

RESEARCH METHODS

Episode I

RESEARCH METHODS IN COMM

(aka COMMUNICATION STUDIES 60173)
Tuesdays, 2:00-4:40 PM, Moudy South 300, Class #74484

Course Syllabus, Fall Semester 2020

Instructor: Dr. Andrew Ledbetter

Phone: 817-257-4524

E-mail: a.ledbetter@tcu.edu (great way to reach me)

Twitter: @dr_ledbetter (also a good way to reach me more publicly)

IM screen name (GoogleTalk): DrAndrewLedbetter (this works too)

Office Hours: In order to practice physical distancing due to the COVID-19 pandemic, I will not meet face-to-face with students in my office this semester. I will be available on Zoom office hours on Thursdays between 2 and 3 PM (link available on TCU Online), and I am happy to talk with you on the phone or Zoom at other times that are mutually convenient.

Required Text

Keyton, J. (2019). *Communication research: Asking questions, finding answers* (5th ed.). McGraw-Hill. You may obtain a copy at the TCU bookstore or purchase or rent a copy (including digital) on Amazon: https://www.amazon.com/Communication-Research-Questions-Finding-Answers-ebook-dp-B079YV8BZL/dp/B079YV8BZL/ref=mt_other?encoding=UTF8&me=&qid=1595947958.

Additional readings will be posted on TCU Online.

Course Description

This is the first course in a two-course sequence (but, fortunately, this Episode I does not include Jar Jar Binks...). This course provides a general introduction to communication research overall. We will consider topics such as research ethics, basic procedures for both qualitative and quantitative data collection, and the connection between research and theory, as well as research and practice. In my mind, I think of this course as about *how you get your data*. The second course will then help you understand *how to analyze your quantitative data*. Overall, both courses are about equipping you with a

set of research tools that will allow you to seek knowledge—whether that knowledge is for formal theory-testing in academic contexts or practical application in professional contexts.

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Explain key ethical considerations in the conduct and application of social scientific research.
2. Design studies using common quantitative and qualitative research designs in the social sciences.
3. Identify how research can be applied in scholarly and professional contexts.
4. Explain and evaluate the use of research designs in published social scientific journal articles.
5. Prepare a research proposal that could be developed into completed project.

Mapping of Course Outcomes and Course Activities and Assignments

Course Outcome(s)	Course Activities: Assignments, Exams/Quizzes, Presentations, etc.
1	Labs 2 & 3
2	Labs 4-9
3	Lab 11
4	Article presentation assignment
5	Lab 10; Research proposal

COURSE-SPECIFIC POLICIES

1. **Delivery method.** This course is a modified on-campus course, although we are also prepared to switch to fully online delivery if required. Some students will also be participating online for some or all of the semester. First we’ll consider the plans for modified on-campus course delivery, and then in the question in the FAQ below, I’ll address plans for if we have to switch to online course delivery.

FAQ ON COURSE DELIVERY:

What is “modified on-campus delivery”? It means that students may attend class face-to-face in Moudy South 300, with some students participating via Zoom.

How many of the class days are synchronous? All of them are, with just one exception – the week of November 3, each of you will meet with me one-on-one to talk about your research proposal, and you will also complete a lab exercise that moves the proposal forward. Other than that, unless otherwise announced due to an emergency or other change in plans, you will have the opportunity to participate in synchronous learning (face-to-face or via Zoom) for every class period.

What rules do I have to follow when coming to class in person? TCU policy requires you to wear a mask at all times (the mask must cover your mouth and nose), and you also must stay at least six feet away from others (physical distancing). The seats in the room will be configured to enable this physical distancing; please do not move them. *If you do not follow these rules, you will be asked to leave class for the day. Any refusal to comply with these policies will result in forwarding details of the incident to the Schieffer College Dean’s Office and to Campus Life for disciplinary action.*

Here’s some language TCU wants me to include on this: *“Face coverings are required on campus, unless you are alone in your private office or dorm room. Students will be expected to practice physical distancing and wear protective face coverings at all times while in public spaces on the TCU campus. Failing to do so in the classroom could result in the student being asked to leave the room and continue the class through remote access. Additionally, the instructor has the option to terminate the class period*

and continue it as a remote session. Failure to comply with the instructor's request to adhere to TCU policy regarding face coverings or repeat violations may be reported to Campus Life."

How will I participate via Zoom? You will find the link to the recurring Zoom meeting on TCU Online. On Zoom, you will be able to see me, see the PowerPoint presentation, ask questions, and communicate with me and the rest of the class. I will structure the class to allow full participation whether students are face-to-face or on Zoom.

I'm enrolled as a fully online student for all of my classes this semester. May I still come to class face-to-face if I want to do so? My understanding is that university policy prevents fully online students (i.e., those who have chosen to enroll online for all of their courses) from attending class face-to-face. So, no, if you are enrolled with TCU as a fully online student, I cannot permit you to come to class face-to-face.

What technology and other resources do I need to have? You will need to have access to a device that connects to Zoom and a stable Internet connection. If you do not have access to these, please let me know and we can talk with the department and university about ways to assist you. Beyond Zoom connectivity, you will need access to a browser that can log on to TCU Online, a word processor via which you can complete the application log paper, and a copy of the Keyton textbook.

Do I need to turn on my camera when I am on Zoom? I really hope that you will choose to turn your camera on. As a communication graduate student, you probably know that nonverbal cues are an important part of communication, and if we can't see you, we can't read your nonverbal feedback. However, I understand that there may be reasons why you cannot or do not wish to turn on your camera, and therefore turning on your camera is not required. Unless you are speaking, please make sure that your microphone is on mute.

What if I want to participate via Zoom rather than coming to class in person? Not a problem. Just come to the Zoom session at class time and you can participate that way.

What if I want to come to class even though I registered as a fully online student? Unfortunately, I cannot permit this, because coming to class when you're scheduled to be on Zoom risks violating TCU's physical distancing policy.

Will you be recording class sessions? Yes. All class sessions will be recorded and posted on TCU Online, so that if you have to miss a day due to illness or other reasons, you may see what happened in class. However, let me caution you against relying on these recordings in lieu of coming to class. If you don't attend, you will not have the opportunity to engage in class discussions or activities, and that will hinder your learning of communication theory. You may use these recordings only for your own personal use for learning research methods; any redistribution to others in any form, for any reason, is a violation of TCU policy. See below for more details.

Here's the language on this that TCU wants me to include: *Our class sessions will all be recorded for use by enrolled students, including those who are unable to attend live. Students who participate with their camera engaged or utilize a profile image are consenting to have their video or image recorded. If you do not wish to consent to have your profile or video image recorded, be sure to keep your camera off and do not use a profile image. Likewise, students who un-mute during class and participate orally are consenting to have their voices recorded. If you do not wish to consent to have your voice recorded during class, you will need to keep your mute button activated and communicate exclusively using the "chat" feature, which allows students to type questions and comments live. Further, if you anticipate that you will not consent to your video and/or audio participation being recorded, please contact the instructor immediately so the instructor may work with you to determine how to assess your class participation and assignments that may require collaboration during the class session.*

What if we have to move fully online? The content and structure of the course would make a transition to fully online, if necessary, very easy. All written assignments are already submitted online, so there would be no change to those. The only change is that everyone will be participating via Zoom and no one will be coming to class in person. We can discuss the course material, review PowerPoints, and engage in class activities via Zoom, and if we need to, we will do that.

When will *Black Widow* and the new James Bond movie see release? *Sigh* I wish I knew... some things can't be answered in a syllabus FAQ...

2. **Time Zone.** Note that all times referred to in the syllabus and all other course materials refer to Central time (i.e., the time in Fort Worth, TX).
3. **Class Attendance and Participation:** For all students, but especially graduate students, I expect punctual attendance and participation in all scheduled class sessions. This includes reading all course readings prior to class and bringing a copy of the readings with you. If you cannot attend a class session, please notify me as soon as you possibly can.
4. **Deadlines:** All work is due electronically (sent via e-mail attachment to a.ledbetter@tcu.edu) by the start of class on the designated due date. If a situation arises that hinders this, please contact me as soon as possible (ideally before the assignment is due). I reserve the right to deduct points if work is submitted late, and especially if you do not notify me beforehand.
5. **Electronic Devices:** Use of electronic devices is encouraged in class, as long as you are using it in ways that enhance your learning or the learning of others. If your technology use interferes with classroom activity, I reserve the right to ask you to (a) cease your technology use and/or (b) leave the classroom. Only the official TCU student email address will be used for all course notification. It is your responsibility to check your TCU email on a regular basis.
6. **Recording Class Sessions:** Class sessions contain my own and others' intellectual property. Except when I have granted prior written approval, recording audio or video from class sessions is prohibited and will be treated as academic misconduct (see #4).

I will post recordings of the class Zoom sessions after class. You may use these for your own personal use. They are not to be redistributed to others, and if they are, that is academic misconduct (see the academic misconduct policy below).

7. **Obtaining Copies of PowerPoint Slides:** PowerPoint slides for each class session will be placed on TCU Online prior to the start of class. I fully intend that you will download them, keep them, and consult them in future projects. You also have my permission to freely (i.e., without cost to the recipient) redistribute, reuse, or modify them for your personal or instructional purposes (although some form of acknowledgment would be appreciated especially for the latter).
8. **My commitment to ideological diversity.** Academia cannot function properly unless all of its members experience freedom to express their views without fear of personal attack. In order to create a classroom environment that supports respectful, critical inquiry through the free exchange of ideas, the following principles will guide our work:
 - Treat every member of the class with respect, even if you disagree with their opinion;
 - Reasonable minds can differ on any number of perspectives, opinions, and conclusions;
 - Because constructive disagreement sharpens thinking, deepens understanding, and reveals novel insights, it is not just encouraged, it is expected;
 - All viewpoints are welcome;
 - No ideas are immune from scrutiny and debate;

- The purpose of this classroom is to discover, explore, and debate ideas, not to engage in political activism or political persuasion;
- You will not be graded on your opinions.
- (Drawn from Debra Mashek, <https://heterodoxacademy.org/teaching-heterodoxy-syllabus-language/>)

- 9. Communication with parents:** In high school, your parents had complete access to your academic record. As a college student (and for most of you, as legal adults), by federal law that is no longer the case. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA; also known as the Buckley Amendment), passed in 1974, requires that colleges and universities keep your academic records private, even from your parents, unless you give consent. For information on TCU's compliance with FERPA, and how to grant your parents or others access to your academic information, see <http://www.reg.tcu.edu/privacy.asp>.

Please also note that waiving FERPA restrictions for a parent (or another person) only means that a professor may discuss your grade with the parent—it does not require a professor to do so. As a general rule, I will not discuss your academic performance in this class with your parents or other individuals, even if you have waived your FERPA rights. You are an adult, and I believe that your personal growth as an adult will only occur as you take initiative and responsibility for your own academic career, including discussing concerns with me in a timely fashion. If you do have questions about your academic record in this class, of course I am more than happy to speak with you individually about them.

- 10. Changes to the Syllabus:** Although I've made every effort to craft this syllabus as accurately as possible, sometimes unforeseen events arise, including but not limited to inclement weather days, instructor illness, relevant current events that merit class discussion, or the availability of guest speakers. I reserve the right to make changes in the syllabus as the semester progresses, including but not limited to changes in the course schedule, grading criteria, and attendance policies. Syllabus changes will be communicated to you in three ways: (a) by e-mail, (b) announcement in class, and (c) posting of the revised syllabus on TCU Online. You are responsible to check your e-mail, attend class, and visit TCU Online to receive such announcements.

In all cases, the most recent version of the syllabus posted on TCU Online supersedes all previous versions. Also, a change in one section and/or policy of the syllabus does not invalidate any other section and/or policy of the syllabus. Likewise, if one section and/or policy of the syllabus is found to be invalid by a university or legal authority, that decision shall apply to that section and/or policy of the syllabus only, and the validity of the remainder of the syllabus shall remain intact.

TCU POLICIES

- 11. Campus life and the student experience will be different this year.** The health and safety of students, faculty, and staff is Texas Christian University's highest priority. TCU has implemented public health interventions, which includes following local and state public health orders and CDC guidelines. These health interventions may impact your experience as a student both inside and outside the classroom. Safety protocols may change during the semester and may result in modifications or changes to the teaching format, delivery method, or the course schedule (e.g., altering meeting times or frequency; changing beginning or ending dates for a term; or partially or completely moving from a face-to-face classroom teaching to an online teaching or remote learning format). Any changes in teaching format, delivery method, or course schedule will not impact the credit hours for the course.

- 12. Zoom access:** Zoom links to the recurring meetings for (a) class sessions and (b) weekly office hours will be posted on TCU Online. If you want to meet individually for a Zoom meeting, contact me at a.ledbetter@tcu.edu.

13. Academic Misconduct: TCU's mission is "to educate individuals to think and act as ethical leaders and responsible citizens in the global community." The ideals of ethics and responsibility are completely incompatible with academic misconduct.

Sec. 3.4 from the TCU Code of Student Conduct: Any act that violates the academic integrity of the institution is considered academic misconduct. The procedures used to resolve suspected acts of academic misconduct are available in the offices of Academic Deans and the Office of Campus Life and are listed in detail in the Undergraduate Catalog. Specific examples include, but are not limited to:

- **Cheating:** Copying from another student's test paper, laboratory report, other report, or computer files and listings; using, during any academic exercise, material and/or devices not authorized by the person in charge of the test; collaborating with or seeking aid from another student during a test or laboratory without permission; knowingly using, buying, selling, stealing, transporting, or soliciting in its entirety or in part, the contents of a test or other assignment unauthorized for release; substituting for another student or permitting another student to substitute for oneself.
- **Plagiarism:** The appropriation, theft, purchase or obtaining by any means another's work, and the unacknowledged submission or incorporation of that work as one's own offered for credit. Appropriation includes the quoting or paraphrasing of another's work without giving credit therefore. [I reserve the right to examine submitted papers using the turnitin.com plagiarism detection service. Normally this will occur automatically when you submit your paper to TCU Online, and in other cases I may upload your paper to the service myself.]
- **Collusion:** The unauthorized collaboration with another in preparing work offered for credit.
- **Abuse of resource materials:** Mutilating, destroying, concealing, or stealing such material.
- **Computer misuse:** Unauthorized or illegal use of computer software or hardware through the TCU Computer Center or through any programs, terminals, or freestanding computers owned, leased or operated by TCU or any of its academic units for the purpose of affecting the academic standing of a student.
- **Fabrication and falsification:** Unauthorized alteration or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise. Falsification involves altering information for use in any academic exercise. Fabrication involves inventing or counterfeiting information for use in any academic exercise.
- **Multiple submission:** The submission by the same individual of substantial portions of the same academic work (including oral reports) for credit more than once in the same or another class without authorization.
- **Complicity in academic misconduct:** Helping another to commit an act of academic misconduct.
- **Bearing false witness:** Knowingly and falsely accusing another student of academic misconduct.

Please also note that TCU's academic misconduct policy forbids submitting the same paper (or portions thereof) to multiple classes without prior instructor approval. You can find more information about academic misconduct at TCU in the Student Code of Conduct (Section 3.4), <https://tcu.codes/code/index>.

In this course, paying money to another student currently in the course for information such as class notes, completed review sheets, and so forth is considered a form of academic misconduct.

Exam and quiz material is my own intellectual property. **Taking photographs, videos, or any other copies of quiz or exam materials is academic misconduct, as is distributing such material to other people in any form, publicly and/or privately, or receiving such material from others. This includes via learning websites such as Quizlet. Likewise, if you discover that such material is being or has been distributed, you must tell me immediately, or else you are complicit in that academic misconduct.**

I reserve the right to record exams and quizzes on video, using any device of my choosing, to identify academic misconduct during those exercises.

If you have questions concerning what constitutes academic misconduct, please discuss this with me ahead of time. Not knowing the definition of academic misconduct does not excuse you from the consequences. **In**

this course, any form of academic misconduct will result in automatic failure (i.e., grade of “F”) for the relevant assignment(s) and recommendation to the academic dean that the offender be dropped immediately from the course with a grade of “F”. In a group project, all project members will, by default, receive the same penalty. TCU’s undergraduate and graduate catalogs provide information about appeal procedures in cases of alleged academic misconduct.

- 14. Email.** Only the official TCU student email address will be used for all course notification. It is your responsibility to check your TCU email on a regular basis.
- 15. Course materials.** TCU students are prohibited from sharing any portion of course materials (including videos, PowerPoint slides, assignments, or notes) with others, including on social media, without written permission by the course instructor. Accessing, copying, transporting (to another person or location), modifying, or destroying programs, records, or data belonging to TCU or another user without authorization, whether such data is in transit or storage, is prohibited. The full policy can be found at: <https://security.tcu.edu/polproc/usage-policy/>.

Violating this policy is considered a violation of Section 3.2.15 of the Student Code of Conduct (this policy may be found in the Student Handbook at <https://tcu.codes/code/index/>), **and may also constitute Academic Misconduct or Disruptive Classroom Behavior** (these policies may be found in the undergraduate catalog at <https://tcu.smartcatalogiq.com/current/Undergraduate-Catalog/Student-Policies/Academic-Conduct-Policy-Details>). TCU encourages student debate and discourse; accordingly, TCU generally interprets and applies its policies, including the policies referenced above, consistent with the values of free expression and First Amendment principles.

- 16. Student access and accommodations:** Texas Christian University affords students with disabilities reasonable accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. To be eligible for disability-related academic accommodations, students are required to register with the TCU Office of Student Access and Accommodation and have their requested accommodations evaluated. Students are required to provide instructors an official TCU notification of accommodation approved through Student Access and Accommodation. More information on how to apply for accommodations can be found at <https://www.tcu.edu/access-accommodation/> or by calling Student Access and Accommodation at (817) 257-6567. Accommodations are not retroactive and require advance notice to implement.
- 17. Statement on TCU’s Discrimination Policy:** TCU prohibits discrimination and harassment based on age, race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, ethnic origin, disability, predisposing genetic information, covered veteran status, and any other basis protected by law, except as permitted by law. TCU also prohibits unlawful sexual and gender-based harassment and violence, sexual assault, incest, statutory rape, sexual exploitation, intimate partner violence, bullying, stalking, and retaliation. We understand that discrimination, harassment, and sexual violence can undermine students’ academic success and we encourage students who have experienced any of these issues to talk to someone about their experience, so they can get the support they need.
- [Review TCU’s Policy on Prohibited Discrimination, Harassment and Related Conduct or to file a complaint: https://titleix.tcu.edu/title-ix/.](https://titleix.tcu.edu/title-ix/)
 - [Learn about the Campus Community Response Team and Report a Bias Incident: https://titleix.tcu.edu/campus-community-response-team/](https://titleix.tcu.edu/campus-community-response-team/)
- 18. Statement on Title IX at TCU:** As an instructor, one of my responsibilities is to help create a safe learning environment on our campus. It is my goal that you feel able to share information related to your life experiences in classroom discussions, in your written work, and in our one-on-one meetings. I will seek to keep any information you share private to the greatest extent possible. However, I have a mandatory reporting responsibility under TCU policy and federal law and I am required to share any information I receive regarding sexual harassment, discrimination, and related conduct with TCU’s Title IX Coordinator.

Students can receive confidential support and academic advocacy by contacting TCU's Confidential Advocate in the Campus Advocacy, Resources & Education office at (817) 257-5225 or the [Counseling & Mental Health Center](https://counseling.tcu.edu/) at <https://counseling.tcu.edu/> or by calling (817) 257-7863. [Alleged violations can be reported to the Title IX Office](https://titleix.tcu.edu/student-toolkit/) at <https://titleix.tcu.edu/student-toolkit/> or by calling (817) 257-8228. Should you wish to make a confidential report, the Title IX Office will seek to maintain your privacy to the greatest extent possible, but cannot guarantee confidentiality. Reports to law enforcement can be made to the Fort Worth Police Department at 911 for an emergency and (817) 335-4222 for non-emergency or TCU Police at (817) 257-7777.

Obligations to Report Conduct Raising Title IX or VAWA Issues

Mandatory Reporters: All TCU employees, except Confidential Resources, are considered Mandatory Reporters for purposes of their obligations to report, to the Coordinator, conduct that raises Title IX and/or VAWA (Violence Against Women Act) issues.

Mandatory Reporters are required to immediately report to the Coordinator information about conduct that raises Title IX and/or VAWA issues, including any reports, complaints or allegations of sexual harassment, discrimination and those forms of prohibited conduct that relate to nonconsensual sexual intercourse or contact, sexual exploitation, intimate partner violence, stalking and retaliation involving any member of the TCU community, except as otherwise provided within the [Policy on Prohibited Discrimination, Harassment and Related Conduct](#).

Mandatory Reporters may receive this information in a number of ways. For example, a complainant may report the information directly to a Mandatory Reporter, a witness or third-party may provide information to a Mandatory Reporter, or a Mandatory Reporter may personally witness such conduct. A Mandatory Reporter's obligation to report such information to the Coordinator does not depend on how he/she received the information. Mandatory Reporters must provide all known information about conduct that raises Title IX or VAWA issues to the Coordinator, including the identities of the parties, the date, time and location, and any other details. Failure of a Mandatory Reporters to provide such information to the Coordinator in a timely manner may subject the employee to appropriate discipline, including removal from a position or termination of employment.

Mandatory Reporters cannot promise to refrain from forwarding the information to the Coordinator if it raises Title IX or VAWA issues or withhold information about such conduct from the Coordinator. Mandatory Reporters may provide support and assistance to a complainant, witness, or respondent, but they should not conduct any investigation or notify the respondent unless requested to do so by the Coordinator.

Mandatory Reporters are not required to report information disclosed (1) at public awareness events (e.g., "Take Back the Night," candlelight vigils, protests, "survivor speak-outs," or other public forums in which students may disclose such information (collectively, public awareness events); or (2) during an individual's participation as a subject in an Institutional Review Board approved human subjects research protocol (IRB Research). TCU may provide information about Title IX rights and available resources and support at public awareness events, however, and Institutional Review Boards may, in appropriate cases, require researchers to provide such information to all subjects of IRB Research.

911 for an emergency and (817) 335-4222 for non-emergency or TCU Police at (817) 257-7777.

- 19. Health and wellness.** If you are exhibiting symptoms that may be related to COVID-19 (fever or chills, dry cough, shortness of breath, etc.) or are concerned that you may have been exposed to COVID-19, you must self-quarantine and consult with the Brown Lupton Health Center at 817-257-7949 for further guidance.

In addition, you must notify the Campus Life Office immediately at 817-257-7926. Campus Life will inform your professors that you are unable to attend class, and provide any assistance and support needed. Click here for detailed information concerning COVID-19 symptoms: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus>.

If you are unwell, but are not exhibiting potential COVID-19-related symptoms, please notify your instructor as soon as possible that you are ill and will not be attending class.

If you do not feel well enough to attend class in person, but feel well enough to attend class remotely, please notify your instructor as soon as possible before the class begins to arrange attendance via video conferencing.

- 20. Face coverings and physical distancing.** Face coverings are required on campus, unless you are alone in your private office or dorm room. Students will be expected to practice physical distancing and wear protective face coverings at all times while in public spaces on the TCU campus. Failing to do so in the classroom could result in the student being asked to leave the room and continue the class through remote access. Additionally, the instructor has the option to terminate the class period and continue it as a remote session if students do not wear required masks or practice physical distancing.
- 21. Emergency response information.** Please review [TCU's L.E.S.S. is More public safety video](#) to learn about Lockdown, Evacuate, and Seek Shelter procedures. (<https://publicsafety.tcu.edu/less-is-more/>)

[TCU's Public Safety website](#) provides maps that show our building's rally point for evacuation and the seek shelter location. (<https://publicsafety.tcu.edu/>)

In the event of an emergency, call the TCU Police Department at **817-257-7777**.

Download the [Frogshield Campus Safety App](#) on your phone. (<https://police.tcu.edu/frogshield/>)

- 22. TCU Campus Resources for Students:** Many resources exist on the TCU campus that may be helpful to students:

- Brown-Lupton Health Center (817-257-7863)
- Campus Life (817-257-7926, Sadler Hall 2006)
- Center for Academic Services (817-257-7486, Sadler Hall 1022)
- Center for Digital Expression (CDeX) (817-257-7350, Scharbauer 2003)
- Mary Couets Burnett Library (817-257-7117)
- Office of Religious & Spiritual Life (817-257-7830, Jarvis Hall 1st floor)
- Student Development Services (817-257-7855, BLUU 2003)
- TCU Center for Writing (817-257-7221, Reed Hall 419)
- Transfer Student Center (817-257-7855, BLUU 2003)
- Veterans Services (817-257-5557, Jarvis Hall 219)

Course Assessment

Lab Exercises (11 labs, 150 points total) – This is a research *methods* course—and methods can only be learned through *practice*. This course focuses on *designing research projects* and *collecting data*. Early in the semester, you will identify a general communication research topic that interests you. Then, for some of the labs, you will follow this idea by sketching research projects that use various data approaches to examine that topic. The homework/lab exercises form the heart of your learning in the course. The syllabus below lists the days that the labs are *assigned*, and each lab assignment sheet lists the day that the lab is *due* (typically by the start of class). See the TCU Online document on assignments for more details. All labs will be submitted through email.

Article Presentation (50 points): Each student will be assigned to one of the data collection / research design methods we cover in class. You will then find an article in your area of study that uses this statistical technique. In your presentation, you will explain (a) the problem the research aims to solve, (b) why the research uses the particular research design, (c) how the research design was executed, and (d) what the research design demonstrated. You will also write a 1-2 page summary of these things. Presentations on your article will occur at the start of the class period after the research is covered (this gives you and everyone else a chance to become acquainted with it in the course material first). Each

presentation should last no longer than 15 minutes. No more than two students may cover a given topic. You can see topics and their due dates by looking at the “presentation opportunities” on the course schedule below. See the TCU Online document on assignments for more details. You will submit the paper via email.

Research proposal (100 points) – This paper will describe how you could use one of the research designs in this course to study communication. It could build from one of the labs or be a separate paper. See the TCU Online document on assignments for more details. You will submit the proposal via email.

Grading Scale – Overall, in graduate courses, I believe an ‘A’ should reflect outstanding work, a ‘B’ should reflect good/acceptable work, a ‘C’ should reflect problematic work, and (of course) an ‘F’ should reflect unacceptable work. When I assign your grade for this course, I will consider both the quantity/quality of your participation in class and the spirit of collegiality and respect you exhibit toward me and your colleagues. In addition to these, your point total will strongly guide grade assignment, with 270 or more points (90% and above) reflecting ‘A’-quality work, 240-269 points (80-89%) reflecting ‘B’-quality work, 210-239 (70-79%) reflecting ‘C’-quality work, and 209 points or below indicating ‘F’-quality work. To provide the most accurate assessment of your work, I will use the +/- system when grading (e.g., 83% as the cut-off for a B-, and 87% as the cut-off for a B+).

COURSE SCHEDULE

Module 1: Introduction to Social Research

August 18 (Week 1): Why do we do communication research?

Reading: Keyton, ch. 1

August 25 (Week 2): From theory to research

Reading: Keyton, ch. 2

Lab due: Lab 1 (Data about yourself)

September 1 (Week 3): Research ethics & the public reporting of research

Readings:

Keyton, ch. 3

Mac Donald, H. (2020, July 9). I cited their study, so they disavowed it. *The Wall Street Journal*.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/i-cited-their-study-so-they-disavowed-it-11594250254>

Massey, D. S., & Waters, M. C. (2020, July 15). Scientific versus public debates: A PNAS case study.

PNAS editorial. <https://www.pnas.org/content/early/2020/07/14/2012328117>

Cesario, J., & Johnson, D. J. (2020, July 6). Statement on the retraction of “Officer characteristics and racial disparities in fatal officer-involved shootings”.

https://retractionwatch.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/PNAS_STATEMENT.pdf

The original controversial article is also available on TCU Online, although reading it is optional.

Lab due: Lab 2 (Finding bad reporting of research)

Module 2: Getting Qualitative Data

September 8 (Week 4): Designing qualitative research

Reading: Keyton, chs. 14 & 15

Lab due: Lab 3 (Complete IRB training)

September 15 (Week 5): Interviewing and ethnography

Reading: Keyton, ch. 16

Lab due: None

September 22 (Week 6): Grounded theory and thematic analysis

Reading: Keyton, ch. 17

Lab due: Lab 4 (Interviewing / ethnography lab)

September 29 (Week 7): Mixed methods & model building

Reading: Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (2nd ed., pp. 208-227). SAGE Publications.

Lab due: Lab 5 (Doing grounded theory / thematic analysis)

Module 3: Getting Quantitative Data

October 6 (Week 8): Conceptualization, operationalization, & measurement

Reading: Keyton, chs. 4 & 5

Lab due: Lab 6 (Building a model)

October 13 (Week 9): Designing quantitative research

Reading: Keyton, chs. 6 & 7

Lab due: None

October 20 (Week 10): Surveys

Reading: Keyton, ch. 8

Lab due: Lab 7 (Design an experiment)

October 27 (Week 11): Content analysis

Reading: Keyton, ch. 12

Lab due: Lab 8 (Create a Qualtrics survey)

Lab done in class: Lab 9 (Doing content analysis)

Module 4: Using Research

November 3 (Week 12): Research proposal consultations

Rather than meeting as a full class, I will schedule one-on-one consultation meetings with each student during the week. We'll discuss your idea for your research proposal paper.

Labs due: Lab 10 (Research proposal plan) [due Friday at 11 PM]

November 10 (Week 13): Writing, publishing, and applying research

Reading: Keyton, chs. 13 & 18

Lab due: None

November 17 (Week 14): Presentations

Lab due: None

Tuesday, November 24:

Due: Research proposal paper due at 11 PM.