

Department of Communication, Media, and Culture
Thomas W. & Robin W. Edwards College of Humanities & Fine
Arts
Coastal Carolina University

“Research is formalized curiosity. It is poking and prying with a purpose.” – Zora Neale Hurston

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Course Name	Quantitative Research Methods in Communication
Course ID & Section	COMM 578
Dates & Time	
Credit Hours	3
Semester/Year	
Location	
Final Exam	TBD

Course Catalog Description

COMM 578- Quantitative Research Methods in Communication (3 credits)

Introduces graduate students to common quantitative research methods that are applied in the field of communication. Students learn the basics of quantitative research, such as how to collect, analyze, and interpret quantitative data. Topics include research design, data analysis, and reporting/interpretation of results. **Offered as needed.**

Course Instructional Objectives

1. Learn, design, conduct, interpret, and evaluate quantitative research methods in communication
2. Prepare for the Applied Communication Capstone (COMM 691)

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Understand statistical procedures used in communication research
2. Select appropriate statistical tests to answer research questions/hypotheses
3. Conduct a variety of statistical procedures using R and R Studio
4. “Write-up” the results of statistical procedures you perform

Course Objectives

This course is designed to introduce graduate students to the most common quantitative research methods employed in the field of communication. Hence, the emphasis of this course is on empirical studies and will examine research that communication scholars often use and often write about. It will also examine research conducted by communication scholars. Participants will review and critically evaluate quantitative research methods. Students will also be exposed to the various data analysis techniques used in communication research.

Course Learning Outcomes

After successfully completing this course, students will be able to:

1. Identify, critically read, and summarize research.
2. Select appropriate quantitative methodologies for use in their research. These methodologies include but are not limited to experimental, survey, and content analysis.
3. Formulate research questions and hypotheses, construct research designs, conduct data analysis, report results, and analyze implications of findings.
4. Propose a research study and justify the theory, the methodological decisions, sampling and measurement.

Required Textbooks

Allen, M., Titsworth, S., & Hunt, S. K. (2009). *Quantitative Research in Communication*. Sage.
Field, A., Miles, J., & Field, Z. (2013). *Discovering Statistics using R*. Sage

Other readings to be provided on Moodle.

Course Information

Class meets on **XXX**. Class is designed to be an in-person class but is subject to policy changes as directed by CCU. If in-person classes are not available, class will transition to a synchronous, streaming modality. Should a student become unavailable to attend the class in person, they are responsible for signing into the class during its meeting times. Students are responsible for all content provided during in-class sessions.

General Course Guidelines

Attendance & Participation Policy:

- Come to class prepared to discuss readings. By enrolling in this class, you have committed to being present during all meetings. Absences deprive you of valuable discussions and information. There is a strong correlation between absences and grades; the more class time students miss, the lower the grades they tend to earn.
- We will follow the attendance policy outlined by CCU: <https://www.coastal.edu/policies/pdf/stud-332-may2020.pdf>. Per the policy, absences due to family illness, death, or other extenuating circumstances will require documentation. Ensure you email your professor within 2 days of your absence to determine if your absence is excused. Failure to email your professor within 2 days will result to unexcused absence. Missing 25% of the class meetings (3 class periods) results in automatic course failure. With documented university excused absences, assignments should be completed *prior* to the absence. As a general rule, incomplete grades will not be given. Late submission of assignments will receive a **20% grade reduction, with an additional 20% taken off per week**.

However, you are not permitted to make up presentations without a detailed doctor's note. Students are responsible to keep backup copies of their work. Technical problems are not valid excuses for late completion of assignments. Finally, presentation dates will be assigned in advance and cannot be changed without instructor approval.

- Class participation involves being an attentive listener, orally contributing to class discussion and active involvement in class activities.

Keys to Succeeding in this Class

- 1) Communicate, communicate, communicate
- 2) Take what I say seriously
- 3) Use me as a resource

Posting of Assignments

- All coursework for this class is to be posted to Moodle. Primary communication for all course changes will be done via email using the Moodle quick mail function. If necessary, individual e-mail communication will also be used. It is imperative that every student check email frequently for course information and/or updates.
- If you are anticipating an e-mail outage, please let me know ahead of time, when possible.

Communicating With Your Instructor

- I can be reached via e-mail (jndone@coastal.edu), text or phone. I will check e-mail daily and will respond to you within 24 hours. If you have not heard from me within 24 hours, please feel free to reach out to me again at that time.

Professionalism

- Learning is maximized by reading class materials, note-taking, critical listening, and cognitive engagement. Professionalism includes listening to others' opinions (although not necessarily agreeing with those viewpoints), actively listening to those who are speaking, and working together in a spirit of cooperation. Collectively, we are a team working together to improve and learn; each student must be a productive, contributing member of our team. Be on time for class.

Technology Policy

Cellphones are **NOT** permitted in class. However, laptop computers/tablets are permitted for use in class. Should you have an unexpected emergency or other concern that requires your interaction on matters apart from class, I expect you to excuse yourself from the class, take care of any urgent business and, if practical, return to the class. As each classroom session is extremely comprehensive, it is best if you maximize your opportunities to attend all classes.

Missed Assignments/Makeups

Be sure to pay close attention to deadlines—there will be no makeup assignments or labs, or late work accepted without a university approved documented excuse.

Major Assignments

This course consists of the assignments detailed below. Active participation, adherence to assignment guidelines, and the quality (and quantity) of your work will play a fundamental role in your final grade. Ensure you check the deadlines on Moodle because no late assignments will be accepted in this course.

Assessment

Grading Scale:

The grading scale is as follows:

A= 100-90%.

B= 89-80%.

C= 79-70%.

D= 69-60%.

F= 59% and below. Percentages will be calculated based on points earned from:

	<u>Points Possible/Your Points</u>
CITI Training	5 pts
Exam 1	100 pts
R Lab Assignments/Results Write-ups	60 pts
Exam 2	150 pts
Research Proposal	150 pts
Total	465 pts

Assignment Description

CITI Training:

5 pts.

You must take the CITI Training and obtain a certificate that will enable you to conduct research. This training can be found here: <https://about.citiprogram.org/course/human-subjects-research-2/>. Ensure you obtain a license at the end of the training.

Examinations:

250 pts.

There are two exams that are closed book/closed notes; however, a handwritten study guide (the length and content will be specified prior to each exam) is allowed. Exams will consist mostly of multiple choice, true/false, matching, and fill-in-the-blank. These exams will evaluate your mastery of the procedures and concepts presented in readings, lectures, and class discussion. The exams are not cumulative. The dates & times for the exams will be provided on Moodle.

R Lab Assignments/Results Write-ups:

60 pts.

Students will complete a series of R lab assignments. Results must be written-up in APA Style, 7th edition, in accordance with the examples you will be provided. Due dates will be determined as we proceed to permit flexibility in our schedule.

Research Proposal Project and Presentation:

150 pts.

Each student will submit a research proposal. The research proposal will be an experimental research design about a topic in communication. You will design an experiment, explain how you will collect data, and explain how you plan to analyze the data (statistical tests to run). The final proposal will consist of a title page, abstract (no more than 250 words), keywords, complete literature review (approximately 8-10 pages), research

questions and/or hypotheses, partial methods section, references list, and an appendix with the stimuli and questionnaire. This paper and the reference must conform to APA style, 7th edition, and be typed double-spaced in 12-point plain Times New Roman font, with 1-inch margins on the sides, top, and bottom. A minimum of 35 sources should be cited meaningfully (mostly peer-reviewed journal articles). Write well and proofread carefully, using headings to organize the report. You will give a presentation about this paper in the finals week. The entire proposal should not be more than 15 pages (references excluded).

Academic Integrity

Each student is expected to uphold the standards of academic integrity. For a complete review of this, please refer to the Code of Student Conduct on the CCU Academic Integrity webpage (<http://www.coastal.edu/aic/>). Any violation of this code (including forgery, plagiarism, cheating, etc.) will be vigorously pursued. If there is a violation, charges will be filed with the administration. The instructor for this course will not tolerate academic dishonesty in any form. All work must be original. If in doubt, please talk to your instructor.

Statement on Disability

If you have a documented disability or special need, please inform me of this before the end of the second week of classes so that I may accommodate your needs for the rest of the semester. For the sake of privacy, you may have the Office of Accessibility and Disability Services (843-349-6561, <http://www.coastal.edu/disabilityservices>) contact me instead.

Although it is my responsibility to meet the needs of all of my students, it is your responsibility to make your needs known. I also recommend that you remind me of your needs as needed (such as in the week before an exam).

Diversity

Because diversity is appreciated and celebrated in the Edwards College of Humanities and Fine Arts, every attempt will be made to integrate diverse perspectives and viewpoints into class discussions and lectures. A part of our commitment to diversity includes accommodating students with special needs, including physical and learning disabilities.

Continuity of Instruction

During a pandemic or catastrophic event, after all face-to-face instruction has been suspended, communication for our class will take place electronically through Moodle or email. In the event of an emergency, log onto Moodle for information on class instruction

Academic Dishonesty Policy

Students are expected to abide by the Coastal Carolina University (CCU) Code of Student Conduct. A full copy is available at <http://www.coastal.edu/conduct/>. All students enrolled at CCU are expected to be honorable and observe the high standards of conduct appropriate to a community of scholars. All acts of dishonesty in any academic work constitute academic misconduct.

This includes but is not necessarily limited to:

- Cheating: Using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids

- Plagiarism: Representing the words, ideas, or data of another as one's own
- Fabrication: Unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation
- Aiding and Abetting Academic Dishonesty: Intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another student commit an act of academic dishonesty.

Note: It should be noted that any incident of academic misconduct will be treated with utmost seriousness in this course. Penalties for engaging in academic dishonesty range from significant point penalties to failure of assignment or failure of the course to suspension from the University. In short, do not do it!

Student Resources:

- Writing Center: 843-349-2937, <http://www.coastal.edu/writingcenter/>
- Prince 209 Moodle Support/ Tutorials: <http://www.coastal.edu/moodle/resources/students.html>
- Student Computing Services: 843-349-2908, 843-349-2220, <http://coastal.edu/scs>
- Library Services: <http://www.coastal.edu/library>
- Learning Assistance Center: 843-349-6536, <http://www.coastal.edu/lac>
- Counseling Services: 843-349-2305, <http://www.coastal.edu/counseling>

Tentative Schedule

WK 1	Topic: INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE	Readings/Assignment Due
	Philosophy of the Course and Syllabus Policies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Introduction, knowing, inquiry, and science ▪ Rationale for labs, research project, & examination ▪ Communication Research Methods Overview ▪ How to Read a Journal Article (Bonito Article Example) ▪ Directional and Bi-Directional Hypotheses and Research Questions ▪ Likert, Likert-Type, and Semantic Differential Scales ▪ Activity: Brainstorm Research Topics 	Read the Syllabus Buy Textbooks Read Wimmer & Dominick (Chapter 1-Reading on Moodle)
WK 2	INTRODUCTION TO QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH	
	Key Concepts in Quantitative Research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Independent & Dependent Variables ▪ Operationalization ▪ Sampling, Sampling Error, & Sampling Theory ▪ Levels of Measurement ▪ Measurement Error ▪ Validity & Reliability ▪ Power & Significance ▪ Measures of Central Tendency ▪ Measures of Dispersion ▪ Frequency Distributions 	Read Allen et al., (2009) textbook Chapters 1 & 2 Read Field et al., (2013) pp 1-12; p 36-61 Download R and R Studio Assign CITI Training

WK 3	RESEARCH ETHICS & THE R ENVIRONMENT	
	Introduction to R and R Studio <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ CITI Training Due ▪ IRB examples ▪ Statistical Symbols & Notation ▪ APA Style ▪ R Introduction and Menu Walkthrough 	Read Wimmer & Dominick (Chapter 3-Reading on Moodle) Read Field et al., (2013) Chapter 3 Deadline for Approval of Research Projects/Proposal Topics
WK 4	CONTENT ANALYSIS	
	Content Analysis: Concepts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Definition & Uses ▪ Limitations ▪ Steps in Content Analysis ▪ Reliability ▪ Validity ▪ Examples of Content Analysis 	Read Wimmer & Dominick (Chapter 6-Reading on Moodle) CITI ethics training due
WK 5	SURVEY RESEARCH	
	Survey Research Design <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Descriptive & Analytical Surveys ▪ Constructing Surveys ▪ Pretesting ▪ Gathering Survey Data ▪ Response Rate 	Read Wimmer & Dominick (Chapter 7-Reading on Moodle)
WK 6	EXPERIMENTAL RESEARCH	
	Experimental Research Design <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conducting Experimental Research ▪ Control of Confounding Variables ▪ Experimental Design ▪ Field Experiments ▪ Conducting Experiments Online 	Read Wimmer & Dominick (Chapter 9-Reading on Moodle)
WK 7	TESTS OF DIFFERENCE	
	Paired & Independent Samples T-Test <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hypotheses Testing ▪ Research Question Presentation ▪ Review of Midterm Exam ▪ R Lab Assignment 	Read Wimmer & Dominick (Chapter 3-Reading on Moodle) Read Field et al., (2013) Chapter 3 R Lab Assignment Due (Independent Samples t-test)
WK 8	EXAM	
	EXAM 1	EXAM 1
WK 9	ONEWAY ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE	
	Comparing Several Means <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ANOVA ▪ ANCOVA ▪ R Lab Assignment 	Read Allen et al., (2009) textbook Chapters 4 & 6 Read Field et al., (2013) Chapters 10 & 11 R Lab Assignment Due (ANOVA)
WK 10	FACTORIAL ANOVA	

	Understanding Factorial Analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Factorial ANOVA ▪ Two-Way ANOVA ▪ R Lab Assignment 	Read Allen et al., (2009) textbook Chapters 5 Read Field et al., (2013) Chapter 12 R Lab Assignment Due (Factorial ANOVA)
WK 11	MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE	
	Understanding MANOVA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ When To Use MANOVA ▪ Robust MANOVA ▪ R Lab Assignment-MANOVA 	Read Allen et al., (2009) textbook Chapter 7 Read Field et al., (2013) Chapter 12 R Lab Assignment Due (MANOVA)
WK 12	TESTS OF RELATIONSHIPS	
	Correlation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Simple Bivariate Correlation ▪ Partial Correlation ▪ Calculating Effect Size ▪ R Lab Assignment 	Read Allen et al., (2009) textbook Chapter 9 Read Field et al., (2013) Chapter 6 R Lab Assignment Due (Correlation)
WK 13	REGRESSION	
	Introduction to Regression <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Simple Regression ▪ Multiple Regression ▪ Categorical Predictors ▪ R Lab Assignment ▪ Review for Final Exam 	Read Allen et al., (2009) textbook Chapter 10 Read Field et al., (2013) Chapter 7 R Lab Assignment (Multiple Regression)
WK 14	THANKSGIVING/SPRING BREAK	
WK 15	EXAM 2	
	EXAM 2	Exam 2
WK 16	PROPOSAL PRESENTATIONS	
	Presentations/Course Recap <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Research Proposal Presentation ▪ Course Evaluations 	Research Proposal Presentations

Note: Every effort will be made to adhere to this schedule. However, the instructor reserves the right to update or change portions of this syllabus/schedule to make the course a better experience for everyone. This may be in response to suggestions from students, from the instructor's own observations, or as the result of requirements by the Department, College, or University. Changes will be announced in class and maybe posted on the Moodle course site.