

COMM 5310
Communication Research Methods

Professor: Brent Yergensen, Ph.D.

Office: CAS 225

E-mail: byergensen@uttyler.edu

Office Hours: Tuesday 1:00-2:00, Wednesday 4:00-5:00, Thursday 1:00-2:00

Class Time: Wednesdays, 6:00pm-8:45pm

Classroom: CAS 208

Course Description:

Introduction to the uses, assumptions, processes, techniques, principles, and critical evaluation of qualitative and quantitative research methods applied in the systematic study of communication.

Course Goals and Objectives:

This class is aimed at getting you acquainted with some of the basic issues, analytic techniques, and ways of thinking associated with communication research. We will be examining various research paradigms, writing methods, common methods of data collection, and data analysis techniques used to test empirical questions. The goal of this course is to provide you with a graduate-level introduction to research methods.

Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Be able to design original research using a method appropriate to the research question.
2. Be a critical evaluator of research.
3. Be able to read and understand communication research.
4. Have a working knowledge of the different types of communication research methods.
5. Be able to formulate research questions and design a research study using the appropriate methods to answer those questions.
6. Be able to carry out a research project.
7. Be able to use primary sources for communication scholarship.
8. Be able to write and present a research report using the appropriate style guidelines.

Required Textbook:

Davis, C. L., & Lachlan, K. A. (2017). Straight talk about communication research methods (3rd ed.). Kendall Hunt Publishing Company. ISBN: 9781524916145

- Additional assigned readings will be posted on Canvas.
- All course readings are to be read before coming to class on the day they are assigned for. It is expected that students bring their book/reading(s) to each class.

Policies:

It is important to take the necessary precautions to ensure a healthy and successful year. UT Tyler continues to urge you to protect yourselves against the flu, COVID and any new threats that may be developing. Be diligent about preventive measures such as washing hands, covering sneezes/coughs, social distancing and vaccinations, which have proven to be successful in slowing the spread of viruses. Encourage those who don't feel well to stay home, and if they show symptoms, ask them to get tested for the flu or COVID. Self-isolation is important to reduce exposure ([CDC quarantine/isolation](#))

[guidelines](#)). Please work with your faculty members to maintain coursework and please consult [existing campus resources](#) for support.

Assignments (300 points)

Reading Reports (8 @ 10 points each)

Exams (3 @ 20 points each)

Research Proposals (3 @ 50 points each)

Final Presentation (10 points)

Course Calendar

Wk	Dates	Content	Readings	Due
1	8/24	-Course Introduction -Assignments Overview: 1. Understand and evaluate research. 2. Develop a scholarly voice through writing and discussion -Overview of Paradigms Slideshow -Case Example of -Research Proposal -Case Example of -Reading Report -IRB Process	Chapter 1: What is Comm Research? Chapter 2 Perspectives and Paradigms Chapter 3 Library Research Chapter 4 Writing the Lit Review	
2	8/31	Literature Reviews Quantitative Methods	Chapter 5 RQs and Hypotheses Chapter 7 Variables Chapter 8 Sampling Chapter 9 Validity & Reliability	Reading Report 1
3	9/7	Review Proposal 1 (with IRB forms) Quantitative Methods	-Chapter 10 Survey Research -Chapter 12 Experiments -Burgoon & Floyd "Deception," -Quantitative voice ex: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hnVXJ16o4eA -Horan "Understanding Relationships Dark Triad"	Reading Report 2
4	9/14	Exam 1	Exam 1	Proposal 1
5	9/21	Qualitative Methods	Chapter 14: Qualitative Research Chapter 16 Social Constructionist Approaches -Scott "Rhetoric as Epistemic" -Hitchings et al "Qualitative Methods"	Reading Report 3
6	9/28	Qualitative Methods	-Gangneux "Rethinking Social Media for Qual. Research" -Lijadi et al "Online Facebook Focus Group Research" -Bethea "Function of Humor" -Kelly et al "American Lifestyle Text Messaging"	Reading Report 4

7	10/5	Qualitative Methods	-Kerstin "Divining for Water" -Lucas, Buzzanell "Blue-Collar Work" -Pennington "Quitting Social Media" -Welsh et al "Constructing Crime"	Reading Report 5
8	10/12	Review Proposal 2 Qualitative Methods	-Harrison "Not Like People on TV" -Regehr "Rise of Recreational Burlesque" -Miller-Ott & Kelley "Female Relational Aggression" -Generous & Keeley "End of Life"	Reading Report 6
9	10/19	Exam 2	Exam 2	Proposal 2
10	10/26	Ethnographic Methods	-Whitehead "Basic Classical Ethnographic Methods" -Angelone "Virtual Ethnography" -Piacenti "Facebook Ethnography" -Rappaport "Science and Religion Shift Covid-19"	Reading Report 7
11	11/2	Content Analysis	- Chapter 11 Content Analysis -Hetrsoni "Violence in Television Advertising" -Peterson "Ecology Themes in Magazine Ads" -Hernandez-Santaolalla et al "Male Monsters Slasher Films"	Reading Report 8
12	11/9	Introduction to Critical and Rhetorical Methods	-Chapter 17 Rhetorical Approaches -Lessl "The Priestly Voice" -Cloud "The Clash of Civilization" -Ott & Keeling "Cinema and Choric Connection" (Routledge Reader ch 37) -Burke "Equipment for Living" (Routledge Reader ch 17)	Reading Report 9
13	11/16	Exam 3 (Switched with 11/30)	Exam 3	
14	11/23	Thanksgiving Holiday		
15	11/30	Review Proposal 3 Methods Literature Review Best Practices (Switched with 11/16)	Student-chosen articles based on best case study examples of research found in their proposals	Proposal 3
	12/7	Final Exam Week	Final Presentations	Final Presentation

Assignments Overview

Reading Reports

While all students complete all readings, each student will prepare a study guide and discussion document on one readings for the given week that will be distributed to the class two days before the class session focusing on these sections:

1. Brief author bio (2-3 sentences if applicable, meaning only for articles and not book chapters)
2. Brief reading Summary (4-5 sentences) of the article findings and purpose
3. 5-7 key quotes that are central take-aways
4. Summary (4-5 sentences) on what the study contributes to academic knowledge
5. What we know about the research process/methodology from the study
6. 4-5 discussion questions
7. Students will summarize the article for 5-10 minutes, then guide the class discussion for an additional 20 minutes using the discussion questions. Students are invited to implement

brief use of artifacts such as videos, demonstrations, activities, etc to illustrate the content of the material.

Exams

Students will complete three essay exams during the semester that will be open book, open note, and focused on allowing students to display their acquired knowledge and scholarly voice on research methods.

Research Proposals

Students will complete three 2,000+ word research proposals focusing on Introduction, Methodology, and Literature review while using 12 scholarly research journal sources to build the Literature Review.

Final Presentation

Students will deliver a 20-minute presentation on one of their three final presentations that could be used as a primer for a thesis project, followed by 10 minutes of feedback from instructor and peers.

POLICIES

UT-Tyler Honor Code

Every member of the UT-Tyler community joins together to embrace: Honor and integrity that will not allow me to lie, cheat, or steal, nor to accept the actions of those who do. To know and understand the policies that affect your rights and responsibilities as a student at UT Tyler, please follow this link: <http://www.uttyler.edu/wellness/rightsresponsibilities.php>

Campus Carry

We respect the right and privacy of students 21 and over who are duly licensed to carry concealed weapons in this class. License holders are expected to behave responsibly and keep a handgun secure and concealed. More information is available at <http://www.uttyler.edu/about/campus-carry/index.php>

UT Tyler a Tobacco-Free University

All forms of tobacco will not be permitted on the UT Tyler main campus, branch campuses, and any property owned by UT Tyler. This applies to all members of the University community, including students, faculty, staff, University affiliates, contractors, and visitors. Forms of tobacco not permitted include cigarettes, cigars, pipes, water pipes (hookah), bidis, kreteks, electronic cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, snuff, chewing tobacco, and all other tobacco products. There are several cessation programs available to students looking to quit smoking, including counseling, quitlines, and group support. For more information on cessation programs please visit www.uttyler.edu/tobacco-free.

Academic Honesty and Academic Misconduct

The UT Tyler community comes together to pledge that "Honor and integrity will not allow me to lie, cheat, or steal, nor to accept the actions of those who do." Therefore, we enforce the Student Conduct and Discipline policy (Links to an external site.) in the Student Manual Of Operating Procedures (Section 8).

Student Standards of Academic Conduct

Disciplinary proceedings may be initiated against any student who engages in scholastic dishonesty, including, but not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a

student or the attempt to commit such acts.

- “Cheating” includes, but is not limited to:

1. copying from another student’s test paper;
2. using, during a test, materials not authorized by the person giving the test;
3. failure to comply with instructions given by the person administering the test;
4. possession during a test of materials which are not authorized by the person giving the test, such as class notes or specifically designed “crib notes”. The presence of textbooks constitutes a violation if they have been specifically prohibited by the person administering the test;
5. using, buying, stealing, transporting, or soliciting in whole or part the contents of an unadministered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program;
6. collaborating with or seeking aid from another student during a test or other assignment without authority;
7. discussing the contents of an examination with another student who will take the examination;
8. divulging the contents of an examination, for the purpose of preserving questions for use by another, when the instructor has designated that the examination is not to be removed from the examination room or not to be returned or to be kept by the student;
9. substituting for another person, or permitting another person to substitute for oneself to take a course, a test, or any course-related assignment;
10. paying or offering money or other valuable thing to, or coercing another person to obtain an unadministered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program or information about an unadministered test, test key, home solution or computer program;
11. falsifying research data, laboratory reports, and/or other academic work offered for credit;
12. taking, keeping, misplacing, or damaging the property of The University of Texas at Tyler, or of another, if the student knows or reasonably should know that an unfair academic advantage would be gained by such conduct; and
13. misrepresenting facts, including providing false grades or resumes, for the purpose of obtaining an academic or financial benefit or injuring another student academically or financially.

- “Plagiarism” includes, but is not limited to, the appropriation, buying, receiving as a gift, or obtaining by any means another’s work and the submission of it as one’s own academic work offered for credit.

- “Collusion” includes, but is not limited to, the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing academic assignments offered for credit or collaboration with another person to commit a violation of any section of the rules on scholastic dishonesty.

- All written work that is submitted will be subject to review by plagiarism software.

The UT-Tyler Writing Center

The Writing Center provides professional writing tutoring for all students in all disciplines. If you wish to use the Writing Center, you should plan for a minimum of two hour-long tutorials per assignment: the first to provide an initial consultation and drafting plan, and the second to follow up. Be prepared to take an active role in your learning, as you will be asked to discuss your work during your tutorial. While Writing Center tutors are happy to provide constructive criticism and teach effective writing techniques, under no circumstances will they fix, repair, or operate on your paper. Appointments: 903.565-5995, writingcenter@uttyler.edu

Disability/Accessibility Services

In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA) the University of Texas at Tyler offers accommodations to students with learning, physical and/or psychological disabilities. If you have a disability, including a non-visible diagnosis such as a learning disorder, chronic illness, TBI, PTSD, ADHD, or you have a history of

modifications or accommodations in a previous educational environment, you are encouraged to visit <https://hood.accessiblelearning.com/UTTyler> and fill out the New Student application.

The Student Accessibility and Resources (SAR) office will contact you when your application has been submitted and an appointment with Cynthia Lowery, Assistant Director of Student Services/ADA Coordinator. For more information, including filling out an application for services, please visit the SAR webpage at <http://www.uttyler.edu/disabilityservices>, the SAR office located in the University Center, #3150 or call 903.566.7079.

Grade Replacement/Forgiveness and Census Date Policies

Students repeating a course for grade forgiveness (grade replacement) must file a Grade Replacement Contract with the Enrollment Services Center (ADM 230) on or before the Census Date of the semester in which the course will be repeated (September 3, 2021). Grade Replacement Contracts are available in the Enrollment Services Center or at <http://www.uttyler.edu/registrar>. Each semester's Census Date can be found on the Contract itself, on the Academic Calendar, or in the information pamphlets published each semester by the Office of the Registrar.

Failure to file a Grade Replacement Contract will result in both the original and repeated grade being used to calculate your overall grade point average. Undergraduates are eligible to exercise grade replacement for only three course repeats during their career at UT Tyler; graduates are eligible for two grade replacements. Full policy details are printed on each Grade Replacement Contract. The Census Date (September 3, 2021) is the deadline for many forms and enrollment actions of which students need to be aware. These include:

- Submitting Grade Replacement Contracts, Transient Forms, requests to withhold directory information, approvals for taking courses as Audit, Pass/Fail or Credit/No Credit.
- Receiving 100% refunds for partial withdrawals. (There is no refund for these after the Census Date)
- Schedule adjustments (section changes, adding a new class, dropping without a "W" grade)
- Being reinstated or re-enrolled in classes after being dropped for non-payment
- Completing the process for tuition exemptions or waivers through Financial Aid

Final Exam Policy

Final examinations are administered as scheduled. If unusual circumstances require that special arrangements be made for an individual student or class, the dean of the appropriate college, after consultation with the faculty member involved, may authorize an exception to the schedule. Faculty members are required to maintain student final examination papers for a minimum of three months following the examination date.

Incomplete Grade Policy

If a student, because of extenuating circumstances, is unable to complete all of the requirements for a course by the end of the semester, then the instructor may recommend an Incomplete (I) for the course. The "I" may be assigned in lieu of a grade only when all of the following conditions are met: (a) the student has been making satisfactory progress in the course; (b) the student is unable to complete all course work or final exam due to unusual circumstances that are beyond personal control and are acceptable to the instructor; and (c) the student presents these reasons prior to the time that the final grade roster is due. The semester credit hours for an Incomplete will not be used to calculate the grade point average for a student.

The student and the instructor must submit an Incomplete Form detailing the work required and the time by which the work must be completed to their respective department chair or college dean for approval. The time limit established must not exceed one year. Should the student fail to complete all of the work for the course within the time limit, then the instructor may assign zeros to the unfinished work, compute the course average for the student, and assign the appropriate grade. If a grade has not been assigned within one year, then the Incomplete will be changed to an F, or to NC if the course was originally taken under the CR/NC grading basis.

Grade Appeal Policy

UT Tyler's Grade Appeal policy requires the completion of a Grade Appeal form for this action to take place. The grade appeal begins with the instructor of your course. If you do not agree with the decision of the instructor, you may then move your appeal to the department chair/school director for that course. If you are still dissatisfied with the decision of the chair/director, you may move the appeal to the Dean of the College offering that course who has the final decision. Grade appeals must be initiated within sixty (60) days from the date of receiving the final course grade. The Grade Appeal form is found on the Registrar's Form Library.

Withdrawing from Class

Students you are allowed to withdraw (Links to an external site.) (drop) from this course through the University's Withdrawal Portal (Links to an external site.). Texas law prohibits students who began college for the first time in Fall 2007 or thereafter from dropping more than six courses during their entire undergraduate career. This includes courses dropped at other 2-year or 4-year Texas public colleges and universities. Make sure to consider the impact withdrawing from this class has on your academic progress as well as the financial implications.

We encourage you to consult your advisor(s) and financial aid for additional guidance. CAUTION #1: Withdrawing before census day does not mean you get a full refund. Please see the Tuition and Fee Refund Schedule (Links to an external site.). CAUTION #2: All international students must check with the Office of International Programs (Links to an external site.) before withdrawing. All international students are required to enroll full-time for fall and spring terms.

Absence for Official University Events or Activities

This course follows the practices related to approved absences as noted by the Student Manual of Operating Procedures (Sec. 1 -501 (Links to an external site.))

Absence for Religious Holidays

Students who anticipate being absent from class due to a religious holiday are requested to inform the instructor by the second class meeting of the semester.

FERPA

UT Tyler follows the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) as noted in University Policy 5.2.3 (Links to an external site.). The course instructor will follow all requirements in protecting your confidential information.

Military Affiliated Students

UT Tyler honors the service and sacrifices of our military affiliated students. If you are a student who is a veteran, on active duty, in the reserves or National Guard, or a military spouse or dependent, please stay in contact with me if any aspect of your present or prior service or family situation makes it difficult for you to fulfill the requirements of a course or creates disruption in your academic progress. It is important to make me aware of any complications as far in advance as possible. I am willing to work

with you and, if needed, put you in contact with university staff who are trained to assist you. Campus resources for military affiliated students are in the Military and Veterans Success Center (MVSC (Links to an external site.)) The MVSC can be reached at MVSC@uttyler.edu, or via phone at 903.565.5972.

Emergency Exits and Evacuation

Everyone is required to exit the building when a fire alarm goes off. Follow your instructor's directions regarding the appropriate exit. If you require assistance during an evacuation, inform your instructor in the first week of class. Do not re-enter the building unless given permission by University Police, Fire department, or Fire Prevention Services.

UT Tyler Resources for Students

- UT Tyler Writing Center (903.565.5995), writingcenter@uttyler.edu
- UT Tyler Tutoring Center (903.565.5964), tutoring@uttyler.edu
- The Mathematics Learning Center, RBN 4021, this is the open access computer lab for math students, with tutors on duty to assist students who are enrolled in early-career courses.
- UT Tyler Counseling Center (903.566.7254)