

COMM 401 . COMMUNICATION RESEARCH METHODS

TR 9:45 -11:15 BRKS 104A CRN 83982

*This syllabus contains important information about your rights and responsibilities in this course.
Please take the time to read it carefully.*

The University/student relationship is not one of producer/consumer. When students, parents, scholarships, and/or other finders pay fees in order for a student to attend classes, this obligates the student to a set of educational responsibilities and expectations.

Professor Contact Information

Dr. Cooper:	Office:	GRUE 503F
	Office Phone:	474-5060
	Office Hours:	Tuesday 2:00-3:30 & by appointment
	E-mail:	cecooper@alaska.edu

Text/Resources

Keyton, J. (2006). Communication research: Asking questions, finding answers(2nd ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

General Course Description & Objectives

This is an interactive -- experiential course exploring issues related to quantitative and qualitative research - methodologies employed in the conduct of research on communication phenomena. The course is designed to (1) introduce you to contemporary communication research methods, (2) provide you with ways to develop as a consumer of research in the world around us, (3) to develop skill and enhance analytical reasoning as applied to the process of research, and (4) to encourage you to apply what you have learned in the future.

Specific Course Objectives

Students completing this course should be able to:

- Understand and be able to use the basic vocabulary of research methods
- Begin to understand the theory-research and research-application links
- Understand basic statistical concepts
- Begin to understand the predominant quantitative and qualitative research designs and methods used by communication scholars
- Utilize basic research skills
- Apply critical thinking skills to the consumption and process of research

I hope to help you meet these objectives through the following:

- Discussions of reading and lecture material in class
- Small hands-on assignments
- Tests to insure that you are grasping material
- Research project(s) our class will plan, execute, and write up

Attendance/Participation

Attendance and courtesy are expected. This class is an interactive learning experience. To complete course requirements and successfully grasp the material, it is important that you are in class, **have read the** assignment, and participate in classroom and group activities. Class time will primarily consist of lecture, discussion, and research related activities. Lecture will include information from the text as well as outside material. Additionally, there are participation points awarded in the class for involvement in various class activities and engaging in discussion.

E-mail Policy

E-mail is one of the best ways to contact me. I will respond within 48 hours, but typically within 24 hours. E-mail should be used to set up appointments and ask short questions for clarification. E-mail is not to be used to replace class attendance, office hour visitation, or to attach paper drafts for review. Paper drafts are to be reviewed in person. This allows for the greatest learning.

Writing Quality Assumptions

All assignments (unless otherwise specified) should be typed, double-spaced, and have 1 inch margins on all sides. A 12-point font should be used. Follow the current American Psychological Association (APA) style. Manuals are available in the library, in the Writing Center, and in the Communication Department Resource Area (GRUE 503). Every paper you turn in must be of quality, both in content and style. I expect you to use a computer and to take advantage of the programs that guard against grammatical and typographical errors; however, these programs do not catch all errors. Therefore, there is no substitute for good proofreading. Additionally, I expect papers to incorporate citations and evidence appropriately. Reference citations should be of established credibility. Be careful not to cite unverified information available through the Internet.

Makeup Exams/Late Work

Makeup exams are rarely given. If you miss an exam, you lose the points associated with it. The only exceptions are due to documented sickness, death in the family, or some other catastrophe. The best policy is to take the exam in advance or let me know in advance of your absence. I am very unlikely to allow you to take an exam after the scheduled time if you do not have the professionalism to contact me beforehand.

All assignments are due at the BEGINNING of the class period on the day in which they are due unless otherwise indicated. Late work will only be accepted at the instructor's discretion and under the most extreme circumstances. Documentation of those circumstances is required. If accepted, late work will be graded and then a deduction of one letter grade per working day that the assignment is late will be assessed.

Grade Discussion

If you want to discuss a grade, please do not confront me the day I hand back a test/paper (i.e., you have not had time to adequately review my feedback). See me during office hours within a week of my returning the assignment.

Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty is defined as cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, falsifying academic records, and any act designed to give unfair academic advantage to the student or the attempt to commit such an act. This includes submission of essentially the same written assignment for two courses without the prior permission of the instructors and providing false or misleading information to receive a postponement or an extension on a test, quiz, or other assignment. Students who violate University rules on academic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University.

Students with Learning Challenges

It is the policy of UAF to accommodate students with a physical or medically documented learning challenge, pursuant to federal and state law. Any student with a disability who needs accommodations, for example in seating placement or in arrangements for note-taking, examinations, or access to information on the web, should inform the instructor at the beginning of the course (during the first week). Students with disabilities are also encouraged to contact Center for Health and Counseling at (907) 474-7043 or TTY (907) 474-7045. Information can be found on the web at <http://www.uaf.edu/chc/disability.htm>. This office will arrange, coordinate, and provide a variety of support services designed to ensure educational access and to enhance individual development of students with disabilities.

Assignments

Points

Class participation points (instructional portion): based on active participation in class discussion, taking part in class activities, and evidence of being prepared for class (this assumes basic attendance). - 5 % of grade.....	50
Worksheets/homework: 15 %.....	150
Four short exams: Chapters 1-5 (Ex.1), 6-9 (Ex. 2), 10-12 (Ex. 3), 13-18 (Ex. 4) - 10% each	400
Research project: Participation in an original group research project. Output includes a Research Report and informal presentation of the research. - 30 % of grade	300
Project peer evaluation - 5 % of grade	50
Project participation points: based on active participation in project related discussion, taking part in project related activities, and evidence of being prepared with step assignments. - 5 % of grade.....	50
TOTAL:	1000

Grade Determination

- A -- An *honor* grade, indicates originality and independent work, a thorough mastery of the subject and the satisfactory completion of more work than is regularly required.
- B -- Indicates outstanding ability above the average level of performance.
- C -- Indicates a satisfactory or average level of performance.
- D -- The lowest passing grade, indicates work of below-average quality and performance.
- F -- Indicates failure. All "F" grades, including those earned in pass/fail courses, are included in the GPA calculations.

Our Agenda

(subject to adjustment)

<u>Dates by Week</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Assignments Due</u>
9/3	Class orientation and socialization	
9/8, 9/10	Introduction to: Research in Comm., the Research Process & Quantitative Research	Read: K 1, 2, & 3
9/15, 9/17	Intro to Qualitative Research, Research Ethics	Read: K 4 & 5
9/22 , 9/24	Exam 1 , Measurement	Read: K 6
9/29, 10/1	Sampling, Significance Levels, & Hypothesis Testing; Quantitative Research Design; Surveys, Questionnaires and Polls	Read: K 7, 8, & 9
10/6 , 10/8	Exam 2 , Descriptive Statistics	Read: K 10
10/13, 10/15	Testing for Differences, Testing for Relationships	Read: K 11 & 12
10/20 , 10/22	Exam 3 , Quantitative Analysis of Text	Read: K13
10/27, 10/29	Designing Qualitative Research, Qualitative Methods, Analyzing Qualitative Data	Read: K14 - 16
11/3, 11/5	R & W the Quantitative Research Report, R & W the Qualitative Research Report, Exam 4	Read: K 17 & 18
11/10, 11/12	Research Project Defined, Team Procedures, NCA Work on group project(s), Literature Review	Research Task
11/17, 11/19	RQs &/or Hypotheses, Work on group project(s),	Research Task
11/24, 11/26	Methods, Thanksgiving holiday Work on group project(s)	Research Task
12/1, 12/3	Data Collection, Work on group project(s)	Research Task
12/8, 12/10	Analysis, Work on group project(s)	Research Task
12/17 – Thursday	Final — Research Presentation(s) - 8:00am - 10:00am	Research Report