v37n1a2489 Carla Rice, Andrea LaMarre, Nadine Changfoot & Patty Douglas (2020) Making spaces: multimedia storytelling as reflexive, creative praxis, Qualitative Research in Psychology, 17:2, 222-239 PART FIVE- WRITING, P	RESENTING, REFLECTING	
Week 6 Conducting a Research Project + Presentations	July 31 (Lecture #10) Part I (1:00- 2:15) Literature Review Writing a Research Project Break: 15 minutes Part II (2:30-3:45) Giving Oral Presentations Workshop Final Paper Doubts section + Time for groups to get together Readings: Chapter 5- Doing a literature review Chapter 30- Writing a research report Chapter 31- Giving oral presentations All these readings are from the textbook: Seale, C. (2018). Researching society and culture (4th ed.). London, U.K.: Sage + Come prepared with questions regarding final paper	Aug 2 (Lecture #11) Presentation of Research Proposals *List of groups and presentation chronogram will be posted on D2L*	Presentation Slides August 1st- Tuesday at 11:59 pm on D2L dropbox August 2nd in-class presentations
Week 7 Wrap Up	August 7 NO CLASS	August 9 NO CLASS	Final Project August 9 (Wednesday at 11:59 pm on D2L dropbox)
	Alberta Heritage Day	Last day of class is August 8	