Instructor: Katherine Pieper, Ph.D. Office: ASC 333 Office Hours: Wednesday 9-11:30 a.m. and by appointment Email: <u>kpieper@usc.edu</u>

COM 301L: Empirical Research in Communication Spring 2013 Course Syllabus

M/W 12-1:50 p.m. GFS 207

Course Description

This course is designed to facilitate students' knowledge and understanding of research methods and statistical testing for communication research. Lectures focus on conceptual and practical aspects of research design, as well as basic statistical procedures. The course is divided into three sections. The first section focuses on methods of knowing and basic concepts in research design. The second portion overviews different research methodologies and the strengths and weaknesses of each. Finally, several statistical models and procedures are covered.

Course Goals

The goals of the course are twofold: 1) to help students become knowledgeable consumers of research; and 2) to aid students as they conduct research of their own.

Course Material (Required)

Field, A. (2009). *Discovering Statistics Using SPSS* (Third Edition). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Additional readings and worksheets will be made available on Blackboard.

Recommended Reference Text

American Psychological Association (2009). *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (Sixth Edition).

A Note on Enrollment

Owing to the small class size, students may be waitlisted for this course. Once the course has reached the cap, the instructor, with consent from the Department of Communication, must approve all additional students. Individuals who do not attend the first two days of class may jeopardize their continued enrollment in the course.

Grading

There are several methods of evaluating an individual student's understanding of the material presented in this course. They are: exams, course assignments, a final project, and participation. The following breakdown of points is used:

Exam 1	60
Exam 2	60
Exam 3	70
Assignments	80
Final Project	30
Participation	10
Total Points	310 points

Exams. There are three exams in this course. Each exam will consist of several multiple choice items, several short answer/analysis problems, and at least a single long answer/analysis question. Portions of the later exams will be cumulative, owing to the nature of the content. Exams cover both lecture and reading content.

Assignments. There will be multiple assignments over the course of the semester. These will consist of assignments based on lecture or reading topics, as well as those that contribute to the final project. Lab assignments will be given at least one week before the due date, and will be discussed in class. Assignments contribute to students' understanding of the course material or progress toward completing the final project. Assignments will not be accepted electronically without prior permission. Late assignments will be penalized.

Once they are graded, your assignments will be available for your review. Questions about grading or contesting scores should be handled during office hours. Scores may be contested for two weeks after they are returned to students. Grades for exam 1 and 2 or for any assignments may not be contested after the last day of class.

Final Project. The final course project consists of conducting a research study and detailing the process in a research paper. The style of the paper is comparable to a journal article, and should be written using APA (6th Edition) style. Further guidelines and deliverables will be presented in class.

Participation. In-class participation is an important part of the course. Participation points will be assigned by the instructor, taking into account meaningful verbal comments and questions, attendance, and visiting office hours.

Policies

The nature and rigor of this course requires that students be attentive and respectful of others. Although the class will be held in the computer lab, personal web surfing, instant messaging, and email are not allowed during class time. Any student engaged in these activities will receive deductions in their participation grade. Cell phones are not allowed in class.

Attendance is an essential part of doing well in this course. Absences will be excused for medical, religious, or emergency reasons, with documentation. Absences for job interviews and vacations will not constitute excused absences. Students are allowed one unexcused absence during the semester. Lecture notes may be made available as part of the course materials provided on

Blackboard, but students are encouraged to obtain notes from a classmate in the event of an absence. In addition, exams are to be taken on the date assigned. Exceptions can be made in cases of emergency, but the instructor must be notified in advance and provided appropriate documentation.

ADA Compliance. Students requesting academic accommodations based on a disability are required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to the instructor as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU301 and is open 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.

Academic Integrity. Violations of academic integrity—intentional or not—are taken seriously. The Annenberg School for Communication is committed to upholding the University's Academic Integrity code as detailed in the SCampus guide. It is the policy of the School of Communication to report all violations of the code. Any serious violations or pattern of violations of the Academic Integrity Code will result in the student's expulsion from the Communication major or minor.

	Торіс	Reading	Assignment
Week 1			
14-Jan	Introduction/Course Overview What is research?		
16-Jan	Foundations of Science	Field (Chapter 1, pp. 1-6)	Due: 3 articles related to your research topic
	Developing Research Questions	Back et al. (2010)	3 points
Week 2			
21-Jan	No Class		
23-Jan	Ethical Issues in Research*	Zimbardo (1973)	Due: Topic Intro and Cover Sheets for 3 articles
		Field (Chapter 3)	5 points
Week 3			
28-Jan	Research Design I	Field (Chapter 1, pp. 7-11)	Due: USC IRB/CITI Course certification
	Defining Variables Scales & Measurement		5 points
30-Jan	Research Design II	Field (Chapter 1, pp. 11- 18)	Due: Variable Definitions
	Reliability and Validity	Saslow et al. (2012)	2 points
Week 4			
4-Feb	Sampling, Standard Error	Field (Chapter 2, pp. 31- 43)	
		Behm-Morawitz & Mastro	
		(2008)	
6-Feb	Test Statistics and	Field (Chapter 2, pp. 48-	Due: Literature Review (3-5
	Review Session	54)	pgs.) 10 points
Week 5			
11-Feb	Exam 1		
		Field (Chanton 1 nn 26	
13-Feb	Hypothesis Testing	27)	

Week 6

18-Feb No Class

Content Analysis	Stern (2005)	Due: Questionnaires/Measurement 5 points
Experimental Methods I	Law & Braun (2000)	
Experimental Methods II	Rogers et al. (1999)	Due: Method Section (2-3 pages) 10 points
Survey Methods	Hall & Canterbury (2011)	
Measures of Central Tendency	Field (Chapter 1, pp. 18- 26) Singh et al. (2000)	
Distributions Review Session	Field (Chapter 5)	Due: Homework Assignment #1 5 points
Exam II		
No Class		
No Class		
SPSS and Data Presentation	Field (Chapter 4)	
Distributions and Measures of Variability	Field (Chapter 2, pp. 35- 40)	
	Content Analysis Experimental Methods I Experimental Methods II Survey Methods Measures of Central Tendency Distributions Review Session Exam II No Class No Class	Content AnalysisStern (2005)Experimental Methods ILaw & Braun (2000)Experimental Methods IIRogers et al. (1999)Survey MethodsHall & Canterbury (2011)Measures of Central TendencyField (Chapter 1, pp. 18- 20) singh et al. (2000)Distributions Review SessionField (Chapter 5)Exam IIField (Chapter 5)No Class

Week 12			
1-Apr	Inferential Statistics (Mean Differences)	Field (Chapter 2, pp. 54- 58)	
		Field (Chapter 9)	
3-Apr	Inferential Statistics (ANOVA)	Field (Chapter 10)	Due: Homework Assignment #2 5 points
Week 13			
8-Apr	Inferential Statistics (ANOVA and Correlation)	Field (Chapter 6)	
10-Apr	Inferential Statistics (Correlation)		Due: Homework Assignment #3 5 points
Week 14			
15-Apr	Inferential Statistics (Regression)	Field (Chapter 7)	
17-Apr	Inferential Statistics (Chi- Square)	Field (Chapter 18, pp. 686- 701)	Due: Results Section
			10 points
Week 15			
22-Apr	Qualitative Data		Due: Homework Assignment #4
24-Apr	Presentations		5 points
Week 16			
29-Apr	Presentations		
1-May	Review Session		Due: Final Papers <i>30 points</i>
Friday, May	10, 11 a.m1 p.m.	Final Exam	

Friday, May 10, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.