

# MMC5427 | Research Methods in Digital Communications | Term C

Sections 7095, 71F0, and 71FF

*Research is formalized curiosity. It's poking and prying with a purpose.*

~Zora Neale Hurston

**Instructor** Dr. Tami K. Tomasello  
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**Office Hours** Virtual. I reside in Georgia; therefore, please contact me via email at the account listed above. I will typically respond within 24 hours. Optional interactive office/meeting hours will be set up in our Adobe Connect classroom and announced once the course has started.

**Course Site** Located in **Canvas** via <https://lss.at.ufl.edu/>

## Adobe Connect

**Classroom** [https://uflcoj.adobeconnect.com/mmc5427\\_sm/](https://uflcoj.adobeconnect.com/mmc5427_sm/) (Sign in as a “Guest”)

## COURSE COMMUNICATIONS

For questions related to course concepts, assignments, policies, and procedures, please use the **General Discussion** forum on the course site. For communications of a personal nature (e.g., course performance, medical emergencies), please email me directly at the university account listed above and include “MMC5427” in the subject line.

## REQUIRED TEXTS/READINGS

1. Babbie, E. R. (2016). *The practice of social research* (14<sup>th</sup> ed.). Cengage. ISBN: 9781305700253
  - Please note: You are required to use the bundled 14<sup>th</sup> edition for this course. The bundled edition includes an access code for online material located on MindTap. We are using a special lower-priced, loose-leaf edition of the text that may be purchased from the UF bookstore (ISBN: 9781305700253).
2. Additional readings are assigned throughout the term and are available in digital format on the course site in their respective weekly units.

## COURSE OVERVIEW

A brief description of the course, its purpose, and the overall learning objectives.

### Course Description

This course introduces you to foundational research concepts as these apply to the study of social media and provides applied experience with conducting, analyzing, interpreting, and reporting results obtained from some of the data collection methods most commonly used in the field of communication.

**Purpose of Course**

From the cars we drive, to the clothes we wear, to the foods we eat, to the electronic devices we use, to our favorite apps and more, research has played and continues to play an important role in shaping our understandings of and interactions with the world in which we live. In the words of Joanne Keyton (2001), research is about “asking questions and finding answers.” Research is anything but dry or boring; it is exciting, demanding, empowering, and rewarding. And, it enhances the quality of our lives. If you are curious or have ever asked “Why?” then you are already a researcher.

Although research is involved in practically every aspect of our lives, this course helps you understand the role that formal, systematic research plays in investigating and understanding the communication process as it relates to social media by providing you with the knowledge and the practical skills necessary to conduct competent and effective inquiry. We will explore conventional methods of data collection that are commonly used in the communication discipline, as well as some of the new ways that these methods are being employed to ask questions and find answers (e.g., crowdsourcing and analyzing “big data”). By the end of our time together, you will have asked a specific “Why?” about some aspect of social media and engaged in two small-scale research projects that will assist you in answering that question. The knowledge and skills you gain in this course can then be put to use in your professional and personal lives, confidently and competently.

**Course Goals and/or Objectives**

The course is organized around specific cumulative objectives. As a result of this class, you will be able to:

1. Identify, describe, explain, discuss, evaluate, and apply foundational research concepts as these apply to the study of social media.
2. Identify, describe, explain, discuss, and evaluate the procedures for conducting qualitative research using interviews, focus groups, and observations as these apply to the study of social media.
3. Identify, describe, explain, discuss, and evaluate the procedures for conducting quantitative research using surveys, experiments, and content analyses as these apply to the study of social media.
4. Design, conduct, analyze, and report findings from online focus group research as it applies to the study of social media.
5. Design, conduct, analyze, and report findings from online survey research as it applies to the study of social media.

**Instructional Methods**

During our term together, we will examine the conceptual background, distinguishing features, assumptions and typical applications of a variety of research methods as these apply to the study of social media. The class is organized as follows:

- The course is divided into four (4) basic modules covering: 1) research basics, 2) qualitative methods of data collection, 3) quantitative methods of data collection, and 4) an end-of-term course reflection.
- Within each of the first three modules, foundational concepts are introduced on a weekly basis via assigned readings and other materials (e.g., audio, image, videos). You will complete comprehension quizzes and/or engage in online discussions about these concepts as a way to assess your mastery of this information.

- As the term progresses, you are guided through the process of completing two (2) research projects: first, an online focus group and, second, an online survey. Written reports will be submitted for both projects to assess mastery of these procedures and analyses. Weekly discussions will be held to provide feedback and keep track of your progress on these projects.
- In the final course module, we will take time to reflect on what you've learned this term and to look ahead at the future of research as well as how you might apply your newly honed skills in the professional world.

## ASSIGNMENTS

This section provides an overview of the assignments that will be used to assess your mastery of the course material. Additional details are provided on the course site in the weekly units and discussion forums and in appendices at the end of this syllabus.

### Comprehension Quizzes

Most weeks will require you to complete one or more chapter quizzes related to the required textbook as a way to keep you on track with the readings and to enable you to assess your understanding of foundational research concepts.

- Quizzes contain approximately 25 items and are accessed via the **MindTap** companion web site. Purchase of the bundled text includes access and instructions for signing on to MindTap (see also, **Appendix C** at the end of this syllabus for access instructions).
- Quizzes are a form of participation and are not graded in terms of "A, B, C..." Instead, as long as you receive a score of 85% or higher on a quiz, you will receive full credit (100%) for completing it.
- Each quiz may be taken up to three times prior to the deadline specified in the **Due Dates** file. The highest score will be counted.
- Unless otherwise noted by the instructor, comprehension quizzes are **due by Wednesday at 11:59 p.m.**
- If a score of 85% is not reached by the quiz deadline, then credit for a quiz will not be earned and a score of "0" will be entered into the grade book.

### Topic Discussions

During the term, class members will engage in four (4) topic discussions covering specific research concepts and methods.

- In your posts, you will be asked to explain, compare/contrast, evaluate, and synthesize information that is relevant to the materials covered in the weeks that the discussion post addresses.
- Unless otherwise noted by the instructor, initial topic discussion posts are **due by Friday at 11:59 p.m.** and at least two (2) follow-up posts are due within 48 hours (i.e., Sunday by 11:59 p.m.) of the original posting deadline.
- Topical posts receive a letter grade, "A, B, C ..." out of a 100 point total. Points are distributed accordingly:
  - Initial post [70 points]: Based on timeliness of submission, answering all questions and their parts, the quality of the insights offered, clear and appropriate use of relevant course concepts/terms (denoted in **bold** text), and adherence to the specified word count (see forum for details).

- Follow up posts [30 points]: Based on replying to a minimum of two (2) peers' initial posts within 48 hours of the initial post's deadline, quality of insights offered (not just simply "I like your post" comments), and following up on questions asked of you by others in their follow-ups.
- See the **Discussion** section of the course web site for specific instructions regarding each of the forums.

### **Project Discussions**

Most weeks will require you to participate in a project discussion. Project discussions provide opportunities for you to brainstorm on your research projects as well as to give and receive feedback on your research materials.

- Unless otherwise noted by the instructor, initial project discussion posts are **due by Friday at 11:59 p.m.** In instances when follow-up posts are required, these will be due within 48 hours (i.e., Sunday by 11:59 p.m.) of the original posting deadline.
- Project discussions count toward participation; they are not graded "A, B, C..." Instead, as long as you post by the deadline and what you post is of sufficient substance, you will receive credit for this activity.
- Project discussions are graded out of a total of 10 points per forum.
- See the **Discussion** section of the course site for additional information about each project discussion forum.

### **Research Project I**

The first research project requires you to plan and conduct an online focus group, using Google Hangouts on Air, on an instructor-approved social media topic of your choosing. The project will involve creating an interview schedule, recruiting participants, conducting the interview, transcribing the conversation, analyzing the results, and writing an executive summary of the main findings. Focus group results will be used to design the second research project, an online survey. See **Weeks 1 – 6** in the **Course Materials** section of the course site and **Appendix A** at the end of this syllabus for more details.

### **Research Project II**

The second research project requires you to plan and conduct an online survey, using the web application Qualtrics. The survey content will be based on the focus group results. The project will involve writing survey items, identifying appropriate measurement scales, recruiting respondents, conducting the survey, statistically analyzing the data (using basic procedures), analyzing the results, and writing an executive summary of the main findings that also include a synopsis of the focus group study. See **Weeks 7 – 11** in the **Course Materials** section of the course site and **Appendix B** at the end of this syllabus for more details.

## **GRADING POLICIES**

The course assignments are weighted as follows:

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Comprehension quizzes	10%
Topic Discussions	20%
Project Discussions	10%
Research Project Report I	25%
Research Project Report II	35%

**Grading Scale:** The following scale applies to this course. Final grades are rounded up at .49; thus, a final grade of 89.49 will be rounded up to a 90, while a grade of 89.48... will remain an 89.

100 – 93%	A	86 – 83%	B	76 – 73%	C	66 – 63%	D
92 – 90%	A-	82 – 80%	B-	72 – 70%	C-	62 – 60%	D-
89 – 87%	B+	79 – 77%	C+	69 – 67%	D+	59% - below	F

## COURSE POLICIES

The following policies apply specifically to this course, and you are responsible for knowing and honoring them.

### Attendance Policy

Because this is an online asynchronously delivered course, attendance in the form of calling roll will not occur; however, you are expected to sign onto the course site at least once each day throughout the twelve-week term to check for course updates in the announcements and discussion sections of the site.

### Quiz Policy

Most weeks require you to complete at least one chapter quiz that helps you to gauge your understanding of the material presented in the required text book. Quizzes are multiple choice and non-graded in the sense that your actual score is not factored into the course grade; rather, quizzes count as a form of class participation. Successful completion is based on 1) answering all quiz questions, 2) scoring 85% or higher within three attempts or less and 3) on-time submission.

### Assignment Policy

You will engage in a variety of graded assignments that include chapter quizzes, discussion posts (project and topical) and research reports, all of which are to be completed by a specified deadline (see **Due Dates** file for details).

### Late Submissions

If you miss a submission deadline, you are responsible for contacting me via email within 24 hours of the missed deadline. Acceptance of a late assignment, although not guaranteed, will be based on the validity of the reason and may require documentation to substantiate the claim.

- In instances where an assignment is accepted late, a one-letter grade per day late penalty will be applied, including weekends and holidays.
- An assignment will not be accepted after the fifth day that it is late. Note: Because of the interactive nature of discussion forums, once the discussion windows have closed on the topic and project discussions, these cannot be made up.

### Course Technology

This course makes use of a variety of software applications, including Google Hangouts, Qualtrics, and SPSS (a statistical software program, which is available at [apps.ufl.edu](http://apps.ufl.edu)). Detailed instructions for accessing these applications are located in the relevant weekly units in the **Course Materials** section of the course site.

### **Course Performance**

If at any time during the term you experience circumstances that adversely affect your performance, it is your responsibility to contact me immediately so that, if possible, reasonable accommodations can be made. A student who waits days, weeks or until the end of the term to claim a hardship is unlikely to be accommodated, particularly if excessive work has been missed. Also, you are responsible for keeping track of your grades and notifying me of any discrepancies in the grade book within one (1) week of a grade being posted (past this time, the grade will remain). Be proactive and take responsibility for yourself, as well as your actions.

### **Evaluations**

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>.

## **UF POLICIES**

### **University Policy on Accommodating Students with Disabilities**

Students requesting accommodation for disabilities must first register with the Dean of Students Office (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>). The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation. You must submit this documentation to me prior to submitting assignments or taking the quizzes.

Accommodations are not retroactive; therefore, students should contact the office as soon as possible in the term for which they are seeking accommodations.

### **University Policy on Academic Misconduct**

Academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. Students should be sure that they understand the UF Student Honor Code at <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/students.php>. In this course, unless otherwise noted, all graded assignments are to be completed *independently* without any collaboration with others in the course or elsewhere. Evidence of collaboration will result in a "0" score for the involved assignment/quiz and possible failure of the entire course. If in doubt, please ask me for clarification.

### **Netiquette: Online Communication Courtesy**

All members of the class are expected to follow rules of common courtesy in all email messages, threaded discussions, and interactive sessions; this includes but is not limited to: Using appropriate language and tone, providing descriptive subject lines, and addressing one another with respect. Failure to do so may result in having your communication options restricted or revoked. Additional netiquette details and expectations are located on the home page of the course site.

### **GETTING HELP\*\***

For issues with technical difficulties for E-learning in Canvas, please contact the UF Help Desk at:

- [Learning-support@ufl.edu](mailto:Learning-support@ufl.edu)
- (352) 392-HELP - select option 2
- <https://lss.at.ufl.edu/help.shtml>

\*\* Any requests for make-ups or acceptance of late work due to technical issues MUST be accompanied by the ticket number received from LSS when the problem was reported to them. The ticket number will document the time and date of the problem. You MUST e-mail your instructor within 24 hours of the technical difficulty if you wish to request a make-up or acceptance of late work.

Other students resources are available at <http://www.distance.ufl.edu/getting-help> for:

- Counseling and Wellness resources
- Disability resources
- Resources for handling student concerns and complaints
- Library Help Desk support

### **COURSE CONTRACT**

This syllabus represents the current plans and objectives for this course. As we progress through the term, these plans may change to enhance the class learning opportunity. Such changes, communicated clearly, are not unusual and should be expected. By remaining enrolled in this course, you agree to abide by the terms and expectations outlined in this document.

*See the next page for the **Course Schedule**.*

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

Below is a general at-a-glance overview of the course. Additional details are provided in the weekly learning units on the course site and in a separate **Due Dates** file that is located alongside the syllabus on the course site (make sure to download and consult this file throughout the term).

PART I: RESEARCH BASICS			
Week	Topic	Textbook Readings*	Assignments**
1. 05/11 – 16	What is research?	EB: Ch. 1, 3	Review course site Post introduction Chapter quizzes
2. 05/17 – 23	Selecting a research topic	EB: Ch. 4 - 5	Chapter quizzes Topic discussion (1) Project discussion
PART II: QUALITATIVE METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION & ANALYSIS			
3. 05/24 – 30 <i>Memorial Day 05/25</i>	Qualitative overview Interviews and focus groups	EB: Ch. 10 Ch. 7 (pp. 182 – 190)	Chapter quiz Project discussion
4. 05/31 – 06/06	Observation & Textual analysis		Topic discussion (2) Project discussion
5. 06/07 – 13	Data analysis	EB: Ch. 13	Chapter quiz Project discussion
6. 06/14 – 20	Reporting	EB: Ch. 17	Chapter quiz Project discussion <b>Research Project 1</b>
PART III: QUANTITATIVE METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION & ANALYSIS			
7. 06/21 – 27 <i>Independence Day observed 07/03</i>	Quantitative overview Surveys	EB: Ch. 6, 9 Ch. 7 (pp. 190 – 220)	Chapter quizzes Project discussion
8. 06/28 – 07/04 <i>Independence Day observed 07/03</i>	Experiments & Content analysis	EB: Ch. 8, 11	Chapter quizzes Topic discussion (3) Project discussion
9. 07/05 – 11	Data analysis - Descriptive	EB: Ch. 14	Chapter quiz Project discussion
10. 07/12 – 18	Data analysis - Inferential	EB: Ch. 16	Chapter quiz Project discussion
11. 07/19 – 25	Reporting	EB: Ch. 17 (review)	Project discussion <b>Research Project 2</b>
PART IV: RESEARCH REFLECTION			
12. 07/26 – 08/02	Future research & the future of research		Topic discussion (4)

\* EB = Chapter readings from the required text by Earl Babbie, *The Practice of Social Research* (14<sup>th</sup> edition). **NOTE:** Each week contains additional readings, and these are located in their respective unit on the course site.

\*\* Consult the separate **Due Dates** file located alongside the syllabus on the course site for details regarding assignment topics and submission deadlines.

## APPENDIX A

### **Research Project I – Online Focus Group**

This research project is designed to provide you with applied experience using focus group research to study social media. Listed below is a weekly overview of the steps involved in this project. Additional information and resources are provided in the weekly units of the course web site.

#### **Week 1**

##### **Course introduction.**

1. Start thinking about a specific social media topic that you'd like to explore this term.
2. Keep in mind that your topic needs to be one that people can discuss with you, because a focus group is a group conversation.
3. And your topic needs to be one that people can also respond to on a survey by answering a series of questions/statements (this will occur in the second research project).

#### **Week 2**

##### **Selecting a research topic.**

1. Social media research topic:
  - a. Select your research topic for the term.
  - b. Conduct a brief web search to find out what is already generally known about the topic, locating 3 – 4 relevant news articles, magazine articles, and/or research reports. Then briefly summarize what is known based on these sources.
  - c. Identify the guiding research question for your project.
  - d. Identify the unit of analysis for the study.
  - e. Define the primary variables that you will study.
2. Post the information from “1a” – “1e” above to the Week 2: Project Discussion forum.

*Materials to assist you with selecting and narrowing a research topic are available in the Week 2 section of the course site.*

#### **Week 3**

##### **Online focus groups, questions, and recruitment.**

1. Online focus group: You'll use Hangouts on Air to conduct a live online focus group. The benefits of using HoA are that it's free and it will make an audiovisual recording from which you can create a transcript that will assist you with the data analysis portion of this project.
  - a. Create a Google+ account, if you don't already have one.
  - b. Go to Hangouts on Air (HoA) to **practice** with and schedule a focus group session.
  - c. Make sure to link your HoA to your YouTube Channel (HoA will prompt you to do this).
  - d. Read the article in the Week 3 section that explains how to make your session private and how to locate the YouTube video that is recorded for your session.
  - e. It's **essential** that you practice with HoA to make sure you understand how it works and that you can retrieve the video afterwards; otherwise, you may have to re-run the group.
  - f. Additional tips:
    - i. It's best for you to use Google Chrome to access the hangout; otherwise, not all features are available or you may have to download an app.

- ii. It's best if your participants have Google accounts; it makes for easier access to the hangout.
  - iii. Make sure to “**Start Broadcast**” in order to record the session.
2. **Focus group questions:** Create an interview schedule for a focus group that will run 60 – 75 minutes in length.
- a. Write 3 – 5 main questions.
  - b. Write follow-up, probes, and prompt questions for each main question.
  - c. There are several readings on the course site for this week that will assist you in writing your questions.
3. **Focus group recruitment:** Select 5 – 7 individuals to participate in your focus group.
- a. You may select friends, family, or coworkers; however, at least two (2) participants should be people you don't know or know well to make this a more authentic experience.
  - b. Make sure the research topic is relevant to the participants; otherwise, you won't obtain useful data.
  - c. Schedule and confirm a time later this week or **early** in Week 4 with your participants to conduct the focus group; this will leave you time to work on data transcription.
4. Post your interview schedule, confirmation of your HoA focus group session, and a description of your participants to the Week 3: Project Discussion forum.

*Materials to assist you with Hangouts on Air and creating an interview schedule are available in the Week 3 section of the course site.*

## **Week 4**

### **Conducting the focus group.**

1. Run the focus group on Hangouts on Air at the time you've scheduled with your participants.
  - a. After you've started the broadcast, make sure to read a statement of Informed Consent to the group and ask each individual to indicate understanding by saying, “I agree.” Then, begin with your first question on the interview schedule.
  - b. A statement of **Informed Consent** can read something like this:  
**I understand that my participation in this focus group is voluntary, that I may stop participating at any time without penalty, and that my identity will be kept confidential.**
2. Review the YouTube video that was recorded of the session.
  - a. Note: Although YouTube does have a transcript option, this feature is practically useless because it misses many words and gets many of the other words wrong
3. Create a written transcript of the interview, to include:
  - a. The exact words spoken
  - b. Indication of which person is speaking (to **protect identity**, use initials or fictitious names in place of real names)
  - c. Notation of any important nonverbal information such as facial and vocal expressions, use brackets [] to set off this information from the spoken words
4. Save a copy of the transcript for data analysis and to submit as part of the research report for this project.
5. Save a copy of the video's URL to include in the written report.
6. Post a summary of your experiences in conducting the focus group to the Week 4: Project Discussion.

## Week 5

### Analyzing the focus group results.

1. Make three (3) passes through your edited transcript to identify themes and patterns among the participants' responses:
  - a. First pass: Mark everything that seems interesting or important in the responses as you make this initial reading of the transcript. Highlight, circle, underline, write notes to yourself, etc.
  - b. Second pass: Look for broader categories into which your initial codes start to group.
  - c. Third pass: Further collapse the broader categories from the second pass through the data into 3 – 5 main categories; these become the main themes of your results.
2. Also, remember to memo as you go through the data to assist with interpretations.
3. Take regular breaks as you code the data to prevent mental fatigue that will negatively affect your judgment. Also, take a break between the first, second, and third passes through the data to give yourself time to reflect and refresh.
4. Post to the Week 5: Project Discussion regarding your coding experience and the 3 – 5 themes/patterns that have emerged from your analysis.

*Materials to assist you with coding the transcripts are available in the Week 5 section of the course site.*

## Week 6

### Reporting the focus group results.

1. Write a 5 – 7 page executive summary of your study's results.
  - Note: The cover, appendices, and references pages do not count in the page limit.
2. The executive summary needs to include in this order (with point values noted in brackets):
  - A **cover page** [5 points] that includes a descriptive title, your name, and the date.
  - The main report itself, which is 5 – 7 pages total, to include:
    - i. **Introduction:** [5 points] Set the context, identify the purpose of the study, and specify the guiding research question for the study.
    - ii. **Background:** [10 points] Provide brief summary of what is already known about the topic (making sure to cite 3 – 4 sources of this information).
    - iii. **Data Collection & Analysis:** [25 points] Provide an overview of the method used to collect the data, including a brief description of the participants, when it was conducted, how (via HoA), etc., and specify how the data were analyzed to produce the resulting themes/patterns.
    - iv. **Results & Interpretations:** [25 points] Provide a summary and an interpretation of the main results, including direct quotes from participants to support the claims.
    - v. **Conclusion:** [15 points] Recap the study. Identify the strengths and limitations of this research. Specify the practical value of the results (i.e., how do these results improve our understanding of the topic, how can they be applied).
  - An **Appendix A** [5 points] that includes the interview schedule used with your focus group.
  - An **Appendix B** [5 points] that includes the transcript and the web link to the focus group video.
  - **Reference** [5 points] list (APA 6<sup>th</sup> edition).

3. Professionalize the look of the report using a template from Word or a similar word processing program or create your own look (see the executive summary examples on the site for this week).
4. Proper spelling, grammar, and punctuation are expected. Use 11 or 12 point font, one-inch margins, and double-spacing.
5. Submit the report in a single computer file to the course site by the date/time specified in the **Due Dates** document.

*Materials to assist you with formatting the executive summary are available in the Week 6 section of the course site.*

*End of Research Project I. See next page for **APPENDIX B**.*

## APPENDIX B

### Research Project II – Online Survey

#### *Week 7*

##### **Constructing a survey.**

1. Using the themes from your focus group research, construct a 10 – 15 item survey to include the following:
  - a. An opening section that provides a basic overview of the study and a set of instructions for completing the survey.
  - b. A statement of voluntary participation and confidentiality.
  - c. Main study items and appropriate response options (approximately 7 – 10).
  - d. Demographic items and appropriate response options (approximately 3 – 5).
  - e. A “Thank you for your participation” statement at the end.
2. Create an account with Qualtrics and build the survey.
3. Post to the **Week 7: Project Discussion** a copy of the survey or a link to the survey in Qualtrics for peer review.

*Materials to assist you with creating the survey are available in the Week 7 section of the course site.*

#### *Week 8*

##### **Conducting a survey.**

1. Invite friends, family, coworkers, and acquaintances to complete the survey—aim for a minimum of 50 completed surveys (more is fine). Ask people you know to refer others you may not know to take the survey so that you can meet the minimum.
2. Make sure to specify a completion deadline so that the respondents know when the survey is to be submitted.
3. Monitor the survey’s completion progress in Qualtrics to make sure the process is proceeding smoothly.
4. Once the survey window is closed, start exploring the results.
5. Download a copy of the survey results for analysis in SPSS.

*You may wish to review the Survey Basics training video in Qualtrics to refresh your memory on monitoring the survey completion, exploring the results, and downloading the data file for analysis in SPSS.*

#### *Week 9*

##### **Descriptive statistical analysis.**

1. Review the descriptive statistics results from your survey provided in Qualtrics.
2. Conduct additional relevant descriptive statistical data analyses on your survey data using SPSS.
3. Save the results of your analyses for use in the executive research summary that you will submit in Week 11.

*Materials to assist you with descriptive data analysis are available in the Week 9 section of the course site.*

## **Week 10**

### **Inferential statistical analysis.**

1. Conduct relevant inferential statistical data analyses (Chi-square, t-test, and/or correlation) on your survey data using SPSS.
2. Save the results of your analyses for use in the executive research summary that you will submit in Week 11.

*Materials to assist you with inferential data analysis are available in the Week 10 section of the course site.*

## **Week 11**

### **Reporting the results of the online survey.**

1. Write a 5 – 7 page executive summary of your study's results.
  - Note: The cover, appendices, and references pages do not count in the page limit.
2. The executive summary needs to include in this order (with point values noted in brackets):
  - A **cover page** [5 points] that includes a descriptive title, your name, and the date.
  - The main report itself, which is 5 – 7 pages total, to include:
    - i. **Introduction:** [5 points] Set the context, identify the purpose of the study, and specify the guiding research question for the study.
    - ii. **Background:** [10 points] Study purpose and a brief summary of what is already known about the topic (making sure to cite 3 – 4 sources of this information). Also include a one-paragraph summary of the focus group research and the main findings that were used from it to create this survey.
    - iii. **Methods:** [15 points] An overview of the method used to collect the data for this second phase (i.e., survey), including a brief description of the sampling and total number of respondents, overview of the scales of measurement (e.g., Likert, semantic differential) used and number of items, response rate for completed surveys, timeframe for when the survey was conducted, how (via Qualtrics), etc.
    - iv. **Results:** [20 points] A summary of the main results, including descriptive and inferential statistical analysis results to support the claims (use tables and charts as needed to efficiently communicate this information).
    - v. **Discussion:** [20 points] A interpretation of the results, addressing the question, "What do these findings mean?" Also, how do the survey results align with or differ from the focus group results? Why do you think these alignments or discrepancies exist?
      - i. **Conclusion:** [10 points] Recap the study and specify the practical value of the results (i.e., how do these results improve our understanding of the topic, how can they be applied). Identify strengths and limitations of your research. Make a suggestion for future research based on the findings from this study.
  - An **Appendix A** [5 points] that includes a copy of the survey.
  - An **Appendix B** [5 points] that includes the results of the statistical analyses that were included in the report.
  - **Reference** [5 points] list (APA 6<sup>th</sup> edition).
3. Professionalize the look of the report by using a template from Word or a similar word processing program or create your own look (see the executive summary example on the site for this week).

4. Proper spelling, grammar, and punctuation are expected. Use 11 or 12 point font, one-inch margins, and double-spacing. Charts and tables should include a descriptive caption or title.
5. Submit the report in a single computer file to the course site by the date/time specified in the **Due Dates** document.

*See the next page for **APPENDIX C**.*

## APPENDIX C

### Accessing MindTap

To access the online chapter quizzes for your textbook, *The Practice of Social Research*, please use the following instructions:

### How to access your MindTap course

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#### MMC5427: Research Methods in Digital Communications

**Instructor:** Tami Tomasello

**Start Date:** 05/11/2015

#### What is MindTap?

MindTap empowers you to produce your best work – consistently.

MindTap is designed to help you master the material. Interactive videos, animations, and activities create a learning path designed by your instructor to guide you through the course and focus on what's important. Get started today!

#### Registration

1. Connect to <http://login.cengagebrain.com/course/MTPNFMILPQTM0>
2. Follow the prompts to register your MindTap course.

#### Payment

After registering for your course, you will need to pay for access using one of the options below:

**Online:** You can pay online using a credit or debit card, or PayPal.

**Bookstore:** You may be able to purchase access to MindTap at your bookstore. Check with the bookstore to find out what they offer for your course.

**Free Trial:** If you are unable to pay at the start of the semester you may choose to access MindTap until 11:59 PM on 05/31/2015 during your free trial. After the free trial ends you will be required to pay for access.

**Please note:** At the end of the free trial period, your course access will be suspended until your payment has been made. All your scores and course activity will be saved and will be available to you after you pay for access.

If you already registered an access code or bought MindTap online, the course key to register for this course is: **MTPN-FMLP-QTM0**

**System Check**

To check whether your computer meets the requirements for using MindTap, go to  
<http://ng.cengage.com/static/browsercheck/index.html>

Please Note: the System Check is also accessible in the drop down box next to your name located in the upper right corner of your MindTap page.

**Technical Support – Our Designated Representative:**

**Amy Rosselot**

Digital Solutions Coordinator

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<http://www.cengage.com/dcs/>

*End of syllabus.*