CAS 975
INTRODUCTORY
METHODS

TUESDAYS | 3:00 – 5:50 PM
177 Communication Arts & Sceinces

INSTRUCTOR | DR. SALEEM ALHABASH

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	Thursdays, 10 – 11:30 am

The best way to communicate with me outside of classroom time is either by meeting in person (during office hours or scheduled appointments) and through email. I check my email pretty frequently. If you send me an email, expect to receive a response within 48 hours (responses are generally slower over the weekend). In case of emergency or if you have a critical issue that needs to be addressed immediately, feel free to contact me by phone or send an urgent (!) email.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is the introductory course in quantitative and qualitative research methods for the Information and Media doctoral program. The course mainly focuses on understanding the ins and outs of conducting research in the field of media, information, journalism, advertising, and public relations. Specifically, the course will cover different research philosophies and approaches, research ethics, qualitative and quantitative methods, and method triangulation approaches. The course is set up in a way that students, every week of the course, are able to do three things: (1) **learn** something new; (2) **do** something innovative; and (3) **think** critically about research methods. This learn-do-think style will immerse students in learning experiences where they contribute with their experiences to a shared learning environment.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To understand the basic methods of quantitative and qualitative research.
- To critically interpret and evaluate research methods.
- To acquire skills to design, execute, and analyze quantitative and qualitative research methods.
- To familiarize students with the ethical concerns and standards related to the conduct of research in information and media.
- To learn ways to present research.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- **Analytical Thinking:** Students will demonstrate expertise in design and implementation of quantitative and qualitative research. The course will equip students with a critical thinking toolbox for evaluating research in multiple Information and Media sub-disciplines.
- **Cultural Understanding:** Students will show a deep appreciation of the interplay of culture and research methods.
- **Effective Citizenship:** Students will exhibit a deep understanding of the ethical and moral concerns pertinent to the conduct of research. The course will also provide students with skills and appreciation for good citizenry in their respective scholarly disciplines.
- **Effective Communication:** Students will become more effective communicators of research findings.
- **Integrated Reasoning:** Students will apply knowledge gained in this course to their own current and future research projects and, ultimately, their doctoral dissertation projects.

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

My teaching philosophy rests upon helping students become excellent researchers, who not only conduct top quality research, but are also immersed in the scholarly environment of knowing. I believe that education is the sum of instructor-student and student-student interactions. Both the instructor and students are held responsible for making this course a success, and for maximizing their benefits and rewards from it. To this end, I have carefully constructed this course by selecting the latest and seminal readings that will help you understand the basic principles of quantitative and qualitative research. Please know that I do value your opinions and contributions to the course. I want all students to feel comfortable in sharing their opinions. I believe that the topic of the course is inherently interesting, and that particularly in this course, students have a lot to contribute. My aim is to cultivate an atmosphere where we are all courteous, respectful, and thoughtful.

INSTRUCTION METHOD

The course's instruction method incorporates lecturing and discussion, as well as, in-class and out-of-class activities geared toward understanding the topic at hand. Throughout the course I will try my best to offer the most comprehensive explanations using various methods and platforms to ensure you understand the materials and can successfully complete the course and its requirements. Primarily, this course will use Desire 2 Learn (D2L) for course management purposes. Within D2L, students will be able to get materials and content relevant to the course as well as submit their assignments. Each week, students are required to complete a number of readings, engage in classroom discussion, and complete other course activities, including assignments and exams. The course strives to ensure students **learn, do, and think** about issues pertaining to quantitative research methods.

COURSE ACCESS

All course materials will be posted on D2L (www.d2l.msu.edu). In-person attendance is required for this course, except for legitimate reasons (e.g., personal illness, death of an immediate family member, attending a conference, etc.).

D2L support is available by calling 517-432-6200. The staff is very helpful and calls are handled promptly.

ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION POLICY

Students enrolled in this course are required to dedicate time to learning and being assessed. This includes preparing for each class, attending class, participating in the discussions and completing different assignments.

In-class participation is extremely important in a doctoral-level class. As this is one of the introductory courses in our doctoral program, it is important to take this opportunity to situate yourself with the program's culture of idea exchange, creative and critical thinking, as well as scholarly discussion and debate. While no formal attendance will be taken, in-class discussion is factored in the calculation of your final grade.

REQUIRED & RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

Required Textbook:

[BERGER]	Berger, A. A. (2019-2020). *Media and Communication Research* (5th ed.)*.* London, UK: Sage.

[SILVERMAN]	Silverman, D. (2018). *Doing Qualitative Research* (5th ed.). London, UK: Sage.

[WRENCH]	Wrench, J. S., Thomas-Maddox, C., Peck Richmond, V., & McCroskey, J. C. (2019). *Quantitative research methods for communication: A hands-on approach* (4th ed.). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Additional readings will be assigned for most weeks. These readings can be located on D2L, under the "Content" section.

RESEARCH RESOURCES: You should stay abreast of research by reading scholarly and professional journals, such as (NOTE: this list is not exhaustive):

- Communication Monographs
- Communication Research
- Communication, Culture and Critique
- Computers in Human Behavior
- CyberPsych., Behavior, and Social Networking
- Digital Journalism
- Health Communication
- Human Communication Research
- Information, Communication, & Society
- International Communication Gazette
- Journal of Advertising
- Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media
- Journal of Communication
- Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication
- Journal of Health Communication
- Journal of Interactive Advertising
- Journal of Interactive Marketing
- Journal of Marketing
- Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly
- Journalism Studies
- Management Information Systems Quarterly
- Media Psychology
- Newspaper Research Journal
- New Media & Society
- Political Communication
- Public Opinion Quarterly

These journals can be accessed at no additional charge, using your MSU NETID to access online content at www.lib.msu.edu.

EXPECTATIONS

READINGS You are expected to complete all assigned readings at the beginning of each week. Lectures and discussions are intended to complement the readings. Assignments will cover material presented in the lectures as well as in the readings. In other words, everything is fair game!

DEADLINES Students are required to submit their assignments according to the deadlines announced by the instructor. Late submissions are not permitted in any case, unless otherwise approved by the instructor.

INTEGRITY You are expected to submit your own original work throughout the course. This applies to all types of work/assignments. I take academic honesty and integrity **very seriously**. Cheating on an assignment/exam, plagiarizing on an assignment/paper, or any other form of academic dishonesty will, at the least, result in failing the assignment, possibly failing the class, along with proper documentation with MSU's Graduate School. Let me know, as soon as possible, if you have any questions about this.

Originality check will be activated for all written assignments. **TurnItIn** will be used in this course. Please read the following statement from MSU regarding use of this software:

Consistent with MSU's efforts to enhance student learning, foster honesty, and maintain integrity in our academic processes, instructors may use a tool called TurnItIn to compare a student's work with multiple sources. The tool compares each student's work with an extensive database of prior publications and papers, providing links to possible matches and a "similarity score." The tool does not determine whether plagiarism has occurred or not. Instead, the instructor must make a complete assessment and judge the originality of the student's work. All submissions to this course may be checked using this tool.

Students should submit papers to TurnItIn Dropboxes without identifying information included in the paper (e.g., name or student number), the system will automatically show this information to faculty in your course when viewing the submission, but the information will not be retained by TurnItIn.

Student submissions will be retained in the global TurnItIn repository.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

WEEKLY REFLECTION PAPER	Each week, students are required to submit a one-page (12-point font, single-spaced) paper that synthesizes the readings for that week. This is not to be treated like a summary of the readings, but rather as a reflection that *connects the dots* across the readings. Each paper is worth **10 points** for a total of **100 points.** *Note: There are 12 WRPs due in total, yet the highest 10 will be counted for the final grade.*
IN-CLASS PARTICIPATION	Students are expected to participate in each class. Assessment of student class participation is cumulative, therefore, students are encouraged to take this seriously and contribute to the discussion with their opinions, reflections of the readings and lectures, as well as any questions they might have. In-class participation is worth **50 points**.
FINAL PAPER	Each student is required to submit a 20-25-page proposal for a quantitative or a qualitative research study. Topics should be relevant to the student's interests, however selection of the topic should be done in consultation with the instructor. The final project will be submitted in five (5) installments (chunks): (1) paper proposal; (2) annotated bibliography; (3) literature review; (4) methods; and (5) final submission. The literature review and methods sections will be subject to peer-review by other students in the class. In the final submission, each student is expected to show how the respective sections were improved as a function of peer-review using a formal summary of revisions letter. Each student is also required to give an oral presentation of his/her final paper at the end of the semester. More details will be provided later on in the semester. The final project is worth **200 points**.
PEER-REVIEW	Each student will be required to provide a written review of the literature review and method sections for 2 other students in the class. The peer-review is worth **50 points**.

GRADES

GRADING RUBRIC	ITEM	POINTS	%
	Weekly Reflection Paper	**100 pts.**	**25%**
	In-Class Participation	**50 pts.**	**12.5%**
	Final Project	**200 pts.**	**50%**
	Peer-Review	**50 pts.**	**12.5%**
	TOTAL	**400 pts.**	**100%**

GRADING SCALE						
90% – 100%	=	**4.0**		70% – 74.9%	=	**2.0**
85% – 89.9%	=	**3.5**		65% – 69.9%	=	**1.5**
80% – 84.9%	=	**3.0**		60% – 64.9%	=	**1.0**
75% – 79.9%	=	**2.5**		Below 60%	=	**0.0**

EVALUATION CRITERIA — I will use the following criteria in grading your assignments and the final project:

EXCELLENT — The work is rigorous, creative, and shows a thorough knowledge of the materials. An excellent piece of work written in a clear and concise manner. Few, if any, errors of fact or writing.

GOOD — The work has few errors and shows a good effort at comprehending the material. Clear, understandable writing with some care and expression of knowledge. Discussion needs more clarity, more development and/or more examples. The work may be missing some of argumentation subtleties.

FAIR — An adequate but superficial completion of the assignment. Few examples used or discussion or argument is unsubstantiated. Sources are poorly cited, many errors of fact, inadequate writing and grammar.

FAILURE — Assignment not completed or turned in extremely late.

COURSE POLICIES

● ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Along with certain rights, students also have the responsibility to behave honorably in an academic environment. The MSU Code of Student Conduct states that it is a violation to engage in academic dishonesty, plagiarism, cheating or misuse of academic resources. Personal integrity, professional attitude and conduct, and a mutual respect for diversity of viewpoints and values are expected in this class. Any violations of academic integrity will be penalized with a failing grade on the assignment and/or the entire course. All violations will be reported to MSU's Graduate School.

● READING ASSIGNMENTS

You're expected to thoroughly complete all reading assignments **before each weekly class meeting**. Some of this material might be "dry," but it is important that you complete the assigned readings and be prepared to participate in class discussions.

● CLASS & COMMUNITY NORMS

Please be courteous to the instructor and fellow students throughout the different interactions and discussions. You are expected to act professionally throughout the course.

● STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities should contact OPHS (Disability Resource Center), 120 Bessey Hall or by phone 353-9462 (voice) or 355-1293 (TTY) for evaluation of need for reasonable accommodation, if any. Students in possession of a RCPD VISA should provide a copy to the instructor by the end of the first week of classes to ensure appropriate accommodations can be made.

● COMMUNICATION OF CLASS CHANGES

In case of any unforeseen changes that could affect the class schedule, you will be notified through your MSU email account. This class will use D2L software management system (www.d2l.msu.edu) for communication purposes. It is your responsibility to check your email and the D2L site for the latest information.

● FEEDBACK FOR YOUR INSTRUCTOR

Michigan State University takes seriously the opinion of students in the evaluation of the effectiveness of instruction, and has implemented the SIRS (Student Instructional Rating System) process to gather student feedback. This course utilizes the "online SIRS" system. You will receive an email sometime during the last two weeks of class asking you to fill out the SIRS online form at your convenience. Please note the final grade for this course will not be accessible on STUINFO for seven days following the University grade submission deadline published by the Office of the Registrar unless the SIRS online form has been filled out. You will have the option in the online SIRS form to decline to participate in the evaluation of the course – we hope, however, that you will be willing to give us your frank and constructive feedback so that we may instruct students even better in the future.

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

This is a tentative schedule of the course. The course outline, reading assignments and requirements are subject to change at the discretion of the instructor. *More readings for certain weeks will be added to the syllabus. Students will be notified via D2L about these changes.*

WEEK 1 *September 3*	PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE
FOCUS	*In addition to introducing the course, its requirements, and encouraging students to pick a topic for their final paper, the bulk of the week's discussions will primarily focus on what research is and how we conduct research (**methods of knowing**).*
READINGS	● [WRENCH] Chapters 1: An Introduction to Communication Research; and 2: Empirical Research ● Chaffee, S. H. & Berger, C. R. (1987). What communication scientists do. In C. R. Berger & S. H. Chaffee (Eds.), *Handbook of Communication Science* (pp. 99-122). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
ASSIGNMENTS	● **None.**

WEEK 2 *September 10*	WHY DO RESEARCH?!
FOCUS	*This week provides an introduction of qualitative research. Specifically, we will discuss why and when to use qualitative methods*
READINGS	● [Berger] Chapters 1: What is Research? and 2: Research Process. ● [Silverman] Chapters 2: What you can (and can't) do with qualitative research; and 7: Using Theories. ● Chaffee, S. H. (1991). *Explication.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
ASSIGNMENTS	● **Reflection due by 3 pm EST on Tuesday, September 10, 2019.**

WEEK 3 *September 17*	RESEARCH CONCEPTS & ETHICS
FOCUS	*This week focuses on the **elements of social scientific research**: how to move a research idea from the theoretical/conceptual level to the operational level. To do so, the week will cover **conceptual definitions**, **relationships** among concepts, **variables** and **measurement**. The week will also highlight major **ethical considerations** and concerns dealing with social scientific research.*
READINGS	● [WRENCH] Chapters 3: Research Ethics; 6: Variable; & 7: Measurement ● [Silverman] Chapter 4: Ethical Research.
ASSIGNMENTS	● **Reflection due by 3 pm EST on Tuesday, September 17, 2019.** ● **IRB Certification. Submit screenshot of IRB certification by 3 p.m. EST on Tuesday, September 17, 2019 to D2L DropBox.** ● **FP 1 [Proposal] due by 3 p.m. EST on Tuesday, September 17, 2019.**

WEEK 4 *September 24*	**HYPOTHESES & RESEARCH QUESTIONS**
FOCUS	*Moving ideas to research requires in-depth synthesis of previous theories, concepts and empirical evidence that are then molded into hypotheses and/or research questions. This week focuses on the **philosophy of formulating hypotheses and research questions** as well as on the issues pertaining **testing hypotheses.***
READINGS	● [Silverman] Chapter 8: Formulating a research question. ● [WRENCH] Chapter 13: Hypothesis Testing. ● Cohen, J. (1994). The earth is round (p<.05). *American Psychologist, 49*(12), 997-1003.
ASSIGNMENTS	● **Reflection due by 3 pm EST on Tuesday, September 24, 2019.**

WEEK 5 *October 1*	**SAMPLES, SAMPLING, & POWER**
FOCUS	*One of the most frequently asked questions by graduate students in their early research careers is "how many participants do I need?" The choice of a sample and sample size is complex and has significant ramifications to inferences you draw from your findings. This week will primarily focus on the logic of sampling and choice of sample, as well as discuss issues related to power and its pivotal role in estimating sample size.*
READINGS	● [WRENCH] Chapter 12: Sampling Methods. ● [SILVERMAN] Chapter 13: How Many Cases Do You Need? ● Cohen, J. (1992). A power primer. *Psychological Bulletin, 112*(1), 155-159. ● O'Keefe, D. J. (2010). Brief report: Post hoc power, observed power, a priori power, retrospective power, prospective power, achieved power: Sorting out appropriate uses of statistical power analysis. *Communication Methods and Measures, 1*(4), 291-299. ● Van Voohris, C. R. W. & Morgan, B. L. (2007). Understanding power and rules of thumb for determining sample sizes. *Tutorial in Quantitative Methods for Psychology, 3*(2), 43-50.
ASSIGNMENTS	● **Reflection due by 3 pm EST on Tuesday, October 1, 2019.**

WEEK 6 *October 8*	**INTERNAL & EXTERNAL VALIDITY**
FOCUS	*In this week, we will discuss issues related to internal and external validity as they pertain to research design, sampling, and extraneous factors that could influence validity and reliability.*
READINGS	● [WRENCH] Chapter 8: Reliability and Validity. ● [SILVERMAN] Chapter 17: Quality in Qualitative Research; Chapter 18: Evaluating Qualitative Research ● Basil, M. D., Brown, W. J., & Bocarnea, M. C. (2002). Differences in univariate values versus multivariate relationships. *Human Communication Research, 28*(4), 501-514. ● Lang, A. (1996). Standpoint: The logic of using inferential statistics with experimental data from nonprobability samples: Inspired by Cooper, Dupagne, Potter, and Sparks. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media, 40*(3), 422-430. ● Jeong, M., Zhang, D., Morgan, J. C., Ross, J. C., Osman, A., Boynton, M. H., Mendel, J. R., & Brewer, N. T. (2018). Similarities and differences in tobacco control researching findings from convenience and probability samples. *Annals of Behavioral Medicine,* DOI: 10.1093/abm/kay059
ASSIGNMENTS	● **Reflection due by 3 pm EST on Tuesday, October 8, 2019.** ● **FP2 [Annotated Bibliography] due by 3 pm EST on Tuesday, October 8, 2019.**

WEEK 7 *October 15*	**CONTENT ANALYSIS**
FOCUS	*In this week, we will discuss content analysis with close attention to operationalization and measurement of content analysis variables.*
READINGS	● [WRENCH] Chapter 10: Content Analysis ● [Berger] Chapter 12: Content Analysis ● Chapters 3 & 4 from: Riffe, D., Lacy, S., & Fico, F. (2014). *Analyzing media messages: Using quantitative content analysis in research* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge. Freely available via MSU library: http://catalog.lib.msu.edu/search~S39?/cP93/cp+++93/-3%2C-1%2C0%2CB/frameset&FF=cp+++93+r54+2014&2%2C%2C2
ASSIGNMENTS	● **Reflection due by 3 pm EST on Tuesday, October 15, 2019.**

WEEK 8 *October 22*	**TEXTUAL ANALYSIS & HISTORICAL RESEARCH**
FOCUS	*This week will focus on various types of textual analysis, including semiotic, rhetorical, ideological criticism, psychoanalytic criticism, and discourse analysis.*
READINGS	● [Berger] Chapters 3: Semiotic Analysis; 4: Rhetorical Analysis; 5: Ideological Criticism; 6: Psychoanalytic Criticism; and 7: Discourse Analysis; Chapter 9: Historical Research
ASSIGNMENTS	● **Reflection due by 3 pm EST on Tuesday, October 22, 2019.**

WEEK 9 October 29	SURVEYS
FOCUS	*This is the first is dedicated to learning about surveys. This week, we will focus on understanding how to design parsimonious and efficient surveys and collect survey data.*
READINGS	● [WRENCH] Chapter 9: Survey research ● [Berger] Chapter 13: Surveys ● Converse, J. M. & Presser, S. (1986). *Quantitative applications in the social sciences: Survey questions.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Ltd. Retrieved from: http://methods.sagepub.com.proxy1.cl.msu.edu/book/survey-questions
ASSIGNMENTS	● **Reflection due by 3 pm EST on Tuesday, October 29, 2019.** ● **FP3 [Lit. Review] due by 3 pm EST on Tuesday, October 29, 2019**

WEEK 10 November 5	INTERVIEWS
FOCUS	*The focus this week is on conducting interviews, from research question to write-up.*
READINGS	● [BERGER] Chapter 8: Interviews ● [SILVERMAN] Chapter 14: Collecting Your Data
ASSIGNMENTS	● **Reflection due by 3 pm EST on Tuesday, November 5, 2019.** ● **Peer Review 1 due by 3 pm EST on Tuesday, November 5, 2019.**

WEEK 11 November 12	RESEARCH APPLICATIONS 1
FOCUS	*Bringing different research approaches to the study of information and media.*
READINGS	● TBD
ASSIGNMENTS	● **Reflection due by 3 pm EST on Tuesday, November 12, 2019.** ● **FP4 [Method] due by 3 pm EST on Tuesday, November 12, 2019. **

WEEK 12 November 19	EXPERIMENTS
FOCUS	*This week is dedicated to learning about experiments. We will discuss different experimental designs, consideration for designing clear and parsimonious experiments, as well as ensuring clear manipulation of independent variables.*
READINGS	● [WRENCH] Chapter 11 ● [BERGER] Chapter 14: Experimental Design ● Thorson, E. Wicks, R., & Leshner, G. (2012). Experimental methodology in journalism and mass communication research. *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly, 89*(1), 112-124.
ASSIGNMENTS	● **Reflection due by 3 pm EST on Tuesday, November 19, 2019.** ● **Peer Review 2 due by 3 pm EST on Tuesday, November 19, 2019.**

WEEK 13 *November 26*	ETHNOGRAPHY, OBSERVATION, & NOVEL APPROACHES
FOCUS	*This week focuses on ethnomethodological research and participant observation. Not only will we talk about conducting such studies, but we will also talk about the sensitivity related to validity of findings.*
READINGS	● [BERGER] Chapters 10: Ethnomethodological Research; 11: Participant Observation ● [WRENCH] Chapter 12 ● Shah, D. V., Capella, J. N., & Neuman, W. R. (2015). Big data, digital media, and computational social science. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 659,* 6-13. Retrieved from: http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0002716215572084 ● Hargittai, E. (2015). Is bigger always better? Potential biases of big data derived from social network sites. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 659,* 63-76. ● Wells, C. & Thorson, K. (2017). Combining big data and survey techniques to model effects of political content flows in Facebook. *Social Science Computer Review, 35*(1), 33-52.
ASSIGNMENTS	● **Reflection due by 3 pm EST on Tuesday, November 26, 2019.**

WEEK 14 *December 3*	RESEARCH APPLICATIONS 2
FOCUS	*Bringing different research approaches to the study of information and media.*
READINGS	● TBD
ASSIGNMENTS	● **Reflection due by 3 pm EST on Tuesday, November 26, 2019.**

WEEK 15 *December 11*	FINAL PAPER PRESENTATIONS
FOCUS	*Students will present their final papers to the class.*
READINGS	● None
ASSIGNMENTS	● **Final Paper Presentations: slides submitted to D2L by 10 a.m. EST on Wednesday, December 11, 2019.** ● **FP 5 [Final Paper] due by 10 a.m. EST on Wednesday, December, 11, 2019.**