

**Communication 350**  
**Communication Research Methods**  
**Spring 2010**

**Gasson Hall 203 MW**

Instructor: Dr. Seung-A Annie Jin

Office Hours: Fridays 10:00am ~11:50am and by appointment

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### Course description

This course aims to introduce students to the basic set of knowledge and skills needed to design and execute research. Lectures will focus on the conceptual aspects, such as developing research problems, building proper measurements, sampling, designing methods, and analyzing data. When you complete this course, I hope that you will be equipped to move beyond being passive recipients of research, and become discriminating consumers and competent practitioners.

### Course materials

- Textbook 1: *Principles of Research in Communication* by Thomas D. Stewart (abbreviated as **PRC**; required; available at BC bookstore and major online bookstores)
- Textbook 2: *Quantitative Research Methods for Communication* (abbreviated as **QRM**; required; available at BC bookstore and major online bookstores)
- Lecture outlines and exercise packets (I'll provide handouts)

### Evaluation of performance (Total of 500 points)

- |   |            |
|---|------------|
| (1) Examination 1 (October 5 <sup>th</sup> Mon, 1 hour exam)                            | 100 points |
| (2) Examination 2 (November 2 <sup>nd</sup> Monday, 1 hour exam)                        | 100 points |
| (3) Final examination (December 9 <sup>th</sup> Wednesday, 1 hour exam)                 | 100 points |
| (4) Quizzes ( <b>Quiz dates</b> are indicated in the schedule)                          | 100 points |
| !! <b>NO</b> make-up quizzes are accepted: <b>NO</b> exceptions!!                       |            |
| (Total of 10 Quizzes: 10 points each)   |            |
| (5) Attendance and participation in class   | 50 points  |
| (Daily attendance: Total of 25 Attendances: 2 points each)                              |            |
| (6) Essays ( <b>Dues dates</b> are indicated in the schedule)                           | 20 points  |
| !! <b>NO</b> late essays will be accepted: <b>NO</b> exceptions!!                       |            |
| (Total of 10 Essays: 2 points each)   |            |
| (7) Research participation and method paper <b>DUE</b> December 9th                     | 30 points  |
| (You need to participate in 3 studies and submit 2-page paper for each: 10 points each) |            |

### **1. Examinations (100 points x 3 exams = 300 points)**

There will be 3 examinations for this course, and they generally hold the following format:

- 8 to 15 multiple choice questions (about 20% of the examination's points)
- 5 to 8 fill in the blanks or short answer questions (about 15% of the points)
- 5 to 8 analysis questions (about 65% of the points).

The latter examinations may be cumulative in part. In general, I aim to have no more than 20% of the later examinations to test materials covered in prior examinations. The purpose is not to impose excessive burdens on you during examinations; the purpose instead is to highlight the inter-linked nature of many decisions we make in designing research methods: decisions made in the earlier phases of the study will shape the available options in the study's later phases.

### **2. Attendance and participation in class (2 points x 25 classes = 50 points)**

This part of the evaluation is designed to set incentives for a desired behavior – punctual attendance and active participation in class sessions.

I'll take attendance at the beginning of each class.

Generally, missing two lecture sessions is acceptable; missing three and more will adversely affect my evaluation of your performance

However, if you fall ill, you should not neglect your health; take the time to rest. I will accept authentic medical excuses. However, medical conditions do not necessarily exempt your participation in the missed sessions. In such a situation, you must meet with me to discuss how you can compensate for missing the sessions.

More generally, this principle applies to other authentic, justifiable crises that you may encounter in your life as the semester progresses. However, be very conservative in your interpretation of what constitutes a justifiable crisis. Sudden life-threatening illness, or death in the family is a crisis; deciding to recover from hangover after a weekend partying is not.

### **3. Quiz (10 points x 10 quizzes = 100 points)**

- Questions (about 5 questions for each quiz) for weekly quizzes will be from *Quantitative Research Methods for Communication*.
- Relevant chapters for each quiz are indicated in the schedule (QRM).
- It is **YOUR** responsibility to **do the readings and be prepared** for each quiz.
- Quizzes will be graded but will not be returned individually.
- Answer keys will be reviewed in class.

### **4. Essay (2 points x 10 essays= 20 points)**

- Questions for weekly essays will be from *Principles of Research in Communication*, *Quantitative Research Methods for Communication*, and *every material* we cover in class.
- To receive full credits, you need to turn in a completed paper copy of your essays.
- Essays will be distributed at the end of class prior to each due date.
- It is **YOUR** responsibility to **bring a completed paper copy** of your essay to class and turn it in at the **beginning** of class before I take attendance.
- **Essay due dates** are indicated in the schedule.
- **NO** late essays will be accepted. **No** exceptions.
- **NO** electronic essays will be accepted. **No** exceptions.
- **NO** extra paper copies of the essay will be available on the due date.
- Essays completed **DURING** the class on the due date will **NOT** be accepted. **No** exceptions.

**3. Research Participation Requirement (10 points x 3 write-ups = 30 points)**

Students will have opportunities to participate as subjects in research studies conducted by Faculties in Communication Department. Participating in each study and submitting three-page long write-up will give you 10 points. In order to receive these credits, you need not only to attend the study but also write a two-page-long (double-spaced) essay (for each study) describing (1) the purpose of the study and (2) methodology of the study (research design, sampling, measures, methodological problems, internal/external validity of the study, etc.)

I will tell you more about the required components of the essay and provide a detailed handout containing guidelines.

The hope is that you will learn something through this experience while earning the credits. Each student can participate in a maximum of three studies for research participation credits.

**Grading**

Grades will be assigned on a standard A-F scale.

Grades are computed according to university policy as follows: A=4.0, A- =3.66, B+=3.33, B=3.0, B- =2.66, C+=2.33, C=2.0, C- =1.66, D+=1.33, D=1.0, D- =.66, F=0.

Final grades are assigned as follows:

A is 90% and above, a B is 80% and above, a C is 70% and above, a D is 60% and above.

The “plus” grades are 88%, 78%, and 68%.

The “minus” grades are 92%, 82%, 72%, and 62%.

**Schedule**

**Subject to change depending on instructor’s plan, students’ progress and needs**

<b><u>Week</u></b>	<b><u>Date</u></b>	<b><u>Topic</u></b>	<b><u>Reading</u></b>	
Week 1 Introduction	W Jan 20 <sup>th</sup>	<b>DAY #1.</b> Course Introduction [Exam1]	Handouts Syllabus	
Week 2 Research Questions Hypotheses Definitions	M Jan 25 <sup>th</sup>	<b>DAY #2.</b> Developing Research Questions [Exam1]	PRC Ch2 QRM Ch1,2	
	W Jan 27 <sup>th</sup>	<b>DAY #3.</b> Science and Ways of Knowing & Building Good Measures Part 1 (Levels of Measurement) [Exam1]	PRC Ch1,2 ,4 PRC Ch8 (p.81-82) QRM Ch6,7,9	
		<b>◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆Essay # 1 DUE◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆</b>		
		<b>●●●●●●●●Quiz #1●●●●●●●●</b>		<b>QRM Ch1,2,3</b>
Week 3 Measures Validity Sampling	M Feb 1 <sup>st</sup>	<b>DAY #4.</b> Building Good Measures Part 2 (Measurement Reliability & Validity) [Exam1]	PRC Ch4 QRM Ch6,9,10	
	W Feb 3 <sup>rd</sup>	<b>DAY #5.</b> Sampling (Probability Sampling) & Non-probability Sampling) [Exam1]	PRC Ch5 QRM Ch14	
		<b>◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆Essay # 2 DUE◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆</b>		
		<b>●●●●●●●●Quiz #2●●●●●●●●</b>		<b>QRM Ch6,7,9</b>

Week 4 Sampling	M Feb 8 <sup>th</sup>	<b>DAY #6.</b> Sampling Exercises (Systematic Sampling, Stratified Sampling) [Exam1]	PRC Ch5 QRM Ch14 Handouts
	W Feb 10 <sup>th</sup>	<b>DAY #7.</b> Sampling Review & Exam Review [Exam1]	Handouts
		◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ <b>Essay # 3 DUE</b> ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ ●●●●●●●● <b>Quiz #3</b> ●●●●●●●●	<b>QRM Ch4,5,10</b>
Week 5 EXAM Survey	M Feb 15 <sup>th</sup>	<b>DAY #8. Exam1 (1hour)</b>	
	W Feb 17 <sup>th</sup>	<b>DAY #9.</b> Survey Method Part 1 [Exam2]	PRC Ch9 QRM Ch11
Week 6 Survey	M Feb 22 <sup>nd</sup>	<b>DAY #10.</b> Survey Method Part 2 [Exam2]	PRC Ch9 QRM Ch11
		◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ <b>Essay # 4 DUE</b> ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ ●●●●●●●● <b>Quiz #4</b> ●●●●●●●●	<b>QRM Ch11</b>
	W Feb 24 <sup>th</sup>	<b>No class:</b> out of town for <b>conference</b>	
Week 7	M March 1 <sup>st</sup> W March 3 <sup>rd</sup>	<b>No class: spring break</b>	
Week 8 Experimental Design	M March 8 <sup>th</sup>	<b>DAY #11.</b> Validity in research (Internal Validity & External Validity) [Exam2]	PRC Ch7 QRM Ch10
	W March 10 <sup>th</sup>	<b>DAY #12.</b> Experimental Design Part 1 [Exam2]	PRC Ch8 QRM Ch13
		◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ <b>Essay # 5 DUE</b> ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ ●●●●●●●● <b>Quiz #5</b> ●●●●●●●●	<b>QRM Ch10</b>
Week 9 Experimental Design	M March 15 <sup>th</sup>	<b>DAY #13.</b> Experimental Design Part 2 [Exam2]	PRC Ch8 QRM Ch13 Handouts
	W March 17 <sup>th</sup>	<b>DAY #14.</b> Experimental Design Part 3 Solomon Four Group Design [Exam2]	PRC Ch8 QRM Ch13 Handouts
		◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ <b>Essay # 6 DUE</b> ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ ●●●●●●●● <b>Quiz #6</b> ●●●●●●●●	<b>QRM Ch13</b>
Week 10 EXAM	M March 22 <sup>nd</sup>	<b>DAY #15.</b> Exam Review	
	W March 24 <sup>th</sup>	<b>DAY #16. Exam 2 (1 hour)</b>	
Week 11	M March 29 <sup>th</sup>	<b>DAY #17.</b> Descriptive Statistics [Final Exam]	PRC Ch12 QRM Ch8 QRM Ch15

Descriptive Statistics	W March 31 <sup>st</sup>	<b>DAY #18.</b> Descriptive Statistics & Hypothesis Testing [Final Exam]	PRC Ch12 QRM Ch8 QRM Ch15
Week 12 Hypothesis Testing	M April 5 <sup>th</sup>	<b>No Class: Easter Break</b>	Handouts QRM Ch17
	W April 7 <sup>th</sup>	<b>DAY #19.</b> Hypothesis Testing [Final Exam]	Handouts QRM Ch17
		◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ <b>Essay # 7 DUE</b> ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ ●●●●●●●● <b>Quiz #7</b> ●●●●●●●●	<b>QRM Ch 8 &amp; 15</b>
Week 13 t-test	M April 12 <sup>th</sup>	<b>DAY#20.</b> Statistics: t-test Part 1	
	W April 14 <sup>th</sup>	<b>DAY #21.</b> Statistics: t-test Part 2	
Week 14 Correlation	M April 19 <sup>th</sup>	<b>No class: Patriot's day</b>	
	W April 21 <sup>st</sup>	<b>DAY #22.</b> Statistics: Correlation Part 1 [Final Exam]	Handouts QRM Ch19
		◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ <b>Essay # 8 DUE</b> ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ ●●●●●●●● <b>Quiz #8</b> ●●●●●●●●	<b>QRM Ch17</b>
Week 15 Chi-Square	M April 26 <sup>th</sup>	<b>DAY #23.</b> Statistics: Correlation Part 2 & Statistics: Chi-Square Part 1 [Final Exam]	Handouts QRM Ch16
	W April 28 <sup>th</sup>	<b>DAY #24.</b> Statistics: Chi-Square Part 2 [Final Exam]	
		◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ <b>Essay # 9 DUE</b> ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ ●●●●●●●● <b>Quiz #9</b> ●●●●●●●●	<b>QRM Ch19</b>
Week 16 FINAL EXAM	M May 3 <sup>rd</sup>	<b>DAY #25.</b> Final Exam Review [Final Exam]	Handouts QRM Ch16
		●●●●●●●● <b>Quiz #10</b> ●●●●●●●●	<b>QRM Ch16</b>
	W May 5 <sup>th</sup>	<b>DAY #26. FINAL (1 hour)</b> ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ <b>Essay # 10 DUE</b> ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆	

**Course Policies**

- **Unique academic needs:** If you have an academic need or learning disability that should be taken into account in either classroom activities or exams, you must provide me with the proper documentation detailing the accommodations necessary in the first two weeks of the semester.

**Department of Communication Attendance Policy** Attendance is required as a condition of successful completion of all courses in the department of Communication. After missing any class session, a student is responsible for finding out about assignments, due dates, announcements, handouts, and so forth that were covered during the missed session, and for making up any missed work. The student is also responsible for obtaining class notes from a classmate for the session, and for learning the material from that session for any relevant exams or quizzes. The equivalent of 2 weeks of absence from any course will reduce a student's course grade by one full letter grade. Absence from a combined total of 3 weeks of class meetings will result in automatic failure of the course. Thus, if the class meets once a week, 3 missed sessions equals automatic failure. If a course meets twice a week, 6 missed sessions will result in failure of the course, and a combined total of 9 missed class sessions will result in automatic failure of a course that meets 3 times per week. There are no exceptions to this rule. Absences for any reason, including illness, personal crises, athletics or other extra-curricular activities are included in this total. If a student is involved in any activity that might require that student to miss 3 or more weeks of a particular course, then that student should not enroll in the course. Individual faculty members may add additional requirements or stipulations to this policy.

**Department of Communication Policy on Academic Integrity** The department holds the highest standards of academic honesty for Boston College Communication majors. The maintenance of these standards is essential to the basic functioning of the department as an academic community, and makes possible the conduct of fair, meaningful, and worthwhile educational experiences. Because the faculty of this department takes academic honesty so seriously, we remind all students in all Communication courses of the academic integrity statement signed by all students upon matriculation at Boston College. Please re-read the statement carefully. Instances of cheating, plagiarism, dishonesty or collusion will be treated seriously within the department of Communication. Sanctions for such breaches of academic integrity will include failure of the course, ejection from the major, and/or expulsion from Boston College. All cases will be referred to the department chairperson or the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. In order to help ensure honesty in written work submitted as part of the course requirements for courses within the communication department, the department requires that ALL written assignments for ALL department courses be handed in on diskette as well as on paper. The diskettes will routinely be checked for plagiarized material through a professional service that analyzes the content of the work against a broad range of Internet and on-line databases. Written work will not be accepted unless it is accompanied by a diskette version. **Statement on Academic Integrity from the College of Arts and Sciences:** The College of Arts and Sciences expects all students to adhere to the accepted norms of intellectual honesty in their academic work. Any forms of cheating, plagiarism, or dishonesty or collusion in another's dishonesty is a fundamental violation of these norms. CHEATING is the use or attempted use of unauthorized aids in any exam or other academic exercise submitted for evaluation. This includes data falsification; the fabrication of data; deceitful alteration of collected data included in a report; copying from another student's work; unauthorized cooperation in doing assignments or during an examination; the use of purchased essays, term papers, or preparatory research for such papers; submission of the same written work in more than one course without prior written approval from the instructor(s) involved; and dishonesty in requests for either extensions or papers or make-up examinations. PLAGIARISM is the deliberate act of taking the words, ideas, data, illustrative material, or statements of someone else, without full and proper acknowledgment, and presenting them as one's own. COLLUSION is assisting or attempting to assist another student in an act of academic dishonesty. As part of your scholarly development, you must learn how to work cooperatively in a community of scholars and fruitfully utilize the work of others without violating the norms of intellectual honesty. You have a responsibility to learn the parameters of collaboration and the proper forms for quoting, summarizing and paraphrasing. Faculty members who detect any form of academic dishonesty have the responsibility to take appropriate action. The faculty member also has the responsibility to report the incident and penalty to the Department Chairperson and the appropriate Class Dean. The report will remain in your student file until you graduate. If the gravity of the offense seems to warrant it or if the faculty member prefers that another academic authority decide the matter, he or she may refer the case to a Dean. In addition, if the student is unwilling to accept the faculty member's decision, he or she may choose to have the matter adjudicated either by an Associate Dean or by an Administrative Board. The section of the College of Arts and Sciences in the BC Undergraduate Catalogue has further details about this process. Academic integrity is a very important matter. If you have any questions in any of your courses about what is allowed or not allowed, please discuss the matter immediately with the instructor.