CMGT 540: Uses of Communication Research Fall 2015 Mondays 6:30-9:20pm Room: ASC G26 Course website: blackboard.usc.edu Tophat course URL^{*}: tophat.com/e/ 487162 Tophat course SMS number: (315) 636-0905

Instructors:

Mathew Curtis Office: ASCJ 321F Office hours: Before class, and by appointment Email: mcurtis@usc.edu Courtney S. Pade Office: ASCJ 321J Office hours: Mondays 3-5pm Email: courtney.pade@usc.edu

Course description

This course introduces you to knowledge and skills needed to design and implement research projects. You will learn to form appropriate research questions and answer such questions by collecting and interpreting data. After completion of this course, you will be equipped to move beyond being passive observers of research and be discriminating consumers and competent practitioners.

As professionals you need to able to solve problems. Although solving problems successfully requires many resources (e.g., interpersonal and political skills), a fundamental ability is being able (1) to understand problems conceptually – to break problems down into their important parts and have a sense of how the parts relate to one another and to the whole; and (2) to obtain and analyze relevant data. Conceptualizing problems and obtaining and analyzing data are two core skills you learn in research methods. The skills you learn in this course will allow you to stand out in your profession as a creative thinker, with the additional ability to design and implement good assessment practices.

A secondary aim of the course is to impart somewhat vicariously a set of skills that will be useful in your professional careers. In your careers you will undoubtedly have to make decisions and act under uncertain or confusing conditions. Under such conditions, the important skills are about dealing with information: knowing where to look for information, how to judge the quality of information, how to make sense out of information. Dealing with information is a core part of doing research, and so you will have many opportunities to practice those skills.

^{*} We will be using the software program Tophat for discussion and attendance. You will receive an email inviting you to our class so you can register. It is free to students.

Course Overview

Module 1: Writing and Statistics

- Week 1: Writing Well
 - Using the library, ethics, how to avoid plagiarism
- Week 2: Statistics
 - Basic and intermediate statistics
- Week 3: Statistics
 - Advanced statistics and SPSS tricks

Module 2: Focus Groups

- Week 4: Theory and Design
 - Review strengths and weakness of FG and how to design an effective FG
- Week 5: Design and Live Focus Groups
 - Finalize design of FG and conduct live FG
- Week 6: Analysis and Introduction Paper Review
 - How to analyze and interpret FG, review of introduction paper

Module 3: Survey

- Week 7: Theory
 - Review strengths and weakness of surveys and how to design an effective survey
- Week 8: Design
 - Finalize design of survey and prepare to collect data
- Week 9: Analysis
 - How to analyze and interpret survey data

Module 4: Content Analysis

- Week 10: Theory
 - Review strengths and weakness of content analysis and how to design an effective content analysis
- Week 11: Design
 - Finalize design of content analysis and prepare to code data
- Week 12: Analysis
 - How to analyze and interpret content analysis data

Module 5: Experiment

- Week 13: Theory
 - Review strengths and weakness of experiments and how to design an effective experiment
- Week 14: Design
 - Finalize design of experiment and prepare to collect data
- OPTIONAL CLASS -Week 15: Analysis
 - How to analyze and interpret experiment data

Learning objectives

- Understand and apply four different research methods (focus groups, surveys, content analysis, experimental) to a range of problems,
- Identify and define problems appropriate for research analysis
- Understand the purpose of an introduction within a research paper
- Be able to produce a research introduction on self-selected topic
- Be able to write in the research style (concisely, accurately, using citations)
- Identify errors in existing research
- Understand the strengths and weaknesses of the four methods examined in the course
- Enter data in to SPSS
- Perform basic and advanced SPSS analyses
- Interpret SPSS output
- Become familiar with Qualtrics
- Adept at using USC library databases to identify and access relevant literature

Textbooks and materials

Graff, G., & Birkenstein. C. (2014). They say / I say: The moves that matter in academic writing. New York, New York: W. W. Norton & Company. ISBN-10: 0393935841

American Psychological Association. (2010). Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (6th edition). Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association. ISBN-10: 1433805618*

• NOTE: This reference guide is used throughout the program, so is not assigned as specific reading within this course.

Articles:

Please see weekly reading list at the end of this syllabus. Articles are available via blackboard.

Flipped Classroom:

In this course we use what is known as a flipped classroom. There is more information on this in the Week 1 readings. The flipped classroom technique means you will review media pieces before coming to class. Occasionally you may have trouble accessing a media piece. If this happens, **before** contacting the instructors, please ensure your browser is up to date and try accessing the media via each of the following three browsers (Firefox, IE, Chrome).

Other Materials:

Headphones – *Please bring headphones to every class so that you are able to watch course media on your laptop.*

Headphone splitter (Recommended)

Component	Weighting
Mini-research paper (one for each of the four topic modules,	40% (4 times 10%)
Focus Groups, Survey, Content Analysis, and Experiment)	
Introductory paper	10%
SPSS assignment	10%
Final paper	10%
Readings quizzes	5%
Discussions	4% (8 times 0.5)
Participation	5%
Assignments & Quizzes	16% (16 times 1)

Mini-Research Projects (40%)

The research projects are your chance to investigate something of interest to you. What would be useful for you to know more about? Each module will supply you with the skills needed to define your problem and design a plan to research your question. You are the person who decides what it is your research. You will complete four mini-research projects utilizing the four main methods of the course (survey, focus group, content analysis, experiment).

Introductory Paper (10%)

To make people listen to your ideas and findings you have to make them care. The introduction to any work is where you frame an issue to appeal to your target audience. You cannot assume the reader knows or cares about your work. You have to make them know and care about your work.

SPSS Assignment (10%)

Research generates data. Lots of data. Statistical skills are needed to interpret the data you gather. You will receive instruction on statistical concepts but perhaps the most effective way to learn statistics is via 'hands-on' use of statistical programs.

Final Paper (10%)

You will take your Introductory Paper and expand this into a Final Paper. This Final Paper extends and builds upon your Introductory Paper. Your Final Paper will also address the feedback provided on your Introductory Paper. Given you need feedback on the Introductory Paper for your Final Paper we do not accept late Introductory papers if they are submitted less than two weeks before the due date for the Final Paper. This is an exception to the late policy stated later in the syllabus.

Readings Quizzes (5%)

In any week there may be a quiz on the readings. Note we do not do a reading quiz on the APA manual or the Graff & Birkenstein textbook. This quiz will only cover the readings assigned for that week. For example, if there is a quiz in Week 3 it only assesses the readings assigned for Week 3. The quiz is not announced ahead of time and so you should prepare for a quiz every week by completing the readings. There is no quiz in Week 1.

Discussions (5%)

Throughout the semester there are a total of ten discussions. In most instances you prepare for these discussions before class and bring a print out of your preparation to class.

Participation (5%)

This grade is broken up into weekly graded discussions, and a final overall course participation grade. There is a peer evaluation form at the end of the course that will inform this overall participation grade.

Contribute professionally to class discussions, group work, and peer review. Asking a question or contributing to the discussion counts as participation. If you participate frequently, enthusiastically, and thoughtfully this counts a complete. You will not earn a complete by merely making quick or brief responses or being disengaged or disrespectful.

Attendance in class also contributes to your participation grade. This is a graduate level course and the expectation is you are in class each week, you arrive on time, and do not leave early. Given this is Los Angeles with the associate traffic problems and life happens there may be occasion where you are late, leave early, or miss class. If you know you will miss part, or all of, the class make sure to inform the instructors ahead of time if possible and check with the instructors about what work was missed and what make-up work is expected.

Attendance is sometimes taken by the software program TopHat. This means it is possible to sign-in remotely as being in class even in you are not in the classroom. Do *not* do this as we find it displeasing.

During the course we have frequent small group discussions and exercises. If you are not in class you are encouraged to participate in these activities remotely (e.g. via Skype). Doing so will mean less make-up work for you. If you do this please have a member of your group tell the instructors this as the start of the activity so we can confirm you are participating.

Assignments & Quizzes (16%)

You will have various small assignments and quizzes (separate from the reading quizzes) throughout this course.

Contacting Professors

This class is unusual as it has two professors equally responsible for the course. If you have questions about the course email both professors in the same email. This means you get a quicker response. Do not email one professor and then if you do not like the answer you receive email the other professor hoping for a different answer.

Grading System

The number of points each assignment is assigned does not reflect the importance of the assignment in determining your final grade. The weighting each assignment receives is the determining factor (see assignment table). Many assignments are scored out of 100 points (including all papers) but some important assignments are scored out of 10 points. Blackboard displays a weighted total which indicates your grade in the course.

Peer Method Review (penalties for appropriate completion failure)

In each of the four method modules (focus groups, surveys, content analysis, experiments) you will provide feedback on the work the other students in your team produce. This peer feedback is an important component of each method module. The expectation is you complete each method review to an appropriate standard. Completion allows you to pass this component of the course but does not directly affect your grade. However, if you do not complete these peer method reviews to an appropriate standard points are deducted directly from your final grade.

Weekly emails

Each week after class an email will be sent via blackboard. This email lists the tasks to complete before the next class. Typically this email will be sent within 24 hours of the end of class. We will usually have already described in class all the tasks listed in the email. The email serves as a convenient reminder/to do list and may occasionally list things not previously described in class. It is your responsibility to check your email and ensure you are aware of what is expected.

Due Dates

The majority of work is due on the day class starts at 6.30pm. A small number of items are due Friday. These items are indicated in class that week and highlighted in the weekly email.

Paper Grading Criteria Scoring (see complete rubrics on Blackboard)

Introductory and Final Paper

• Formatting (10% of paper's grade); Writing Quality: Mechanics, Expression, Organization (35%); Comprehension (55%)

Methods Papers

• Formatting (10% of paper's grade); Introduction (25%); Method (15%); Results (20%); Discussion (20%); Writing quality (10%)

Note: All papers will be returned via email, and there will be a **24-hour cooling off period** after that email is sent. This means that you should not reply to your grading instructor until at least 24-hours have passed. After that time you may reply with your questions or concerns. Failure to abide by this rule may results in a point deduction on your subsequent paper. Also, you have ten days to dispute a grade. The exception to this ten day rule is for the Final paper and Experiment paper as we need to finalize grades.

Due dates for large assignments

Assignment	Due
SPSS	Sept 21 st
Introductory paper	Sept 28 th
Focus group paper	Oct 12 th
Survey paper	Nov 2 nd
Content analysis paper	Nov 23 rd
Final paper	Dec 7 th
Experiment paper	Dec 14 th

Writing Quality

The course project demands much in terms of writing. The quality of your writing will significantly influence how your work is evaluated.

The instructors learned through many encounters that many students judge themselves to be good writers. This judgment is often over-optimistic. The writing demands in this course are very high, complex, and constant. Even competent writers will be challenged. Hence, be prepared to expend much effort in improving your writing. The instructors encourage you to be open and receptive to feedback for improving.

The effort to improve must come from you. The instructors will highlight where your writing needs to improve, and point you to resources. Then, it is your responsibility to use these resources to improve.

How will writing quality be evaluated? One basic component is writing mechanics. Good mechanics refer to careful attention to spelling, punctuation, and grammar; good grammar includes subject-verb agreement, appropriate use of parallel structures, absence of sentence fragments, and so on. Another aspect of mechanics is the use of proper vocabulary and expressions. For a refresher, refer to http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/grammar. More resources are listed at:

```
http://college.usc.edu/writingcenter/information_for_students/online_resources.html.
```

Another component of writing quality is organization. In a well-organized paper, the arguments flow smoothly; the transitions from one idea to another are well written, i.e., the reader knows when different arguments are being presented and can grasp the important and subtle distinctions. A well-organized paper respects the reader's cognitive burden and shepherds the reader's attention carefully. How to learn about organizing a paper well? Two good resources exist: The first is the article "The Science of Scientific Writing," available in the course readings. The second is the required text They Say / I Say, especially Chapter 8.

Consult these resources, become familiar with their guidance, and implement in your writing.

The basic criterion is to communicate well to your readers (your instructors and your peers). If your readers cannot understand your writing due to flaws in grammar, vocabulary or organization, then the quality of your thinking cannot be appreciated. The instructors cannot spend minutes to decipher a sentence you wrote. You cannot ask instructors to ignore poor writing in order to focus on content.

A paper with good ideas but bad writing will earn a poor grade, as specified in the evaluation rubric ("Evaluation of Papers"). The demands are especially stringent. If your writing performs poorly in the quality requirement (i.e., scoring on the lowest category), it represents unsatisfactory performance. The instructors will require you to attend to those areas and revise before proceeding. For example, upon detecting the 8th error in vocabulary, expression, spelling, punctuation, typography or other mechanics in your draft, the instructors will impose a score of "0" in that category, and may stop reading and return your paper. You then have to revise and resubmit within 7 days.

When evaluating your writing, the instructors may correct the first few language errors. Thereafter, the instructor may only indicate that flaws are present. In such instances, you must take the initiative to identify and correct those flaws, rather than expect instructors to perform that task.

Letter Grade	Grade Range
А	93-100%
A-	90-92.99%
B+	87-89.99%
В	83-86.99%
В-	80-82.99%
C+	77-79.99%
С	73-76.99%
C-	70-72.99%
D	60-69.99%
F	59.99% or less

Paper Guidelines

All documents should be in Microsoft Word format. Papers must be type-written or wordprocessed, double-spaced, with 12 point font. Make sure you keep a copy of all submitted papers. Please ensure that each paper is written in APA style. Refer to the APA manual (6th Edition). Finally, typos and spelling errors are unforgivable at this level and reflect poorly on you. All page length requirements are for double-spaced pages, with 1-inch margins, in 12-point Times New Roman font.

Lateness

We realize that all students may occasionally submit an assignment late. To encourage everyone to hand in assignments, we will accept late work. However, in fairness to those who do turn things in on time there will be a price to pay for late work. We will grade all late assignments and then deduct percentage points. Work less than 24 hours late will be deducted 10%, work more than 24 hours late but under a week late will be deducted 25%. Each additional week will result in a further 25% deduction per week late up to a maximum of a 50% deduction. An exception to this rule is at the end of the semester. Any late work must be submitted before the last day of class unless approved by the instructor. After the last class we are finalizing grades and grading final paper and so typically cannot accept late work. Please also see the note about late deadlines in the information section for the Introductory Paper.

If you are going to be late turning in an assignment, email the instructors to notify them of this, and then email them again to alert them when you have submitted the assignment.

Make-up work

If you miss a class there is work to make-up. When you miss a class you should contact both instructors (do this before class if you know in advance you will miss a class). Make-up work submitted late does not follow the same late policy outlined above and late make-up work will be discussed on a case by case basis with the instructors.

Group work

You will work within a group throughout the course to complete the course assignments.

These groups are assigned by the instructors. Groups will change during the course of the semester. Please be aware that you and your group members will be completing a Peer Feedback Survey at the end of this course that will inform your overall participation grade.

Academic integrity policy

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 violation or pattern of violations of the Academic Integrity Code will result in the student's expulsion from the Communication major or minor.

It is particularly important that you are aware of, and avoid, plagiarism, cheating on exams, fabricating data for a project, submitting the same paper to more than one class, or submitting a paper authored by anyone other than yourself. If you have doubts about any of these practices, confer with a faculty member.

Resources on academic honesty can be found on the Student Judicial Affairs website:

(http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS):

1. "Guide to Avoiding Plagiarism" addresses issues of paraphrasing, quotations and citations in written assignments, drawing heavily upon materials used in the university's Writing Program;

2. "Understanding and Avoiding Academic Dishonesty" addresses more general issues of academic integrity, including guidelines for adhering to standards concerning examinations and unauthorized collaboration.

The "SCampus" (http://www.usc.edu/scampus) contains the university's Student Conduct Code and other student-related policies.

The School and the University is committed to the general principles of academic honesty that include and incorporate the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one's own academic work from misuse by others as well as to

avoid using another's work as one's own. By taking this course, students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. All submitted work for this course may be subject to an originality review as performed by TurnItIn technologies (http://www.turnitin.com) to find textual similarities with other Internet content or previously submitted student work. Students of this course retain the copyright of their own original work, and TurnItIn is not permitted to use student-submitted work for any other purpose than (a) performing an originality review of the work, and (b) including that work in the database against which it checks other student-submitted work.

Disabilities policy

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is 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 instructors as early in the semester as possible. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.

http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html

Library access

As a USC student, you have access to all the library resources and the Annenberg Librarian, Chimene Tucker (cetucker@usc.edu), is available to assist you with any inquiry you may have.

Readings

August 24th, Week 1

Graff, G., & Birckstein, C. (2007). *They say, I say: The moves that matter in academic writing*.New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. <u>Note read this during weeks 1-3</u>. This is one of the required textbooks in the course and so is not on blackboard.

Gopen, G. & Swan, J. (1990). Science of scientific writing. American Scientist, 78, 550-558.

- Levy, Y., & Ellis, T. J. (2006). A systems approach to conduct an effective literature review in Support of information systems research. *Information Systems Journal*, *9*, 181-212.
- Meyer, R. (2013, September 13). The post-lecture classroom: How will students fare? The

Atlantic. Retrieved from http://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2013/09/the-post-lecture-classroom-how-will-students-fare/279663/

Pamela E. Barnett. P. E. (2014, February 14). Flipping the classroom isn't the answer -- let's

scramble it. *Inside Higher Ed*. Retrieved from http://www.insidehighered.com/views/2014/02/14/flipping-classroom-isnt-answer-letsscramble-it-essay#sthash.zRaeS7xs.dpbs

August 31st, Week 2

Park, J. T., & John, D. R. (2010). Got to get you into my life: Do brand personalities rub off on

consumers?. The Journal of Consumer Research, 37(4), 655-669.

Gelman, A. (2002). *Teaching Statistics: A Bag of Tricks*. New York: Oxford University Press. 148-156.

September 7th, No class

September 14th, Week 3

Beall, A. E. (2008). The strategic-question approach to market research. In *Strategic market research: A guide to conducting research that drives businesses* (pp. 5-10). Bloomington, IN: iUniverse.

Levy, Y., & Ellis, T. J. (2006, June). Towards a framework of literature review process in support of information systems research. Paper presented at 2006 Informing Science and IT Education Joint Conference, University of Salford, United Kingdom, 171-181.

Muniz, A. M., & O' Guinn, T.C. (2001). Brand community. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 27, 412-432.

Percentage Calculators. (2014). Retrieved from

http://www.calculatorsoup.com/calculators/math/percentage.php

What is statistical significance?. (2014). Retrieved from

http://www.statsoft.com/Textbook/Elementary-Statistics-Concepts#What

September 21st, Week 4

- Fiates, G. M. R. F., Amboni, R. D. M., & Teixeira, E. (2008). Consumer behaviour of Brazilian primary school students: Findings from focus group interviews. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 32, 157-162.
- Garrison, M. E. B., Pierce, S. H., Monroe, P. A., Sasser, D. D., Shaffer, A., & Blalock, L. B. (1999). Focus group discussions: Three examples from family and consumer research. *Family and Consumer Sciences Research Journal*, 27, 428-450.
- Lunt, P., & Livingstone, S. (1996). Rethinking the focus group in media and communications research. *Journal of Communication*, *46*, 79-98.
- Morgan, D. L. (1996). Focus groups. Annual Review of Sociology, 22, 129-152.

September 28th, Week 5

- Black, I. R., & Nevill, I. (2009). Fly-posting: An exploration of a 'controversial' medium. Journal of Marketing Communications, 15, 209-226.
- Hampson, S. E., Martin, J. Jorgensen, J., & Barker, M. (2009). A social marketing approach to improving the nutrition of low-income women and children: An initial focus group study. *Public Health Nutrition*, 12, 1563-1568.
- Vicsek, L. (2010). Issues in the analysis of focus groups: Generalisability, quantifiability, treatment of context and quotations. The Qualitative Report, 15, 122-141.

Waterlander, W. E., de Mull, A., Schuit, A. J., Seidell, J. C., & Steenhuis, I. H. M. (2010).
Perceptions on the use of pricing strategies to stimulate healthy eating among residents of deprived neighbourhoods: A focus group study. *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity*, 7, 44-55.

October 5th, Week 6 (None)

October 12th, Week 7

- Parker, R., & Chatterjee, A. (2009). Consumer susceptibility to credit debt: Findings from exploratory surveys. *Journal of Global Business Issues*, *3*(2), 179-184.
- Stobbelaar, D. J., Casimir, G., Borghuis, J., Marks, I., Meijer, L., & Zebeda, S. (2007).
 Adolescents' attitudes towards organic food: A survey of 15- to 16-year old school children. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 31(4), 349-356.

October 19th, Week 8

- Junglas, I. A., Johnson, N. A., & Spitzmuller, C. (2008). Personality traits and concern for privacy: An empirical study in the context of location-based services. *European Journal* of Information Systems, 17, 387-402.
- Moran, M. B., Murphy, S. T., & Sussman, S. (2012). Campaigns and cliques: Variations in effectiveness of an anti-smoking campaign as a function of adolescent peer group identity. *Journal of Health Communication*, 17(10), 1215-1231.

October 26th, Week 9 (None)

November 2nd, Week 10

- Kim, H., & Kwon, Y. J. (2011). Soulmates, best friends, and casual buddies: The relationship of U.S. college students to retailer brands. *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal, 29*(1), 67-82.
- Tsang, A. S.L., & Prendergast, G. (2009). Does culture affect evaluation expressions? A crosscultural analysis of Chinese and American computer game reviews. *European Journal of Marketing*, 43(5/6), 686-707.

November 9th, Week 11

Ball, J. G., Liang, A., & Lee, W. (2009). Representation of African Americans in direct-toconsumer pharmaceutical commercials: A content analysis with implications for health disparities. *Health Marketing Quarterly*, 26, 372-390.

- McMullan, J. L., & Miller, D. (2009). Wins, winning and winners: The commercial advertising of lottery gambling. *Journal of Gambling Studies*, *25*, 273-295.
- Pantelidis, I. S. (2010). Electronic meal experience: A content analysis of online restaurant comments. *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly*, 51, 483-491.
- Pegoraro, A. L., Ayer, S. M., & O'Reilly, N. J. (2010). Consumer consumption and advertising through sport. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 53, 1454-1475.

November 16th, Week 12 (None)

November 23rd, Week 13

- Hollingshead, A. B. (1998). Communication, learning, and retrieval in transactive memory systems. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *34*, 423-442.
- Pracejus, J. W., & Olson, G. D. (2004). The role of brand/cause fit in the effectiveness of causerelated marketing campaigns. *Journal of Business Research*, *57*, 635-640.

Utz, S. (2009). The (potential) benefits of campaigning via social networking sites. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 14(2), 221-243.

November 30th, Week 14

Guadagno, R. E., Okdie, B. M., & Kruse, S.A. (2012). Dating deception: Gender, online dating, and exaggerated self-presentation. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *28*(2), 642-647.

Herrewijn, L., & Poels, L. (2013). Putting brands into play: How game difficulty and player experience influence the effectiveness of in-game advertising. *International Journal of Advertising*, 31(1), 17-44.

December 7th, Optional Week 15 (None)