

# JOURN 8006

## Quantitative Research Methods in Journalism

### Course

#### Instructor

- Michael W. Kearney, Ph.D.
- Office: 314 Lee Hills Hall
- Hours: By appointment
- Email: kearneymw@missouri.edu
- Phone: (573) 884-0424

#### Objectives

1. Provide an introduction to quantitative research methods commonly used in the study of journalism and mass communication with specific emphases on the a) formulation of questions, b) development of data collection methods, and c) interpretation of data as answers to questions.
2. Develop the skills necessary to read, understand, critique, and write about mass communication research.
3. Provide an introduction to the uses of statistics.
4. Cultivate analytical thinking about theory and research both in theory and in practice.

#### Goals

This class is designed to introduce graduate students to the most common scientific research methods currently used in journalism and mass communication. It is intended to be an introduction to the systematic study of mass communication. Hence, the emphasis of this course is on empirical studies and will examine research that journalists often use and often write about. It will also examine research conducted by journalism and mass communication scholars. This course serves as baseline preparation for your continuing work in the graduate program by providing you with a rigorous intellectual experience in how studies are conducted, how to assess their validity and reliability, issues regarding appropriate use of numbers and statistics, and their relationship to the parts of the world they attempt to explain. The course, along with J-8000, serves as a foundation both for the development of your intellectual portfolio and the completion of your professional project or master's thesis.

#### Texts

- Wimmer, R.D., & Dominick, J.R. (2011). *Mass media research: An introduction* (9th Ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Grolemond, G. & Wickham, H. (2017). *R for Data Science*, First Edition. <http://r4ds.had.co.nz/>

You should also stay abreast of research in your interest area by reading appropriate scholarly and professional journals, such as: Communication Research, Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly, Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media, Political Communication, Public Opinion Quarterly, Journal of Communication, Journal of Advertising, Newspaper Research Journal, Mass Communication Review

## Requirements

The class consists of two exams, a final written project, completion of IRB certification, several homework assignments, and weekly readings.

## Research paper

The research paper (proposal) will be on a topic chosen by you, in consultation with me. You are strongly encouraged to meet with me outside of class to discuss your proposed research topic. The research paper (proposal) will be due the last week of class. The research question for your research paper (proposal) is due on the 6th week of class. Research proposal presentations will take place three weeks before finals—the 15th week of the semester. Although the final paper (research proposal) must include a **brief** summary of pertinent literature, identification of applicable theories and a clear statement of the value of the study, the primary emphasis will be on research design, methods, and plan of data analyses. Details about the paper will be forthcoming.

## Grades

### Breakdown

The following is a percentage breakdown of the grades in this course:

Assignment	Percent
Exam #1	25%
Exam #2	25%
Research paper	25%
Homework assignments	25%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Scale

This course uses a plus/minus grading scale. Graduate students cannot earn D's, thus earning less than 70% will result in a failing grade.

Percent	Grade
93.4 - 100	A
90.0 - 93.3	A-
86.7 - 89.9	B+
83.4 - 86.6	B
80.0 - 83.3	B-
76.7 - 79.9	C+
73.4 - 76.6	C
70.0 - 73.3	C-
00.0 - 69.9	F

Percentages are exact. I do not offer extra credit or give incompletes. If you have any questions or concerns about an assignment—the nature of it, the due date, etc.—it is best to ask them before completing the assignment. Given advanced notice and special circumstances, it may be possible to come to agreement on an alternative arrangement for an assignment, but you *must talk to me at least one week prior to the original due date*.

## **Late Work**

Late work will result in a reduction in grade. Homework assignments are due at the start of class on the assigned due date. The final paper is due by midnight on the assigned due date. Late assignments will be deducted points at a rate of 10% [of the original assigned value] per 24 hours until it is either submitted or ceases to be worth points.

The only exceptions to the late work policy will be in the case of a documented emergency such as bereavement, extreme illness or medical emergency, or some other catastrophic life event.

## **Policies**

### **Academic Integrity**

Academic integrity is fundamental to the activities and principles of a university. All members of the academic community must be confident that each person's work has been responsibly and honorably acquired, developed, and presented. Any effort to gain an advantage not given to all students is dishonest whether or not the effort is successful. The academic community regards breaches of the academic integrity rules as extremely serious matters. Sanctions for such a breach may include academic sanctions from the instructor, including failing the course for any violation, to disciplinary sanctions ranging from probation to expulsion. When in doubt about plagiarism, paraphrasing, quoting, collaboration, or any other form of cheating, consult the course instructor.

### **ADA Compliance**

If you anticipate barriers related to the format or requirements of this course, if you have emergency medical information to share with me, or if you need to make arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please let me know as soon as possible.

If disability related accommodations are necessary (for example, a note taker, extended time on exams, captioning), please establish an accommodation plan with the MU Disability Center, S5 Memorial Union, 573-882-4696, and then notify me of your eligibility for reasonable accommodations. For other MU resources for persons with disabilities, click on "Disability Resources" on the MU homepage.

### **Intellectual Pluralism**

The University community welcomes intellectual diversity and respects student rights. Students who have questions or concerns regarding the atmosphere in this class (including respect for diverse opinions) may contact the departmental chair or divisional director; the director of the Office of Students Rights and Responsibilities; the MU Equity Office, or [equity@missouri.edu](mailto:equity@missouri.edu).

All students will have the opportunity to submit an anonymous evaluation of the instructor(s) at the end of the course.

### **Course Discussion and Privacy**

In this class, students may not make audio or video recordings of course activity, except students permitted to record as an accommodation under section 240.040 of the Collected Rules. All other students who record and/or distribute audio or video recordings of class activity are subject to discipline in accordance with provisions of section 200.020 of the Collected Rules and Regulations of the University of Missouri pertaining to student conduct matters.

Those students who are permitted to record are not permitted to redistribute audio or video recordings of statements or comments from the course to individuals who are not students in the course without the express permission of the faculty member and of any students who are recorded. Students found to have violated this policy are subject to discipline in accordance with provisions of section 200.020 of the Collected Rules and Regulations of the University of Missouri pertaining to student conduct matters.

## Schedule

The course topics, homeworks, and readings are subject to change at the discretion of the instructor (another good reason to keep absences few).

Week	Date	Topic	Chapters		Due
			W&D	G&W	
1	1/16	Intro to quant research	1,3		
2	1/23	Operationalization	2,4		IRB
3	1/30	Survey research	3		
4	2/06	Experimental research	9		
5	2/13	Content/text analysis	6		
6	2/20	Intro to #rstats		1,4,6,8	RQ
7	2/27	Descriptive statistics	10	3,5,7	HW1
8	3/06	Chisquare and t-test	11,12		HW2
9	3/13	<b>Exam #1</b>			
10	3/20	Correlation and factors	12		HW3
11	3/27	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>			
12	4/03	General linear model		22-25	HW4
13	4/10	Advanced models	8		HW5
14	4/17	<b>Exam #2</b>			
15	4/24	Presentations			
16	5/01	<b>WORK DAY</b>			Paper

  

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