

INGL 4230
Introduction to Human Communication Research
Spring Semester 2004
Wednesday, 4:30-7:20 p.m.

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Office Hours: Monday/Wednesday 1:30-2:30 p.m. and by appointment

Course Description

This course is an introduction to the theoretical and practical concerns underlying procedures most commonly used in communication research. Students will evaluate findings of communication research and better understand research methods.

Course Objectives

By the end of the course the student will:

1. understand the implications of methodological choices in studying communication behavior.
2. understand the basic steps and stages involved in conducting typical forms of communication research.
3. critically evaluate the fundamental methods used to study and make knowledge claims about communication behavior.
4. understand the concepts of reliability and validity.
5. execute library research and write an original review of communication literature.

Textbooks:

Rubin, R. B., Rubin, A. M., & Piele, L. J. (2000). Communication research: Strategies and sources (5th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

American Psychological Association. (2001). Publication manual of the American Psychological Association (5th ed.), Washington, D. C.: American Psychological Association. (Strongly recommended)

Additional readings will be assigned. These will be placed on reserve in the Richardson Seminar Room.

Course Requirements

You are expected to turn in your assignments on the date that they are due. Late assignments will be graded at the discretion of the professor, and will only be accepted with a legitimate excuse.

1. Annotated Bibliography (25%)
2. Research prospectus (30%)
3. Exam #1 (15%)
4. Exam #2 (15%)
5. Exam #3 (15%)

Los estudiantes que reciben servicios de Rehabilitación Vocacional deben comunicarse con el profesor al inicio del semestre para planificar el acomodo razonable y equip asistivo necesario conforme a las recomendaciones de la Oficina de Asuntos Estudiantes. También aquellos estudiantes con necesidades especiales que requieren de algún tipo de asistencia o acomodo deben comunicarse con el profesor. (Ley 51)

Evaluación diferenciada a estudiantes con necesidades especiales. (Ley 51)

Course Policies

1. Attendance is expected at all classes. Courses in communication require a high degree of class participation and interpersonal interaction. For this reason, students are expected to attend all classes. A strong emphasis will be placed on in-class participation and learning. Under university policy, more than four absences will result in a grade reduction.
2. In the context of this class, "class participation" means coming prepared for class and contributing appropriately to discussions. Contributions can take the form of asking intelligent and useful questions, as well as answering questions thoughtfully. "Class participation" does not mean merely showing up for class everyday. Those who show up, but usually come unprepared and who rarely contribute constructively to class discussions are taking from their classmates without giving in return and they will receive no points for class participation.
3. Cheating, plagiarism, or other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated in this class. It is not an acceptable defense to claim, "I didn't know I was plagiarizing," "I didn't know what I was doing was plagiarism," or "I didn't know that plagiarizing was prohibited." In an academic environment, plagiarism is one of the most serious offenses a student can commit. **Plagiarism is the**

intentional or unintentional representation of another person's ideas as your own. Plagiarism sometimes confuses students. It is plagiarism to turn in any portion of someone else's paper, speech, or outline as your own work. It is plagiarism to use any portion of a speech or paper from a "file" of previously used speeches and present it in class as your original work. It is plagiarism to take passages from someone's work and include it in a speech, paper, or outline without citing the original author. Even if you do not use the exact words that someone else used, **it is plagiarism to use their ideas without giving them credit.** It is a form of academic misconduct to knowingly allow another student to use your work as their own. All material submitted for evaluation must be the original work of the student.

4. Late assignments will only be accepted when you contact me **before** the assignment is due, and I will only accept late assignments when you have a legitimate and supportable excuse. In fairness to students who complete their work on time, if I accept your assignment late, you can expect that it will be graded more harshly than if it had been turned in on the date that it was due (because you will have had more time to complete the assignment). Also, when an assignment is late, I will only grade it when I have time. In other words, late assignments may take much longer than usual to return to you.
5. Always keep an extra copy of any assignment that you turn in to me (either a hard copy or on a computer disk). While it is extremely rare that I misplace student assignments, keeping an copy will protect you in the event that it happens.

Tentative Schedule

Date	Topic	Reading
January 21	Introduction to course	
January 28	Studying communication	Chapter 1
February 4	Searching the communication literature	Chapter 2
February 11	Using the internet for communication research Using computers to search electronic databases	Chapter 3 Chapter 4
February 18	Exam #1	

Date	Topic	Reading
February 25	Designing the Communication Research Project	Chapter 9
March 3	To be announced	
March 10	Individual meetings with instructor to discuss research projects.	
March 17	General Sources Access Tools	Chapter 5 Chapter 6
March 24	Communication Periodicals Information Compilations Annotated Bibliography Due	Chapter 7 Chapter 8
March 31	Exam #2	
April 7	Semana Santa	
April 14	Writing Research Papers Preparing Research Projects	Chapter 10 Chapter 11
April 21	Conducting a Research Study	Chapter 12
April 28	Exam #3	
May 5	To be announced	
May 12	Research Project Due	

Annotated Bibliography Assignment

As researchers, you will be developing a working annotated bibliography for your project. Your bibliography will identify materials you could use in writing your research proposal.

An annotated bibliography is evaluative. This means that you will not simply list “bibliographic information” (author, title, source, publisher, date, etc.), but you will also write a short summary (about 100 words) about the source and what it covers as well as an evaluation of the quality of the source.

This assignment requires you to pose a research question and then investigate what is known about the concepts of interest. This will require you to research, locate, document, summarize, and evaluate 10-12 articles of interest to you as a student researcher in the field of communication.

Procedures:

Pose a research question: Create a research question of interest to yourself based on personal or professional interest. Look at various research articles to get an idea of research questions asked by others. Keep your question simple and maintain a communication focus. For instance, one might ask the question: “How might a person reduce speech anxiety?,” “What influences interpersonal attraction?,” or “What is the best way to communicate criticism to one’s superior?”

Research: Utilizing effective library research skills, identify 10-12 articles, books or other resources relevant to the concept(s) of interest to your research (i.e., speech anxiety, interpersonal attraction, superior-subordinate communication and criticism).

Locate: Using your knowledge of the internet and library organization, you will need to locate and acquire the articles of interest. Acquiring might include downloading an electronic copy, photocopying the article, or taking notes as needed to adequately summarize and evaluate the information.

Document: Following APA style, complete a citation for each document included in the annotated bibliography.

Summarize: Based on a thorough readings of the document, you will need to create an summary (***in your own words***) of the main information related to your research question. An annotation typically includes a paragraph summarizing the key definitions, methods, operational definitions, and/or findings.

Evaluate: In addition to summarizing the key information, you need to provide an

evaluation of the material. This evaluation should address reliability, authority, and usefulness to your project.

Tips:

- Select your research question with care to ensure an appropriate “communication” focus.
- Place your research question prominently at the beginning of the document.
- Approach the process in small steps. Attempting to do this all in one night is not likely to be effective.
- Arrange your final document alphabetically (based on the first author of the source).
- Review the final document carefully for professional appearance and proper adherence to APA style.
- The assignment will be assessed based on the breadth and depth of your research effort along with adherence to the criteria outlined above.