

University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film

Communication and Media Studies COMS 313 L01
Communication Research Methods

Winter 2017

Mon., Jan. 9 – Mon April 10 (excluding Feb. 20)

Class Time Mondays 12:00-2:45

Instructor: Dr. Lisa Stowe
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Web Page: D2L available through MyUofC portal
Office Hours: Tuesdays/Wednesdays 11-12

Course Description

This course provides students with an introduction to the concepts, theories, methods and tools used in communication studies research. Through critical reading and writing as well as active learning that encourages a hands on approach to research methods, students will become both consumers and producers in their own research process. As consumers, students will learn about the various theoretical and methodological perspectives that can be applied to communications research. As producers, they will become familiar with the various research methods (including surveys, content and discourse analysis, interviewing, focus groups, ethnography) that can be applied to a wide array of research questions on a number of communications research topics.

Objectives of the Course

To understand how research methods are used in the field of communications and how communications research applies to various social issues and topics.

To critically reflect on the challenges and opportunities of various qualitative and quantitative research methods.

To recognize ethically sound, rigorous research methodologies and research design in scholarly articles.

To reflectively evaluate the importance of research ethics in the research process.

To understand how important scholarly research is to the research process and to learn how to write a thematically cohesive literature review.

To develop knowledge and practical skills for proposing and designing research.

To learn how to code and interpret collected data.

To learn in a safe and collaborative environment.

Textbooks and Readings

Seale, C. (Ed.) (2012). *Researching Society and Culture*. London, UK: Sage
Other class readings will be posted in D2L.

Internet and electronic communication device information

Laptops and other computer devices are welcomed in the course and are to be used only for class activities and note taking. Please be respectful of your fellow classmates while using them.

Assignments and Evaluation

Weight	Course components	Due
30%	2 Reading Tests (worth 15% each) Time: 1.5 hours each	Feb 13 and March 27
5%	Ethics Certification Each student will complete the online TCPS tutorial during class time. Time: 2 hours	Jan 23
20%	Literature Review Assignment Individually, students will compile an annotated bibliography and develop a thematically cohesive literature review using at least 6-8 sources related to a research question on a topic of their choice. Length: 1200 words	Feb 6
15%	Research Methods Presentation In groups, students will sign up to present on a chosen research method. 3-4 discussion questions should be circulated to the rest of the class ahead of time. Length: 30-45 minutes of presentation including facilitation of class discussion. Groups must also submit presentation notes and discussion questions to the instructor.	Ongoing
10%	Research Proposal Presentation In their research groups, students will present their research proposals outlining and explaining the choices they made regarding research questions, methodology, literature review, etc. Length: 15- 20 minutes	April 3 and 10
20%	Research Proposal	April 10

	<p>Student groups will submit a research proposal on a topic and research design of their choice. The proposal will include the elements of a formal academic proposal (introduction to topic, significance of research, research questions, literature review, research design, task chart, reference list and appendices).</p> <p>Length: 2000-2500 words plus appendices</p>	
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Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: No

Note:

All assignments and exams must be completed or a course grade of F may be assigned at the discretion of the instructor.

Submission of Assignments: Please hand in your essays directly to the designated dropboxes in D2L.

Please include your name and ID number on all assignments, and be prepared to provide picture ID to pick up assignments or look at marked final exams in SS 320. Personal information is collected in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act*. For more information, see <http://www.ucalgary.ca/secretariat/privacy>

Note: It is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment and to ensure that the proper version is submitted (particularly in courses requiring electronic submission). Including a version date in your file name may be useful.

Policy for Late Assignments

Assignments submitted after the deadline may be penalized with the loss of a 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 will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For additional information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit www.ucalgary.ca/access/.

Students who require an accommodation in relation to their coursework 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) should contact their instructors. Whenever possible, students should advise their instructors in advance if they will be missing quizzes, presentations, in-class assignments, or group meetings.
- When accommodations are granted, they may take forms other than make-up tests or assignments. For example, the weight of a missed grade may be added to another assignment or test.
- For information on Deferrals of Final Exams and Term Work, see sections G.6 and G.7 of the *University Calendar* at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g->

[6.html](#) and <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-7.html>

Writing Skills Statement

Department policy directs that all written assignments (including, to a lesser extent, written exam responses) will 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. Sources used in research papers must be properly documented. If you need help with your writing, you may use the Writing Centre. Visit the website for more details: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>

Grading & Grade Scale of the Department of Communication, Media and Film

Final grades are reported as letter grades. Presentations will be recorded as a letter grade while all other assignments will be designated a numerical grade.

The following chart outlines the grade scale percentage equivalents used in the Department of Communication, Media and Film. In calculating final grades in this course, letter grades will be converted to the midpoint of the percentage range, as shown in the final column of the table below.

Grade Point Value	Description	Grade	Dept of CMF grade scale equivalents*	Letter grade % equivalent for calculations* *
4.00	Outstanding	A+	96 - 100%	98.0%
4.00	Excellent—superior performance, showing comprehensive understanding of subject matter.	A	90 - 95.99%	93.0%
3.70		A -	85 - 89.99%	87.5%
3.30		B+	80 - 84.99%	82.5%
3.00	Good--clearly above average performance with knowledge of subject matter generally complete.	B	75 - 79.99%	77.5%
2.70		B-	70 - 74.99%	72.5%
2.30		C+	65 - 69.99%	67.5%
2.00	Satisfactory—basic understanding of the subject matter.	C	60 - 64.99%	62.5%
1.70		C-	55 - 59.99%	57.5%
1.30	Minimal pass—marginal performance; generally insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject	D+	53 - 54.99%	54.0%
1.00		D	50 - 52.99%	51.5%
0.00	Fail – unsatisfactory performance or failure to meet course requirements.	F	0- 49.99%	0%

* If percentages are used to calculate final grades, then grades falling within these ranges will be translated to the corresponding letter grades.

** 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.

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. These requirements apply to all assignments and sources, including those in non-traditional formats such as Web pages or visual media.

For information on citation and documentation styles (including APA, Chicago, IEEE, MLA, and others), visit the links provided at <https://ucalgary.ca/ssc/resources/writing-support/436>. If you have questions about how to document sources, please consult your instructor or the Writing Centre (3rd Floor TFDL, <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>).

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 (e.g., surveys, interviews, or observations) as part of your university studies, you are responsible for following university research ethics guidelines. Your instructor must review and approve your research plans and supervise your research. For more information about your research ethics responsibilities, see <http://arts.ucalgary.ca/research/resources/ethics>

Important information, services, and contacts for students

For information about . . .	Visit or contact . . .
ARTS PROGRAM ADVISING (ASC)	SS 102 403-220-3580 artsads@ucalgary.ca
CAMPUS SECURITY <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Calgary Police Service• Emergency Text Messaging• Emergency Evacuation & Assembly• Safewalk Program	http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/ 403-220-5333 403-266-1234 Emergency: call 911 http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/textmessage http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints If you feel uncomfortable walking alone at any time, call Campus Security for an escort (220-5333). For more information, see http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/
DESIRE2LEARN (D2L) Support	http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT help line 	403-220-5555 or itsupport@ucalgary.ca
STUDENT SUCCESS CENTRE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing Support Services • Student Services Mobile App 	http://ucalgary.ca/ssc http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support http://ucalgary.ca/currentstudents
STUDENTS' UNION CONTACTS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty of Arts Reps • Student Ombudsman 	https://www.su.ucalgary.ca/about/who-we-are/elected-officials/ http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds
SU WELLNESS CENTRE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counselling Services • Health Services • Distress centre 24/7 CRISIS LINE • Online resources and tips 	403-210-9355 (MSC 370), M-F, 9:00–4:30 pm http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/counselling http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/health 403-266-HELP (4357) http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/healthycampus <p>If you're concerned about a friend or your own well-being, it is important to seek help early. Call or visit the SU Wellness Centre or the 24-hour crisis line.</p>

Schedule of Lecture Topics and Readings

Date	Topic	Activities	Readings and Assignments Due
Monday, Jan 9	Introduction to the class Course Objectives What is research? Intro to philosophical paradigms and theoretical perspectives.	Choosing groups	Chapter Three: Silverman, D. (2012). Research and theory. In Seale, C. (Ed.), Researching society and culture (pp 30-44). London, UK: Sage.
Monday, Jan 16	What are the contexts of research? What are good research questions and good research design?	Chapter Discussion Questions	Chapter Four: Silverman, D. (2012). Research and policy. In Seale, C. (Ed.), Researching society and culture (pp 46-57). London, UK: Sage. Chapter Seven: Kelly, M. (2012). Research questions and proposals. In Seale, C. (Ed.), Researching society and culture (pp 98-117). London, UK: Sage.
Monday, Jan 23	Why are ethics in research important? Ethics and Social Research	Complete the TCPS 2 Tutorial Course on Research Ethics http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/eng/education/tutorial-didacticiel/ Brainstorming a research project	Chapter Five: Ali, S & Kelly, M. (2012). Ethics and Social Research. In Seale, C. (Ed.), Researching society and culture (pp 59-76). London, UK: Sage. Complete the TCPS 2 Tutorial Course on Research Ethics (5%) http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/eng/education/tutorial-didacticiel/

Monday, Jan 30	What is a Literature Review?	Locating sources and the annotated bibliography. Learning how to organize a literature review thematically.	Chapter Six: Branley, D. (2012). Doing a literature review. In Seale, C. (Ed.), Researching society and culture (pp 78-89). London, UK: Sage.
Monday, Feb 6	What is data and how do I collect it? Structured Methods: Interviews, Questionnaires and Observation	Developing an interview script or questionnaire.	Literature Review Assignment Due: 20% Chapter Eleven: Phellas, C.N., Bloch, A & Seale, C. (2012). Structured methods: Interviews, questionnaires, and observation. In Seale, C. (Ed.), Researching society and culture (pp 182-205). London, UK: Sage.
Monday, Feb 13	What is data and how do I collect it? Ethnography	Exploring the mundane, everyday spaces and social phenomena, using a variety of qualitative methods.	First part of class: Individual Reading Test #1 (15%) Chapter Fourteen: Walsh, D. (2012). Doing ethnography. In Seale, C. (Ed.), Researching society and culture (pp 246-261). London, UK: Sage.
Monday Feb 20	No class: Reading Break	No class: Reading Break	No class: Reading Break
Monday, Feb 27	What is data and how do I collect it? Qualitative Interviewing and Focus Groups		Chapter Twelve: Byrne, B (2012). Qualitative interviewing. In Seale, C. (Ed.), Researching society and culture (pp 206-226). London, UK: Sage. Chapter Thirteen: Tonkiss, F. (2012). Focus groups. In Seale, C. (Ed.), Researching society and culture (pp 228-244). London, UK: Sage.
Monday, March 6	What is content analysis?		Chapter Twenty-Six: Seale, C. & Tonkiss, F. (2012). Content and comparative keyword analysis. In Seale, C. (Ed.), Researching society and culture (pp. 459-478). London, UK: Sage.
Monday, March 13	What is visual and discourse analysis?		Chapter Sixteen: Ali, S. (2012). Visual analysis. In Seale, C. (Ed.), Researching society and culture (pp. 283-301). London, UK: Sage. Chapter Twenty-Three: Tonkiss, F. (2012). Discourse analysis. In Seale, C. (Ed.), Researching society and culture (pp. 405-423). London, UK: Sage.
Monday, March 20	How do I code qualitative data?	Identifying patterns and themes from qualitative data.	Chapter Twenty-One: Rivas, C. (2012) Coding and analyzing qualitative data. In Seale, C. (Ed.), Researching society and culture (pp 366-392). London, UK: Sage.
Monday, March 27	How is a research report structured? How do I give an effective presentation?		First part of class: Individual Reading Test #2 (15%) Chapter Twenty-Eight: Rivas, C. (2012). Writing a research report. In Seale, C. (Ed.), Researching society and culture (pp. 497-517). London, UK: Sage. Chapter Twenty-Nine: Silverman, D. (2012). Giving oral presentations. In Seale, C. (Ed.), Researching society and culture (pp. 518-527). London, UK: Sage.

Monday, April 3	Class Presentations		Research Presentation Due 10%
Monday, April 10	Class Presentations		Research Presentation Due 10% Research Proposal Due 20%