

University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film
Communication Studies (COMS) 413 – Seminar 01
Advanced Research Methods
Winter 2017

Start & end dates (& dates excluded)
Mo., Jan. 9 – Mo., April 10 (excluding Feb. 20)

Lectures, days, and time; Tutorials, days, and time
Mo. 2:00-4:45

Instructor: Richard Hawkins
Office: SS 306
Office Phone: 403 220 6548
E-Mail: rhawkins@ucalgary.ca
Office Hours: Mondays 10:00 – 11:00, Tuesdays 10:00 – 11:00, or by appointment

Course Description

The pre-requisite for this course is successful completion of COMS 313 (Research Methods). Building on the overview of basic social science research approaches and techniques as covered in COMS 313, this course will introduce students to the process of designing an actual research project as they might be expected to undertake in their professional careers.

Research is a strategy for learning and a process of discovery. Research leading to new knowledge does not come from the mere application of data gathering and interpretation techniques. It begins with the identification of research questions as derived from rigorous assessment of what is already known about a particular phenomenon. Investigative techniques must be chosen such that they are consistent with the requirements of the question and that accord with clearly defined theories as to how observations from research can be constructed into new knowledge.

Research professionals know from experience that the ultimate quality of a research outcome is usually determined not by the process of gathering or even interpreting data, but by the thoroughness of thinking and planning at the front end of the process:

- identifying the state of existing knowledge,
- defining uncertainties and gaps,
- developing questions and hypotheses,
- identifying or formulating theories and hypotheses,
- selecting and costing out (in time and money) appropriate investigative and analytical techniques,
- setting out schedules and strategies for the completion of research projects.

Through guided discussions, workshops and seminars, this course will give students hands-on experience with this process following the same steps that a professional researcher would take when approaching any new research undertaking. The outcome will be a detailed research proposal that could be deployed in an actual research setting.

The course will be organized into three modules, each with its own deliverable (described below in “assignments and evaluation”):

Module One: Theory and practice – leading to development of a “Topic Summary”

Module Two: Researching the question – leading to an “essay on the state of the question”

Module Three: Defining the project – leading to a formal “Research Proposal”

Most sessions will be conducted in two simultaneous streams. A “theory” stream will use a textbook and selected additional readings to collect and review basic research theories, approaches and techniques in the social sciences as covered in COMS 313. This stream will employ guided discussion of these texts. The other stream will be devoted entirely to “practice” – hands-on workshops and seminars enabling students to discuss and refine their deliverables for the three modules.

Additional Information

N/A

Objectives of the Course

- Equip students with the knowledge and skills to scope-out, design, formulate and carry out significant research projects such as they might undertake in the course of their careers;
- Develop critical awareness of the differences between method, process and strategy;
- Develop a critical awareness of the close links between theory and practice in carrying out social science research.

Textbooks and Readings

Required Text:

Bouma, G. D., R. Ling and L. Wilkinson (2016) *The Research Process*, Third Canadian Edition, Don Mills: Oxford University Press Canada.

Additional readings TBA – available on D2L

Internet and electronic communication device information

Students are welcome to bring laptops and other devices to class so long as these are used to aid student learning. During class, it is not acceptable to play games, answer email, surf the web, or engage in other non-class activities. Cell phone use is not permitted at any time. Inappropriate use of technology not only affects you, but it also

distracts other students and undermines our goal of creating a respectful learning environment.

Assignments and Evaluation

Weight	Assignments	Due
20%	Topic summary, plus in class presentation	Jan 30
40%	State of the Question Essay, plus in-class presentation	March 13
40%	Research Proposal, plus in-class presentation	April 10

The course has three modules, each oriented to one deliverable:

- **Module One Deliverable: Topic summary, plus in class presentation (20%) (due in class January 30)** Students will prepare a 4 to 5 page exposition of a chosen topic for research as developed in Module One. This will be presented briefly in class on the due date. (Details of the exercise will be provided and discussed at length as the course gets underway.)
- **Module Two Deliverable: State of the Question Essay, plus in-class presentation (40%) (Due in class March 13)** Students will prepare a 12 page (maximum) double spaced paper in the style of a bibliographical essay that sets out a thorough review of the state of published knowledge in the academic literature on the research topic they have developed in Module One. (Details of the exercise will be provided and discussed at length as the course gets underway.)
- **Module Three: Deliverable: Research Proposal, plus in-class presentation (40%) (Due in class April 10)** Drawing upon the Module One and Two deliverables, students will prepare a 10-12 page formal research proposal according to a format as would be required by a funding agency or research client. (Details of the exercise will be provided and discussed at length as the course gets underway.)

IMPORTANT: The seminar method requires active participation by all students in all sessions throughout the Term. This is not an option. *A check-in sheet will be distributed each week.* Except for legitimate reasons – illness, emergencies or special circumstances of which the instructor is notified – participants who are absent for more than three sessions will lose 10% of their final grade.

Except where excused for legitimate reasons, failure to present a scheduled seminar discussion will result in loss of the grade for that assignment.

Detailed instructions for each of the assignments will be provided on the first day of class.

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: No

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 your tutor or instructor if possible. If it is not possible to do so, a daytime drop box is available in SS320; a date stamp is provided for your use. A night drop box is also available for after-hours submission. Assignments will be removed the following morning, stamped with the previous day's date, and placed in the instructor's mailbox.

Please include your name and ID number on all assignments, and be prepared to provide picture ID to pick up assignments or look at final exams in SS 320 after classes have ended. 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. For courses in which assignments are submitted electronically, it is the student's responsibility to ensure that the correct copy of the assignment is submitted. (Including the version date or version number in your file name may help you avoid submitting the wrong version of your written assignments.)

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_0.pdf .

Please note:

1. Students seeking accommodations for transient illnesses (e.g., the flu) should contact their instructors directly. Whenever possible, students should advise their instructors in advance if they will be missing quizzes, presentations, in-class assignments, or group meetings.
2. 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.
3. 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. For details see <http://comcul.ucalgary.ca/needtoknow>. 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. However, assignments, exams, and other work in this course will be graded using a combination of percentage and letter grades. Each assignment will receive a percentage grade along with an indication of which letter grade would be awarded.

The following grade scale percentage equivalents are used in the Department. If letter grades are used for an assignment or other course component, the percentage equivalent in the final column will be used for calculating the final grade:

Grade Point Value	Description	Grade	Department 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	00 - 49.99%	0%

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 (i.e. surveys, interviews, observation) as part of your university studies, you are responsible for following university research ethics guidelines. Your instructor must review and approve of 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 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT help line 	http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students 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 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.

Schedule of Lectures and Readings

413 Schedule of Lecture Topics and Readings

	Date	Stream One: Theory	Stream Two: Practice
1	Mo Jan 09	Course Introduction and organization	N/A
Module One: Theory and practice			
2	Mo Jan 16	Text 1, 2 plus additional readings tba	Topic Workshop
3	Mo Jan 23	Text 3, 4 plus additional readings tba	Topic Workshop
Module Two: Researching the question			
4	Mo Jan 30	Text 5, 6	(Topics due) Presentations
5	Mo Feb 06	Text 7, 8	Research progress seminar
6	Mo Feb 13	Text 9, 10	Research progress seminar
	Mo Feb 20	Family Day Holiday – Reading Week	
7	Mo Feb 27	Text 11	Research progress seminar
8	Mo Mar 6	Scheduled Check-up sessions	
Module Three: Defining the project			
9	Mo Mar 13	(State-of-the-question essays due) Presentations	
10	Mo Mar 20	Text 12	Proposal seminar
11	Mo Mar 27	Text 13	Proposal seminar
12	Mo Ap 3	Text 14	Proposal seminar
13	Mo Ap 10	(Proposals Due) Proposal Presentations	