

DEREE COLLEGE SYLLABUS FOR:

3/0/3

CN 4632 COMMUNICATION RESEARCH METHODS - LEVEL 6

UK CREDITS: 15

(Updated: Fall 2015)

PREREQUISITES:

WP 1010 Introduction to Academic Writing
WP 1111 Integrated Academic Writing and Ethics
WP 1212 Academic Writing and Research
CN 2301 Contemporary Mass Communication
CN 2408 Issues in Context
CN 3521 Communication Theories

CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

Examination of key concepts of social science research as applied to communication. Quantitative and qualitative research techniques. History and development of communication research. Sampling and research ethics. Exploration of the major approaches to research.

RATIONALE:

This course prepares students for the Communication Seminar by teaching them how to write a literature review and do a pilot study, and requiring them to produce both to meet the summative assessment requirements. This is also valuable preparation for students who will undertake graduate studies after completing their degree. Moreover, an understanding of mass media research methods and goals is important to people who want to work in the communication industry.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

After taking this course students should be able to:

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1. Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the major theories and key concepts relevant to the field of communication research.
2. Demonstrate awareness of the diversity of approaches to understanding media research in both historical and contemporary contexts, and of the uses and significance of those approaches.
3. Demonstrate understanding of the dynamics of media discourses in the shaping of culture and social attitudes.
4. Analyze arguments and positions related to research theory and practice with reference to relevant literature.

5. Select and apply quantitative and qualitative research methods in examining a contemporary issue or phenomenon concerning the mass media

METHOD OF TEACHING AND LEARNING:

In congruence with the teaching and learning strategy of the college, the following tools are used:

- Classes consist of lectures and class discussions.
- Office Hours: Students are encouraged to make full use of the office hours of their instructor, where they can ask questions about their own original articles and go over lecture material
- Use of a Blackboard site, where instructors post lecture notes, assignment instructions, announcements and additional resources.

ASSESSMENT:

Class tests (1 hour) formative	0	Short answer questions
Assignment summative	40	Research proposal including a pilot study. (2000 words)
Final examination (2 hour, comprehensive) summative	60	Short or long answer questions

The formative assessment aims at evaluating the students’ understanding of the course topics. The assignment tests learning outcome 5. The final examination tests learning outcomes 1,2,3, and,4.

REQUIRED MATERIAL:

Wimmer, Roger and Dominick, Joseph. *Mass Media Research: An Introduction* Wadsworth Publishing 2010

FURTHER READINGS:

Berger, Asa. *Media and Communication Research Methods: An Introduction to Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* Sage Publications 2010

Gunter, Barrie. *Media Research Methods: Measuring Audiences, Reaction and Impact* Sage Publications 1999

RECOMMENDED:

Hansen, Anders; Cottle, Simon; Negrine, Ralph; and Newbold, Chris. *Mass Communication Research Methods*, Palgrave Macmillan, 1998

WWW RESOURCES: <http://rogerwimmer.com/mmr/wimmerdominick9e.htm>
<http://pewresearch.org/>
http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/ict/netmedia/publications_en.html
<http://www.rajar.co.uk/>
<http://www.aeforum.org/aeforum.nsf/Issue/?openView>
<http://nielsen.com/>
<http://www.arbitron.com/home/content.stm>
<http://www.barb.co.uk/>
<http://www.rajar.co.uk/>

SOFTWARE REQUIREMENTS: Word, Excel.

COMMUNICATION REQUIREMENTS: All papers using good English.

INDICATIVE

CONTENT OUTLINE:

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The meaning of research
- 1.2. The development of mass media research
- 1.3. Private and public sector media research

2. Media research and the scientific method

- 2.1. Methods of knowing
- 2.2. Characteristics of the scientific method
- 2.3. Concepts and constructs
- 2.4. Independent and dependent variables

3. Research Procedures

- 3.1. Selecting a research topic
- 3.2. Determining topic relevance
- 3.3. How to do a literature review

4. Positivism and interpretivism

- 4.1. The Positivist paradigm
- 4.2. The Interpretive paradigm
- 4.3. Differences between the two approaches

5. Research ethics

- 5.1. Why be ethical?
- 5.2. General ethical theories
- 5.3. Ethical principles

6. Sampling

- 6.1. What is a sample?
- 6.2. Probability and non probability sampling
- 6.3. Issues to consider and sampling error
- 6.4. Probability - Random sampling

- 6.5. Probability - Systematic random sampling
- 6.6. Probability - Stratified sampling
- 6.7. Probability - Cluster sampling
- 6.8. Non Probability - Available samples
- 6.9. Non Probability - Purposive samples
- 6.10. Non Probability – Quota samples

7. Experimental research

- 7.1. Conducting experimental research
- 7.2. Advantages and disadvantages of laboratory experiments
- 7.3. Early media research: cartoons and aggression

8. Field observation/participant observation

- 8.1. Techniques
- 8.2. Advantages and disadvantages of field observations

9. Interviews

- 9.1. Characteristics of intensive interviews
- 9.2. Advantages and disadvantages of intensive interviews

10. Focus Groups

- 10.1. Characteristics of the focus group technique
- 10.2. Methodology of focus groups
- 10.3. Advantages and disadvantages of focus groups

11. Case studies

- 11.1. Characteristics of case study research
- 11.2. Conducting a case study
- 11.3. Advantages and disadvantages of case studies

12. Survey Research

- 12.1. Descriptive and analytical surveys
- 12.2. Constructing questions: open and close ended questions
- 12.3. Questionnaire design: instructions, order, layout, length
- 12.4. General guidelines
- 12.5. Analyzing data
- 12.6. Advantages and disadvantages of survey research

13. Content Analysis

- 13.1. Definition of content analysis: Kerlinger's characteristics
- 13.2. Uses and limitations of content analysis
- 13.3. Steps in content analysis: defining the universe, sampling, selecting a unit of analysis, constructing content categories, constructing a coding schedule, doing a pilot study
- 13.4. Analyzing data