

Communication 494
Communication Research Practicum
Fall 2014

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Meeting Days, Times and Room: Wednesdays; 3:30 to 5:20; ASCJ 202-C

Office Hours:

Tuesdays: 3:30-5:00
Wednesdays: 10:00-11:30; 1:30-3:30
Thursdays: 10:00-10:40; 3:30-5:00
Other times by arrangement.

Text:

Patten, Mildred L. (2011). **Understanding research methods: An overview of the essentials**. Glendale: Pyrczak Publishing

Course Description:

This course gives you practical skill in conducting empirical communication research. The course will give you experience in every phase of conducting empirical research, including formulating proper research questions, finding relevant theoretic and empirical research, formulating hypotheses, developing an appropriate research method, conducting and gathering data, analyzing findings statistically, and writing a research report. All of you will work as members of a research team under my direction.

Each semester is different. What you will experience depends upon the phase of the research process a specific study is at and the complexity of the study. A study may take two and sometimes three semesters to complete.

Last semester, the research team completed a study on "Perceptions of Communication and Communication Students." This study will be presented at the annual convention of the National Communication Association in New Orleans in November 2011. The research team then began work on a study that we'll be conducting this semester on "Texting and Lying." This study has been pilot tested and is ready to be submitted to the University IRB.

Format of the Course:

We meet every Wednesday from 4:00-5:20 in ASCJ 202-C. This is not a lecture class. Everything we cover will be done as a research team. What we cover on a specific date depends upon what has to be done. I will send you an agenda about 6 days before each class meeting. The agenda will indicate what tasks we'll be addressing and your assignment for the coming week.

Keep a weekly log. I will send the form to you. In the log you'll note what you've done in connection with the study and how much time you've spent. You'll turn your log in to me at the end of the semester. At that time you will assess the quantity and quality of your work based on criteria that will be described below.

Each of you must take the online CITI course that qualifies you to do research with human subjects. You must also get an Annenberg Qualtrics account. Surveys we create are typically distributed through Qualtrics. For you to have editing access to any survey that we create as a collaborating researcher, you must have taken the CITI course.

Grading:

Your grade will be based on three factors: (1) Contribution to the research project (60 percent), (2) Team self-evaluations (20 percent), and (3) Weekly logs (20 percent).

First, your contribution to the research project will be based on the following criteria:

1. **Attendance:** Attended all meetings; came on time; stayed till end.
2. **Assignments:** Did assignments on time with high quality.
3. **Time Contributions:** Gathered journal articles and books, collected data, entered data into SPSS, prepared charts, tables and graphs, etc.
4. **Intellectual Contributions:** Proposed projects, suggested methods and procedures, suggested statistical tests and analyses, interpreted prior research, analyzed research findings, wrote/edited final paper.
5. **Leadership:** Suggested areas of focus, distribution of assignments, methods of coordinating work, motivated team members, handled conflict.
6. **Team Player:** Was supportive, positive, and cooperative.
7. **Overall Contribution**

Second, team self-evaluations based on the seven criteria above.

Third, my evaluation of your weekly logs and self-evaluation. I will judge the quantity and quality of the work you report in your logs and the quality of your self-evaluation.

Research Project for Fall Semester 2014:

Last semester, students in Comm 494 developed a beta version of a survey analyzing disagreements in intimate relationships. The survey focused on variables related to disagreements and the role of these variables in relational satisfaction.

This semester, students in 494 will do the following:

1. Revise the beta version of the survey. Students will learn to create and

- edit questions on Qualtrics.
2. Learn the protocol for submitting the survey to the University Institutional Review Board.
 3. Gather data for the survey using the Qualtrics survey site.
 4. Learn to use SPSS to statistically analyze data from the survey.
 5. The remainder of the semester will be spent writing the report that hopefully, will be submitted for presentation at a communication conference or convention.