INTRODUCTION TO
QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

COM 803-002 (ADV, JRN, TC 803)
WEDNESDAYS, 3:00 – 5:50 PM in C001 Wilson Hall

INSTRUCTOR | DR. SALEEM ALHABASH

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	(517) 432-2178
	sa@msu.edu
	Wednesdays, 10:00 – 11:30 a.m. OR by appointment

The best way to communicate with me is through email. I check my email pretty frequently. If you send me an email, expect to receive a response within 48 hours. 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. In addition, I'd be more than happy to set-up a time to talk by phone, zoom, or in person.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to introduce graduate students to research methods in social science, in general, with an emphasis on quantitative research methods, as applied to topics in communication (including, but not limited to, mass communication, media, telecommunication, advertising, and public relations). It is intended to be an introduction to the *systematic* study of communication. We will examine research used by communication and media practitioners as well as produced by leading scholars in the different sub-fields. This course serves as baseline preparation for your continuing work in the graduate program by providing you with rigorous intellectual experience in how studies are conducted, how to assess their validity and reliability, issues regarding appropriate use of numbers and statistics, and their relationship to the parts of the world they attempt to explain. This is not a statistics course, but a basic knowledge of inferential statistics will help you. I will review some basic inferential statistics, but mostly, we will review several statistical analyses matched to research designs and learn to use SPSS. We will discuss bivariate and multivariate analytic techniques, with the emphasis on the kinds of data needed to use the technique and how to interpret results output.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course aims to achieve the following objectives:

- To introduce you to common research methods of social science that are applied to theory and practice of communication, mass communication, telecommunication, advertising, and public relations, among others, through *formulation* of questions, *development* of methods that can provide data relevant to the questions, and *interpretation* of the data as answers to the questions.
- To teach you how to read, understand, critique, and write about communication research.
- To introduce you to the uses of statistics.
- To encourage you to think *analytically* about theory and research and to integrate that analysis with practical, professional work.

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

My teaching philosophy rests upon helping students in becoming excellent social scientists. 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 the course by selecting the appropriate readings related to the topic of the course, while limiting the reading load to a minimum. 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 – Quantitative Research Methods – 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.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

[W & D]	Roger D. Wimmer & Joseph R. Dominick (2013). *Mass Media Research.* Boston, MA: Wadsworth.
[Cronk]	Brian C. Cronk (2012). *How to Use SPSS Statistics: A Step-By-Step Guide to Analysis and Interpretation.* Glendale, CA: Pyrczak Publishing.
SPSS	Students are responsible for acquiring access to the latest version of SPSS.

It is advised to buy the exact editions noted here. If you decide to use an earlier edition, you are responsible to ensure that you are reading the correct chapters/pages, as some of the contents might have changed from edition to edition.

You should stay abreast of research in your interest area by reading appropriate scholarly and professional journals, such as: *Communication Research, Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly, Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media, Political Communication, Public Opinion Quarterly, Journal of Communication, Journal of Advertising, Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, New Media & Society, Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking, Media Psychology, Public Relations Review, Journal of Marketing, Journal of Consumer Psychology, among others.*

EXPECTATIONS

READINGS

You are expected to complete all assigned readings at the beginning of each week. Lectures and discussions are intended to complement reading assignments and examinations will cover material presented in the lectures as well as in the readings. In other words, everything is fair game! Additionally, we will have unannounced quizzes throughout the semester, and a large part of the questions will be related to the readings. This is why it is necessary to read before class.

ATTENDANCE

Students are expected to attend every class, unless they cannot do so for a legitimate reason (i.e., illness or pre-arranged/pre-approved absence). In case you decide not to come to class, please inform me in advance. You are expected to come to class on time. Entering the class late is disrespectful to the instructor and other students, so please be punctual. This is especially important since some in-class activities are unannounced and might take place at the beginning, middle, or end of class.

DEADLINES

Students are required to submit their assignments according to the deadlines announced by the instructor. In case a student does not submit his/her work on time, 10% will be taken off the top for each late day.

INTEGRITY

You are expected to submit your own original work throughout the course. This applies to exams, assignments and papers. 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

EXAMS	There will be **two (2)** exams in this course. Exams will comprise of multiple choice and essay questions. They will be administered in class in the middle and end of semester (check schedule for dates). Each exam is worth **100 points.**
ASSIGNMENTS	There will be **four (4)** assignments throughout the semester. Examples of assignments include critiquing a scholarly article, designing a study, and running and reporting data analyses. Each assignment is worth **20 points** (except for Assignment #4, which is worth **40 points)**
QUIZZES	Throughout the semester, there will be a number of unannounced quizzes, usually about the week's readings and/or the lecture. This is why it's important to come prepared every single class.
FINAL PROJECT	You will be asked to work on a 15-page research proposal in groups of 3-4 students. The proposal will be on a topic of your choice in consultation with me. You must discuss your topic with me during the first three weeks of the semester. Although the paper must include at least a summary review of pertinent literature, identification of applicable theories and a clear statement of the value of the study, the primary emphasis will be on research design, methods, and data analyses. Details about the paper will be forthcoming. The final project is worth **100 points (+30 points for presentation)**
PARTICIPATION	You are expected to participate in the in-class weekly discussions by asking and answering questions, providing a summary of the week's reading, and taking part in in-class activities. Participation is worth **20 points.**
RESEARCH PARTICIPATION	Throughout this semester, you are **required** to participate in research as part of your grade in [course name]. Compulsory research participation is worth 4% or 20 points in this course. To earn these points, you are required to complete 4 hours of research. You may do this one of two ways (or though a combination of options A and B below). **Option A:** You may sign-up for studies using the SONA system (https://msucas.sona-systems.com). The SONA system allows you to see ads for special events and for studies that require research participants, view available time slots, and select a time slot that best suits your schedule. Researchers will also use the SONA system to award you credit in exchange for participation. Research credits are awarded on the basis of how long each study takes. One-hour studies earn you 1 SONA credit (which is equal to 1 % or 5 points in this class). Half hour studies earn you half a SONA credit. Lab studies will reward you with an additional .25 SONA credit for travel to the lab. Please note that you cannot complete more than 75% of this requirement using online surveys. 25% of this requirement needs to be fulfilled by attending lab studies or guest speaker events. Option A SONA studies close on **December 1, 2019** this semester and no additional research opportunities will be available after that date. *Use of the SONA system assumes you will act responsibly and only sign up for events/studies you plan to attend or complete. If you repeatedly fail to show up for events, your account will be restricted until next semester. The "3 strikes and you're out" rule means that when you fail to show up to an event/study or*

complete an online survey that you chose to sign up for, then your account will be limited and you will see far fewer ads (and will likely have trouble completing the credits for this course). You can avoid having your account restricted by only signing up to studies/events that you plan to attend/complete. If you find that you can no longer attend an event or complete a study, you must cancel your sign up. If it is too late to cancel, please contact the researcher and explain your absence within 24hrs.

Option B: If you do not wish to participate in the studies advertised on the SONA system, please contact the instructor regarding alternative research assignments. You may complete alternative written assignments to earn the required research credit in this course. These alternative assignments are valued and credited in the same manner as studies advertised on SONA. Specifically, your instructor will award one credit (which is equal to 1% or 5 points in this class) for what s/he believes constitutes work that would take one hour of your time to complete. Please be aware that this option closes **November 21, 2019** this semester and no additional opportunities will be available after that date.

GRADES

GRADING RUBRIC	ITEM	POINTS	%
	Exams [2 exams x 100 pts.]	**200 pts.**	**40%**
	Assignments	**100 pts.**	**20%**
	Quizzes	**30 pts.**	**6%**
	Final Project [100 project + 30 present.]	**130 pts.**	**26%**
	Participation	**20 pts.**	**4%**
	Research participation	**20 pts.**	**4%**
	TOTAL	**500 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, but 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 the subtleties of the argument.
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 a misuse of academic resources. Personal integrity, professional attitude and conduct, and a mutual respect for a 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 ASSIGNMENT

You're expected to thoroughly complete all reading assignment **at the beginning of each week**. Some of this material might be "dry," but it is important that you complete the assigned readings and be prepared to participate in online discussions.

● CLASSROOM NORMS

Please be courteous to the instructor and fellow students throughout the different online interactions and discussion. You are expected to act professionally throughout the course. In addition, you need to illustrate collegial and collaborative spirit while working on the final group project.

● 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.

● COMMUNICATION OF CLASS CHANGES

In the unusual event that weekly lectures are delayed, you will be notified through your MSU email account. This class will use Desire2Learn (D2L) software management system (d2l.msu.edu) for communication purposes. It is your responsibility to check your email, the D2L site for the latest information.

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, which is why it is important to check your email regularly and ask when in doubt.

WEEK 1 *September 4, 2019*	**Course Introduction, Scientific Inquiry, & Theorizing**
READINGS	● W & D, Chs. 1
ASSIGNMENT	● None

WEEK 2 *September 11, 2019*	**Elements of Research, and Research Ethics**
READINGS	● W & D, Chs. 2, 3 ● Cronk 8.2
ASSIGNMENT	● None

WEEK 3 *September 18, 2019*	**Sampling & Sampling Theory**
READINGS	● W & D, Ch. 4
ASSIGNMENT	● **IRB Certification** due at the beginning of class (hard and soft copies) ● **Assignment #1** due at the beginning of class (hard and soft copies)

WEEK 4 *September 25, 2019*	**Content Analysis**
READINGS	● W & D, Ch. 6
ASSIGNMENT	● None

WEEK 5 *October 2, 2019*	**Survey Research**
READINGS	● W & D, Ch. 7
ASSIGNMENT	● None

WEEK 6 *October 9, 2019*	**Experimental Research**
READINGS	● W & D, Ch. 9
ASSIGNMENT	● **Assignment #2** due at the beginning of class (soft copies via D2L, hard copies in mailbox – CAS 309)

WEEK 7 *October 16, 2019*	**Hypothesis Testing & Applied Research**
READINGS	● W & D, Chs. 11, 13-16
ASSIGNMENT	● **Final Project Proposal** due at the beginning of class (hard and soft copies)

WEEK 8 *October 23, 2019*	**Mid-Term Exam**
READINGS	● No readings
ASSIGNMENT	● None

WEEK 9 *October 30, 2019*	**Introduction to Data Analysis, Descriptive Statistics, & Non-Parametric Statistics**
READINGS	● W & D, Chs. 10 (full chapter), 12 (pp. 311-319) ● Cronk, Chs. 1-3, 7.1, 7.2
ASSIGNMENT	● None

WEEK 10 *November 6, 2019*	**Correlation**
READINGS	● W & D, Ch. 12 (pp. 326-331) ● Cronk, Ch. 5.1, 5.2
ASSIGNMENT	● None

WEEK 11 *November 13, 2019*	**Simple Linear Regression & Multiple Linear Regression**
READINGS	● W & D, Ch. 12 (pp. 331-337) ● Cronk, Chs. 5.3, 5.4
ASSIGNMENT	● None

WEEK 12 *November 20, 2019*	**T-tests**
READINGS	● W & D, Ch. 12 (pp. 319-322) ● Cronk, Chs. 6.2, 6.3, 6.4
ASSIGNMENT	● **Assignment #3** due at the beginning of class (hard and soft copies)

WEEK 13 *November 27, 2019*	**Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)**
READINGS	● W & D, Ch. 12 (pp. 322-326) ● Cronk, Chs. 6.5, 6.6, 6.7, 6.8
ASSIGNMENT	● None

WEEK 15 *December 4, 2019*	**Final Project Presentations**
READINGS	● No readings
ASSIGNMENT	● **Assignment #4** due at the beginning of class (hard and soft copies) ● **Final Project** due at the beginning of class (hard and soft copies) ● **Final Project Presentations** during class

WEEK 16 *December 13, 2019*	**Final Exam**
READINGS	● No readings
ASSIGNMENT	● Thursday, December 13, 2018 @ 12:45 – 2:45 pm EST in C001 Wilson Hall