

Course Syllabus

Strategic Communication Research Methods I

Journalism 4952, Fall 2017
Missouri School of Journalism
Credits: 3

Instructor

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Teaching Assistant

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What's this course about?

Successful brands invest in strategic communication research to better understand the needs, concerns and perceptions of their target audience, making it easier to strengthen their market position.

In this course, you will learn skills to conduct strategic communication research and arrive at sound conclusions. You will learn the skills needed to evaluate others' research and carry out your own research to be used on the job after you graduate.

Strategic communication research is crucial to making sound decisions about appropriate strategies, tactics or courses of action. When you are done with this course, you will be able to confidently answer client questions about how to approach strategic communication problems.

What are the goals of the course?

1. To teach key strategic communication research jargon.

2. To show how strategic communication research solves problems.
3. To demonstrate how research can be used to understand target consumers.
4. To illustrate how to harness data.
5. To debate the future of strategic communication research: When do you use quantitative research and is there still a place for qualitative research?
6. To specify how globalization and digitalization influence or change strategic communication research.
7. To review, critique and understand others' research.
8. To sharpen and improve creative and critical thinking skills.
9. To enhance persuasive writing and presentation skills.
10. To develop a sense of professional ethics.

What skills will I gain?

This course will teach you how to:

1. Speak the language of strategic communication research.
2. Understand the steps of a solid research plan.
3. Create and execute the latest research methods.
4. Harness data.
5. Use new and established tools to help clients across different industries.
6. Use blended research techniques to understand audience engagement.
7. Understand how traditional research is evolving in digital technologies and how digital technologies are changing traditional research.
8. Examine and test the best ways to create, produce and evaluate communications strategies for a variety of clients.
9. Understand the role of research in global and digital communities.
10. Develop creative, persuasive and critical thinking skills to become leading professionals in strategic communication.

ACEJMC Core Values & Competencies

The Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC) requires that, irrespective of their particular specialization, all graduates should be aware of certain core values and competencies and be able to:

- Understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press for the country in which the institution that invites ACEJMC is located, as well as receive instruction in and understand the range of systems of freedom of expression around the

world, including the right to dissent, to monitor and criticize power, and to assemble and petition for redress of grievances;

- Demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications;
- Demonstrate an understanding of gender, race ethnicity, sexual orientation and, as appropriate, other forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to mass communications;
- Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society;
- Understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information;
- Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;
- Think critically, creatively and independently;
- Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work;
- Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;
- Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;
- Apply basic numerical and statistical concepts;
- Apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.

Required Readings

Davis, Joel J. (2012), *Advertising Research: Theory & Practice*, 2nd edition, Prentice Hall.

We will use Blackboard for assignments and any additional readings.

If you have difficulty logging onto the course Blackboard or you do not see the course listed on your Blackboard homepage, please contact the *Mizzou IT Help Desk*.

Grades

Grades are based on three components:

10 CTEs (10 points each) 100

2 Memos (100 points each) 200

Attendance/Participation 100

Total Points Possible: 400

Assignments

There are three assignments: 1) critical thinking exercises (CTEs), 2) memos, and 3) attendance/participation.

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Critical Thinking Exercises (CTEs) = 10 x 10 = 100 points

CRITICAL THINKING EXERCISES (CTEs): Every Thursday, a graded in-class activity, or critical thinking exercise (CTE), will be assigned for you to complete. You will work in teams of 2 to 3 to solve a real world problem. You will need to read the assigned readings and attend the Tuesday class presentation prior to Thursday's class.

Your team types a 200- to 250-word response in the form of a business memo (see example). Your CTE must use good argumentation. Good argumentation draws on class readings, notes and presentations. To earn full credit, you will find two extra "outside" citations using Google searches. Missed CTEs cannot be made up.

Each CTE is due at the end of the class and is worth 10 points. You may earn up to 10 extra credit points to be counted toward CTEs, which means you may miss one CTE without penalty.

You must be present in class to contribute to the CTE and all contributions must be significant. I reserve the right to deduct points if you are on Facebook, texting, or ignoring your group.

You will need the whole class period to develop a sound solution to the CTE. CTEs turned in early run the risk of not being fully developed and may lose points.

Late Memos receive a maximum of ½ credit.

Please type CTEs in Word and email CTEs to Dr. Rodgers and the T.A.

CTE Grading Criteria:

___ Followed instructions to the letter (1 point)

___ Had perfect (or near perfect) grammar and spelling (1 points)

___ Provided two citations for outside readings beyond course readings (2 points)

___ Used and cited course concepts accurately and appropriately, presented creative and viable recommendations, used persuasive argumentation, showed critical and careful thought, provided good points, and supported points with clear and vivid examples (6 points)

TOTAL POINTS: /10

2 Memos = 2 x 100 = 200 points

MEMOS: There are two Memos, written in "business" memo style. Memos are open book and open note. Students work individually during class time. The goal is to see how well you apply course concepts, solve problems, think critically, and write persuasively. Late Memos receive no more than half credit (or an F) – no excuses will be accepted including the excuse "I lost my file" or "Blackboard lost my file" or the "Internet was down". **Save files often!**

Please type Memos in Word and email directly to Dr. Rodgers at: srodgers@missouri.edu

3 Attendance/Participation = 100 points

ATTENDANCE/PARTICIPATION: Attendance/participation points are awarded for being on time and actively participating in each class. Students must attend class to receive full participation points. If you need to miss class for any reason, you must email the Professor BEFORE the missed class. If you miss class due to an illness, a written doctor's note is required. Attendance will be taken in every class.

Attendance

Attend class to earn participation points. You get two excused absences BUT you have to email me BEFORE the missed class or it's considered unexcused. **Each** unexcused absence (i.e., when students "skip" class or forget to email the professor in advance of the absence) receives -10 points, e.g., 1 unexcused absence receive -10, 2 unexcused absences is -20, etc. Students who have five or more absences may be asked to drop the course or may take an F in the class.

Participation

Actively participate in class to get participation points. Active participation means you: 1) ask good questions; 2) give thoughtful responses; 3) demonstrate you've done the readings; 4) share examples, and/or 5) complete in-class activities done on Tuesdays during class. Participation points can only be done in our physical classroom during class time.

Attendance and participation are worth a total of 100 points.

Extra Credit (optional):

During the semester, you will have an opportunity to earn up to 10 extra credit points. Extra credit can be applied only to the CTE score and CTE scores cannot exceed 100 points or 100%. To receive extra credit, show up to class on time and correctly answer the extra credit question at the beginning of each Tuesday class.

Criteria for Final Letter Grade

| Letter Grade | Percentage | Definition |
|---------------------|-------------------|---|
| A | 95-100% | A = Outstanding work. Outstanding achievement relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements. Performance was of the highest level. Excellence while meeting course objectives was sustained throughout the course. Not only was the student's performance clearly and significantly above satisfactory, it was also of an independent and creative nature. |
| A- | 90-94% | A- = Excellent work. Excellent achievement relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements. Performance was clearly and significantly above satisfactory, and was creative and independent. |
| B+ | 86-89% | B+ = Near excellent work. Achievement was significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements. Performance was clearly and significantly above satisfactory, and was creative and independent. |
| B | 85% | B = Very good work. Achievement significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements. Performance was very good, although not of the highest level. Performance was clearly and significantly above satisfactory |

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| | | fulfillment of course requirements (For undergraduate students: B = meritorious. For graduate students: B = adequate). |
| B- | 80-84% | B- = Good work. Achievement at a level just above that necessary to meet course requirements. Performance was notable. |
| C+ | 76-79% | C+ = Slightly above satisfactory work. Achievement that meets the course requirements. Performance was slightly more than adequate. |
| C | 75% | C = Satisfactory work. Achievement that meets the course requirements. Performance was adequate, although marginal in quality (For undergraduate students: C = adequate. For graduate students: C = inadequate). |
| C- | 70-74% | C- = Slightly below satisfactory work. Achievement that barely meets the course requirements. Performance has been slightly below satisfactory and was marginal in quality. |
| D+ | 66-69% | D+ = Passing work. Achievement below satisfactory in meeting course requirements. Student demonstrated below satisfactory achievement in meeting course objectives, yet fulfilled a sufficient enough portion of the course objectives that repeating the course is not necessary unless required by the academic unit. |
| D or D- | 60-65% | D = Minimum passing work. Achievement is barely worthy of credit. Student demonstrated unsatisfactory achievement in meeting course objectives, yet fulfilled a sufficient enough portion of the course objectives that repeating the course is not necessary unless required by the academic unit. |
| F | 59% or less | F = Failed – no credit. A failure to meet course requirements. The work of course objectives were either: 1) completed but not at a level of achievement that is worthy of credit, or 2) have not been completed and there was no agreement between the instructor and the student that the student would be awarded an “I” (incomplete). |

Weekly Schedule

| Week: | Topic: | Due: | Points: |
|-------------------------------------|--|--|--------------------------|
| Week 1 Tuesday Aug. 22 | Introduction Dr. Rodgers | No Readings for class Please read the “Academic Integrity” section at the bottom of this syllabus and be familiar with the policies that guide our classroom. | Attendance |
| Thursday Aug. 24 | Overview – What is strategic communication research? Why do we need it? How will it help? Dr. Rodgers | Readings: Chapter 1 | Participation/Attendance |
| Week 2 Tuesday Aug. 29 | Sources of Information – Where does strategic communication research come from and what are the key steps to a solid research plan? What is secondary research and where can I find it? Dr. Rodgers | Readings: Chapter 3 | Participation/Attendance |
| Thursday Aug. 31 | CTE 1 | Provided in class | 10 |
| Week 3 Tuesday Sept. 5 | Sampling – What is sampling, why do we do it, and how? Dr. Rodgers | Readings: Chapter 4 | Participation/Attendance |

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| Thursday Sept. 7 | CTE 2 | Provided in Class | 10 |
| Week 4 Tuesday Sept. 12 | Qualitative Research - What are the types, benefits and challenges? Namyeon Lee | Readings: Chapters 5, 6 & 7 | Participation/Attendance |
| Thursday Sept. 14 | CTE 3 | Provided in Class | 10 |
| Week 5 Tuesday Sept. 19 | Observation Research – What are the types, benefits and challenges? Namyeon Lee | Readings: Chapter 8 & 9 | Participation/Attendance |
| Thursday Sept. 21 | CTE 4 | Provided in Class | 10 |
| Week 6 Tuesday Sept. 26 | Measurement – Why, how and when do we do it? Dr. Rodgers | Readings: Chapters 11 | Participation/Attendance |
| Thursday Sept. 28 | CTE 5 | Provided in Class | 10 |
| Week 7 Tuesday Oct. 3 | Surveys - What are different types, criteria and challenges? How do we create, test and execute them? Dr. Rodgers | Readings: Chapters 10, 12 & 13 | Participation/Attendance |
| Thursday Oct. 5 | CTE 6 | Provided in Class | 10 |
| Week 8 Tuesday Oct. 10 | Experiments – When do we use experiments in strategic communication research? What are the steps to creating and executing experiments? What are the challenges (validity and reliability, what?)? Namyeon Lee | Readings: Chapter 14 | Participation/Attendance |
| Thursday Oct. 12 | Memo #1 | Provided in Class: Covers all material covered in class and the textbook for Weeks 1-8 | 100 |
| Week 9 Tuesday Oct. 17 | Segmenting Analysis – What is it, how will it help my clients, and how do I do it? Dr. Rodgers | Readings: Chapter 17 | Participation/Attendance |
| Thursday Oct. 19 | CTE 7 | Provided in Class | 10 |
| Week 10 Tuesday Oct. 24 | Brand Mapping Namyeon Lee | Readings: Chapter 18 | Participation/Attendance |
| Thursday Oct. 26 | CTE 8 | Provided in Class | 10 |
| Week 11 Oct. 31 | Data Analysis – How do I know if I have good data? What are the basic steps? How do I know which statistic to use for what purpose? Dr. Rodgers | Readings: Chapters 15 & 16 | Participation/Attendance |
| Thursday Nov. 2 | CTE 9 | Provided in Class | 10 |
| Week 12 Tuesday Nov. 7 | Reporting Research – What's good report writing? How do I do it? What are common pitfalls to avoid? | Readings: Chapter 21 | Participation/Attendance |

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| | Dr. Rodgers | | |
| Thursday Nov. 9 | CTE 10 | Provided in Class | 10 |
| Week 13 Tuesday Nov. 14 | Advertising Testing and Post-Production Optimization and Research Ethics Namyeon Lee | Readings: Chapters 2 & 19 & 20 | Attendance |
| Thursday Nov. 16 | NO CTE | | |
| Week 14 Nov. 18 – Nov. 26 | THANKSGIVING BREAK | THANKSGIVING BREAK | |
| Week 15 Tuesday Nov. 28 | Review for Memo #2/Course Evaluations | No Readings No CTE | Attendance |
| Thursday Nov. 30 | Memo #2 | Memo #2 – Covers readings and class presentations covered in Weeks 9-16 | 100 |
| Week 16 Dec. 5 | Wrap-Up | Wrap-Up | Attendance |
| Thursday Dec. 7 | Wrap-up/Last Day of Class | Last Day of Class | Attendance |

Academic Integrity

Academic Honesty

Academic honesty 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.

Academic misconduct includes but is not limited to the following:

- Use of materials from another author without citation or attribution.
- Use of verbatim materials from another author without citation or attribution.
- Extensive use of materials from past assignments without permission of your instructor.
- Extensive use of materials from assignments in other classes without permission of your instructor.
- Fabricating information in news or feature stories, whether for publication or not.
- Fabricating sources in news or feature stories, whether for publication or not.
- Fabricating quotes in news or feature stories, whether for publication or not.

- Lack of full disclosure or permission from editors when controversial reportorial techniques, such as going undercover to get news, are used.

When in doubt about plagiarism, paraphrasing, quoting or collaboration, consult with your instructor. For closed-book exams and exercises, academic misconduct includes conferring with other class members, copying or reading someone else's test and using notes and materials without prior permission of the instructor. For open-book exams and exercises, academic misconduct includes copying or reading someone else's work.

Classroom Misconduct

Classroom misconduct is defined by the [University of Missouri's collected rules](#) and regulations are also outlined in the [M-Book Student Code of Conduct](#).

Classroom misconduct can include obstruction or disruption of teaching, such as late arrival or early departure or failure to turn off mobile devices unless otherwise instructed.

Classroom misconduct can also include misuse of computing resources, harassment, bullying, physical abuse or safety threats; theft; property damage; disruptive, lewd or obscene conduct; abuse of computer time; repeated failure to attend class when attendance is required; and repeated failure to participate or respond in class when class participation is required.

IMPORTANT: Entering a classroom late or leaving a classroom before the end of the period can be extremely disruptive behavior. Students are asked to arrive for class on time and to avoid early departures. This is particularly true of large lectures, where late arrivals and early departures can be most disruptive. Instructors have the right to deny students access to the classroom if they arrive late and have the right to dismiss a student from the class for early departures that result in disruptions.

Under MU policy, your instructor has the right to ask for your removal from the course for misconduct, disruptive behavior or excessive absences. The instructor then has the right to issue a grade of withdraw, withdraw failing or F. The instructor alone is responsible for assigning the grade in such circumstances.

Dishonesty and Misconduct Reporting Procedures

MU faculty are required to report all instances of academic dishonesty or classroom misconduct to the appropriate campus officials. Allegations of classroom misconduct must be reported to MU's Office of Student Conduct. Allegations of academic misconduct must be reported to MU's Office of the Provost.

Professional Standards and Ethics

The School of Journalism is committed to the highest standards of academic and professional ethics and expects its students to adhere to those standards. Students should be familiar with the Code of Ethics of the Society of Professional Journalists and adhere to its restrictions. Students are expected to observe strict honesty in academic programs and as representatives of school-related media. Should any student be guilty of plagiarism, falsification, misrepresentation or other forms of dishonesty in any assigned work, that student may be subject to a failing grade from the instructor and such disciplinary action as may be necessary under University regulations.

Statement for Executive Order #38, Academic Inquiry, Course Discussion and Privacy

Faculty allowing recording:

University of Missouri System Executive Order No. 38 lays out principles regarding the sanctity of classroom discussions at the university. The policy is described fully in Section 200.015 of the Collected Rules and Regulations. In this class, students may make audio or video recordings of course activity unless specifically prohibited by the faculty member. However, the redistribution of audio or video recordings of statements or comments from the course to individuals who are not students in the course is prohibited 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.

Faculty not allowing recording:

University of Missouri System Executive Order No. 38 lays out principles regarding the sanctity of classroom discussions at the university. The policy is described fully in [section 200.015](#) of the Collected Rules and Regulations. 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.

Title IX Information:

The University of Missouri prohibits all forms of sex or gender discrimination, including sex-based violence. If you or someone you know has experienced sex discrimination or been harassed or assaulted, you can get help at the Relationship & Sexual Violence Prevention (RSVP) Center, a confidential resource, at rsvp@missouri.edu or (573) 882-6638, or go to www.rsvp.missouri.edu. You can also contact the Title IX Office (title9@missouri.edu; (573) 882-3880; or www.title9.missouri.edu). Because we care about our community, Mizzou employees are required to report all incidents of sex discrimination to the Title IX Office.

Students with Disabilities:

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 register with the [MU Disability Center](#), S5 Memorial Union, 573-882-4696, and then notify me of your eligibility for reasonable accommodations.

Religious Holidays

Students are excused for recognized religious holidays. Let your instructor know in advance if you have a conflict.

Intellectual Pluralism

The University community welcomes intellectual diversity and respects student rights. Students who have questions concerning the atmosphere in this class (including respect for diverse opinions) may contact your faculty chair or associate dean; or the director of the Office of Students Rights and Responsibilities (<http://osrr.missouri.edu/>); the MU Equity Office, or equity@missouri.edu.

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