

ANSC 597

Practicum in Communication Research Spring 2006 6:45 to 9:45 PM, Tuesdays/Thursdays ANSC 223 (ELC)

Instructors

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Goals of the Course

One important goal of this course is to provide students who are completing their Master of Arts degree with an opportunity to apply the knowledge they have learned in the MA curriculum by designing, executing, and reporting a research project. Prior to enrolling in this class, students should have completed content courses in (a) entertainment management, strategic and corporate communication, information and communication technologies, marketing communication, communication law and policy, or telecommunications management, and (b) a course or pair of courses in research methods (COMM 587, COMM 540). The paper and project that serves as the main focus in this class should be a continuation of a paper or proposal from earlier classes. Ideally, the students enrolled in this class will continue to work on a project they already started. If you have not yet selected a thesis topic from your previous course work, you are expected to quickly develop a research question in collaboration with the instructors. In the past, this course has been organized largely as an independent study. However, in the current course design, we organize students into research teams and encourage them students to work with each other and help each other in data collection and paper

writing. Throughout January and most of February time will be devoted to group work among students who are using similar methodologies; a focus group research team, a survey research team, a content analysis research team, etc. Working collaboratively, instructors and students will complete work on research designs and tools. Students will work with each other on definitions of terms, examples, reliability of coding, practice trials in conducting focus group discussions, coding programs or web sites, etc. By “research” we mean collecting data using any qualitative or quantitative methodology. By “qualitative data” we mean focus group research, in-depth interviews or observational coding.

By “quantitative data” we mean the analyses of survey data, data [usually questionnaire data] collected in experiments, content analyses or conducting statistical analyses of archived data or “secondary analyses”. Students may also complete a “Case Study” that integrates material from several classes and is applied to an Internship or employment.

Finally, by “research” we do not mean library or Internet research, or writing a standard essay or review.

ADA Compliance Statement

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776. For additional information, see the Web page of the Disabilities Services Program in SCAMPUS.

Academic Integrity

The Annenberg School for Communication is committed to upholding the University’s Academic Integrity code as detailed in the Campus guide. It is the policy of the School for Communication to report all violations of the code. Any serious violations or pattern of violations of the Academic Integrity Code will result in the student’s expulsion from the Communication major or minor. See section 11 of SCAMPUS.

When taking this class, you enter into a contract that states that all the work you are turning in has been your own and no one else’s and that you have not turned in any work for which you have received credit in another class.

The School for Communication is committed to the highest standards of academic excellence and ethical support. It endorses and acts on the Campus policies and procedures detailed in the section titled University Sanction Guidelines. These policies protect the rights of students and faculty. Please be aware that any kind of plagiarism or cheating on exams will result in failing grade and reporting to the Office of Student Conduct.

Grading

Comprehensive Examination Test	20% of course grade
Research participation, helping one another	20% of course grade
Presentation of MA project last week of class/ Feed-back on presentations	10% of course grade
MA project paper	50% of course grade

The university requirement for completion of your MA degree includes (a) a Comprehensive examination (administered “closed book”) and (b) an MA thesis project.

Examination

The purpose of this exam is to test your ability to synthesize material learned during the program of courses. The Comprehensive examination involves a closed book three hour examination. Students are provided with a number of options from which to choose and must then write on one question. Questions include all aspects of the curriculum—organization, social influences, new technology, entertainment, etc. The examinations are graded by the three instructors.

Research participation, helping each other

Students will be preparing minutes to present at the beginning of each class. Every student is expected to actively participate in class, e.g., present his/her own ideas, criticize other projects etc. Moreover, every student will be participating as a subject in research conducted by fellow students, and expected to provide comprehensive and constructive feed-back in a so called peer-review process on an early draft of the MA project paper of a fellow student.

Presentation of your MA project/Feed-back on presentations

During last week of class students of the two COMM 597 classes will join for a conference presentation in which selected projects will be presented. Peers are invited to evaluate the presentations in writing.

MA Project Paper

The MA Project Paper is intended to be a higher level research effort on your part, and not merely a graded assignment. Hopefully, you will start with a paper you have written for a previous class, and you will use your review of literature and/or ideas from that class to collect data, analyze that data and draw conclusions. A completed draft of your paper should be submitted electronically to all instructors by midnight April 14 and it should contain:

- I. A cover page
- II. An abstract (300 words max.)
- III. An Introduction (2-5 paragraphs), OR, a 1-2 paragraph Introduction plus 1-3 paragraphs of a State of Problem.
- IV. A Review of Literature (3-5 pages)
- V. Preview of needed study/expectations or statement of hypotheses (1-2 pages)
- VI. Methods
- VII. Results (incl. tables, graphs of data)
- VIII. Discussion
- IX. References
- X. Appendix or Appendices (i.e., Content analysis coding manual, code sheets, attach electronic SPSS or transcript data files)

The final paper has to be submitted electronically AND on paper by May 9th. Please note that we cannot give recommendation on the total length of the paper nor on method, results or discussion section. Every project is different in length and requires different level of elaboration.

Online surveys and subjects incentives

If you use an online survey (in English) you may use the Annenberg School's account on Survey Monkey, which is a highly useful online survey website. Please see one of the instructors for login and password information.

If you wish to post a survey in Asian languages (Korean, Japanese, Chinese) you will need to get a monthly account with FreeOnline Surveys (based in England), for \$20 a month.

Additional research materials or subject's incentives cannot be covered by school funds.

Class schedule

Tuesday class	Thursday class	Topics	Research Paper	Additional assignments
Jan 10	Jan 12	Introduction Orientation	Review proposal	Clarify status/questions
Jan 17	Jan 19	Finalize research topic, rq, design	Search for relevant literature	Prepare time table
Jan 24	Jan 26	Finalize research topic, rq, design	Write introduction	
Jan 31	Feb 2	Data collection	Write introduction/theory	
Feb 7	Feb 9	Data collection	Write introduction/theory	
Feb 14	Feb 16	Data collection	Write introduction/theory/method	
Feb 21	Feb 23	Data analysis	Write method section	
Feb 28	Mar 2	Data analysis	Write result section	
Mar 7	Mar 9	Data analysis	Write result section	
Mar 14	Mar 16	<i>Spring Break</i>	<i>Spring Break</i>	<i>Spring Break</i>
Mar 21	Mar 23	Examination and Interpretation	Summarize results & write result section	
Mar 28	Mar 30	Discussion	Write discussion section	
Apr 4	Apr 6	Discussion	APA style, Formatting	
<i>April 7th Last day to drop a class with mark of "W"</i>				
Apr 11	Apr 13	feed-back on paper	Final <i>draft</i> due	Peer-review via email
Apr 18	Apr 20	feed-back on paper	Revision	Prepare power point presentation
Apr 25	Apr 25 (!)	Presentation in class		
	Apr 30 th	Final <i>paper</i> due		

Course materials

Required materials on the basics of social research

- Babbie, E. (2004). *The practice of social research*. (10th edition). Belmont: Wadsworth. OR
- Baxter, L. A. & Babbie, E. (2004). *The basics of communication research*. Belmont: Wadsworth.

Required materials on methods (get the relevant book(s))

- Kruegar, R. A. & Casey, M. A. (2000). *Focus groups: A practical guide for applied research* (3rd edition). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Neuendorf, K. A. (2002). *The content analysis guidebook*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Yin, R. K. (2003). *Case study research: Design and methods* (3rd edition). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Required materials on data analysis (get one or both)

- Green, S. B. & Salkind, N. J. (2005). *Using SPSS for Windows and Macintosh* (4th edition). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- If you prefer to use your own SPSS software, you may use an offer to purchase the students SPSS software for an additional \$15 when packaged with the book (restricted to 50 variables): SPSS 12.0 for Windows Student Version, Pearson Education 2005.
- Miles, M. B. & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook* (2nd edition). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Required materials on APA style

You are expected to write your thesis according to APA guidelines. You find a detailed description of APA style in:

- Sparks, L. (2005). *Communication research style manual. A short and savvy approach to conducting research*. Reno: Bent Tree Press.

Recommended/additional material

- American Psychological Association (2001). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (5th edition).