

COMMUNICATION 308
Adv. Research Methods in Communication
Online Edition

Instructor: Dr. A. Cheree Carlson

Please use Canvas for course related e-mail. Otherwise things get buried.

Office: AZCNTR 386A

Office hours: by appointment, can be in-person or virtual.

Canvas can be accessed through log in at “MyASU”

< <http://my.asu.edu> >

Communication 308 is an introduction to the many kinds of methods and research in Communication Studies. We will explore how different ways of knowing lead to different criteria for knowledge about human communication. The course covers quantitative, qualitative, and critical approaches. It is important to note that this course cannot cover any method of inquiry completely. Each is given more in-depth coverage in specialized 300-400 level courses.

OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course, the student should be able to

1. understand the scope of the discipline of communication.
2. understand the basic process of conducting research in communication.
3. evaluate the appropriateness of various research methods in response to research questions.
4. apply the appropriate style for writing research reports (APA).
5. write a coherent proposal to apply a method to a chosen topic.

COURSE TEXTS

Required: Steven Croucher and Daniel Cronin-Mills, *Understanding Communication Research Methods*, 3rd edition. **Note: This is not the same textbook as used by Tempe Campus.**

Recommended: Recent APA manual or guide to APA format.

Additional readings for this course are provided as online “pdf” files kept on the Canvas site. Access to Canvas is REQUIRED for course materials, discussions, and readings.

If you do not have it already, you might want to download the free Adobe Acrobat reader at

<http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html>

You do **not** have to download the optional virus scanner.

This is an asynchronous course. There is no set class period for lecture and discussion. You do **NOT** have to physically trek Downtown. However, there **ARE** specific due dates for readings and assignments. Due dates are posted on Canvas. Feel free to contact me through Canvas email if you have any questions.

Zoom gave me a holiday “present,” so I don't have a cache of recorded lectures to go with the PowerPoint slides. I will be recording them as quickly as possible. Videos will always be posted in time for any related assignments.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Quizzes.....30%

Instead of big tests, we will have lots of little quizzes, which will be completed in the Lockdown browser. These are intended to keep you up with readings and lectures. Dates for these will be announced in the calendar.

Papers:

Topic Proposal (2-3 pp) 5%
Three Article Analyses (3-4 pp) 5% each (15% total)
Annotated Bibliography..... 15%
Application Paper (6-7 pp)..... 20%

Practice:

Yellowdig Exercises/Discussions. .15%

- Grading is done on a straight percentage scale.
- Later assignments tend to be weighted more than earlier ones, so you get more credit as you learn.
- Most exercises and discussions will take place on the Yellowdig Platform. This is available through Canvas.

COURSE PHILOSOPHY

Here is what you can expect of **me**.

1. **RESPECT FOR IDEAS.** The instructor has a duty to make students think critically about their beliefs so that they can make choices in the world and defend them. This activity should always be respectful of those beliefs while testing their limits.
2. **PROFESSIONALISM.** The instructor should always behave professionally . This means being prepared for lectures, sticking to the syllabus, responding to phone calls or emails in a timely manner, and keeping office hours.
3. **OPEN COMMUNICATION.** Students should be able to voice any concerns about theclass without fear of reprisal.
4. **JUSTICE.** The instructor should grade papers and exams strictly on their merits. Students should never have to fear arbitrary or capricious grading.

Here is what is expected of **you**.

1. **BE AN ACTIVE LEARNER.** What you get out of this course depends on how much you put in. A good start is to have the assigned readings done prior to class discussion. You are then able to engage in classroom rhetoric. Speak up, ask questions, and contribute to the class.
2. **BE RESPONSIBLE.** Communication is inherently controversial due to its close ties to politics, relationships, culture, religion, and ethics. A responsible communicator will give respect to varied points of view. For the same reasons, some course content may be deemed offensive by some students. I try to provide warnings when introducing potentially distressing material, but if I miss something, please contact me. If you have any problems with the course, talk to me about them. I am willing to spend time with you to answer questions, discuss complaints, etc. We can schedule an office visit downtown, have a Zoom meeting, or even use email.
3. **BE ETHICAL.** Don't cheat or plagiarize. This means that when you write a paper you must cite the source of anything that is not your original work. This not only means direct quotations, but anything you paraphrase, or any ideas you borrow. Cheating or plagiarizing in any form is grounds for failing the course and may lead to formal university action. The formal college policy is included on the syllabus below.
4. **ALLOW YOURSELF TIME.** Work always piles up faster than you think. Do not try to do all the readings the night before an exam: concepts build on one another and must be learned thoroughly. For the research paper, give yourself time to proofread and edit. Acceptance of late papers is contingent upon the reason you did not complete the work. If accepted, 10 percent is deducted for each 24 hours late.

As college students you should write on a college level. This also takes rewriting. Spelling and grammar count. All papers must be typed in correct APA format.

COURSE POLICIES

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

It's simple. If you are discovered plagiarizing (global, patchwork, self or otherwise), there will be consequences. University policy requires that I report any such issues to the Academic Integrity Officer, who will discuss it with both of us and recommend an outcome. In case of citation problems due to mere ignorance/laziness/sloppy work, you will be required to redo the assignment by fixing any citation problems to get a grade. The formal college policy is included here:

Academic honesty is expected of all students in all examinations, papers, laboratory work, academic transactions, and records. The possible sanctions include, but are not limited to, appropriate grade penalties, course failure (indicated on the transcript as a grade of E), course failure due to academic dishonesty (indicated on the transcript as a grade of XE), loss of registration privileges, disqualification and dismissal. For more information, see provost.asu.edu/academicintegrity.

If you fail to meet the standards of academic integrity in any of the criteria listed on the university policy website, sanctions will be imposed by the instructor, college, and/or dean. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating on an academic evaluation or assignment, plagiarizing, academic deceit (such as fabricating data or information), or falsifying academic records. Turning in an assignment (all or in part) that you completed for a previous class is considered self-plagiarism and falls under these guidelines. Any infractions of self-plagiarism are subject to the same penalties as copying someone else's work without proper citations. Students who have taken this class previously and would like to use the work from previous assignments should contact the instructor for permission to do so.

If you have any questions about your work and the academic integrity policy, please discuss your assignment or concerns with your instructor, teaching assistant, or your college Academic Integrity Officer in advance of submitting an assignment. Student resources on Sun Devil Integrity and strategies for completing your work with integrity and avoiding plagiarism are available here: [ASU Student Resources for Academic Integrity](#) or provost.asu.edu/academicintegrity for more information.

TITLE IX POLICY

Title IX is a federal law that provides that no person be excluded on the basis of sex from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity. Both Title IX and university policy make clear that sexual violence and harassment based on sex is prohibited. An individual who believes they have been subjected to sexual violence or harassed on the basis of sex can seek support, including counseling and academic support, from the university. If you or someone you know has been harassed on the basis of sex or sexually assaulted, you can find information and resources at <https://sexualviolenceprevention.asu.edu/faqs>

As a mandated reporter, I am obligated to report any information I become aware of regarding alleged acts of sexual discrimination, including sexual violence and dating violence. [ASU Counseling Services](#), is available if you wish to discuss any concerns confidentially and privately.

DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS

Qualified students with disabilities who will require disability accommodations in this class are encouraged to make their requests to the instructor at the beginning of the semester either during office hours or by appointment. Note: Prior to receiving disability accommodations, verification of eligibility from the Student Accessibility and Inclusive Learning Services is required. Disability information is confidential.

Student Accessibility and Inclusive Learning Services

(<https://eoss.asu.edu/accessibility>)

Email: Student.Accessibility@asu.edu

SAILS Phone: 480-965-1234

SAILS FAX: 480-965-0441

SAFE ENVIRONMENT

Learning takes place best when a safe environment is established in the classroom. In accordance with the Student Services Manual, students enrolled in this course have a responsibility to support an environment that nurtures individual and group differences and encourages engaged, honest discussions. The success of the course rests on your ability to create a safe environment where everyone feels comfortable to share and explore ideas. We must also be willing to take risks and ask critical questions. Doing so will effectively contribute to our own and others intellectual and personal growth and development. We welcome disagreements in the spirit of critical academic exchange, but please remember to be respectful of others' viewpoints, whether you agree with them or not.

Students are entitled to receive instruction free from interference by other members of the class. If a student is disruptive, an instructor may ask the student to stop the disruptive behavior and warn the student that such disruptive behavior can result in withdrawal from the course. An instructor may withdraw a student from a course when the student's behavior disrupts the educational process under USI 201-10 (<http://www.asu.edu/aad/manuals/usi/usi201-10.html>).

College Contact:

This course is offered by the [College of Integrative Sciences and Arts](#) (CISA). For more information about the college, visit our website: <https://cisa.asu.edu>. If you have questions about this course, please speak with your instructor. If your instructor is unable to address your questions, please send your inquiry to cisa@asu.edu.

Overview of Written Assignments

COM 308 Topic Proposal

Your first written assignment is to choose a topic for your research journey and justify your choice. Be sure it is related to **communication**. Choose carefully -- the topic you select will be yours for the semester, although if you decide to change later in the class, we can discuss it.

Writing the paper

Present a clear thesis statement. It should have to do with why you think this would be a good topic. A thesis statement is always a single declarative sentence.

Your paper should also answer these three questions:

1. What Am I Doing?

Assume your reader does not know anything about your topic. Given how many topics are out there, this is a good assumption. Introduce us to it. One paragraph

is enough.

2. Why should we care?

Prove your case is significant. A topic can be significant in one or more ways. It could be a problem that many have noted but no one can solve. It may be something that will give us insight into how communication works. It may fill a gap in the research that already exists. Read some of the articles for class and notice how everyone “sells” their topic first thing. One or two paragraphs, depending upon how hard you think it will be to interest the reader.

3. What has already been done?

Provide five scholarly sources, as proof that the topic is researchable. Briefly explain why you chose them. You don’t need to review these articles (yet), simply explain them enough to show that research exists for this topic. If you cannot find at least five good sources, reconsider your topic

Technical Requirements

1. Length 2-3 pages. If you must go a *little* over, that's ok.
2. Proper APA format. No abstract is necessary.
3. At least **five scholarly** sources. More is fine, less is not. Scholarly means no newspapers, no magazines, and no blogs. Web sites are not allowed at this stage. Wikipedia is for high school. Non- scholarly sources are fine as **extras**.
4. File saved as an Adobe .pdf document.
5. Grammar and spelling count.
6. The paper must be turned in on Canvas by midnight on the due date.

Com 308 Article Analysis

There are three major research paradigms. For these papers you will explore one published article from each paradigm. **The paradigm to write upon will be specified in the assignment.** These are worth 5% each. The article should be related to your topic. It does not have to be an exact match. Your task is to discuss the article as if you were evaluating it for use in your research project.

Each paper will include **at least two sources**:

1. your textbook/class notes and
2. the scholarly article you are examining. Your task is to discuss your topic as if you were proposing a research project.

Then complete these tasks.

- **First**, remind the reader of your topic.
- **Second**, discuss
 - what specific method used is by the article,
 - how it fits within the paradigm
 - why it is a good fit for your topic.
- **Third**, evaluate any one conclusion the authors make **following the claim, data, warrant structure of the Toulmin Model.**
- **Finally**, based upon this article, pose a possible research question on your topic.

Guide for choosing Articles for Analysis

Things to look for:

- Studies in communication journals
- Full studies that have analyses of data
- Studies that have identifiable methods

Do Not Use:

- Meta-analyses
- Literature Reviews
- Theoretical pieces
- Conference papers
- Dissertations
- Book chapters

Technical Requirements

1. Length 3-4 pages. If you must go a *little* over, that's ok.
2. Proper APA format. **(No APA, no A.)**
3. The scholarly research article must be from the paradigm you claim.
4. File saved as an Adobe .pdf document.
5. Grammar and spelling count.
6. The papers must be turned in on Canvas by midnight on the due date.

COM 308 Annotated Bibliography

Review 10 scholarly articles related to your topic. To author your annotations, write between 100-150 words about each of the articles, focusing on **what** they found and **how** they found it. Pay close attention to method! After all, this is a methods class! What specific methods did the author use? Why? Finally, do **not** simply copy the abstract for each article. Doing so would constitute plagiarism.

Every essay will be a bit different, depending upon your final selections. But overall, these are your tasks.

General Outline:

1. What am I doing now? Remind the reader of your topic. This is especially important, as you will have narrowed/refined/alterd it by now. If you still have exactly what you started with, you are doing something wrong. One short paragraph will do.

2. What approaches have others taken to the topic? That's your Bibliography!
A list properly alphabetized and formatted in APA.

3. Given the literature, pose a Research Question of your own. Now you must decide specifically what you want to find out! To defend this, briefly summarize

differences and commonalities in your reading. You may pose either a Research Question or Hypothesis, but keep in mind that the latter is more difficult to defend. The length of this section depends upon your argument, but don't go beyond a basic comparison.

Technical Requirements

1. The articles must be research studies published in peer reviewed journals.
2. At least **six** of the articles must be from Communication journals. The others can be from any discipline.
3. Proper APA format. This is a bibliography, after all. **(No APA, no B)**
4. File saved as an Adobe .pdf document.
5. Grammar and spelling count.
6. The paper must be turned in on Canvas by midnight on the due date.

COM 308 COM 308 Application Paper

In this final paper think about how the methods that you have learned in class can be used in practical situations. How might you utilize the methods from this class?

Each of you has selected a topic that attracted your interest. Think about why you chose it. How might knowledge of this area be useful to you?

To structure the paper, offer a hypothetical (or actual) workplace, relational, social, or family situation or a communication problem that would need resolution. Then choose a method, propose how you would use it and how your research can assist in finding ways to resolve the problem.

Basic Outline:

1. Introduction

- a. Broadly speaking, discuss how communication methods provide practical possibilities in addition to research possibilities.

2. Body

- a. Hypothetical scenario: Paint a picture of a workplace/family/social/relational problem or other moment when communication research might be useful.
- b. Choose a method: Describe the method and justify using it. In other words, why this method?
- c. Apply the method! Consider, depending on the approach:
 - i. Sample survey/interview questions
 - ii. Types of observations
 - iii. Types of texts

3. Conclusion

- a. Summarize your goals
- b. Bring it back to the beginning -- regarding practical application of methods.

Since the content of these will differ according to the chosen method, this is only a bare skeleton. There will be a guide posted on Canvas going over what needs to be included for each methodology.

Technical Requirements

1. Length 8-10 pages. If you must go a *little* over, that's ok.
2. At least 10 sources. Make use of course materials and at least 8 of the sources from your annotated bibliography. You are allowed to add new articles.
3. At least 6 articles must be from Communication journals.
4. Proper APA format. No abstract is necessary. **(No APA, no B)**
5. File saved as an Adobe .pdf document.
6. Grammar and spelling count.
7. The papers must be turned in on Canvas by midnight on the due date.