

**University of Calgary**  
**Department of Communication, Media and Film**  
**COMS 313 (L01): Communication Research Methods**

**WINTER 2023: January 10 to April 11 (excluding Feb. 21, 23, 24 AND April 7)**

**Lecture: TuTh 2:00PM to 2:50PM**  
Lab 1 F 9:00-9:50; Lab 2 F 10-10:50

<b>Instructor:</b>	Maria Victoria Guglietti
<b>Office:</b>	SS 220
<b>Email:</b>	mvguglie@ucalgary.ca
<b>Office Hours:</b>	Friday 9:30-11:30 (Zoom or in person) or by appointment

### **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.

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.

Students should also be able to

- analyze and evaluate communication research papers,
- design a communication research project.

### **Textbooks and Readings**

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

**(recommended)**

Additional material will be posted on D2L.

## 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

The use of smartphones or other electronic devices is strictly limited to activities connected with the class.

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
30%	<p><b>Group Activities:</b> in groups of max. 5 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, worth 10% of the final grade, will consist of 4 to 6 questions. The activities will be handed-in via dropbox submission.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Group activities are open book. The instructions will be available approximately two weeks before the deadline.</p>	Feb. 9th, Mar. 9th AND April 4th by 11:59PM (dropbox submission)
5%	<p><b>TCPS Tutorial:</b> Students are required to complete the TCPS2 online tutorial for ethics certification. The tutorial is found here: <a href="https://tcps2core.ca">https://tcps2core.ca</a></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>	Jan. 26th by 11:59PM (dropbox submission)
25%	<p><b>Take-home midterm analysis of academic research:</b> 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</p>	Feb. 17th by 11:59PM (dropbox submission)

	academic study in the area of communication studies assigned by the instructor. <b>The midterm analysis is a take-home assignment.</b> Further instructions will be posted on D2L.	
10%	<b>Final proposal's abstract: individual, 200/300 words</b> Students will write the abstract of their final proposal's project (approx. 200/300 words). The abstract should include an overview of the proposed study, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. a brief introduction of the topic (why this topic, why now?)</li> <li>b. the research question</li> <li>c. sampling method</li> <li>d. method of data collection</li> <li>e. method of data analysis</li> <li>f. a brief explanation of how the findings will be applied (what can we do with the findings? Why are they important?)</li> </ul> The goal of this assignment is to provide students with timely feedback about the direction of their final proposal. Further instructions will be posted on D2L.	Mar. 21 <sup>st</sup> by 11:59PM (dropbox submission)
30%	<b>Final communication research proposal:</b> individual, approx. 6-7 pages. Students will complete a final research proposal, which will include all the components of a formal academic proposal (i.e. title, introduction, literature review, aims and objectives, method, data analysis, ethical implications, dissemination strategies, references in APA style).  Further instructions will be posted in D2L.	April 14 <sup>th</sup> by 11:59PM (dropbox submission)

**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, except for the final research art project which will be presented in class, 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 a partial letter grade (e.g.: A- to B+) for each day late. An assignment received two days after the deadline will receive an automatic 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 11:59 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/](http://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, final grades are reported as letter grades. All assignments will receive a percentage grade.

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

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

	<b>Tuesdays</b> 2:00-2:50AM PF 118	<b>Thursdays</b> 2:00-2:50AM PF 118	<b>Fridays</b> Tutorial SA109
<b>Week 1</b> Jan. 10, 12 (L) &13(T)	<b>Topic:</b> Introduction to class and assignments.  <b>Assignment:</b> sign in for groups.	<b>Topic:</b> Research and theory	<b>NO TUTORIAL</b>
<b>Week 2</b> Jan. 17 &19 (L) 20 (T)	<b>Topic:</b> Ethics	<b>Topic:</b> Ethics	<b>Topic:</b> Reading communication research

<b>Week 3</b> Jan. 24 & 26 (L) 27 (T)	<b>Topic:</b> Research designs	<b>Topic:</b> Research questions  <b>Assignment:</b> TCPS workshop due @ 11:59PM	<b>Topic</b> Analysis of a paper (practice activity)- Introduction group activity 1
<b>Week 4</b> Jan. 31 & Feb. 2 (L) 3 (T)	<b>Topic:</b> Sampling methods	<b>Topic:</b> Sampling methods <b>Introduction midterm instructions</b>	<b>Topic:</b> Group activity 1
<b>Week 5</b> Feb. 7 & 9 (L) 10 (T)	<b>Topic:</b> Data collection- Surveys	<b>Topic:</b> Data collection- Surveys  <b>Assignment:</b> Group activity 1 due by 11:59PM (D2L)	<b>Topic:</b> Surveys- Introduction group activity 2
<b>Week 6</b> Feb. 14 & 16 (L) 17 (T)	<b>Topic:</b> <b>Sustainability office talk</b>	<b>Topic:</b> Quantitative data analysis	<b>NO TUTORIAL TIME DEDICATED TO MIDTERM</b>  <b>Assignment: midterm due by Feb. 18<sup>th</sup> at 11:59PM (D2L)</b>
<b>Week 7</b> Feb. 21 & 23 (L) 24 (T)	<b>READING WEEK</b>		
<b>Week 8</b> Feb. 28 & Mar. 2 (L) 3 (T)	<b>Topic:</b> Quantitative data analysis	<b>Topic:</b> Data collection: Qualitative interviewing/ focus groups.	<b>Topic:</b> group activity 2
<b>Week 9</b> Mar.7 & 9 (L) 10 (T)	<b>Topic:</b> Ethnography	<b>Topic:</b> Ethnography/ Introduction final project instructions  <b>Assignment:</b> group activity 2 due @ 11:59PM	<b>Topic:</b> Developing a communication. Research question/ Abstract analysis
<b>Week 10</b> Mar. 14 & 16 (L) 17 (T)	<b>Topic:</b> Data collection and analysis: Content and text analysis	<b>Topic:</b> Q&A abstract development	<b>Topic:</b> group activity 3
<b>Week 11</b> Mar. 21 & 23 (L) 24 (T)	<b>Topic:</b> Literature review  <b>Assignment:</b> proposal abstract due @ 11:59PM	<b>Topic:</b> Qualitative data analysis: Visual and written thematic analysis	<b>Topic:</b> group activity 3
<b>Week 12</b> Mar. 28 & 30 (L) 31 (T)	<b>Topic:</b> Qualitative data analysis: Discourse analysis	<b>Topic:</b> Qualitative data analysis: Narrative analysis	<b>Topic:</b> group activity 3/ final proposal development
<b>Week 13</b> April 4 & 6 (L) 7 (T)	<b>Topic:</b> Qualitative data analysis: Phenomenological analysis  <b>Assignment:</b> group activity 3 due by 11:59PM	<b>Topic:</b> Q&A final proposal	<b>NO CLASS- GOOD FRIDAY</b>

<b>Week 14</b> April 11 (L)	<b>Topic-</b> Q&A final proposal	<b>NO CLASS</b> Time dedicated to proposal writing- Instructor available for office hours	<b>FINAL PROPOSAL SUBMISSION DUE</b> <b>April 15<sup>th</sup> by 11:59PM</b> <b>(D2L)</b>
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