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Montclair State University

School of Communication and Media

Prerequisite(s): CMST 201. The course engages students in investigative research methods frequently used in the fields of communication and media (e.g., textual and visual analyses, focus groups, interviewing, content analysis and survey research). Students as researchers utilize qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methodologies to develop critical skills for understanding and evaluating communication and media contexts. As well, students develop skills for writing scholarly research papers according to American Psychological Association guidelines and standards of the communication and media studies academic discipline. Meets the Graduation Writing Requirement for majors in Communication and Media Studies. 3 hours lecture.

Communication Research Methods

CMST 301_02 | Fall 2022



This 3-credit course provides Communication and Media Studies majors in the School of Communication and Media with an overview of common research methods. Students learn a variety of humanistic and social-scientific research methodologies. These include qualitative methods (i.e., textual analyses, interviewing, focus groups) as well as quantitative methods that lend themselves to statistical manipulations (i.e., content analysis, surveys, experiments). Students select a timely topic at the intersection of communication and media studies and investigate it using a variety of research modes and methods over the course of the semester. Students gain knowledge of ethical, moral and social issues in communication research and ask critical questions about the application of research to inform professional practice. The course is foundational for those who want to learn how to conduct media research and critically use research data and findings.



Learning Outcomes

By completing this course, you will be able to:

- Understand and explain the relationship between theory and research
- Learn the language and techniques of social scientists and media researchers, including the style guidelines of the American Psychological Association (APA).
- Achieve Institutional Review Board (IRB) Certification for working with human subjects.
- Define *research* and its associated purposes, principles, practices, and ethical issues at each phase
- Describe and compare the predominant research methodologies in the intersecting fields of communication and media studies
- Identify the various types of qualitative and quantitative research methods and tools, including their strengths as well as limitations
- Access, analyze, and evaluate scholarly research reports.
- Develop and compose a research topic statement (1,000 words)*
- Compose a review of literature (3,000 words)*
- Collaboratively investigate as part of a research team. Prepare a mixed-methods research report (5,000 words) that includes visual presentation of preliminary research data and findings.
- Determine an appropriate methodology (theoretical framework + methods/procedures) for investigating a set of research questions;
- Visualize the practical application of research methods in the various subfields and industries represented in the SCM.

* These assignments (including draft revisions) fulfill the University's undergraduate major graduation writing requirement.

This course is offered in HawkFlex mode.

HawkMix is a mix of online and in-person instruction:

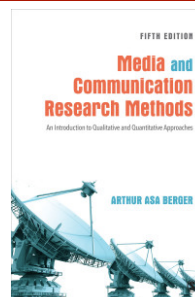
- Class sessions are in real time **online Mondays** in Zoom classroom # 885 4744 6362
- Class sessions are on campus **in-person Thursdays** (Check NEST for specific classroom)

As a general rule, all students enrolled must adhere to the modality as described above. There is no Zoom option for in-person class meetings. Quizzes must be taken in the modality listed above as per the dates listed in the course calendar.

You will also collaborate (offline and online) in research teams, as permitted by public health policy as communicated by the University.

Although masking is not required, encourage it given the confines of our classroom space.

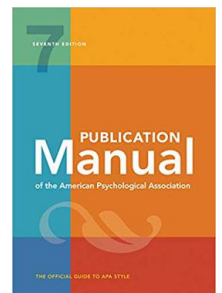
Required Textbook(s)



Berger, A. A. (2020). *Media and Communication Research Methods: An Introduction to Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches (5th Ed.)*. Sage.

You can purchase a user-friendly digital version at <http://bookshelf.vitalsource.com>.

Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (7th Ed.). There are numerous web sites that provide information on APA Style, if you choose not to purchase the manual. Regardless, you are 100% responsible for knowing and following these style guidelines.



Communication Research Methods | CMST 301

Required Technologies

Reliable, high-speed Internet access.

You will need sufficient bandwidth to participate via audio/video through Canvas. Circumstances may warrant synchronous instruction through Zoom, which requires up-to-date software and operating system specs. Check the Office of Information Technology web site for details.

Respondus Lockdown Browser.

This software is required to take the quizzes within Canvas either using a personal computer or tablet (it does not work with smartphones). *Update your software frequently.* For instructions on how to install it and use it on your device, go to:

<https://tinyurl.com/lockdownbrowse>

APA Style Guide 7th (2020) Edition There are many web sites that offer templates and citation guides for using APA Style (rather than buying the reference manual): <https://tinyurl.com/APA7guide>

Performance Assessments

QUIZZES | As incentive to complete the assigned reading there are 10 short quizzes (closed-book & closed note). *Lockdown Browser is required.* Each quiz is administered at the **beginning** of each class session using an access code. I will reveal the answers directly after completion as a springboard for class discussion. If you are late to class and miss the quiz, you lose the points. There are no make-up quizzes (no exceptions). I drop the lowest quiz score. **75 points**

RESEARCH TOPIC PROPOSAL | Each student will individually submit a 1000-word rationale explaining a research subtopic of interest. **15 points**

LITERATURE REVIEW | Each student will conduct an extensive summative and evaluative review of the existing academic research on their proposed topic in the form of a written report (3000 words) using APA style. This assignment requires at least one revision prior to submission and is prerequisite to working within a research team. **25 points**

IRB CERTIFICATION | To qualify to work with human research participants, each student will complete the self-paced online training program of the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) Program. **15 points**

You will work within the same (assigned) research team for selected projects for the duration of the semester. This work can occur in person (*as public safety allows*) and also online (see "Course Rhythm" on page 6). You can find your research team members by going to:
Canvas > People > Research Teams



RESEARCH BRIEFS (2) Each research team will craft two research briefs—one that proposes an investigation using qualitative research methodology and one using quantitative research methodology. Your team will then explain the proposed research to "peer reviewers" in a 15-minute oral/visual presentation in class. As part of the process, research teams will incorporate peer-review feedback into their final submissions. To ensure equity every student will formally assess and evaluate the contributions of each member of their research team. **50 points**

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE | Each research team will collaboratively construct a single survey questionnaire in Qualtrics as part of their semester-long research investigation of a specific topic. **15 points**

RESEARCH REPORT | Each research team will propose a mixed-methods study (combining the two previously submitted research briefs) that will yield preliminary data and findings. The final report is an integration of a selected topic proposal + literature review, and the collected survey questionnaire data. **75 points**



More than fifty years ago, then Yale psychologist Stanley Milgram conducted the infamous experiments about destructive obedience

Did Milgram's experiment demonstrate that humans have a universal propensity to destructive obedience or that they are merely products of their cultural moment?

Half of a century after Milgram probed the nature of destructive obedience to authority, we are faced with the unsettling question: What would citizens do today?

photo from the Milgram Experiment (1961)

Research Team Etiquette

- Post a **recognizable** head shot (of you only) in your Canvas profile.
- Provide your research team members with **at least 2 different ways to contact you**.
- Respond to your team members **within 24 hours** of being contacted.
- Disruptions happen in life and that's okay. It just means that **ongoing communication with your team is essential**.
- If you emerge as a team leader, **delegate** with compassionate confidence. If you emerge as a follower, **seek clarification** and contribute readily and on time.
- If you are unable to participate in live class sessions or research team meetings, ask for notes from your team members. **Likewise, share freely.**

Performance Expectations

All written work should adhere to university standards for writing (see specifics at <http://www.montclair.edu/dean-of-students/handbook/writing-standards/>). You are responsible for citing/attributing the source of all work (including quotes, videos, images, and logos) that you use as part of your work in this course. Consult the 7th edition of the APA Style Guide on how to produce college-level writing (See "Required Textbook(s)" on page 2).

I expect you to do your own work for this course, work both independently and collaboratively, and give credit for all materials used in your research. As a university student, digital citizen, and a future professional in the workplace, you are responsible for knowing and adhering to the university policies on academic honesty, including citation of all source materials. All students who engage in dishonest acts such as cheating and/or plagiarism will be subject to disciplinary action, which includes failure of the course and possible expulsion from the university. You are solely responsible for understanding what constitutes a violation of academic honesty. Go to: <https://www.montclair.edu/policies/student/student-conduct/academic-honesty/>

Montclair State University is committed to maintaining an environment that is inclusive and free of discrimination, bullying, or harassment. MSU welcomes persons from all racial, ethnic, social, cultural, and religious backgrounds. Behavior that violates the civil and statutory rights of any individual or group, or interferes with any individual or group's ability to benefit from, or contribute to, the employment, educational, and/or cultural opportunities provided by the University constitutes a violation of University policy and will not be tolerated. **Life is short. Please be kind.**

MIT neuroscientist Earl Miller explained in an interview with NPR that most people are actually quickly shifting their attention from one task to another when they think they are doing two or three or eight things at once. That constant change of focus makes our brain *less* functional, not more. Learn more at <http://www.digitalresponsibility.org/perils-of-multitasking>



Grading Standards

The following evaluation criteria are applied to all oral, written, and digital assignments that comprise the course of study. Major assignments will be accompanied by more detailed assessment rubrics:

A—Demonstration of superior work. Work demonstrates deep and detailed understanding of material; is logically developed and academic in tone and approach. Sources used are cited appropriately and in accordance with APA style guidelines. Creativity or special insights are evident, and work is free from spelling, grammatical, and/or formatting errors.

B—Very good work. Work demonstrates a clear understanding of the material and provides relevant details that ground theory in practice. Work reflects appropriate tone and approach for college-level work and displays coherent organization, addresses the purpose of the assignment. Work is relatively free from spelling, grammatical, and/or formatting errors.

C—Satisfactory work. Work, for the most part, demonstrates understanding of material and provides a few relevant details. Work displays a basic level of organization, mildly addresses the purpose of the assignment, and contains spelling, grammatical, and/or formatting errors.

D—Unsatisfactory work. Student work displays a severe lack of understanding of material and provides little or no relevant detail. The work is poorly organized, does not meet the purpose of the assignment, and contains numerous spelling, grammatical, and/or formatting errors.

F—Work is neither satisfactory nor complete. Student work displays no understanding of material and provides no detail. The work lacks organization, does not meet the purpose of the assignment, and does not adhere to spelling, grammatical, and/or formatting guidelines.

94-100%= A	84-86%= B	74-76%= C	64-66%= D
90-93%= A-	80-83%= B-	70-73%= C-	60-63%= D-
87-89%= B+	77-79%= C+	67-69%= D+	59% or below= F

Help & Resources

FEELING LOST OR OVERWHELMED?

If you are experiencing stress to the extent that is interfering with your ability to cope with this course and/or normal every day tasks, *please seek help*. At Montclair State University, all counseling services are free, voluntary and confidential. You can call (973) 655-5211 or go to <https://www.montclair.edu/msu-cares/>

ACCOMMODATING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

It is important for those students with a documented disability to have the appropriate university staff communicate that information to me. This confidential information may afford modification of testing, or other class requirements. For more information see: <https://www.montclair.edu/disability-resource-center/about-our-services/> or call (973) 655-5431.

NEED TECHNOLOGY ASSISTANCE?

The Office of Information Technology provides loaner laptops, Wi-Fi cards, and other services for students to be able to complete their coursework. Submit a university Help Desk ticket (helpdesk@montclair.edu).



Course Rhythm

- 1 Complete the textbook reading **prior to** the date specified in the calendar. It's a sprint and not a walk. Glean important concepts and move on. Each quiz is 5 simple questions to gauge whether or not you read the assigned chapter.
- 2 The quizzes are administered at the beginning of each class session. Arrive on time to each class session with Lockdown Browser ready to go. If you arrive late, you miss the quiz. *No make-up quizzes. No exceptions.*
- 3 With each class session, focus on which research method best answers your team's research question(s). If you miss a class session, obtain notes from a research team member. Do not report your absence to the professor as attendance is not assessed and there are neither "excused" absences nor late submissions of work.
- 4 Fully participate in research team meetings in the ways that meet the collective needs of your group. Options include on campus, group text, FaceTime, Google docs, Zoom and many others from which to choose. Successful teams discover how to collaborate and communicate early on—and stick with what works.
- 5 If your team is struggling, use drop-in office hours or make an appointment with the professor early on in the semester so that you can overcome stumbling blocks quickly and generate your best work product.

Because media businesses rely on strict adherence to deadlines, this course employs a similar deadline standard. Work submitted after the deadline will not be evaluated or counted towards course credit. There are no make-up opportunities for missed assignments.

For chronic issues that impede your success in this course, consult the Dean of Students early on to explore your options.



About the Professor

Vanessa E. Greenwood, Ph.D. is a tenured full professor in the School of Communication & Media at Montclair State University where she has professionally resided for 20 years.

Dr. Greenwood holds BA and MA degrees in Communication Studies and a PhD in Media Ecology. She is the author of many journal articles, chapters, policy reports, and books at the intersection of communication, technology, and media literacy. Her most recent book is *Navigating Media Literacy: A Pedagogical Tour of Disneyland* (2020, Myers Press). You can find more information about her research at www.montclair.edu/~greenwoodv

Drop-In Office Hours

Mondays 11:30-12:30pm

Tuesdays 3:00-4:00pm

Thursdays 11:30-12:30pm

Zoom Office ID: **589-624-8622**

Best means of contact:

greenwoodv@montclair.edu

If you cannot attend these drop-in hours, you can request an alternate day/time.

Semester Calendar

DATE	TOPIC + READING	ASSIGNMENTS
Thurs 9/8	Course Intro & Orientation	Review Syllabus & Obtain Textbook
Mon 9/12	What is Research? (chapter 1) The Research Process (chapter 2)	Quiz #1 (in-class)
Thurs 9/15	<i>President Koppell Investiture (no classes)</i>	
Mon 9/19	Read and Write Research (chapter 17)	Quiz #2 (in-class) <i>Topic Statements due by 11:59pm</i>
Thurs 9/22	Lit Review Requirements (Canvas doc) Sample APA Paper (Canvas doc)	<i>Refine topic statement(s) & review literature</i>
QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS		
Mon 9/26	Rhetorical Analysis (chapter 4)	Lecture & Discussion
Thurs 9/29	Semiotic Analysis (chapter 3)	Quiz #3 (in-class)
Mon 10/3	Introduction to the Research Brief (PDF)	Review Guidelines and Rubric
Thurs 10/6	Crafting Research Questions & Methodology	<i>Team report-out on research questions & theoretical framework (end of class)</i>
Mon 10/10	Discourse Analysis (chapter 7)	Quiz #4 (in-class) <i>Literature Reviews (1st draft) due by 11:59pm</i>
Thurs 10/13	Working with Human Subjects	CITI Training Demo (in-class)
Mon 10/17	Ethnomethodology (chapter 10)	Lecture & Discussion
Thurs 10/20	Participant Observation (chapter 11)	Quiz #5 (in-class)
Mon 10/24	Interviews & Focus Groups (chapter 8)	Quiz #6 (in-class) <i>CITI Training Certification due by 11:59pm</i>
Thurs 10/27	Troubleshoot Research Brief #1 & Literature Reviews	Review Submission Requirements
Mon 10/31	Research Brief #1 Presentations (Teams 1-3)	In-class peer review <i>Literature Reviews (2nd draft) due by 11:59pm</i>
Thurs 11/3	Research Brief #1 Presentations (Teams 4-6)	In-class peer review
Mon 11/7	Revising Research Brief #1 Introduction to Research Brief #2	<i>Research Brief #1 & Team Evals due by 11:59pm</i>
QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS		
Thurs 11/10	Content Analysis (chapter 12)	Quiz #7 (in-class)
Mon 11/14	Survey Research (chapter 13)	Quiz #8
Thurs 11/17	Intro to Survey Questionnaire Assignment	Qualtrics Software Demo
Mon 11/21	Troubleshoot Survey Questions	<i>Survey Questionnaire due Mon 11/21</i>
Thurs 11/24	Thanksgiving holiday (no classes)	
Mon 11/28	Troubleshoot Research Brief #2	Review Guidelines and Rubric
Wed 11/30	Quant Research Presentations (Teams 4-6)	In-class peer review
Thurs 12/1	Quant Research Presentations (Teams 1-3)	In-class peer review
Mon 12/5	Revising Research Brief #2	<i>Research Brief #2 & Team Evals due by 11:59pm</i>
CONDUCTING MIXED-METHOD RESEARCH		
Thurs 12/8	Mixed-Methods Study (Canvas doc)	Quiz #9 (in-class)
Mon 12/12	Gathering Data	Deploy revised surveys & collect preliminary data
Thurs 12/15	Experiments & Statistics (chapters 14 & 15)	Quiz #10 (in-class)
Mon 12/19	Analyzing & Presenting Preliminary Data	Bring sample survey data to class
Tues 12/20	Final Research Reports & Team Evaluations due in Canvas by 11:59pm	