

North Carolina State University: Fall 2013
QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS: COM 386
Section 002: T/Th 4:30-5:45 and Section 003: T/Th 3:00-4:15
Main Campus, Winston Hall 213

Instructor: Elizabeth Johnson-Young

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Office: Rick's Addition (1st floor)

Office Hours: in person or via Moodle by appointment

Course Description

Design and implementation of communication research methods, including experimental and survey research procedures. Use of computer software for statistical analysis.

Learning Outcomes

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

- Identify and compose conceptual and operational definitions for independent and dependent variables
- Analyze foundational research issues such as sampling, measurement, and ethics
- Apply research methods to specific communication questions
- Identify the advantages and disadvantages for studying communication problems with various social scientific methods
- Analyze data using statistical analysis software
- Interpret and describe research findings
- Write a summarizing research report

Required Text and Materials

Required Text:

1. Babbie, E. (2013). The basics of Social Research, 6th Edition. Wadsworth: Belmont, CA

Highly Recommended Texts:

1. Field, A. (2000). Discovering Statistics Using SPSS for Windows: Advanced Techniques for Beginners. Sage: London.
2. Allen, M., Titsworth, S., and Hunt, S. (2009). Quantitative Research in Communication. Sage: Thousand Oaks, CA.

Moodle and Email: We will regularly use our course's Moodle site for quizzes, reminders, discussion, other communications and, at times, assignment submissions. Please ensure you have access to the site and that you are prepared to check it on a regular basis. Moodle will send all announcements to your NCSU email address. Plan to check your email on a regular basis. Links to important assignments and resources will also be provided on our Moodle site.

Software Access: In order to complete work using statistical software, you may at times need to be able to access NCSU's virtual computing lab (VCL) or a computer lab with SPSS software installed.

Course Assignments

Final Exam	25%
Final Project	25%
Midterm #1	15%
Midterm #2	15%
Activities & Other Assignments	10%
Online Quizzes	10%

Assignment Briefs

Online Quizzes: Each week you will be required to take an online quiz. The purposes of these quizzes are to allow you practice on your own and to test your understanding of the week's material. This will be imperative as we continue on to our exams, final project, and into future jobs.

Midterms: You will have 2 midterms during the semester. These will take place in class. These exams may include multiple choice, short answer, fill in the blank, and calculations.

Final Exam: The final exam will be formatted similarly to the midterms and will be cumulative. We will take some time in class to review.

Final Project: For your final project you will complete a research paper. The topic will be your choice and may be completed in groups of no more than 3 people. You may choose to utilize survey data that we have access, collect your own survey data, or complete a content analysis. These options will be useful later and are reasonable to complete in the course of one semester.

Activities & Other Assignments: Throughout the semester we will be completing in-class activities and assignments, as well as at-home assignments. The purposes of these assignments are to reinforce and practice with the material we've covered in class and to allow us to gain experience with various parts of the research process.

Grade Concerns

I do not discuss graded assignments (e.g., tests, papers, etc.) on the day that they are returned to you. It is important to take time for reflection before discussing grades. You may meet with me during my office hours after this reflection period to discuss any questions you may have within one week of the return of the assignment. If you choose to dispute the grade, you may submit your concerns to me in writing within 7 days of the return of the assignment. In your appeal, indicate why you believe that your grade does not reflect your produced work.

Late Assignments and Make-Up Work

All work must be submitted prior to the date and time it is due to be considered on time. Make-up exams and late work will **only be accepted for documented and confirmed, university-excused absences**. Please note that a receipt from the Student Health Center does NOT constitute appropriate documentation. See the University's policy with regard to what is considered to be an excused absence:

http://www.ncsu.edu/provost/academic_regulations/attend/reg.htm. If this occurs, students should expect to submit all work that is due or take exams one class session *prior* to an anticipated absence or on the first day you return to class following an emergency absence. **No assignments will be accepted via email unless arranged in advance.**

If you miss an assignment or presentation due to an emergency absence, you should contact the instructor as soon as possible in order to make arrangements appropriate to your situation. No make-up assignments or presentations will be allowed for unexcused absences.

No other late work is accepted. Please plan accordingly!

Attendance Policies:

Attendance: Due to the participatory nature of COM 386 it is imperative that you attend class in order to participate in important activities. You cannot expect to succeed in the course without attending, as you cannot participate without being present and you cannot turn in late assignments.

For information regarding NCSU's attendance policy, go to:

<http://policies.ncsu.edu/regulation/reg-02-20-3>

For complete attendance policies, please see <http://policies.ncsu.edu/regulation/reg-02-20-3>

Absences: The University includes certain anticipated situations and documented emergency situations in its definition of an excused absence.

Anticipated absences: (e.g., participating in an official university function, court attendance, religious observances, or military duty) must be submitted in writing and approved by the instructor at least one week prior to the absence.

Emergency absences (e.g., illness, serious injury or death of immediate family member, car wreck): must be documented by Student Development, an attending physician, or some form of public record, and this documentation must be submitted on the first day of your return in order to be excused.

Drop Policy: Per University Policy (<http://policies.ncsu.edu/regulation/reg-02-20-03>): "By the third class/laboratory period or the fifth business day of the semester (whichever comes first) students who have not attended class or contacted the instructor regarding his/her absence may be dropped from the undergraduate class roll. This drop will be initiated by the Associate Dean of the College upon the request of the department. The

student may petition the department for readmission to the class if s/he has been dropped in error, or in the event of students with extenuating circumstances, provided the request is received by the tenth business day of the semester. Students who intend to drop a course continue to have the responsibility to officially drop and are encouraged to do this on a timely basis, following normal university procedures.”

Academic Integrity & Academic Honesty

Students are required to comply with the university policy on academic integrity found in the Code of Student Conduct found at

http://www.ncsu.edu/policies/student_services/student_discipline/POL11.35.1.php

See http://www.ncsu.edu/policies/student_services/student_discipline/POL11.35.1.php for a detailed explanation of academic honesty.

Honor Pledge: Your signature on any test or assignment indicates

"I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this test or assignment"

http://www.ncsu.edu/student_affairs/osc/academic_integrity/cheating_policy.php

Accommodations for Disabilities

Reasonable accommodations will be made for students with verifiable disabilities. In order to take advantage of available accommodations, student must register with the Disability Services Office (<http://www.ncsu.edu/dso>) located at 1900 Student Health Center, Campus Box 7509, 919-515-7653. For more information on NC State's policy on working with students with disabilities, please see the Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities Regulation at

http://www.ncsu.edu/policies/academic_affairs/courses_undergrad/REG02.20.1.php.

Non-Discrimination Policy

NC State University provides equality of opportunity in education and employment for all students and employees. Accordingly, NC State affirms its commitment to maintain a work environment for all employees and an academic environment for all students that is free from all forms of discrimination. Discrimination based on race, color, religion, creed, sex, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, or sexual orientation is a violation of state and federal law and/or NC State University policy and will not be tolerated. Harassment of any person (either in the form of quid pro quo or creation of a hostile environment) based on race, color, religion, creed, sex, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, or sexual orientation also is a violation of state and federal law and/or NC State University policy and will not be tolerated. Retaliation against any person who complains about discrimination is also prohibited. NC State's policies and regulations covering discrimination, harassment, and retaliation may be accessed at <http://policies.ncsu.edu/policy/pol-04-25-5> or http://www.ncsu.edu/equal_op.

Any person who feels that he or she has been the subject of prohibited discrimination, harassment, or retaliation should contact the Office for Equal Opportunity (OEO) at 919-515-3148.

