Syllabus contents

Montclair State University

School of Communication and Media

Prerequisite(s): CMDA 210. The course provides a survey of investigative methods employed in the fields of communication and media. Students are guided through the research design process and develop critical skills in understanding and evaluating media own projects and practice research methods most appropriate for professionals (interviewing, ethnographic work, focus group and survey research, textual and visual analysis).3 hours seminar.

Zoom ID# 868-3672-6449
password posted in Canvas

Investigative Research Methods
CMST 280 | Spring 2021

This 3-credit course provides majors in the School of Communication and Media with an overview of common communication and media research methods. Students learn a variety of humanistic and social-scientific research methodologies. These include qualitative methods (i.e., textual analyses, interviewing, focus groups) as well as quantitative methods that lend themselves to statistical manipulations (i.e., content analysis, surveys, experiments). Students select a timely topic at the intersection of communication and media studies and investigate it using a variety of research modes and methods over the course of the semester. Students gain knowledge of ethical, moral and social issues in research and ask critical questions about the application of research to inform professional practice. The course is foundational for SCM majors or minors who want to learn how to conduct media research and critically use research data and findings.

This course is offered in Hawk**MIX** mode.

HawkMIX offers a combination of online and face-to-face learning to optimize the design and execution of communication research.
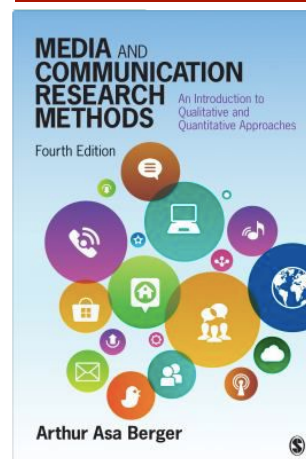
You will attend class sessions in real time via Zoom; complete asynchronous activities through Canvas; and work face-to-face and online in isolated research teams of four (4), as needed and as permitted.

Online sessions occur on Zoom
Mondays and selected Thursdays 11:15-12:30pm

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Note: To preserve remote class sessions as safe, productive, and open spaces for discussion, and to respect & protect the privacy of all course participants, class session in Zoom will not be recorded (by anyone). Any recording, (including screen capture) of excerpts or entire sessions is not allowed (with exception only for DRC accommodations). Sharing course content outside the class or posting recordings in a public space are prohibited.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

- Understand and explain the relationship between theory and research

- Learn the language and techniques of social scientists and media researchers, including the style guidelines of the American Psychological Association (APA).

- Achieve Institutional Review Board (IRB) Certification for working with human subjects.

- Define *research* and its associated purposes, principles, practices, and ethical issues at each phase

- Describe and compare the predominant research methodologies in the intersecting fields of communication and media studies

- Identify the various types of qualitative and quantitative research methods and tools, including their strengths as well as limitations

- Access, analyze, and evaluate scholarly research reports.

- Collaboratively investigate as part of a research team.

- Select a research topic and determine an appropriate theoretical framework, grounding literature, and methods/procedures for investigating research questions;

- Visualize the practical application of research methods in the various subfields and industries represented in the School of Communication and Media.

Required Textbook

Berger, A. A. (2016). *Media and Communication Research Methods: An Introduction to Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* (**4th Ed**). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

You can purchase a user-friendly digital version at http://bookshelf.vitalsource.com.

Required Technologies

Reliable, high-speed internet access.
You will need sufficient bandwidth to participate via audio/video. We will view media texts synchronously through Zoom, which requires up-to-date software and operating system specs. Check the Office of Information Technology web site for details. *Update your Zoom software frequently.*

Respondus Lockdown Browser.
This software is required to take the quizzes within Canvas either using a personal computer or tablet (it doesn't work with smartphones). *Update your software frequently.* For instructions on how to install it and use it on your device, go to:
https://tinyurl.com/lockdownbrowse

Face to face sessions are reserved for research team collaboration, *as public safety allows.*
Location: **University Hall 2031**

You will find your research team members listed in:

Canvas > People > Research Teams

Performance Assessments

QUIZZES | As incentive to complete the assigned reading there are 15 short quizzes (closed-book & closed note). *Respondus Lockdown Browser is required.* Each quiz is administered at the **beginning** of each class session using an access code. I will reveal the answers directly following the quiz as a springboard for class discussion. So, if you are late to class and miss the quiz, you lose the 5 points. There are no make-up quizzes (no exceptions). However, the lowest 5 quiz scores are dropped, which provides you with a safety net. **75 points**

TOPIC PROPOSAL | Each research team will submit a 500-750 word rationale that explains your research subtopic for the semester. **15 points**

LITERATURE REVIEW | Each research team conduct an extensive summative and evaluative review of the existing research on their proposed topic using peer-reviewed journal articles. The submission is in the form of a written report (2500-3000 words) in APA format. This assignment is pre-requisite to crafting research question(s) to investigate. **25 points**

IRB CERTIFICATION | To qualify to work with human subjects, each research team member will complete a self-paced online training program of the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) Program. **15 points**

RESEARCH BRIEFS (2) Working in research teams, you will craft two research briefs—one that proposes an investigation using qualitative research methodology and one using quantitative research methodology. Your team will then explain your proposed research to "peer reviewers" in a 15-minute oral/visual presentation in class. As part of the process, research teams will incorporate peer-review feedback into their final submissions. To ensure equity every student will formally assess and evaluate the contributions of each member of their research team. **50 points**

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE | Each research team will collaboratively construct a single survey questionnaire in Qualtrics as part of their semester-long research investigation of a specific topic. **15 points**

RESEARCH REPORT | Each research team will conduct a mixed-methods study (combining the two research briefs) that will yield preliminary findings for their semester-long investigation. The final report is an integration of the topic proposal, literature review, and survey questionnaire data. **75 points**

photo from the Milgram Experiment

More than fifty years ago, then Yale psychologist Stanley Milgram conducted the infamous experiments about destructive obedience

Did Milgram's experiment demonstrate that humans have a universal propensity to destructive obedience or that they are merely products of their cultural moment?

Half of a century after Milgram probed the nature of destructive obedience to authority, we are faced with the unsettling question: What would citizens do today?

Post a recognizable head shot (of you only) in your Canvas and Zoom profiles.

As a general rule, **you should have your video camera activated during synchronous class sessions.** However, it is acceptable for you to intermittently mute your camera during class, as needed. Beware of falling in the multitasking trap, however (see below).

Be aware of your microphone status during class session. Use mute as the default when you are not speaking.

Strive to non/verbally participate in synchronous class sessions and research team breakout sessions. The collective "we" is what comprises the learning community.

Performance Expectations

All written work should adhere to university standards for writing (see specifics at http://www.montclair.edu/dean-of-students/handbook/writing-standards/). You are responsible for citing/attributing the source of all work (including quotes, videos, images, and logos) that you use as part of your work in this course. Consult the 7th edition of the APA Style Guide on how to produce college-level writing (Go to http://www.apastyle.org).

I expect you to do your own work for this course, work both independently and collaboratively, and give credit for all materials used in your research. As a university student, digital citizen, and a future professional in the workplace, you are responsible for knowing and adhering to the university policies on academic honesty, including citation of all source materials. All students who engage in dishonest acts such as cheating and/or plagiarism will be subject to disciplinary action, which includes failure of the course and possible expulsion from the university. You are solely responsible for understanding what constitutes a violation of academic honesty. Go to: https://www.montclair.edu/policies/student/student-conduct/academic-honesty/

Montclair State University is committed to maintaining an environment that is inclusive and free of discrimination, bullying, or harassment. MSU welcomes persons from all racial, ethnic, social, cultural, and religious backgrounds. Behavior that violates the civil and statutory rights of any individual or group, or interferes with any individual or group's ability to benefit from, or contribute to, the employment, educational, and/or cultural opportunities provided by the University constitutes a violation of University policy and will not be tolerated. **Life is short. Please be kind.**

As MIT neuroscientist Earl Miller explained in an interview with NPR, most people are actually quickly shifting their attention from one task to another when they think they are doing two or three or eight things at once. That constant change of focus makes our brain less functional, not more. Learn more at http://www.digitalresponsibility.org/perils-of-multitasking

Grading Standards

The following evaluation criteria are applied to all oral, written, and digital assignments that comprise the course of study. Major assignments will be accompanied by more detailed assessment rubrics:

A—**Demonstration of superior work.** Work demonstrates deep and detailed understanding of material; is logically developed and academic in tone and approach. Sources used are cited appropriately and in accordance with APA style guidelines. Creativity or special insights are evident, and work is free from spelling, grammatical, and/or formatting errors.

B—**Very good work.** Work demonstrates a clear understanding of the material and provides relevant details that ground theory in practice. Work reflects appropriate tone and approach for college-level work and displays coherent organization, addresses the purpose of the assignment. Work is relatively free from spelling, grammatical, and/or formatting errors.

C—**Satisfactory work.** Work, for the most part, demonstrates understanding of material and provides a few relevant details. Work displays a basic level of organization, mildly addresses the purpose of the assignment, and contains spelling, grammatical, and/or formatting errors.

D—**Unsatisfactory work.** Student work displays a severe lack of understanding of material and provides little or no relevant detail. The work is poorly organized, does not meet the purpose of the assignment, and contains numerous spelling, grammatical, and/or formatting errors.

F—**Work is neither satisfactory nor complete.** Student work displays no understanding of material and provides no detail. The work lacks organization, does not meet the purpose of the assignment, and does not adhere to spelling, grammatical, and/or formatting guidelines.

94-100%= A	84-86%= B	74-76%= C	64-66%= D
90-93%= A-	80-83%= B-	70-73%= C-	60-63%= D-
87-89%= B+	77-79%= C+	67-69%= D+	59% or below= F

Help & Resources

FEELING LOST OR OVERWHELMED?
If you are experiencing stress to the extent that is interfering with your ability to cope with this course and/or normal every day tasks, *please seek help.* At Montclair State University, all counseling services are free, voluntary and confidential. You can call (973) 655-5211 or go to https://www.montclair.edu/msu-cares/

ACCOMMODATING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
It is important for those students with a documented disability to have the appropriate university staff communicate that information to me. This confidential information may afford modification of testing, or other class requirements. For more information see: https://www.montclair.edu/disability-resource-center/about-our-services/ or call (973) 655-5431.

NEED TECHNOLOGY ASSISTANCE?
The Office of Information Technology provides loaner laptops, Wifi cards, and other services for students to be able to complete their coursework. Submit a university Help Desk ticket (helpdesk@montclair.edu).

Course Rhythm

1. Complete the reading in the textbook prior to the date specified. It's a sprint and not a walk. Glean important concepts and move on. Each quiz is 5 simple questions to gauge whether or not you read the chapter.

2. Enter the Zoom classroom Meeting ID **# 868-3672-6449 +** password (listed in Canvas) a few minutes before class begins. Obtain the quiz access code. Log out of Zoom and enter the Canvas quiz through the Respondus Lockdown browser. After submitting the quiz, exit Lockdown and re-enter Zoom. Class "re-Zooms" at 11:25am

3. Class sessions will not be recorded, so if you miss a class obtain notes from someone on your research team. Likewise, share your notes freely.

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Because media businesses rely on strict adherence to deadlines, this course employs a similar deadline standard. Work submitted after the deadline will not be evaluated or counted for course credit. There are no make-up opportunities for missed assignments.

While you are not graded on attendance, you are graded on your individual contributions to your research team. Contributions can occur in a myriad of ways. It is up to your research team to determine how best to work together.

About the Professor

Vanessa E. Greenwood, Ph.D. is a full professor and researcher in the School of Communication & Media at Montclair State University where she has been employed for 19 consecutive years. Dr. Greenwood holds BA and MA degrees in Communication Studies and a PhD in Media Ecology. She is the author of many journal articles, chapters, policy reports, and books at the intersection of communication, technology, and media literacy. Her most recent book is *Navigating Media Literacy: A Pedagogical Tour of Disneyland* (2020, Myers Press). You can find more information about her research at www.montclair.edu/~greenwoodv

Dr. Greenwood is also the founder and director of the COMM+MEDIA Research Collaboratory (collaboration + laboratory) where faculty and students work together to solve complex problems and catalyze positive social change. The C+MRC provides internship opportunities for students in the SCM who have successfully completed Investigative Research Methods. For more information go to www.cmrcollaboratory.org.

Drop-In Office Hours

Virtual (Zoom) Office Hours
Mon & Thurs 1:00-2:30pm (no appt needed)*
Zoom Office ID: **589-624-8622**
Best means of contact:
greenwoodv@montclair.edu
If you cannot make my drop-in hours, you can contact me for an alternate day/time

COMMUNICATION + MEDIA
research collaboratory
collaborate | inquire | innovate | circulate | sustain