

University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film
COMS 313 (L01): Communication Research Methods
FALL 2021: September 7 to December 9 (excluding Oct. 11, Nov. 8 and 10)
Lecture: MW 9:30 to 10:45

**(This course will have synchronous lectures on Zoom
and asynchronous readings and assignments on D2L)**

IMPORTANT NOTE ON COURSE DELIVERY

Asynchronous & Synchronous Course Components: Please read this outline carefully to see which course components will be offered synchronously (where you are expected to participate in person or online at the usual scheduled course time) and which components will be offered asynchronously (to be completed on your own time). Synchronous sessions hosted on Zoom can be accessed on D2L by clicking on the Communications tab and selecting Zoom.

Note: If you will not be able to participate in synchronous in-class or online class sessions owing to time differences or geographical location, then consult with the instructor to see if accommodation is possible or arrange to take this course in a future term.

Online Quizzes and Exams: You will be allowed a minimum window of 24 hours to access online quizzes and exams, but there may be a time limit for completing a quiz once you open it. Read the description carefully. The time specified for any timed online assessments includes 50% extra time.

Instructor:	Maria Victoria Guglietti
Email:	mvguglie@ucalgary.ca
Web Page:	D2L (access via MyUofC portal)
Office Hours:	Friday 9:30-11:30 (Zoom or in person) or by appointment

Course Description

A critical introduction to communication research methods. Students will explore, practice, and critique selected quantitative and qualitative research methods and perspectives on the processes of knowledge production.

Additional Information

The weekly schedule of topics and readings can be found at the end of this outline or on D2L.

The class has a hybrid format. Narrated lectures will be posted **by Friday noon** to allow students to prepare for Zoom lectures, where the instructor will answer questions and discuss case studies that address the reading of the week. Students will also work on group activities and other active learning components during Zoom meetings.

Students are responsible for reading and following all course and university policies discussed in this outline.

Objectives of the Course

By the end of this course, students should be able to identify and understand:

- the difference between scientific research and other practices of knowledge production,
- common research orientations and designs in social sciences,
- the strengths and limitations of common communication research methods
- the potential bias introduced by different method of sampling,
- common ethical implications of communication research projects,
- different types of qualitative and quantitative data analysis,
- the constitutive elements of a literature review and its role in the context of a research project,
- the components of a research proposal and the characteristics of a good proposal in the context of communication research.

Students should also be able to

- analyze and evaluate communication research papers,
- design a communication research project.

Textbooks and Readings

Seale, C. (2018). *Researching society and culture* (4th ed.). London, U.K.: Sage.
(recommended)

Learning Technologies and Requirements

In order to complete online (or blended) courses, University of Calgary students are required to have reliable access to the following technology:

- A computer with a supported operating system, as well as the latest security and malware updates, with current antivirus software enabled;
- Broadband internet connection, and a current and updated web browser;
- A webcam (built-in or external), and a microphone and speaker (built-in or external) or headset with microphone.

If you need access to other software programs to complete assignments, your instructor will provide relevant information and links.

If you have technical difficulties, contact IT support services. See <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/student-campus-services-information-technologies-it.html>

Policy on the Use of Electronic Communication Devices

The use of smartphones or other electronic devices is strictly limited to activities connected with the class.

Please familiarize yourself with the University's policy on the recording of lectures, which is outlined at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/e-6.html>, and carefully review the section on Instructor Copyright at the end of this outline.

Weight	Assessed Components	Due
24%	Group Activities: in groups of max. 4 members, students will complete three problem solving activities that require the identification, critique and/or design of different aspects of the communication research process. Each activity will consist of 4 to 6 questions. The activities will be handed-in via dropbox submission.	September 29; October 26 AND December 2 by 11:59PM ¹

¹ Note that major deadlines are *often* scheduled a day after class.

	Group activities are open book. The instructions will be available approximately two weeks before the deadline.	(dropbox submission)
5%	<p>TCPS Tutorial: Students are required to complete the TCPS2 online tutorial for ethics certification. The tutorial is found here: https://tcps2core.ca</p> <p>Students need to submit proof of completion (i.e. certificate of completion) by uploading a digital version of the certificate to the D2L dropbox assigned.</p> <p>Estimated duration of the tutorial: 2 hours.</p>	September 23 by 11:59PM (dropbox submission)
10%	<p>Participation quizzes: open book- take-home- approx.15 minutes- multiple choice</p> <p>Students will complete a brief D2L quiz five times during the term. Most quizzes will be multiple-choice though they may also include short answers or a short activity. The goal of this assignment is to provide students with an instrument for self-assessment. Quizzes will be posted approx. a week before their deadline and can be completed anytime until then. Each quiz will receive a Pass/Fail grade worth 2% of the final grade if students complete the full assignment on time. Each quiz has approx. 9 questions. Note that students cannot use their day of grace extension for this assignment.</p>	September 20, October 4, 27, November 17, AND December 6 by 11:59PM (D2L quiz)
25%	<p>Take-home midterm analysis of academic research: open book, 2-3 pages long</p> <p>Students will complete a questionnaire that requires the identification and evaluation of research orientation, design, method and ethical implications of an academic study in the area of communication studies assigned by the instructor. The midterm analysis is a take-home assignment.</p> <p>Further instructions will be posted on D2L.</p>	November 3 by 11:59PM (dropbox submission)
10%	<p>Final proposal's abstract: individual, 200/300 words</p> <p>Students will write the abstract of their final proposal's project (approx. 200/300 words). The abstract should include an overview of the proposed study, including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a brief introduction of the topic (why this topic, why now?) the research question sampling method method of data collection method of data analysis a brief explanation of how the findings will be applied (what can we do with the findings? Why are they important?) <p>The goal of this assignment is to provide students with timely feedback about the direction of their final proposal.</p> <p>Further instructions will be posted on D2L.</p>	November 15 by 11:59PM (dropbox submission)
26%	<p>Final communication research proposal: individual, approx.5-6 pages.</p> <p>Students will complete a final research proposal, which will include all the components of a formal academic proposal as outlined in chapter 6 of the textbook (i.e. title, introduction, literature review, aims and objectives, method, data analysis, ethical implications, dissemination strategies, references in APA style).</p> <p>Further instructions will be posted in D2L.</p>	December 10 by 11:59PM (dropbox submission)

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: No

If your class is held in the evening, the Registrar's Office will attempt to schedule the final exam in the evening, but there is no guarantee that the exam will NOT be scheduled during the day.

Note: You must complete the following course components in order to pass the course: final communication research proposal.

Submission of Assignments

Please submit all assignments by uploading them to the designated D2L dropbox. Include your name and ID number on all assignments. Be sure to keep a copy of each submitted assignment and to submit the proper version.

Private information related to individual students is treated with the utmost regard by University of Calgary faculty. Student assignments will be accessible only by the authorized course faculty, and personal information is collected in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act*. Please note that instructors may use audio or video recording for lesson capture, assessment of student learning, and self-assessment of teaching practices.

Policy for Late Assignments

Assignments submitted after the deadline may be penalized with a partial letter grade (e.g.: A- to B+) for each day late. An assignment received two days after the deadline will receive an automatic 0.

***The Day of Grace:** One day of grace is available to all students to cover unforeseen problems that prevent them from meeting a deadline such as computer crashes, vehicle breakdowns, lack of printer ink or money, unexpected family obligations, etc. Students may use this day ONLY ONCE during the semester. **Students using this day of grace must upload the assignment by 4:30 pm the next calendar day** to avoid a late penalty and write "grace" on their subject line. It should be noted that assignments handed in this manner may be returned 1-2 classes later than those submitted on the due date.

Student Accommodations

Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS); SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit www.ucalgary.ca/access/. Students who require an accommodation based on a protected ground other than disability should communicate this need in writing to their Instructor. For the full policy on Student Accommodations, see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/student-accommodation-policy>

Students seeking accommodation for transient illnesses (e.g., the flu) or another legitimate reason should contact their instructors. Whenever possible, students should provide supporting documentation to support their request; however, instructors may not require a medical note. For information on the use of a statutory declaration, see the *University Calendar*: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/m-1.html>

Expectations for Writing

Department policy directs that all written assignments and, to a lesser extent, written exam responses be assessed at least partly on writing skills. Writing skills include not only surface correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc.) but also general clarity and

organization and proper documentation of research sources. For further information, please refer to the *University of Calgary Calendar* section on writing across the curriculum: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/e-2.html>

Grading & Department of Communication, Media and Film Grade Scale

The following table outlines the grade scale percentage equivalents used in the Department of Communication, Media and Film. Final grades are reported as letter grades. For components graded using percentages or numerical scores, those values will be used directly in calculating the final course grade, while for components graded using letter grades, the letter grades will be converted to the midpoint values listed in the final column of the table below in calculating the final course grade.

In this course, final grades are reported as letter grades. All assignments (group activities, quizzes, midterm analysis, show and tell presentation and final proposal) will receive a percentage grade.

Grade Point Value	Description	Grade	Dept of CMF grade scale equivalents*	Letter grade % equivalent for calculations*
4.00	Outstanding performance	A+	96 - 100%	98.0%
4.00	Excellent performance	A	90 - 95.99%	93.0%
3.70	Approaching excellent performance	A -	85 - 89.99%	87.5%
3.30	Exceeding good performance	B+	80 - 84.99%	82.5%
3.00	Good performance	B	75 - 79.99%	77.5%
2.70	Approaching good performance	B-	70 - 74.99%	72.5%
2.30	Exceeding satisfactory performance	C+	65 - 69.99%	67.5%
2.00	Satisfactory performance	C	60 - 64.99%	62.5%
1.70	Approaching satisfactory performance	C-	55 - 59.99%	57.5%
1.30	Marginal pass. Insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject	D+	53 - 54.99%	54.0%
1.00	Minimal pass. Insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject	D	50 - 52.99%	51.5%
0.00	Failure. Did not meet course requirements.	F	0 - 49.99%	0%

* Column 4: If percentages are used to calculate final grades, then grades falling within these ranges will be translated to the corresponding letter grades. Column 5: These percentage equivalents will be used for calculating final grades unless an alternative method of final grade calculation is outlined above.

Plagiarism

Using any source whatsoever without clearly documenting it is a serious academic offense. Consequences include failure on the assignment, failure in the course and possibly suspension or expulsion from the university. These requirements apply to all assignments and sources, including those in non-traditional formats such as Web pages or visual media.

You must document not only direct quotations but also paraphrases and ideas where they appear in your text. A reference list at the end is insufficient by itself. **In-text citations must be provided, and readers must be able to tell exactly where your words and ideas end**

and other people's words and ideas begin. Wording taken directly from a source must be enclosed within quotation marks (or, for long quotations, presented in the format prescribed by the documentation style you are using). Paraphrased information must not follow the original wording and sentence structure with only slight word substitutions here and there.

For information on citation and documentation styles (MLA, APA, Chicago, IEEE, etc.), visit the Student Success Centre resource links at <https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success/writing-support> or the Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) Research and Citation Resources at https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/resources.html

If you need help with your writing or have questions about citing sources, consult your instructor or visit the Student Success Centre, Taylor Family Digital Library. To book an appointment, go to <https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success/writing-support>

Instructor Intellectual Property & Copyright Legislation

Course materials created by the instructor (including lectures, course outlines, presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments, and exams) remain the intellectual property of the instructor. These materials may NOT be reproduced, redistributed, or copied without the explicit consent of the instructor. The posting of course materials to third party websites such as note-sharing sites without permission is prohibited. Sharing of extracts of these course materials with other students enrolled in the same course section and term may be allowed under fair dealing. Check with the instructor if you have any questions about sharing materials with classmates.

To ensure they are aware of the consequences of unauthorized sharing of course materials (including instructor notes & electronic versions of textbooks), all students are required to read the *University of Calgary Policy on Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright* at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/acceptable-use-material-protected-copyright-policy> and the requirements of the *Copyright Act* (<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-42/index.html>). Students who use material protected by copyright in violation of this policy may be disciplined under the Non-Academic Misconduct Policy.

Academic Misconduct

For information on academic misconduct and its consequences, please see the *University of Calgary Calendar* at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>

Research Ethics

Whenever you perform research with human participants, including surveys, interviews, or observations as part of your university studies, you are responsible for obtaining research ethics approval and for following university research ethics guidelines. In some cases, your instructors may apply for course-based research ethics approval for certain assignments, and in those cases, they must review and approve your research plans and supervise your research. For more information about your research ethics responsibilities, please see <https://arts.ucalgary.ca/research/arts-researchers/resources-researchers-and-instructors/ethics>

Deferrals of Course Work and Requests for Reappraisal

For university regulations and procedures related to deferral of term work, see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-7.html>

For information about deferrals of final examinations, see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-6.html>

For information about requesting a reappraisal of course work or of a final grade, see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/i.html>

Student Support Services and Resources

Please see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/registration/course-outlines> for information about student support services and resources, including Wellness and Mental Health Resources, Student Success programs and services, the Student Ombuds Office, the Student Union, and Safewalk. For resources on D2L, Zoom, Yuja, etc., see <https://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students>. (Find the topic menu under the icon to the left of the ELEARN banner.)

Schedule of Lecture Topics and Readings

	Mondays 9:30-10:45 (Zoom)	Wednesdays 9:30-10:45 (Zoom)
Week 1 Sep. 8		<p>Asynchronous components: Unpacking research methods (recorded lecture).</p> <p>Synchronous component (Zoom)²: Introduction to class and assignments</p> <p>Assignment: sign in for groups and show and tell presentation; familiarize with the D2L site</p>
Week 2 Sep. 13 & 15	<p>Asynchronous components: Research and theory (recorded lecture).</p> <p>Synchronous component: Discussion: What constitutes communication research?</p> <p>Assignment: group activity 1 posted</p>	<p>Synchronous component: Reading communication research.</p> <p>Time dedicated to group work.</p>
Week 3 Sep. 20 & 22	<p>Asynchronous components: Ethics (recorded lecture).</p> <p>Midterm instructions are posted.</p> <p>Synchronous component: Discussion: Ethics in social media research</p> <p>Assignment: Quiz 1 due by Sep. 20 @ 11:59PM</p>	<p>Synchronous component: Discussion: Vulnerable groups- Feminist agendas- Research in Indigenous communities</p> <p>Time dedicated to group work</p> <p>Assignment: TCPS workshop due September 23 @ 11:59PM</p>
Week 4 Sep. 27 & 29	<p>Asynchronous components: Research question and research designs (lecture).</p> <p>Synchronous component: Discussion: case study analysis</p>	<p>Synchronous component: Discussion: Developing a question and a design for your proposed study.</p> <p>Time dedicated to group work</p> <p>Assignment: group activity 1 due on September 29 @ 11:59PM (dropbox)</p>

² All synchronous sessions take place over Zoom.

<p>Week 5 Oct. 4 & 6</p>	<p>Asynchronous components: Sampling (recorded lecture).</p> <p>Synchronous component: Discussion: Sampling error, case study analysis</p> <p>Quiz 2 due by Oct 4 @ 11:59PM</p>	<p>Synchronous component: Discussion: Beyond random sampling. The limits of convenience sampling. Case study analysis.</p>
<p>Week 6 Oct. 11 &13</p>	<p align="center">NO CLASS- THANKSGIVING</p>	<p>Asynchronous components: Surveys (recorded lecture).</p> <p>Synchronous component: Discussion: Survey questions- levels of measurement, the effects of non-response.</p> <p>Assignment: group activity 2 posted</p>
<p>Week 7 Oct. 18 & 20</p>	<p>Asynchronous components: Qualitative interviewing/ focus groups (recorded lecture).</p> <p>Synchronous component: Discussion: Power in interviewing- reviewing the interviewer-participant relationship</p>	<p>Synchronous component: Discussion: The interview as data, case study analysis</p> <p>Q&A session on proposal abstract</p>
<p>Week 8 Oct. 25 & 27</p>	<p>Asynchronous components: Ethnography</p> <p>Synchronous component: Discussion: Fieldwork and power, case study analysis</p> <p>Assignment: group activity 2 due Oct. 26 @ 11:59PM</p>	<p>Synchronous component: Discussion: The ethnographic turn, case study analysis</p> <p>Q&A session on midterm</p> <p>Assignment: Quiz 3 due by Oct. 27 @ 11:59PM</p>
<p>Week 9 Nov. 1 & 3</p>	<p>Asynchronous components: Quantitative data (recorded lecture).</p> <p>Synchronous component: Discussion: Reading quantitative studies</p>	<p>NO CLASS: Time dedicated to midterm completion.</p> <p>Assignment: Midterm due Nov. 3 @ 11:59PM</p>
<p>Week 10 Nov 8 &10</p>	<p align="center">TERM BREAK- NO CLASSES</p>	
<p>Week 11 Nov. 15 & 17</p>	<p>Asynchronous components: Literature review (recorded lecture).</p> <p>Synchronous component: Discussion: Writing your final proposal, Q&A</p> <p>Assignment: proposal abstract due Nov. 15 @ 11:59PM group activity 3 posted</p>	<p>Asynchronous components: Content and text analysis (recorded lecture).</p> <p>Synchronous component: Discussion: Big data and the humanities. Case study analysis</p> <p>Assignment: Quiz 4 due by Nov. 17 @ 11:59PM</p>
<p>Week 12 Nov. 22 & 24</p>	<p>Asynchronous components: Thematic and discourse analysis (recorded lecture)</p> <p>Synchronous component: Discussion thematic analysis: case study analysis</p>	<p>Synchronous component: Discussion: discourse and power- Norman Fairclough: case study analysis</p> <p>Time dedicated to group work</p>

<p>Week 13 Nov. 29 & Dec. 1</p>	<p>Asynchronous components: Narrative and phenomenological analysis (recorded lecture).</p> <p>Synchronous component: Discussion: Stories as data- data as narrative- Case study analysis. Mapping experience- beyond discourse? Case study analysis.</p>	<p>Asynchronous components: Visual analysis (recorded lecture).</p> <p>Synchronous component: Discussion: Images as objects of study. Case study analysis.</p> <p>Assignment: group activity 3 due Dec 2 at 11:59PM</p>
<p>Week 14 Dec. 6 & 8</p>	<p>Synchronous component: Proposal writing: Q&A session</p> <p>Assignment: quiz 5 due Dec. 6 @ 11:59PM</p>	<p>NO CLASS</p> <p>FINAL PROPOSAL SUBMISSION DUE DECEMBER 10 @ 11:59PM (dropbox)</p>