

COMM 4484-01-Mass Communications Research Methods

Mondays & Wednesdays, 11:00 am - 12:15 pm

Humanities 312

Fall Semester 2018

Instructor:	Dr. Patrick Hadley
Office:	Humanities 214
Office Phone:	678-839-4931
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E-mail:	CourseDen D2L Email (preferred email for normal course-related communications)
Office Hrs-F2F:	Mondays: 9:30 am - 10:30 am; 1:30 pm - 3:30 pm Wednesdays: 9:30 am – 10:30 am; 1:30 pm - 2:30 pm
Office Hrs-Virtual:	Tuesdays & Thursdays: 9:30 am - noon (Or by appointment)

Overview

A survey of qualitative and quantitative research methods, data analysis and reporting procedures, and a critical analysis of research applications for print, telecommunication, electronic media, public relations, and advertising research.

You are responsible for learning all material presented in lectures and assigned content. You are also expected to complete assigned readings prior to class, and to be prepared to make informed contributions to discussions and in-class activities. Lectures will focus on central concepts in our assigned text, and periodically draw on information from additional sources. If you have questions at any point concerning course expectations or material, I encourage you to email or visit me during office hours.

Department of Mass Communications Learning Outcomes

1. Awareness: Students will demonstrate *awareness* of mass communications scholarship, i.e., theory/research; paramount economic, ethical, legal/policy, social, and technological issues; and the role of principal personalities and stakeholders within the context of freedom of speech, freedom of press, media competition, media convergence, diversity, and/or social responsibility. ACEJMC defines awareness as familiarity with facts, concepts, theories, laws and regulations, processes and effects.
2. Understanding: Students will demonstrate *understanding* of mass communications scholarship, i.e., theory/research; paramount economic, ethical, legal/policy, social, and technological issues; and the role of principal personalities and stakeholders within the context of freedom of speech, freedom of press, media competition, media convergence, diversity, and/or social responsibility. ACEJMC defines understanding as assimilation and comprehension of information, concepts, theories and ideas.
3. Application: Students will demonstrate effective application of mass communications scholarship, i.e., relate and/or apply concepts, theory/research, and professional principles to analyze and synthesize information, create, develop, produce, and/or write for converging digital, multi-media, and

traditional media. ACEJMC defines application as competence in relating and applying skills, information, concepts, theories and ideas to the accomplishment of tasks.

Course Learning Objectives

- To identify and explain the role of research in mass media, public relations, advertising, and social media decision-making (*Awareness/Understanding*)
- To explain the research process and define the elements of research, particularly concepts, constructs, variables, measurements, reliability and validity (*Awareness/Understanding*)
- To define major mass media research methods and explain similarities, differences, advantages, and disadvantages (*Awareness /Understanding*)
- To compare and contrast similarities and differences between industry and academic research (*Understanding*)
- To conduct, analyze, evaluate, interpret, and communicate research (*Application*)

Required Course Materials

For this course you will purchase access to McGraw-Hill's Connect, rather than buying a textbook. Here is the Connect access code that you will purchase:

- Access Card For *Communication Research: Asking Questions, Finding Answers*, Joanne Keyton, ISBN 1260131009 (5th Ed.)

Here's how to purchase the access code/card:

Option 1: Purchase from Connect integrated in CourseDen

You can purchase Connect access through your CourseDen account. Login to the CourseDen, click on this course (COMM 4484-01), and then click on the McGraw-Hill Connect link, which will take you to the Connect registration page where you can follow the prompts.

At that time, you will need to do one of the following:

- Enter your access code ● Purchase access online
- Begin your 14-day Courtesy Access period

Please note: After you register, you will have the option to purchase a low-cost print version of the text through Connect. This is optional. If you choose to purchase a copy, a full-color, loose-leaf version will be shipped to you. You also will have the option through Connect to rent a bound version of the book.

Option 2: Purchase from the UWG bookstore, then access Connect through CourseDen

Purchase a Connect access card at the UWG bookstore. Use the access code that you are provided to register and enter your Connect access code through CourseDen.

Important: Please be aware that if you purchase or rent the physical version of this textbook, you MUDT purchase Connectd access to complete assignments related to each chapter. (ALERT: Access codes purchased from third party companies -- not McGraw-Hill or UWG Bookstore -- may have been used previously and, if so, will not operate properly.) **Failure to purchase Connect access due to financial or other considerations is not a justification for failing to complete LearnSmart assignments, nor is it a justification for late submission or extended deadlines for submission of assignments.**

Student Rights and Responsibilities

Please carefully review the following information at this link (http://www.westga.edu/assetsDept/vpaa/Common_Language_for_Course_Syllabi.pdf). It contains important material pertaining to your rights and responsibilities in this class, including accessibility guidelines and the university honor code. Because these statements are updated as federal, state, and accreditation standards change, you should review the information each semester.

Attendance/Participation

You are strongly encouraged to attend all regularly scheduled class sessions. Class absence may compromise performance on exams given that they will cover material presented in lectures and assigned readings. Class absence also may result in incomplete experiential research assignments that are assigned as in-class collaborative assignments. Arriving after class begins or leaving before class ends is discouraged as such behavior may distract the class.

CourseDen (D2L)

During the online component of the course, we will primarily use CourseDen (D2L) Discussions, Dropbox, Quizzes, Email, and Grades tools. You are expected to log in to CourseDen (D2L) regularly throughout the week, but especially within 24 hours of each scheduled class session. For CourseDen (D2L) assistance, including orientations and troubleshooting, I encourage you to reference the technical support resources at the bottom of your CourseDen homepage: UWG Online Helpdesk Services (<https://www.westga.edu/uwgonline/uwg-online-student-help.php>), via email at online@westga.edu, or by phone at 678-839-6248.

The *Discussions* tab is where you will go for virtual classroom discussions.

The *Assignments* tab is where you will access your assignments for class, where you will submit assignments to be graded, and where you will receive feedback.

Grades

You will use the *Grades* tab to view your grades in the class. Exam scores will typically be posted within three days of an exam. Grades for experiential research assignments will typically be posted within a week of due dates.

Email

The *Email* tool allows the members of the class to exchange emails with each other, and to exchange emails with me. Each time you log in, it is important that you check *Email*, particularly for messages from me. Do not send e-mail related to this course to my UWG e-mail address (unless you cannot access CourseDen).

ASSIGNMENTS

LearnSmart Practice Assignments

For each assigned chapter, you will be expected to complete a LearnSmart assignment as we engage in class discussion on that chapter. LearnSmart is described as follows on the McGraw-Hill Higher Education website:

LearnSmart is an interactive study tool that adaptively assesses students' skill and knowledge levels to track which topics students have mastered and which require further instruction and practice. Based upon student progress, it then adjusts the learning content based on their knowledge strengths and weaknesses, as well as their confidence level around that knowledge.

[As an] online study tool that maximizes time spent with your course textbook or eBook, LearnSmart tests your knowledge of key concepts and pinpoints the topics on which you need to focus your study time.

There are several tutorials available in Connect to assist you in getting familiar with this education resource. Each LearnSmart assignment is worth **1 percent** of your grade, for a total of **13 percent** of your final grade over 13 assigned chapters during the semester.

Deadline for completion of each chapter's questions will be posted in LearnSmart and the course schedule.

Exams

You are expected to complete three **online** exams (**in the Quizzes area in D2L**). Each exam will cover the equivalent of three to five chapters, and will include 40 - 60 questions. You will have the **full 75 minutes of a regular class period to complete the online exam**.

Exams will cover assigned readings, videos, and related content, along with lecture material. Exams may include multiple-choice, true-false, matching, and short-answer questions.

To ensure that exams are fair, a question analysis is performed for each exam to compare the responses of students who score in the upper quartile to the responses of those who score in the lower quartile. When the majority of students who score in the upper and lower quartiles perform poorly on particular

questions, I give everyone credit for such questions if I find reasonable cause that the questions proved excessively difficult for the majority.

Early or make-up exams will be permitted only in cases of unavoidable situations outside the student's control, substantiated with documentation. Requests for early exams must be made at least 48 hours prior to the exam. To request an early or make-up exam, contact me or leave a message and contact number at 678-839-4931.

Experiential Research Team Assignments

To illustrate the complexity of conducting, analyzing, evaluating, interpreting, and reporting research, you will be required to complete three experiential research assignments in teams. These assignments are designed to explore specific research issues in more depth and to encourage critical thinking and collaborative decision-making skills. Guidelines and grading criteria for these team research assignments will be posted on the D2L course site and provided in a separate course handout.

Late Work Policy

Guidelines for all assignments will be available at least two weeks before deadlines. Thus, there will be NO acceptance of unexcused late work, including the experiential research team assignments, social media research presentation, or online exams. If you miss an exam, you will receive zero points. If your team fails to submit an experiential research assignment, all members of your team will receive zero points. Also, there will be no make-up of exams or other assignments unless the absence is excused prior to the missed work and arrangements have been made for completing the work. Please contact me immediately if there are workload sharing among your experiential research team members.

Evaluation

Assignments will be weighted as follows:

LearnSmart Assignments (1 percent/chapter x 13 chapters)	13%
Exam 1	15%
Exam 2	12%
Exam 3	15%
Experiential Research Assignment #1	15%
Experiential Research Assignment #2	15%
<u>Experiential Research Assignment #3</u>	<u>15%</u>
TOTAL	100%

Assignment and final grades will be based on the following percentage scale.

A	90% - higher
B	80% - 89%
C	70% - 79%
D	60% - 69%
F	59% - lower

In the interest of academic integrity and fairness, please note that at the end of the semester, I do not offer extra credit opportunities, since grades may already include extra credit for problematic exam questions and bonus exam questions.

I round up final grade percentages, so a final grade percentage of 89.50 would be rounded up to 90. However, a final grade percentage of 89.49 would NOT be rounded up. Each point on every assignment is important to your final grade percentage and final letter grade.

[END OF SYLLABUS]

[\[CLICK HERE\]](#) FOR WEEKLY SCHEDULE IN SEPARATE DOCUMENT]

Weekly Schedule (Subject to change)
COMM 4484 - Mass Media Research
Fall 2018

Week	Lecture/Discussion Topic	Assigned Content Due
Wk 1 8/15	Overview Course Overview/Syllabus Review/How to Access McGraw-Hill Connect	No reading assignment
Wk 2 8/20 8/22	Relevance of Research in Media Discussion of Significance of Research (Selection of 2 - 3 person teams for experiential research assignments) Introduction to Communication Research	M-Read Chapter 1 and online resources **Wed. - Ch.1 LearnSmart Assignment (deadline Wed-: <u>8/22 @ 10:00 am</u>)

<p>Wk 3</p> <p>8/27</p> <p>8/29</p>	<p>The Research Process</p> <p>Research Ethics</p>	<p>M-Read Chapter 2 and online resources</p> <p>W-Ch.2 LearnSmart Assignment (deadline: Wed. 8/29 @ 10:00 am)</p> <p>Read Chapter 3 and online resources</p>
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<p>Wk 4</p> <p>9/3</p> <p>9/5</p>	<p>Introduction to Quantitative Research</p> <p>**Labor Day-- No Classes**</p> <p>Quantitative Research Intro</p>	<p>No F2F class meeting</p> <p>Read Chapter 4 and online resources</p> <p>W-Ch.3 LearnSmart Assignment (deadline Wed. 9/5 @ 10:00 am)</p>
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<p>Wk 5</p> <p>9/10</p> <p>9/12</p>	<p>Quantitative Research Intro/Measurement</p> <p>Quantitative Research</p> <p>Measurement</p>	<p>Read Chapter 4 and online resources **Ch. 4 LearnSmart Assignment (Deadline Mon. 9/10 @ 10:00 am)</p> <p>Read Chapter 5 and online resources **Ch. 5 LearnSmart Assignment (Deadline Wed.. 9/12 @ 10:00 am)</p>
<p>Wk 6</p> <p>9/17</p> <p>9/19</p>	<p>Assessments</p> <p>**Experiential Research Team Assignment #1 due by 9:00 pm on 9/17**(Post in D2L Assignment area)</p> <p>*Online Exam #1 (covers Chaps. 1 - 5 content) Accessible on 9/19 via <i>Quizzes</i> link in D2L between 6:00 am and 11:59 pm Eastern Time (no F2F class)</p>	<p>Face-to-Face class WILL MEET</p> <p>NO Face-to-Face class meeting</p>

<p>Wk 7</p> <p>9/24</p> <p>9/26</p>	<p>Quantitative Research: Populations, Samples, Sample Size</p>	<p>Mon/Wed-Read Chap. 6 and online resources</p> <p>W-**Ch. 6 LearnSmart Assignment (Deadline Wed.. 9/26 @ 10:00 am)</p>
<p>Wk 8</p> <p>10/1</p> <p>10/3</p>	<p>Quantitative Research Designs</p>	<p>Mon/Wed-Read Chap. 7 and related resources</p> <p>W-**Ch. 7 LearnSmart Assignment (Deadline Wed.. 10/3 @ 10:00 am)</p>
<p>Wk 9</p> <p>10/8</p> <p>10/10</p>	<p>Surveys & Questionnaires</p> <p>(NOTE-OCT. 8th is the last day to withdraw from course with a "W"**))</p>	<p>Mon/Wed-Read Chap. 8 and online resources</p> <p>W-Ch. 8 LearnSmart Assignment (Deadline Wed.. 10/10 @ 10:00 am)</p>

<p>Wk 13</p> <p>11/5</p> <p>11/7</p>	<p>Qualitative Research Intro</p> <p>Designing Qualitative Research</p>	<p>M-Read Chapter 14 M-Ch. 14 LearnSmart Assignment (Deadline Mon. 11/5 @ 10:00 am))</p> <p>W-Read Chapter 15 W-Ch. 15 LearnSmart Assignment (Deadline Wed. 11/7 @ 10:00 am))</p>
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<p>Wk 14</p> <p>11/12</p> <p>11/14</p>	<p>M-Qualitative Methods of Data Collection</p> <p>W-Social Media Research and Analytics/Discussion of Experiential Research Assignment #3/Social Media Research</p>	<p>M-Read Chapter 16 M-Ch. 16 LearnSmart Assignment (Deadline Mon. 11/12 @ 10:00 am)</p> <p>W-Read/View online social media research content on CourseDen (F2F class WILL meet)</p>
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<p>Wk 15</p> <p>11/19 & 11/21</p>	<p>*Thanksgiving Recess - No Classes*</p>	<p>*No F2F class meetings</p>
<p>Wk 16</p> <p>11/26</p> <p>11/28</p>	<p>M-Discussion of Experiential Research Assignment #3/Social Media Research & Analytics</p> <p>W- Discussion of Exam #3 Topics</p>	<p>M-*F2F class WILL meet**</p> <p>W-F2F class WILL meet**</p>
<p>Wk 17</p> <p>12/3</p> <p>12/5</p>	<p>M-Online Exam #3 (covers Chaps. 9,12,14,15,16 and related online content)</p> <p>Accessible on 12/3 via Quizzes link in D2L between 6:00 am and 11:59 pm Eastern Time</p> <p>W-Experiential Research Team Assignment #3 due by 9:00 pm on 12/5 (Post in D2L Assignments area)</p>	<p>M-F2F class WILL NOT MEET</p> <p>W-F2F class WILL MEET</p>
<p>Final Exam time slot - Wed., 12/12 11:00 am - 1:00 pm</p>	<p>(**NOTE-No final exam is scheduled for Final Exam Time Slot.)</p>	

[END OF COURSE SCHEDULE - VERSION 1.0]