

COMM 601 – COMMUNICATION RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES (Social Science)

W 5:30 – 8:30 GRUE 202 CRN 88476

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

Professor Contact Information

Dr. Cooper: Office: GRUE 503F
 Office Phone: 474-5060
 Office Hours: Tuesday 2:00-3:30 & by appointment
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Text/Resources

- Cronk, B. C. (2006). How to use SPSS, (4th ed). Glendale, CA: Pyrczak.
- de Vaus, D. (2001). Research design in social research. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Orcher, L. T. (2007). Conducting a survey: Techniques for a term project. Glendale, CA: Pyrczak.
- Salkind, N. J. (2004). Statistics for people who think they hate statistics, (2nd ed). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

General Course Description & Objectives

Communication 601 is a first level course on the “whys” and “hows” of inquiry into human communication phenomena. I take the position that the methods employed in research must be fitted to the theory and to the research question that drive inquiry into any given communication phenomenon. Because the theory, questions, and phenomena of communication are diverse, so too are the applicable methods. COMM 601's primary goals are (1) to make you an informed, critical reader of past and current communication research in the social science (quantitative) tradition, so that you will be better able to understand and to make use of the wealth of research upon which our knowledge of communication is presently based, and (2) to provide you with the basic framework needed to conduct survey research as it relates to issues in human communication (This includes a basic understanding of statistics). COMM 601 complements COMM 602, which focuses on the “whys” and “hows” of research in the human science (qualitative) tradition in communication, and together these two courses comprise the research methodologies sequence required in the M.A. Program. Because of the diversity of potentially applicable methods, even COMM 601 and COMM 602 combined cannot provide you with all the background and experience you would need to understand (or utilize) every research method you might encounter, though the courses will emphasize selected methods you are more likely to run into. As a consequence, a secondary goal of these courses is to provide you both with groundwork to build upon in further developing your knowledge of research methods in any subsequent courses in methods, and with a "map" of the territory and resources that you would need to explore in developing your ability to conduct fully independent inquiry into human communication.

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 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.

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. The best policy is to take the exam in advance. 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 (detailed discussion of assignments will occur)

Points

Three exams: - 150 pts. each.....450

Two papers - See below – (more specific information available later) 200 pts. each.....400

TOTAL: 850

Annotated Bibliography Paper:

The first paper will be an annotated bibliography covering 10 research articles, including at least two experiments, five survey/self report studies, and at least two random sample survey studies. Each bibliography entry will have the standard form: Full APA citation, an original summary of the article, including the research question and hypotheses, research design, measurement tools, and findings. The annotation for each citation should be a maximum of TWO pages long. **IN ADDITION**, and central to the annotated bibliographies for COMM 601, each entry must be supplemented by a clear, in-depth critical evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the research study, of not less than one page and a maximum of two pages. It is in these evaluations that you will demonstrate your developing ability as an informed, critical reader of past and current research, and the bibliographies will be evaluated with particular attention to this evaluation.

Research Design Paper:

The second paper will be the presentation of a complete design for a survey study based upon an existing work (not a study included in the annotated bibliography paper). The design must include a review of relevant literature, the presentation of a new research question or hypothesis as appropriate, and the development or revision of a research design and data gathering procedures, including measurement tools as appropriate, and a discussion of analysis procedures using SPSS. In short, the research design paper should be the first part of a survey research article in the discipline, omitting only the presentation and analysis of evidence, and the conclusions and implications for further research. The second paper should be a maximum of 15 double-spaced typewritten pages.

Criteria: The papers will be evaluated with the following criteria in mind:

- Level or depth of understanding of concepts, methods, and tools of social science research.
- Level of ability to utilize or apply concepts from the course where appropriate.
- Level or depth of recognition, understanding and/or analysis of strengths and weaknesses in research.
- Level of clarity in writing and presentation, as per APA style manual.

As in all graduate courses in Communication, clear, concise written expression is a requirement, following the APA guidelines (Fifth edition) in general, and the guidelines for inclusive language in particular. Your written work is the primary basis on which your understanding is evaluated, despite what you may know about the subject matter. Do not turn in work that has not been read, reread, typed, proofread, and produced carefully for submission.

Our Agenda

(subject to adjustment)

<u>Dates by Week</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Assignments Due</u>
Building Blocks		
9/9	Class orientation and socialization, What is Research Design?	Read: de V. 1, 2, 3
9/16	Statistics, Averages, Variability	Read: S. 1, 2, 3, (C. 3)
9/23	Data Illustration, Correlation Coefficients	Read: S. 4, 5, (C. 4)
9/30	Reliability and Validity, Hypotheses	Read: S. 6, 7, O. App. B
10/7	Probability, Significance	Read: S. 8, 9; O. App. C
Foundational Statistical Tests		
10/14	t-tests & more t-tests Annotated Bibliographies	Read: S. 10, 11 Read: C. 6.2,3,4 1st Exam Due
10/21	ANOVA, Factorial ANOVA	Read: S. 12 & 13, C. 6.5,6 2nd Exam begins*
10/28	Correlation, Linear Regression	Read: S. 14 & 15 Read: C. 5.1,2,3,4
11/4	Chi-square +, 2 nd Paper Assigned, Equilibrium check ☺	Read: S. 16, 17, C. 7.1,2
11/11 – NCA	Work on your own: papers	
Survey Methodology		
11/18	Data Collection, Cross-sectional Design	Read: S. 20 & de V. 10 1st Paper Due
11/25	Survey Methodology 11/27-Thanksgiving holiday	Read: O. 1-3
12/2	Survey – Literature, Sample, and Design Final Paper Questions	Read: O. 4-6, 7-9
12/9	Survey - Administration and Analysis, Write-up Overview	Read: O. 10-14
TBA-during finals week 12/18 – Wednesday	<u>Final Exam-(3rd Exam)</u> 8:00pm – 10:00pm	2nd PAPER DUE by 3pm

*Note: The second exam will be comprised of the worksheet/end of chapter assignments for Salkind 9-15 & Cronk related chapters as assigned. Due dates will be clarified. The intention is to have you turn in the work for each chapter the Monday following the class discussion of the chapters.