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COMX 460.50: Research Methods (Online)

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COMMUNICATION RESEARCH METHODS: COMX 460

FALL 2021 - ONLINE

Instructor: Dr. Christina Granato Yoshimura
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This course looks at the methods commonly used in human communication research and the assumptions that underpin research design. By the end of the course you should have an introductory comfort level with reading and using quantitative research methods and the ability to decide which methods are most appropriate to your professional and scholarly interests.

Course Objectives:

The purpose of this course is to introduce you to ways of conducting research on human communication. When finishing this course you should be able to:

1. Comprehend and accurately use research vocabulary
2. Locate, read, and write about peer-reviewed research on human communication
3. Develop questions about human communication that can be answered through research
4. Apply communication research methods to research questions
5. Interpret research results from basic descriptive and inferential statistics
6. Evaluate the quality of research findings

Course Requirements:

- Treadwell, D. & Davis, A. (2020). *Introducing Communication Research: Paths of Inquiry*. 4th edition. McGraw Hill.
- Regular use of a personal computer with Microsoft Word and a web browser
- Consistent, quality Internet access and weekly engagement with the Moodle course site

Online Course Format:

- Regular online work in our Moodle shell is required for this course. All notes, slides, and assignments will be distributed from me to you via Moodle. All assignments will be turned in from you to me via Moodle.
- You will find our Moodle shell is arranged by week with all of the materials and deadlines clearly listed. The expectation in this course is that you complete the work for each week before 10:00am Mountain Time the final day of the learning module.
- I will be regularly available to you to add depth, clarification, or further resources once you have engaged the materials in our Moodle shell. Please just be sure to contact me via email to let me know what would be helpful to you well *before* the due date for any course work.

Policies:

Participation - Class is conducted entirely online, and our participation will occur through course posting in discussion boards, submission of online assignments, and email.

Think of learning as a chance to grow. Allow yourself to participate in discussions and don't sabotage other people's opportunities for education by discouraging them from participating. Be open to other people and be willing to respond to ideas that are different from what you believe. Dialogue is how we advance knowledge. Believe that your ideas are as important as everyone else's and share them with us.

Deadlines and Accommodation: All assignments and exams (including dates and deadlines) are posted on our Moodle course website. To keep the pace and process of this online course manageable for all of us no assignment or exam may be turned in late nor made up (except for the very rare instance approved by Dr. Yoshimura, generally in advance). If you require additional time for any reason you should plan to work in advance rather than requesting an extension. Please consult if you would like any help in setting up an adjusted, work-ahead schedule for this course.

For requests of alternate testing accommodations through DSS, **please contact Dr. Yoshimura within the first week of class in order to be effectively accommodated** for the entire course. Of course, if documented needs arise through the session you are welcome to initiate a discussion of how we can best meet your needs for the remainder of the semester.

For requests to take the course as a graduate student for graduate credit, please contact Dr. Yoshimura as soon as possible before the class begins or at the very start of the course in the first week.

Academic Integrity: All students taking this course must adhere to the University of Montana's academic dishonesty policy as presented in the Student Conduct Code (SCC). As noted in the code, students are expected to practice academic honesty. Any actions that include, but are not limited to, the following behaviors are reasons for pursuing academic and university sanctions: plagiarism, copying another student's exam, allowing another student to copy from your exam or work, sharing information with another student during testing sessions, acquiring or possessing an exam without the instructor's permission, tampering with course materials or resources (including library references) submitting false information (data, quotations, citations, etc.), representing someone else's work as your own, clicking for someone else in the response section of our course, putting someone's name on work they haven't done, etc. Students will be charged with academic dishonesty for any breach of these standards. No work done for credit in any other class may be turned in for credit in this class. The *minimum* consequence for engaging in cheating or plagiarism is failure on the related assignment, but this type of activity usually results in failure in the entire course. At worst, academic misconduct can result in expulsion, denial of your degree, and/or revocation of a degree that has already been awarded. See the Student Conduct Code for definitions and consequences of cheating and plagiarism. The unabridged student conduct code is located at: [Student Conduct Code](http://www.umt.edu/student-affairs/dean-of-students/Student%20Conduct%20Code%20-%20FINAL%20-%2008-24-18.pdf) (<http://www.umt.edu/student-affairs/dean-of-students/Student%20Conduct%20Code%20-%20FINAL%20-%2008-24-18.pdf>)

Please help foster a course where education and consideration for one another are valued. In this course, harassment of any kind is both inappropriate and intolerable, and disciplinary action will be taken should it occur.

Philosophy and Consideration – In this course we are committed to fairness, and generally abide by the ethical system of the categorical imperative – something is just and fair if it can be applied to everyone in the same circumstance. Policies in this syllabus are to be applied to everyone in the course –no exemptions, extensions, or extra credit will be granted to one person if we cannot do so for the entire class. The entire class is being held to the policies in this syllabus, and the timeline and schedule for this course – please make sure that you are willing to accept this if you choose to continue in the course.

E-Mail – Since this course is online, our direct contact will occur over email. Please always put COMX 460 in the subject of your e-mail, especially if you are not emailing from your university email account. Please allow up to 24 hours for email replies. When emailing, please write professionally and courteously. This means forming complete sentences, with appropriate punctuation and capitalization, as well as formulating your questions or requests in a considerate way. You can trust that your reply will

be formed in kind.

Contesting Grades - We can go over any assignment or exam with you to discuss concerns that you might have using three guidelines, all of which make it easier to concentrate on your concerns. 1) Please reach out a minimum of 1 hour after an assignment/test grade has been posted and a maximum of one week after an assignment/test grade has been posted. 2) Please write your concerns and your backing for these concerns down so that we can look at your concerns from an objective, factual position. 3) Please consult the assignment directions and feedback carefully as part of your preparation to discuss the grade. Please note that grades on all assignments should be posted on our course website within a week after the assignment has been turned in. Please do not worry or contact me to find out your grade until this week has passed.

Changing Grading Option - As per departmental practice, you may not drop or change your grading option after the 45th instructional day except in the following situations: a) documentable accident or illness, b) no evaluation record for the course, c) documentable family/personal emergency, and d) documentable change in employment schedule that prevents completion of course.

Technology: A known fact of technology is that it sometimes fails. Computers crash, Internet connections falter. In order to control for these failures, your guiding principles should be to think ahead and be prepared. Save your work often, and in several places. Leave yourself time before assignments are due to allow for connection errors (never plan to submit at the very last minute), and familiarize yourself with resources in your area in case you need to use them as a back-up to complete your assignments.

The only acceptable technology-related excuse for not meeting the requirements of this course is a documented failure of the UM online system – if you find the system is not working, you'll need to e-mail me immediately to inform me of the time at which you believe the system (not your computer or connection) was at fault. You should then contact the UMonline help desk at 406.243.4999. You should also continue attempting to access the system – any failures in the system are usually resolved within an hour. If documented failures of the system occurred when an assignment was due, we will work together to help you get an assignment in as soon as the system is up again.

Grading:

Assignment	Total Points
Peer Engagement	70
Worksheets	140
Class Paper	100
Final Exam (open book, timed)	100
Quizzes (open book, not timed)	70

The class is worth 480 total points. I do not use +/- grading for this course, and use traditional letter grades where A= 100-90%, B=89-80%, C= 79-70%, D=69-60%, and F<60%.

Grading Criteria:

- A= Exceptional work, far exceeds requirements
- B= Very good work, results better than required
- C= Average work, results meet requirements
- D= Flawed work, results less than required
- F= Poor work, results far short of requirements

Basic Needs Statement:

Any student who faces challenges securing food, housing, or health care and believes that this could affect their performance in this course, is urged to contact any or all of the following campus resources:

- **Food Pantry Program**
 - UM offers a food pantry that students can access for emergency food. The pantry is open on Tuesdays from 9 to 2, on Fridays from 10-5. The pantry is located in UC 119 (in the former ASUM Childcare offices). Pantry staff operate several satellite food cupboards on campus (including one at Missoula College). For more information about this program, email umpantry@mso.umt.edu, visit the pantry's [website](https://www.umt.edu/uc/food-pantry/default.php)(<https://www.umt.edu/uc/food-pantry/default.php>) or contact the pantry on social media (@pantryUm on twitter, @UMPantry on Facebook, um_pantry on Instagram).
- **ASUM Renter Center**
 - The Renter Center has compiled a list of resources for UM students at risk of homelessness or food insecurity [here: http://www.umt.edu/asum/agencies/renter-center/default.php](http://www.umt.edu/asum/agencies/renter-center/default.php) and [here:https://medium.com/griz-renter-blog](https://medium.com/griz-renter-blog).
 - Students can schedule an appointment with Renter Center staff to discuss their situation and receive information, support, and referrals.
- **TRiO Student Support Services**
 - TRiO serves UM students who are low-income, first-generation college students, or have documented disabilities. TRiO services include a textbook loan program, scholarships and financial aid help, academic advising, coaching, and tutoring.
 - Students can check their eligibility for TRiO services online [here: http://www.umt.edu/trioss/apply.php#Eligibility](http://www.umt.edu/trioss/apply.php#Eligibility).
- **Curry Health Center** (Dental, Mental Health, and Medical)
 - Curry Health Center provides quality, affordable, accessible health care for students at the University of Montana. They promote a healthy campus by treating students with dignity and respect and through collaborating and sharing expertise. They offer appointments and online screening tools, and same day appointments if needed: <http://www.umt.edu/curry-health-center/>

If you are comfortable, please contact me with concerns you have and I will do my best to help connect you with additional resources.

Class Schedule to Complete Learning Modules on Moodle

All work for module must be submitted before 10AM Mountain Time on the final module date

Module 1:

August 30-September 7
Getting Started (Chapter 1)

Module 2:

September 7 -September 14
First Decisions (Chapter 2)

Module 3:

September 14-September 21
Research Ethics (Chapter 3)

Module 4:

September 21-September 28
Research Writing Style (no chapter)

Module 5:

September 28-October 5
Reviewing Research (Chapter 4)

Module 6:

October 5-October 12
Measurement (Chapter 5)

Module 7:

October 12-October 19
Sampling (Chapter 6)

Module 8:

October 19-October 26
Surveys (Chapter 9)

Module 9:

October 26-November 2
Experiments (Chapter 10)

Module 10:

November 2-November 9
Interviews/Focus Groups (Chapter 13)

Module 11:

November 9-November 16
Content Analysis (Chapter 11)

Module 12:

November 16-November 23

Descriptive Statistics (Chapter 7)

Module 13:

November 23-November 30

Inferential Statistics (Chapter 8)

Module 14:

November 30-December 7

Writing and Presentation (Chapter 14)

Module 15:

December 7-December 10 (Synthesis): Write final reflection paper

Module 16:

December 10 – December 14 (Completion): Complete final exam

NOTE: All readings/lecture notes from this class are copyrighted materials. You may print one copy for your own use, but you may not reproduce or use them beyond your own academic pursuits.