

University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film
COMS 313 (L01): Communication Research Methods
Winter 2022: January 10 to April 12 (excluding Feb. 20 and 26)
Lecture: Tu/Th 14:00 to 15:15

**(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
Office:	SS 220
Email:	mvguglie@ucalgary.ca
Web Page:	D2L (access via MyUofC portal)
Office Hours:	SS 220 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.

Zoom lectures will be recorded and posted on D2L a few days after the it takes place.

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 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 (for online courses only).

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.

Media recording for lesson capture

The instructor may use media recordings to capture the delivery of a lecture. These recordings are intended to be used for lecture capture only and will not be used for any other purpose. Recordings will be posted on D2L for student use and will be deleted at the end of term. If recordings occur during online lectures, students are responsible for turning off their camera and/or microphone if they do not wish to be recorded.

Weight	Assessed Components	Due
24%	<p>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.</p> <p>Group activities are open book. The instructions will be available approximately two weeks before the deadline.</p>	January 27 th , March 1 st AND April 5 th by 11:59PM (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>	January 25 th 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>	January 20 th , February 3 rd , March 3 rd , March 15 th , April 12 th 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>	February 17 th 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?) 	March 24 th by 11:59PM (dropbox submission)

	The goal of this assignment is to provide students with timely feedback about the direction of their final proposal. Further instructions will be posted on D2L.	
26%	Final communication research proposal: individual, approx.5-6 pages. 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). Further instructions will be posted in D2L.	April 14 th 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%
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* 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

	Tuesdays 14:00-15:15 (Zoom)	Thursdays 14:00-15:15 (Zoom)
Week 1 Jan. 11 & 13	Asynchronous components: Unpacking research methods (recorded lecture). Synchronous component (Zoom)¹: Introduction to class and assignments Assignment: sign in for groups; familiarize with the D2L site	Asynchronous components: Research and theory (recorded lecture). Synchronous component: Discussion: What constitutes communication research?
Week 2 Jan. 18 & 20	Synchronous component: Reading communication research. Assignment: group activity 1 posted	Asynchronous components: Ethics (recorded lecture). Synchronous component: Discussion: Ethics in social media research Assignment: Quiz 1 due @ 11:59PM

¹ All synchronous sessions take place over Zoom.

<p>Week 3 Jan. 25 & 27</p>	<p>Synchronous component: Discussion: Vulnerable groups- Feminist agendas- Research in Indigenous communities</p> <p>Midterm instructions are posted.</p> <p>Assignment: TCPS workshop due @ 11:59PM</p>	<p>Asynchronous components: Research question and research designs (lecture).</p> <p>Synchronous component: Discussion: case study analysis</p> <p>Assignment: group activity 1 due.</p>
<p>Week 4 Feb. 1 & 3</p>	<p>Synchronous component: Discussion: Developing a question and a design for your proposed study.</p>	<p>Asynchronous components: Sampling methods (recorded lecture).</p> <p>Synchronous component: Discussion: Sampling error, case study analysis</p> <p>Quiz 2 due @ 11:59PM</p>
<p>Week 5 Feb. 8 & 10</p>	<p>Synchronous component: Methodological alignment (research question-sampling)</p>	<p>Asynchronous components: Data collection: 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 6 Feb. 15 & 17</p>	<p>Asynchronous components: Data collection: Qualitative interviewing/ focus groups (recorded lecture).</p> <p>Synchronous component: Discussion: Power in interviewing- reviewing the interviewer-participant relationship</p>	<p>NO CLASS: Time dedicated to midterm completion.</p> <p>Assignment: Midterm due @ 11:59PM</p>
<p>Week 7 Feb. 22 & 24</p>	<p>NO CLASS- READING WEEK</p>	
<p>Week 8 Mar. 1 & 3</p>	<p>Asynchronous components: Data collection: Ethnography</p> <p>Synchronous component: Discussion: Fieldwork and power, case study analysis</p> <p>Assignment: group activity 2 due @ 11:59PM</p>	<p>Asynchronous components: Data collection: Content and text analysis (recorded lecture).</p> <p>Synchronous component: Discussion: Big data and the humanities. Case study analysis.</p> <p>Assignment: Quiz 3 due @ 11:59PM</p>
<p>Week 9 Mar. 8 & 10</p>	<p>Synchronous component: Methodological alignment 2 (research question- sampling- method of data collection)</p>	<p>Asynchronous components: Quantitative data analysis (recorded lecture).</p> <p>Synchronous component: Discussion: Reading quantitative studies</p>
<p>Week 10 Mar. 15 & 17</p>	<p>Asynchronous components: Qualitative data analysis: Thematic and discourse analysis (recorded lecture)</p>	<p>Synchronous component: Q&A proposal abstract</p>

	<p>Synchronous component: Discussion thematic analysis: case study analysis</p> <p>Assignment: Quiz 4 due by 11:59PM</p>	
<p>Week 11 Mar. 22 & 24</p>	<p>Asynchronous components: Literature review (recorded lecture).</p> <p>Synchronous component: Discussion: Writing your final proposal, Q&A</p>	<p>NO CLASS- INSTRUCTOR AVAILABLE FOR QUESTIONS DURING CLASS TIME.</p> <p>Assignment: proposal abstract due @ 11:59PM</p>
<p>Week 12 Mar. 29 & 31</p>	<p>Asynchronous components: Qualitative data analysis: Narrative analysis (recorded lecture).</p> <p>Synchronous component: Discussion: Stories as data- data as narrative- Case study analysis.</p>	<p>Asynchronous components: Qualitative data analysis: Phenomenological analysis (recorded lecture)</p> <p>Synchronous component: Mapping experience- beyond discourse? Case study analysis.</p>
<p>Week 13 Apr. 5 & 7</p>	<p>Asynchronous components: Visual data analysis (recorded lecture).</p> <p>Synchronous component: Discussion: Images as objects of study. Case study analysis.</p> <p>Assignment: group activity 3 due by 11:59PM</p>	<p>Synchronous component: Methodological alignment 3 (research question- sampling- method of data collection – method of data analysis).</p> <p>Q&A final proposal</p>
<p>Week 14 Apr. 12</p>	<p>NO CLASS- Time dedicated to proposal writing</p> <p>Assignment: quiz 5 due April 12 @ 11:59PM</p>	<p>FINAL PROPOSAL SUBMISSION DUE April 14 @ 11:59PM (dropbox)</p>