**Coastal Carolina University**

**Department of Communication, Media, & Culture**

**Comm 576: Graduate Communication Research**

semester/3 credits

**Instructor:**

**Class time:**

**Email:**

**Office:**

**Office hours:**

**Course Description:**

(3 credits) Course introduces students to the skills necessary to explore a range of topics suitable for the study of communication. In addition to providing practice in locating and synthesizing information from a variety of academic resources, the course will also introduce students to a range of research methodologies (field, research, ethnographic studies, statistical analysis) and to theoretical and conceptual issues associated with a variety of communication research approaches. F, S, Su

**Course Instructional Objectives**

The primary objectives of this course are for you to:

1. Examine a range of research methodologies employed across disciplines, particularly in

the humanities and social sciences.

2. Improve your knowledge and understanding of the theoretical and conceptual issues

associated with interdisciplinary research.

3. Apply quantitative and qualitative methodologies to conduct research using a variety of

sources suitable to your discipline(s).

4. Synthesize information from a variety of sources.

5. Improve critical thinking, analytical, and communication skills.

**Course Learning Outcomes**

Upon completion of this course, you should be able to:

1. Demonstrate knowledge and application of a range of research methodologies.

2. Identify and explain theoretical and conceptual issues associated with interdisciplinary

research, particularly in humanities and social science research.

3. Conduct advanced research using quantitative and qualitative methodologies suitable to

multiple disciplines.

4. Synthesize information from a variety of resources.

5. Present information in coherent, well-written, documented research study suitable for

professional audiences.

**Required Textbook:**

Merrigan, G. & Huston, C. (2020). *Communication Research Methods* (4th ed). Oxford University Press. ISBN 978-0-19-065274-6

**Additional Materials and Requirements**:

Numerous scholarly articles are posted in Moodle for your convenience. There will be readings and corresponding assignments due **every week** when class meets. All due dates are posted in the Moodle course page. All assignments are required to be posted in Moodle by 6pm on Thursdays, prior to the start of our weekly class. It is recommended that students spend three hours on course content outside of class for each hour spent in class.

Regular access to Moodle and CCU email is required. **All** official course information outside of the classroom will be distributed through these official channels. Students are responsible for all information within this course syllabus and for keeping up with all information related to the course via Moodle and CCU email. Any issues with Moodle or CCU email should be directed to the attention of ITS for technological assistance. Issues with personal technologies are not valid excuses for late or missing assignments.

**Grading Scale:**

A = 90+% C=70-76.9%

B+ = 87-89.9%  D+= 67-69.9%

B = 80-86.9%  D= 60-66.9%

C+ = 77=79.9%  F= 59.9% and below

**Grade Distribution:**

Syllabus quiz 10

Required activities (2 meetings with Dr. B, Citi training) 100

Critical Reading responses (8 x 50) 400

Discussion leading 50

Qualitative research proposal/references 25

Quantitative research proposal/reference 25

Qualitative study presentation 50

Quantitative study presentation 50

Qualitative project/proposal 100

Quantitative project/proposal 100

***\*****Details for all assignments will be available in Moodle*

**CLASSROOM and UNIVERSITY POLICIES**

**Activities and Assignments:**

This course will have a variety of in-class and out of class work assignments that students will be responsible for completing both during class time and independently. Activities and assignments completed during class time cannot be made up for points if a student is absent without a University-sanctioned excuse (see policy below). Students are responsible for consulting the syllabus and the course Moodle page if absent. Missed information can be addressed with the instructor during office hours.

**Academic Misconduct:**

Students are expected to abide by the Coastal Carolina University (CCU) Code of Student Conduct. A full copy is available at: [www.coastal.edu/judicialaffairs/codeofconduct.pdf](http://www.coastal.edu/judicialaffairs/codeofconduct.pdf)

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 including failure to include proper citation information), **fabrication** (unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation), or **aiding and abetting academic** dishonesty (intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another student commit an act of academic dishonesty). Not understanding the extent of academic dishonesty is not an excuse. Ask any and all questions **before** completing an assignment.

It should be noted that any incident of academic misconduct will be treated with utmost seriousness in this course. Indications of cheating or plagiarism will result in an automatic zero for the assignment and may result in failure of the entire course.

**Course Communication:**

Email is the most *efficient* mode of communication in this course. As your instructor, I will try my best to respond to your emails the same day. You should expect a response from me within a 24-hour period Monday through Friday. Emails sent over weekends may not receive responses until the next business day.

That said, face-to-face conversations are often the most *effective* way to address questions about course content and concepts. I encourage students to visit me during my office hours or to schedule an appointment. A detailed question asked via email may be met with a response requesting that you come see me in person. Students in this course are encouraged to meet with me during my office hours multiple times throughout the semester.

**Diversity:**

Diverse perspectives are recognized, respected, and seen as a source of strength in this course and across CCU. Fostering an inclusive learning environment that embraces open dialogue and values diverse ideas and experiences is essential. Our community is enriched and enhanced by diversity, including (but not limited to) race, ethnicity and national origins, gender and gender identity, sexuality, class, age, and religion. It is expected that all students will act in accord with this guiding principle in our class, whether face-to-face or online. Every attempt will be made to integrate diverse perspectives and viewpoints into our class discussions, activities and lectures. Please keep this at the forefront of your minds when participating in this course.

**Classroom Decorum:**

The **Code of Student Conduct** applies to all interactions and activities in this course, including online. This requires that students behave in a manner that is conducive to a teaching/learning environment. Students who engage in behavior that is disruptive or obstructive to the teaching/learning environment will be subject to disciplinary sanctions outlined by the Code of Student Conduct. Disruptive/obstructive behavior is not limited to but may include the following: physical abuse, verbal abuse, threats, stalking, intimidation harassment, or hazing. In addition, because the class time will be conversational, you will be expected to conduct yourself accordingly in your interactions in this class.

**Attendance:**

Attendance is expected unless there is a physician-documented illness, observation of a religious holy day or other documented University-sanctioned activities (such as NCAA events). This course adheres to the University policy regarding excusable absences (medical emergencies, NCAA events, and religious observances) and this policy will not be negotiated for other absences to be excused (traffic court dates, cars breaking down, etc.). Absences will only be excused for these specific activities, exceptions will not be considered.

**ALL** other absences will be unexcused. Students will not be given extensions on assignments (see the Moodle course calendar) due to these circumstances unless there is a documented emergency situation. Advanced planning and preparation for all assignments is expected for success in this course. Absences from scheduled exams will be excused for illness only if you have a note signed by a physician, stating you were physically unable to meet **during** the scheduled time (such has having a contagious virus). **NOTE:** This does **not** simply include having a doctor’s appointment on the day of a scheduled class. Doctor’s appointments or health center visits that do not have documentation demonstrating an emergency situation will not be excused.

One (1) absence is allowed in this course without penalty from your final course grade. Beyond that, each unexcused absence will result in the deduction of a half letter grade (ex: from B+ to B). Students are responsible for keeping track of their absences from class. I will not be counting up absences until they need to be entered in Webadvisor for official University purposes.

Official written documentation (medical or university issued) is required to justify any absence that a student wants considered to be excused and must be physically turned in to the instructor in class or office hours within one (1) week of the date of the absence to which it pertains. Students are responsible for all materials covered in the classes they have missed as well as for providing a hard copy of the documentation for the professor’s records. Students are responsible for obtaining all information missed during an absence from a classmate or by attending office hours as well as for keeping up with all content and deadlines posted on Moodle. Do **not** email the instructor to ask what you have missed during a class at which you should have been present.

Emergencies do occur and cannot always be planned for in advance. What does an emergency entail? Incapacitating circumstances are those that render you unable to communicate in an appropriate or timely manner. Some examples might include getting into a major (immobilizing) car accident on your way to campus to take a test; unexpectedly observing and being interviewed about a crime; being rendered unconscious, etc. These all require legal or medical documentation for the absence to be excused (e.g., if you fall unconscious on the way to class, a paramedic or urgent care note indicating what was wrong will be required). Without legal or medical documentation of an unexpected emergency, only University-sanctioned absences will be excused.

**Tardiness:**

Attendance will be taken during the first 10 minutes of class. If you are late twice, that will be recorded as an absence. A student may also be considered absent if their conduct is **disruptive or distracting** from the learning environment (including cell phone use and side conversations).

Cell phones should always be silenced (not simply on vibrate) during class, and text messaging is not permitted. In the event that cell phones are noticed in class, students may be asked to leave class for day and/or receive an **absence** for the day. Laptop computers/tablets are only permitted for use in class for special cases and must be approved by the instructor prior to use. Students permitted to use laptops should sit in the first two rows of the classroom.

**Special Accommodations:**

In the Edwards College of Humanities and Fine Arts, we value the varied experiences, backgrounds, and needs of our students. Services are offered which includes accommodating students with special needs, including physical and learning disabilities. Students with disabilities are encouraged to register with the office of Accessibility and Disability Services (843-349-2503), located in Kearns Hall, Rm. 106. You must be registered with the ADS office, if you will require any special accommodations for the course including alternative testing locations or extended time on assignments. For extended time on an assignment, Dr. Bergstrom must be notified at least 24 hours in advance. Three days advanced notification is required for scheduling alternative testing location and/or time. Special accommodations include ongoing absences for medical issues.

Coastal Carolina University is committed to equitable access and inclusion of individuals with disabilities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Individuals seeking reasonable accommodations should contact Accessibility & Disability Services (843-349-2503) or <https://www.coastal.edu/disabilityservices/>

**In-class Participation:**

Relatedly, when students are present in class, they are expected to be active participants in the classroom. Students should come to class having completed the assigned reading(s).

Any student observed sleeping, texting or using a cell phone, surfing the Internet (on computers or tablets), doing work for other courses, talking about unrelated topics, holding side conversations, or otherwise interrupting/ignoring class or distracting other students may be asked to leave and/or marked as absent. Remember, only two absences are allowed in this course before they impact a student’s final course grade.

**Handing in Assignments:**

Assignments are due by (or before) the given due date and time shown in Moodle. All assignments should be uploaded to Moodle. Hard copies will **not** be accepted unless we are completing an activity during class. Emailed assignments are never accepted.

It is your responsibility to double-check that your assignments appear in the upload slots. Technological glitches are **not** excuses for late work. Should you have any issues with technology, contact Moodle Support or ITS. Emailing the professor that you have technology problems is not a valid excuse for late or missing work.

**Grading:**

Please allow up to two weeks for assignments to be graded. Grades for this course will be located in the course Moodle site in the course gradebook. Students should also keep track of their own grades and absences (technology is not always 100% reliable) and discuss concerns about grades in a timely fashion during my office hours or by scheduling an appointment. Any concerns regarding a specific grade need to be discussed within **one week** of grade receipt, but only after you have taken time to review my comments and feedback. After that time, the grade stands.

**Late Work:**

Ten (10) points will be automatically deducted for any written assignment turned in after the specified date and time posted in Moodle, with an additional ten points for each further day the assignment is late. Work must be turned in within five (5) days of the due date (for a maximum of 50% credit), after that the assignment will receive a zero (0). No late work will be accepted after five (5) days, and the Moodle upload option will no longer be available.

Quizzes will **not** be accepted late. Once a quiz has closed, it will not be reopened.

Again, it is the responsible of all students to keep up with course assignments and due dates by checking Moodle regularly.

**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 if possible 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. I also ask that you remind me of your needs as needed (such as in the week before an exam). With advanced notice, I am happy to work with any student to help meet their accommodation needs.

**Recommended Student Resources:**

Writing Center: 843-349-2937, http://www.coastal.edu/writingcenter/

Moodle Support/Tutorials: http://www.coastal.edu/moodle/resources/students.html Student Computing Services: 843-349-2908, 843-349-2220, <http://coastal.edu/scs>

Learning Assistance Center: 843-349-6536, <http://www.coastal.edu/lac>

Counseling Services: 843-349-2305, http://www.coastal.edu/counseling

**Notice of Right to Retain Student Work:**

The CMC Department reserves the right to retain certain selected examples of student work for teaching purposes, promotional and display purposes, and as a part of its permanent collection.

**Course Schedule:**

The daily/weekly schedule for this class is tentative, and while substantial effort will be made to adhere to the schedule provided, the instructor reserves the right to make changes as necessary based on weather, professional conference attendance, or other relevant circumstances. Changes, should they be necessary, will be posted in Moodle.

**NOTE:** All assignments uploaded to Moodle are required to be formatted in **Microsoft Word** (not Pages or any other platform) using 12-pt font, standard double-spacing, with one-inch margins.

\*\*Proper use of **APA Citation Style** is required for all coursework.

\*\*All uploaded assignments should include the following information in the heading:

*Student’s name, assignment title, course title/section, date*

Any changes or updates pertaining to this document will be included in Moodle and the class will receive notification.

Tentative Course Schedule

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| Week 1 | Welcome and Introduction  Read Chapter 1 | Syllabus quiz |
| Week 2 | Paradigms of Knowing  Read Chapters 2 & 3 | Paradigms activity |
| Week 3 | Making Scholarly Arguments  Library session; Read Chapter 11 | Citi Training due |
| Week 4 | In-depth Interviews  Read Chapter 12 and articles in Moodle | Qualitative idea proposal due |
| Week 5 | Interviews and Focus Groups  Read articles posted in Moodle | Article response due |
| Week 6 | Ethnography  Read Chapter 13 and articles in Moodle | Article response due |
| Week 7 | Critical Studies  Read Chapter 16 and articles in Moodle | Article response due |
| Week 8 | Rhetorical Criticism  Read Chapter 17 and articles in Moodle | Article response due |
| Week 9 | Qualitative Project presentations | Qualitative Project due |
| Week 10 | Social Science Approaches  Read Chapters 4 & 5 | Article response due |
| Week 11 | Survey Research  Read Chapter 7 and articles in Moodle | Article response due |
| Week 12 | Content Analysis  Read Chapter 8 and articles in Moodle | Quantitative project proposal |
| Week 13 | NCA- no class meeting |  |
| Week 14 | Experiments  Read Chapter 6 and articles in Moodle | Article response due |
| Week 15 | Thanksgiving- work on projects |  |
| Final exam | Quantitative Presentations | Quantitative Project due |
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