

Research Methods

MMC 6421
Academic Term: Fall 2020
3 Credit Hours

Instructor

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Virtual Office Hours: Via Zoom, by appointment

Course GroupMe: https://groupme.com/join_group/61794431/0gZbxa6c

Teaching Assistants

- N/A

Course Description & Prerequisites

The students in this course will learn the methods and strategies to use when evaluating online communication tools. Through effective working knowledge and real-world applications, the students will analyze and apply various types of research methods and tools.

Course Pre-Requisites / Co-Requisites

N/A

Course Delivery Mode & Time Commitment

This is a fully online course and you must log into Canvas with your Gatorlink username and password to access the materials and assignments. The course is organized into modules with due dates. The course begins with the Course Orientation (START HERE) Module, which will familiarize you with the course.

Time Commitment

Expect to spend between 10 to 20 hours per week, per course, watching lectures, reading, working on assignments and projects, engaging in discussions, and working with your group members on your research projects.

Course-Level Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to: By the end of this course, students will:

1. Identify foundational research concepts as discussed in lecture and readings. (CO: 1)
2. Explore both traditional and digital forms of research to include research basics, secondary data research, and original data collection. (CO: 2)
3. Evaluate historically validated, rigorous research methods for understanding how and why consumers utilize mass communication platforms and tools to the benefit of organizations. (CO: 3)
4. Develop sufficiently narrow research questions based on a topic or interest of choice. (CO: 4)
5. Conduct qualitative and quantitative research relevant to the digital communications practitioner. (CO: 5)
6. Apply appropriate research methods to digital inquiry. (CO: 6)
7. Analyze and interpret statistical data for validity in measurement. (CO: 7)

8. Identify the most appropriate methods of inquiry for use in communication research. (CO: 8)

(CO = Course-Level Objective)

Textbooks & Materials

Required Course Textbook(s): N/A

All readings will be provided in the course modules.

Minimum Technology Requirements & Computer Skills

COMPUTER REQUIREMENTS

Basic Computer Specifications for Canvas

- [Specifications](#)
- Reliable Web Browser: Login to Canvas and make sure your Internet browser is compatible.

Peripherals

- A backup option should be available to minimize any loss of work such as an external hard drive, a USB drive, cloud storage, etc.

Hardware

- Dependable computer.
- Computer speakers.
- Headset with microphone.
- Webcam.

Software

- [Microsoft Office 365](#).
- [UF Apps](#)– access UF software applications from any device from any location, at any time.
- Canvas Mobile App: Download instructions for [iOS device](#) or [Android device](#).
- [Adobe Reader](#)
- <https://ufl.zoom.us/>
- Google Suite

Internet Connection

- Recommended: Broadband Internet connection with a speed of 4 Mbps or higher.
- To function properly, Canvas requires a high-speed Internet connection (cable modem, DSL, satellite broadband, T1, etc.). The minimum Internet connection speed to access Canvas is a consistent 1.5 Mbps (megabits per second) or higher.
- [Check your Internet speed here.](#)

Subscriptions, Plug-Ins, and Other

- [Adobe Flash Player](#) (Good until the Microsoft update December 31, 2020.)
- [JAVA](#)

MINIMUM COMPUTER AND DIGITAL INFORMATION LITERACY SKILLS REQUIREMENTS

The general and course-specific computer and digital information literacy skills you must have to succeed in the course include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Accessing the Internet.
- Using Canvas.
- Using email with attachments.
- Creating and submitting files in processing program such as Microsoft Office Tools.
- Copying and pasting functions.
- Downloading and installing software.
- Using presentation, graphics, and other programs.
- Posting and commenting in an online discussion.
- Searching the University of Florida library and websites.

Technical Support

In the event that you have technical difficulties with your course, please contact the [UF Computing Help Desk](#) either by filling out an [online request form](#) or calling 352-392-4357 - select option 1. The Help Desk is located on the ground floor of the Hub on the UF campus.

If your technical difficulties caused you to miss a due date, you **MUST** report the problem to the Help Desk and then email your instructor. Include the ticket number that you are given from the Help Desk in an email to the instructor to explain the late assignment/quiz/test.

IT Support

For all Technical assistance questions please contact the UF Computing Help Desk:

Phone: 352-392-HELP (4357)

Email: helpdesk@ufl.edu

Please Note

Your instructor is not able to handle technological issues or answer questions related to computer issues. If a problem of this nature arises that causes you to miss an assignment, you must provide your Help Desk ticket number to the instructor in order to receive an extension.

Course Grading Policies

Grading Criterion, Late Assignment Policy, and Expectations for Assignments

GRADING CRITERIA

Lecture Response Post (LRP), 10 pts. each

Students will create ONE (1) Lecture Response Post (LRP) in 14 of this term's modules in response to prompts and/or questions posed by the instructor during lectures; students must watch the lecture to obtain the questions and will only be able to view the discussion board once they have posted their own LRP. LRPs must be at least 400-500 words in length and should completely answer every question posed by the instructor. Students who fail to answer all questions will lose points. Where applicable, LRPs should include thoughtful responses and discourse that connect what is discussed throughout the lecture to the student's work or experience with professional communication. There will be fourteen (14) LRPs this semester and each one is worth TEN (10) points.

Research Challenges, 10 pts. each

In eight weeks of this term the instructor will post an active learning research-related Challenge assignment as an announcement in Canvas. Students will follow directions for the Research Challenge as posted and earn up to TEN (10) points for each challenge they complete. There will be a total of 8 challenges posted. The challenges will be posted as an Announcement in Canvas no later than Monday of the week assigned and must be completed by Saturday evening at 11:59 PM EST each week. It is the students' responsibility to ensure that they complete all eight (8) challenges by commenting with their work on the Canvas Announcement. Students can earn 0, 5, Or 10 points for each challenge.

Mini Research Assignments (MRA), 20 pts. each

These assignments are spread throughout the semester and will offer opportunities for students to conduct small-scale research projects. Each assignment is different and full details are offered in the Assignments tab in Canvas. Students are required to complete all four (4) mini research assignments, for a total of 80 points.

Again, the goal is the make connections between research and social media. All mini research assignments are due **Saturday at 11:59 PM EST** of the week assigned.

Live Meetings, 5 pts. each

There will be three (4) graded live meeting opportunities this term worth five points each. Each live meeting will have a different purpose and will be scheduled as we move through the semester. The meetings will occur via Zoom and will last approximately 15-30 minutes each. Some of the meetings will be with the entire class, and others will be with your project group only. Above all, the goal is for students to have an opportunity to interact with one another and with the instructor in a more informal setting. Students will earn points for each live meeting attended and group live meetings will be scheduled by vote. Live Meetings will occur according to the chart below and will be scheduled via the Calendar feature in Canvas. Dates are subject to change at the instructor's discretion.

Group Research Project, 2 parts, 90 pts. each

The Group Research Project offers students an opportunity to explore a topic of their choosing from both a quantitative and a qualitative perspective. Students will work with their group and the professor early in the course to determine a sufficiently narrow topic for exploration that is relevant to the field of communications. To start the process of choosing a topic, students must INDIVIDUALLY email a list of 3 topic ideas to the instructor via email or Canvas mail no later than **Saturday, 9/7 at 11:59 PM EST**. During the week following this initial email students will meet as a group with the instructor to finalize their topic choice and research question(s). See the Canvas assignment for more details.

Expectations for Assignments: Writing Style

In order to meet the academic rigor and standards of a graduate program, all students are required to use the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA) 7th Edition style in their courses. The APA 7th Edition Manual has a plethora of guidelines that includes scholarly writing, publishing principles, elements and format for your papers, writing style and grammar, bias-free language guidelines, mechanics of style, intext citing and references, etc. For additional information on notable changes, see changes between APA 6th Edition and APA 7th Edition.

Your grade will be calculated based on the following:

Assignments/Assessments	Points
Course Orientation: These assignments are required; however, they not count toward the final grade.	0

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Introduction • Course Evaluation 	
14 Discussions	140
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worth 10 points each. 	
8 Research Challenges	80
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worth 10 points each. 	
4 Mini Research Assignments (MRA)	80
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worth 20 points each. 	
Research Project Part 1 & 2	180
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worth 90 points each. 	
4 Live Meetings	20
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worth 5 points each. 	
TOTAL	500

Grade	Percentage	Points
A	92.5-100%	463-500
A-	89.5-92.4%	448-462
B+	86.5-89.4%	433-447
B	82.5-86.4%	413-432
B-	79.5-82.4%	398-412
C+	76.5-79.4%	383-397
C	72.5-76.4%	363-382
C-	69.5-72.4%	348-362
D+	66.5-69.4%	333-347
D	62.5-66.4%	313-332
D-	59.5-62.4%	298-312
E	0 – 59.4%	0-297

The only passing grades for graduate students are A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, and S. Grades of B-, C+ or C count toward a graduate degree if an equal number of credits in courses numbered 5000 or higher have been earned with grades of B+, A- and A, respectively. Grade points are not given for S and U grades; S and U grades are not used to calculate grade point averages. All letter-graded courses eligible to count toward the graduate degree, except 1000- and 2000-level courses, are used to calculate the cumulative grade-point average. Letter grades of C-, D+, D, D- or E are not considered passing at the graduate level, although the grade points associated with these letter grades are included in grade point average calculations. See the [UF grading policy](#) for more information.

LATE ASSIGNMENT POLICY

Late assignments will not be accepted unless it is a [University excused absence](#) as stated in the attendance policies. **No late work will be accepted for final projects or work due in the final week of class due to the university grading deadlines.** If potential issues arise concerning submitting final work, students should contact their instructors before deadlines to discuss the possibility of an Incomplete Grade Contract.

1. Late Assignment Grade Reductions

- a. 0-24 Hours Late: 10% reduction in grade.
- b. Over 24 Hours (24 hours and 1 minute) to 7 Calendar Days Late: 20% reduction in grade.
- c. After the 7th Calendar Day: Work will not be accepted.

- Late Discussions will not be accepted.

EXPECTATIONS FOR ASSIGNMENTS

- Course Evaluation**

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aq.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aq.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

Accessibility Policy

Students requiring reasonable access to services and resources required by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and other applicable federal and state regulations, please access [UF Accessibility](#) for all options available to you. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodations. Please register early!

Contact Information

- For ADA questions: Dr. Russ Froman, rfroman@ufl.edu , Phone: 352 - 273-1094
- Disability Resource Center: Gerry Altamirano, galtamirano@ufl.edu , Phone: 352 - 392-8565
- Electronic Information Technology & Communication Accessibility: Anne Allen, alallen@ufl.edu , Phone: 352- 871-2707
- For persons with hearing or speech related accessibility needs: When trying to access an office on campus that does not list a TDD/TTY number, contact the Florida Relay Service at 800-955-8771(TDD) or 711 (V/TDD).

Accessibility Resource Center

University of Florida
PO Box 114085
Gainesville, FL 32611-4085
Phone: 352-392-8565
[Email: accessuf@dso.ufl.edu](mailto:accessuf@dso.ufl.edu)

Address

Environmental Health and Safety Administrative Offices
916 Newell Dr
Gainesville, FL 32603

For more information, see UF's [Electronic Information Technology Accessibility \(EITA\) Policy](#).

Communication Policy

EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENTS

Announcements

You are responsible for reading all announcements posted in Canvas each time you log in.

Email

You are responsible for reading all your course email and responding in a timely manner (within 24 hours).

Video Conferencing

You are responsible for attending course video conferencing meetings. If you cannot attend the video conferencing meeting, please advise the instructor and/or your team at least 24 hours in advance (exceptions can be made for legitimate emergencies). You are expected to demonstrate netiquette and etiquette communication expectations.

Course-Related Questions

Post course-related questions in the GroupMe app. This allows other participants with the same question to benefit from the responses. Also, make sure you review this forum prior to posting a question. Someone may have already asked and answered the question in previous posts.

Email Policy

Except for weekends, holidays, and University breaks, the instructor will typically respond to emails within 48 hours. You should ask course-related questions in the FAQ discussion board. If you have questions of a personal nature, please email the instructor.

Assignment Feedback Policy

The instructor will provide feedback on submitted assignments within 7 to 10 days of the submission date. Major assignments will require more time for grading.

Course-Related Questions Policy

Except weekends and holidays, the instructor will generally answer questions within 48 hours.

Video Conferencing

The instructor will provide any information on required video conferencing within Canvas.

Electronic Communication Policy

In addition to the University's policy, please consider the following:

- Privacy, confidentiality, and security in all electronic communications. See [Information Security](#).
- All electronic communication resources must be used for the course and in alignment with to the CJC Online and University mission. See the [Acceptable Use Policy](#).
- Prohibited use of false identity, false identity pseudonyms, or anonymous (sender's name or electronic identification is hidden).
- Prohibited online access without consent.
- Prohibited disruption of services including introducing computer contaminants (viruses).
- Prohibited [harassment](#) of any kind.

Privacy

If your course includes live synchronous meetings, the class sessions will all be audio visually recorded for students in the class to refer back and for enrolled students who are unable to attend live. Students who participate with their camera engaged or utilize a profile image are agreeing to have their video or image recorded. If you are unwilling to consent to have your profile or video image recorded, be sure to keep your camera off and do not use a profile image. Likewise, students who un-mute during class and participate orally are agreeing to have their voices recorded. If you are not willing to consent to have your voice recorded during class, you will need to keep your mute button activated and communicate exclusively using the "chat" feature, which allows students to type questions and comments live.

Please see UF's Information Technology [policies](#) for additional information.

Select CJC and University Policies and Guidelines

Academic Integrity Policy

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code."

The [Student Honor Code](#), Violation of the Student Honor Code, specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to the appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TA's in this class.

Netiquette

Casual style of communication is commonly found in the online environment and students are sometimes tempted to relax their grammar, word choice, syntax (arrangement of words to create well-formed sentences), writing mechanics (capitalization, punctuation, and spelling), and/or professionalism. Keep in mind when communicating with others to be courteous, civil, respectful, and professional. Please remember that you are adult students and professionals—your communication must be appropriate.

Online Attendance Policy

Since the course is online, you should access your course at least four times per week to ensure you do not miss pertinent postings, messages, or announcements. It is imperative that you meet course deadlines and stay active in discussion boards, group projects, etc. If you are experiencing a major illness, absences due to University duties, or other large-scale issues, contact the instructor immediately.

Students are responsible for meeting all academic objectives as defined by the instructor. In general, acceptable reasons for absences include illness, serious family emergencies, special curricular requirements, military obligation, [severe weather conditions](#), [religious holidays](#), and participation in official University activities. Absences from class for court-imposed legal obligations (e.g., jury duty or subpoena) must be excused. [Excused absences](#) must be consistent with university policies in the Graduate Catalog and require appropriate documentation. For additional information, see the [attendance policies](#).

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is unacceptable; especially, in the academic communities. All academic work must be an original work of your own thought, research, or self-expression. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, prohibited collaboration, consultation, submission of academic work that has been purchased or obtained (see the [UF Policy: Student Conduct Violation](#)). Remember that plagiarism is not acceptable in any of your work including all discussion board posts, journal entries, wikis, and other written and oral presentation assignments. Always cite your sources!

Software Use

All faculty, staff, and students of the University are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also against University policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate. We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to uphold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity.

Notification to Students of FERPA Rights

There are federal laws ([FERPA](#)) protecting your privacy with regards to grades earned in courses and on individual assignments.

Student Guidelines for Course Challenges

Student with questions regarding course content such as assignments, assessments, instructional materials, lectures, meetings, course objectives, course module objectives, or other areas of the course, please adhere to the following guidelines:

1. You should first *approach the faculty member who is teaching the course* to ask for clarifications regarding the course assignments, assessments, materials, lectures, meetings, etc.
 - i) In the Course Orientation Module, you will find the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) page which has been placed there for the purpose of addressing course questions, issues, and challenges.
 - ii) In the Course Orientation Module Welcome page, under Meet your Instructor, you find the faculty members email and directions for requesting an appointment where you can address any concerns and/or questions.
2. If after meeting with *the faculty member teaching the course* you are still not clear on the course assignments, assessments, materials, lectures, meetings, etc., then the next step would be to contact online advising (onlineadvising@jou.ufl.edu) for additional guidance.

Video Conferencing Etiquette

Video conferencing is an excellent tool to interface with your peers and instructor(s) and there are also netiquette expectations to ensure that all participants are respected and treated with civility. Please make sure that you follow all of the netiquette and [etiquette](#) expectations including the following:

1. Be punctual and courteous.
2. Position your camera at eye level with good lighting.
3. Show respect and professionalism by dressing business casual or business professional.
4. Make sure your background is in a proper setting with minimal distractions.
5. Mute your microphone when you are not speaking.

Writing Style

In order to meet the academic rigor and standards of a graduate program, all students are required to use the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA) 7th Edition style in their courses. The APA 7th Edition Manual has a plethora of guidelines that includes scholarly writing, publishing principles, elements and format for your papers, writing style and grammar, bias-free language guidelines, mechanics of style, intext citing and references, etc. For additional information on notable changes, see [changes between APA 6th Edition and APA 7th Edition](#).

Academic and Student Resources

Academic Resources

- [One UF Student Portal](#) – Course registration, final grades, transcript requests, degree audit.
- [GatorEvals](#) – Online faculty evaluations and results.
- [UF Bookstore](#): Phone: 352-392-0194, Email: ufbookstore@bsd.ufl.edu
- [Library Support](#): Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.
[UF Library Services for Distance Students](#)
[Ask a Librarian](#) – chat with librarians online.
CJC Librarian - [April Hines](#), Phone: 352-273-2728, Email: aprhine@uflib.ufl.edu.
[Course Reserves](#): Electronic resource reserve items that can be accessed via links or files.

- [Copyright Concerns of Graduate Researchers](#): Information and resource guide on copyright concerns.
- [Teaching Center](#): General study skills and tutoring. Broward Hall, Phone: 352-392-2010 or 352-392-6420.
- [Writing Studio](#): Provides one-on-one consultations and workshops tailored to specific classes (graduate and undergraduate). 302 Tigert Hall, Phone: 352-846-1138.
- [Online Student Complaints](#): This process is designed to make every attempt to resolve student complaints within its academic and administrative departments at the program level.
- [Information for Veterans](#): Veterans Affairs Certification: Phone: 352 - 294-2948

Student Resources

- [Graduate Student Resources](#): Available resources for graduate students. Your advisors are here to support you, answer questions, help with registration, and other sources. Email onlineadvising@jou.ufl.edu.
- [U Matter, We Care](#): If you or a friend is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu or Phone: 352-294-2273 so that a team member can reach out.
- [Counseling and Wellness Center](#): [3190 Radio Road, Gainesville, FL 32611](#)
[Phone: \(352\) 392-1575, Fax: \(352\) 273-4738](#)
- [Sexual Violence Response](#): Victim services, Care Area, UF Police Department, and Title IX.
- [University Police Department](#): Resources available include the Office of Victim Services and Community Services Division. Emergency: 9-1-1; Non-Emergency: 352-392-1111.
- [Gator Connect](#): Online database of student organizations.
- [Career Connection Center](#): Career assistance and counseling. Reitz Union, Phone: 352-392-1601.
- [Veteran Services](#): Office of Student Veteran Services, Phone: 352-294-2948, email: vacounselor@ufl.edu. | Collegiate Veterans Success Center, Phone: 352- 294-7215, email: charlotte.kemper@va.gov.
- [Student Financial Affairs](#): Financial aid counseling including Aid-a-Gator program. Phone: 352-392-1275.
- [Student Success Coach](#): Meet with a graduate student coach that can support you in numerous ways during your time in graduate school, such as time and stress management, motivation, organization, and much more.



The instructor reserves the right to adjust this syllabus, as necessary.