

MMC 6421

Research Methods in Mass Communication Online Course Syllabus

Contact Information

Instructor: Magdala (Maggie) Labre, PhD, MPH

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Virtual office hours: Mondays and Wednesdays, 2:00 - 4:00 p.m. Office hours may change.

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Please post class-related questions on the [discussion board](#). For more, see [technical support page](#).

Course Description

This course provides an overview of the research methods commonly used in mass communication research. We will discuss quantitative (e.g., experiments, surveys, content analyses) and qualitative methods (e.g., focus groups, in-depth interviews). In addition, the course will also introduce students to SPSS, a statistical software program commonly used to analyze numeric data.

Course Goals

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Explain various mass communication research methods
- Identify ethical issues in scientific research
- Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of different research designs
- Enter and analyze data using SPSS
- Write a research proposal using the methods learned in the class

Required Textbooks

- Babbie, E. (2013). *The practice of social research* (13th Edition). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Field, A. (2013). *Discovering Statistics Using IBM SPSS Statistics*. Thousand Oaks, CA.

Recommended (not required)

- Wimmer, Roger D., and Dominick, Joseph R. (2013). *Mass media research: An introduction* (10th Edition), Wadsworth, Cengage Learning: Boston MA.

University Policy on Accommodating Students with Disabilities

Students requesting accommodation for disabilities must first register with the [Dean of Students Office](#). 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 prior to submitting assignments or taking the quizzes or exams.

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](#).

Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty

You are responsible to make sure you understand what plagiarism means and to give proper credit when using someone else's ideas or writings. To learn more about how to avoid plagiarism, review these guidelines from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Research Integrity: <http://ori.hhs.gov/plagiarism-0>

**Netiquette: Communication Courtesy

All members of the class are expected to follow rules of common courtesy in all email messages, threaded discussions and chats. [Describe what is expected and what will occur as a result of improper behavior] <http://teach.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/NetiquetteGuideforOnlineCourses.pdf>

Assignments

Your assignments and due dates are listed under the Assignments tab. You should complete the assignments in a Word document and submit before the due date. The assignments are due Monday at noon (to prevent technical problems from happening Sunday at midnight when technical support is not available). Late assignments will be penalized as indicated in the grading rubric for each assignment. If you have technical difficulties or other issues that result in a late submission, see the [technical support page](#) for information on how to proceed.

For uniformity, please use the American Psychological Association (APA) style for all written assignments. For help with citation formatting, see [UFLIB guide on writing/publishing](#).

Grades

6 Quizzes: 30% (5% each)

3 Assignments: 45% (15% each)

1. Annotated Bibliography
2. A Tale of Two Studies
3. SPSS Exercise

1 Final Paper: Research Proposal: 25%

GRADING SCALE					
A	=	94+	C	=	74-76
A-	=	90-93	C-	=	70-73
B+	=	87-89	D+	=	67-69
B	=	84-86	D	=	63-66
B-	=	80-83	D-	=	60-62
C+	=	77-79	F	=	Below 60

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Week	Dates	Module	Assignments/Quizzes
1	Aug 25-31	1 Welcome and Course Overview	Sample syllabus quiz 0 (ungraded), due Friday, September 5, noon.
2	Sept. 2-7	2 Mass Communication Research and Ethical Issues	Quiz 1 (Modules 1-2): Due Monday, September 8, 12 pm
3	Sept. 8-14	3 Designing a Research Project	Assignment 1: Annotated Bibliography. Due Monday, September 15, 12 pm
4	Sept. 15-21	4 Measurement	Quiz 2 (Modules 3-4): Due Monday, September 22, 12 pm
5	Sept. 22-28	5 Intro to Quantitative Methods	
6	Sept. 29-Oct. 5	6 Surveys	Quiz 3 (Modules 5-6): Due Monday, October 6, 12 pm
7	Oct. 6-12	7 Content Analysis	
8	Oct. 13-19	8 Experiments	Assignment 2: A Tale of Two Studies. Due Monday, October 20, 12 pm
9	Oct. 20-26	9 Analyzing Quantitative Data	Quiz 4 (Modules 7-9): Due Monday, October 27, 12 pm
10	Oct. 27-Nov. 2	10 Using IBM SPSS	Assignment 3: SPSS Exercise: Due Monday, November 3, 12 pm
11	Nov. 3-9	11 Presenting Your Findings	
12	Nov. 10-16	12 Intro to Qualitative Research	Quiz 5 (Modules 11-12): Due Monday, November 17, 12 pm
13	Nov. 17-23	13 In-depth Interviews	
14	Nov. 24-30	Thanksgiving	
15	Dec. 1-7	14 Focus Groups	Quiz 6 (Modules 13-14): Due Monday, December 8, 12 pm
16	Dec. 8-10		Research proposal: Due Monday, December 15, 12 pm.