

**JOU 4930 (08C6): INTRO TO MEDIA RESEARCH**

Mondays 3:00-6:00PM, MAT 0118

**PROFESSOR**

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**OFFICE HOURS**

3067 Weimer Hall  
Mon 9am-11am; Wed 10am-12pm  
Also available by appointment

**REQUIRED READINGS**

No required textbook; all readings will be posted on Canvas

Access to hard copy of APA style book (6<sup>th</sup> ed.) is recommended

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The ability to conduct and interpret audience research is a critical skill needed for a variety of media-related careers. To that end, JOU 4930 will introduce students to the principles of research methods in the social and behavioral sciences. By the end of the semester, students will be able to effectively interpret, evaluate, and write about research from a variety of methodological approaches including experimental design, cross-sectional studies, and qualitative methods.

**GRADING**

Attendance/Participation:	10%
Academic Interview:	10%
Article Critique:	10%
Research Press Release:	20%
Midterm Exam:	20%
In-depth Research Story:	30%

Grading scale: A, 100-93; A-, 92-90; B+, 89-87; B, 86-84; B-, 83-80; C+, 79-77; C, 76-74; C-, 73-70; D+, 69-67; D, 66-64; D-, 63-60; E, 59 and below

## ASSIGNMENTS AND DEADLINES

**Attendance/Participation (10%):** Our class meets one time a week. This means that one absence from class is equivalent to missing one week worth of material. As a result, attendance is mandatory and critical for student success. Students are expected to read before coming to class and be prepared to participate in class discussion. Your grade for “attendance/participation” will be determined by the consistency of your attendance and the quality of your involvement in class discussion.

**Academic Interview (10%):** Learning to speak with researchers is an essential skill for any media professional. This assignment will require you to interview a professor or graduate student at UF about a research methods related topic (topics will be assigned to students during the second week of class). Following the interview, students will be asked to assess the accuracy of the interview by consulting with outside sources. Finally, you will write a 3-5 page summary of the topic based on evidence from your interviews and supporting outside materials. All citations should be reported using APA style, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. for this and subsequent assignments. **DUE FEB. 6<sup>TH</sup>.**

**Article Critique (10%):** In order to leverage academic studies for practical purposes, you must first be able to critically evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of research. This assignment will require you to select a peer reviewed journal article from the social and behavioral sciences (article to be pre-approved by the professor prior to completing the assignment). After reading the article, you will be asked to create a handout and complete an in-class presentation (with accompanying visual aid, such as PowerPoint or Prezi) that summarizes the methodology and findings of the study as well as critiques the strengths and weaknesses of the work. **DEADLINE TBD IN WEEK 2.**

**Midterm Exam (20%):** To ensure comprehension and retention of basic social scientific terminology, a midterm exam will be conducted. The exam (20-30 questions) will include multiple choice and short answer responses. A study guide will be provided two weeks in advance of the exam. **EXAM WILL BE ADMINSTERED FEB. 27TH.**

**Research Press Release (20%):** Choose a “newsworthy” article from a social scientific journal (article to be pre-approved by the professor prior to completing the assignment). Read the article, then write a 1-2 page press release for a generalist audience. This press release should both summarize the methodology and findings of the work as well as include quotes from expert sources on the topic, such as the original author of the work or a researcher from the related field

of study. Work will be evaluated based on the diversity of sources used and the accuracy of the summary provided. **DUE MAR 20<sup>TH</sup>**.

**In-depth Research Story (30%):** Combining all of the skills and knowledge you have learned throughout the semester, complete a thorough review of social scientific research in an area of your choosing (area to be pre-approved by professor before completing assignment). Review peer-reviewed articles, read book chapters, and consult with academics who are experts in your chosen topic area. Based on this background research, write an in-depth news story (5-10 pages) for a generalist audience that summarizes research findings from this area and provides commentary on the quality and persuasiveness of findings in the area. **DUE APR 17<sup>TH</sup>**.

### **LATE WORK POLICY**

One letter grade (-10 points) will be deducted per day for work submitted past the assignment's deadline. If students anticipate that they will be unable to meet a deadline due to university documented issues (e.g., health condition, death in family), please contact me as soon as possible to arrange an extension. In general, I am quite willing to work with students when issues arise that prevent you from submitting work on time. However, it is necessary for these discussions regarding late work to occur either before or recently after (e.g., within a week) the original deadline for the assignment. Work that is more than 10 days late will be given a "0" unless you contact the professor to arrange an alternative due date within the week that the assignment was due. If you miss the midterm exam, you will need to provide a documented excuse for your absence and arrange an alternative time to take the test within a week of the original exam.

### **HONOR CODE POLICY**

This class strictly adheres to the UF honor code. Any prohibited behavior such as plagiarism, data fabrication, or cheating will result in a failing grade for the assignment in question and referral to the honor court, who may administer additional penalties such as a failing grade for the course or dismissal from the college. More information about the university honor code is available online at the following link: <https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>

### **CLASSROOM CONDUCT**

It is expected that all students will arrive to class on time and be respectful of fellow classmates during lecture and student presentations. Please turn all cell phones to silent. While laptops are allowed, it is expected that they will only be used for class-related work such as note-taking or group assignments.

**Schedule**

January 9th:	Course Overview; Introduction to Audience Research
January 16th:	University Holiday; No Class
January 23rd:	Fundamentals of the Scientific Method, Part 1
January 30th:	Fundamentals of the Scientific Method, Part 2
February 6th:	Experimental Design and Causation, Part 1
February 13th:	Experimental Design and Causation, Part 2
February 20th:	Surveys, Polls and Correlation
February 27th:	MIDTERM EXAM
March 6th:	Spring Break: No Class
March 13th:	Qualitative Research, Part 1
March 20th:	Qualitative Research, Part 2
March 27th:	Basics of Numeracy, Part 1
April 3rd:	Basics of Numeracy, Part 2
April 10th:	Ethics of Audience Research
April 17th:	Final Presentations; Wrap Up