
EMPIRICAL RESEARCH METHODS

COMM 3301



CLASS

Fall 2023
Online
Asynchronous



PROFESSOR

Dr. Stephanie Dailey
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OFFICE HOURS

Anytime by Appointment +
+ Mondays at 9:30 am via Zoom
<https://go.txstate.edu/LB3>

Every day, you are bombarded by a slew of claims. “Crest makes your teeth brighter.” “Our candidate will improve traffic.” “This is a better way to design your web site.” “I love you.”

Most individuals mindlessly accept or reject these claims at face value. After this class, you will be able to better evaluate claims you hear – from advertisers, politicians, coworkers, loved ones, and more – by learning the methods used to gain and analyze the information on which many claims are made.

Overall, this course is designed to help you develop skills and awareness for understanding research in communication studies. Expect a course flavored by an awareness of, and an appreciation for, various ways to conduct research. Expect assignments that will provide you with a chance to demonstrate that you understand the basics of these various ways of research. Expect some lecture, some discussion, and some hands-on exercises. Expect to be surprised by how interesting (and painless) this stuff can be, regardless of how math phobic or narrative intolerant you may be. Expect to come out of the course being able to evaluate whether a piece of research you read about was appropriately designed and well conducted. Expect to feel empowered to conduct your own research and prepared to be a critical consumer of research as a student and professional.

At the end of COMM 3301, you will be able to:

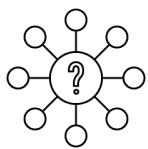
- Explain the application of social scientific methods to the study of communication
- Identify communication variables in empirical studies
- Demonstrate an understanding of library and online research skills to locate scholarly journals
- Recognize statistical tests used in correlational and experimental communication research
- Understand the differences between experimental and correlational studies
- Demonstrate your understanding of inductive and deductive research processes
- See the value of understanding basic communication research for your future career

REQUIRED E-BOOK

To register and/or purchase the e-book, visit our Canvas page and click "McGraw-Hill Connect" on the left navigation bar. You must purchase and register your e-book to pass the course. You may begin a free trial but have to purchase the text once it expires, as you will need the book for the entire semester.



ASSIGNMENTS



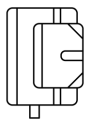
CONSULTING PROJECT

In this course, you will conduct empirical research as a consultant for a client of your choice. Specifically, you will collect and analyze both qualitative and quantitative empirical research to help your client with their challenge. Throughout the semester, your assignments will lead up to the final report you'll write for your client to help them address their communication concerns. You will receive feedback on these assignments as you complete them; then, you will edit your work and put it in your final report. In other words, you'll be building the consulting report throughout each week of the semester.



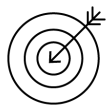
ASSIGNMENTS

Throughout the class you will complete assignments that will help you apply your knowledge in the course. These also help me understand whether or not you are grasping course content as we move throughout the semester!



READING QUIZZES

Each week, you will login to the McGraw Hill Connect site to read a chapter from the e-book and complete practice questions. Reading quizzes consist of approximately 20 practice questions. If you miss a reading quiz, you may not complete it after the due date.



FINAL EXAM

At the end of the semester, you will take a final exam to assess your knowledge throughout the semester.

COURSE COMMUNICATION

OFFICE HOURS

I love helping students! Do not hesitate to send me an email if you'd like to chat. We can agree on a convenient time for a phone call, video chat, or an in-person meeting.

EMAIL

Outside of class, the best way to contact me is through e-mail. Please write "COMM 3301" in the subject line. During the week, you can expect a response within 24 hours. You are also expected to check and respond to emails (if applicable) within 24 hours during the week. On weekends, I unplug from work, so

please don't expect a response then. I use Canvas for announcements, class documents, and grades. Please always check Canvas before you inquire about a document or grade.

COURSE SUPPORT

In addition to me, I encourage you to take advantage of the incredible resources here at Texas State University, including [SLAC's Online Writing Lab](#), the [University Writing Center](#), and the [COMM Lab](#). I also highly recommend reading the Instructional Technologies Support [Course Info](#) webpage to help you be a successful online learner. This site can offer you technical help, tips for success with Canvas, and suggestions for interacting online. Finally, keep in mind the University offers mental health services at no additional cost to students via [TimelyCare](#).

COURSE ORGANIZATION + POLICIES

MODULES

The course is organized into modules of instruction, called Modules, as outlined in the Course Schedule below. Each module begins with a brief introduction and states the objectives of that module, which should give you a general idea of what the module is about. The "Read + View" section of each module lists the required reading, mini-lectures, videos, and/or handouts that you should complete for the module. Think of this section as the class time or instructional part of the module. The end of each module contains a "To Do" section, which explains what you need to complete to earn a grade for the course.

DEADLINES

All assignments are due at the time listed in Canvas. **I do not accept late work.** Also, please remember I am here to facilitate your success in this class. I try to be available as much as possible, even beyond office hours. However, it is my policy to not provide feedback on the same day an assignment is due. Please seek help before the due date. Also, you are responsible for keeping a back-up copy of all submitted work, including the file properties that shows when your work was last saved.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

As members of a community dedicated to learning, inquiry, and creation, the students, faculty, and administration of our university live by the principles of the [Honor Code](#). In the Department of Communication Studies, we teach our students to craft and express original arguments through oral and written communication, as well as apply research to their personal, professional, and civic lives. These processes require students to engage with and think critically about the content that we present in our courses. Using artificial intelligence (AI) tools to deepen your understanding of relevant concepts and topics is permitted; however, we ask that you use AI ethically and follow these guidelines: (1) use AI to supplement rather than replace your learning; thinking critically about the content is critical component of higher education; (2) do not use AI to generate assignment responses or to modify or paraphrase others' ideas; instead, submit your own, original writing and/or answers; (3) include proper attribution for AI-generated content; failure to cite content that was obtained from AI tools will be considered plagiarism and will be reported as academic dishonesty; (4) recall that AI-generated content is sometimes incorrect or biased, as it is generated from various Internet databases, which vary in terms of their accuracy.

In sum, unless otherwise instructed, which will occur a handful of times throughout the course, you should be doing original, independent work in this course. Violations of the honor code, including [plagiarism](#) and the unauthorized use of artificial intelligence resources (e.g., ChatGPT, Grammarly Go, etc.), will be reported according to university academic misconduct policy and procedure guidelines. Please note: plagiarism includes taking credit for (and failing to cite) work that is not your own – including work that is generated by artificial intelligence tools – and recycling your own previous work for this course.

RECORDING/REMOVING CLASS CONTENT

Students are prohibited from photographing and recording during classes, and from transmitting classroom lectures and discussions by students unless written permission from the class instructor has been obtained and all students in the class as well as guest speakers have been informed that photographing or audio/video recording may occur. Permission to allow the audio/visual recording is not a transfer of any copyrights to the material recorded. Photographs, videos and audio recordings may not be reproduced or uploaded to publicly accessible web environments, including Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook. An exception to this will be any student determined by the Office of Disability Services (ODS) to be entitled to education accommodations, to exercise any rights protected under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, including needed recording or adaptations of classroom lectures or materials for personal research and study.

SPECIAL NEEDS

If you have a specific disability and require accommodations (as documented by the Office of Disability Services), please let me know at the start of the semester so I can help meet your learning needs. All discussions will be kept confidential.

RESPECT FOR DIVERSITY

Throughout the semester, please keep in mind that we all have distinct backgrounds, voices, and bodies that inform our experiences. To create a more inclusive class community, I hope to cultivate a course environment that welcomes and values students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives. I will do my best to present materials and activities that respect multiple forms of diversity including: gender, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, religion, ethnicity, race, and culture. I expect you to play an active role in cultivating a class culture that respects and values the inclusion of multiple perspectives in our discussions, and abide by the University's [Code of Student Conduct](#). Please let me know ways I can improve our course for you, or for other students or student groups.

PERSONAL NOTE

I absolutely love teaching and am excited to have you in class. Truly. Please remember that I am here for you! If there is anything I can do to enhance your experience in this course, do not hesitate to come talk to me. I enjoy teaching not only because it gives me the opportunity to help others learn something new, but because I am always learning new things, too. Thus, I welcome your suggestions for this course, its contents, and my teaching style. Let's have a great class and grow together!

COURSE SCHEDULE

We will follow this course schedule during the semester. Be sure to note the following:

- The schedule below lists only the assignments with due dates. There are numerous other required assignments in each module, including reading assignments, videos, and mini-lectures. Each module will walk you step by step through the instructional sequence for this course.
- All assignments are due by 11:59 pm on the due dates below.
- You are always welcome to work ahead in the course. However, before you submit a major project (highlighted in bold), I suggest waiting to hear my feedback on the practice assignments that correspond with the projects. That way, you can make sure that you're on the right track!

MODULE	ASSIGNMENTS	DUE	POINTS
1. Welcome to COMM 3301	Prepare Canvas Account Settings	8/23	10
	Course Review	8/23	10
	Introduction Video	8/23	10
2. Introduction to Empirical Research Methods	Ch. 1 Practice Questions	8/30	5
	Empirical Research Personal Reflection	8/30	10
3. Literature Searches + Research Manuscripts	Ch. 2 Practice Questions	9/6	5
	Identifying Empirical Articles	9/6	10
4. APA & Reading Scholarly Research	Ch. 13 Practice Questions	9/13	5
	APA References Assignment	9/13	10

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS			
MODULE	ASSIGNMENTS	DUE	POINTS
5. Introduction to Qualitative Research	Ch. 14 Practice Questions	9/20	5
	Qualitative Research Overview	9/20	30
	Mid-Semester Anonymous Feedback	9/20	10
6. Qualitative Methods of Data Collection	Ch. 16 Practice Questions	9/27	5
	Focus Group Data	9/27	30
7. Analyzing Qualitative Data	Ch. 17 Practice Questions	10/4	5
	Focus Group Coding Assignment	10/4	30
8. Reporting Qualitative Data	Ch. 18 Practice Questions	10/11	5
	Qualitative Analysis	10/11	30

QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS			
MODULE	ASSIGNMENTS	DUE	POINTS
9. Introduction to Quantitative Research	Ch. 4 Practice Questions	10/18	5
	Quantitative Research Overview	10/18	30
10. Measurement	Ch. 5 Practice Questions	10/25	5
	Variable Measurement	10/25	30
11. Sampling	Ch. 6 Practice Questions	11/1	5
	Quantitative Sample	11/1	30
12. Experiments	Ch. 7 Practice Questions	11/8	5
	Experimental Research Personal Reflection	11/8	10
13. Surveys + Questionnaires	Ch. 8 Practice Questions	11/15	5
	Quantitative Survey	11/15	30
14. Descriptive Statistics, Significance Levels + Hypothesis Testing	Ch. 9 Practice Questions	11/29	5
	Quantitative Analysis	11/29	30
15. Course Wrap-Up	Consulting Project	12/6	160
	Final Exam	12/6	50
	End-of-Course Anonymous Feedback	12/6	10