
COMMUNICATION THEORY & RESEARCH METH. in Spring 2019 (CM2051B)

Course Code	CM2051B	Professor(s)	Youna Kim
Prerequisites	None	Office Number	G-304
Class Schedule	TF: 13:45-15:05 in G-207	Office Hours	Meeting by appointment
Credits	4	Email	ykim@aup.edu
Semester	Spring 2019	Office Tel. Ext.	824

Course Description

This course explores research methods commonly used in the social sciences in general and in media and communications in particular. It will provide students with an understanding of research design and the issues involved in collecting, analyzing and interpreting data. It will equip students to design and conduct their own research, specializing in at least one specific research method relevant to their interests. Students will be encouraged to critically evaluate others' research within their field of study. This course expects students to read widely and to integrate theory and data, thereby increasing their understanding of the role of social research in the field of media and communications.

Course Learning Outcomes

Understand the relationship between theory and research methods in the study of communication as a social science
Master the concepts and technical vocabulary of communication theory and communication research, and be able to use this language appropriately
Outline the major research methods used in research in media and communications and issues relevant to their use
Identify appropriate method(s) for researching specific problems.
Design and conduct empirical studies using method(s) appropriate to the task
Interpret and critically evaluate research studies in media and communications.
Assess the ethical choices of researchers in conducting and presenting research;

General Education

Course Outline

No textbook is required.

All reading materials will be circulated to students.

Please see the course outline below.

Also see the bibliography at the end of this syllabus.

Week 1 What is research?

No reading required for this first week orientation.

Week 2 Critical thinking / Formulating a research question

- (1) Bell Hooks, Cultural Criticism and Transformation (video)
- (2) Stuart Hall, Race, the Floating Signifier (video)
- (3) C. Wright Mills, Sociological Imagination (Chapter 1 The Promise)
- (4) Judith Shapiro, From Sociological Illiteracy to Sociological Imagination

Week 3 Interviewing / Focus group

- (1) Ann Oakley, Interviewing Women
- (2) Jenny Kitzinger, Qualitative Research: Introducing Focus Group

Further reading (optional):

Youna Kim, The Body, TV Talk and Emotion: Methodological Reflections

Pierre Bourdieu, Weight of the World: Social Suffering in Contemporary Society

Norman K. Denzin, The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research

David Morgan, Rethinking the Focus Group in Media and Communications Research

Week 4 Ethnography / Participant observation

(1) Debra Spitulnik, Anthropology and Mass Media

OR Judith Stacey, Can There be a Feminist Ethnography?

(2) Paul Atkinson, Ethnography and Participant Observation

Further reading (optional):

Paul Willis, Learning to Labor: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs

Youna Kim, Women, Television and Everyday Life in Korea: Journeys of Hope

George Marcus, Ethnography In/Of the World System: The Emergence of Multi-Sited Ethnography

Tomoko Kanayama, Ethnographic Research on the Experience of Japanese Elderly People Online

Thomas Lindlof, When Media Use Can't be Observed: Some Problems and Tactics of Collaborative Audience Research

Week 5 Cross-Cultural Comparative Research

Sonia Livingstone, On the Challenges of Cross-National Comparative Media Research

Further reading (optional):

T. Liebes and E. Katz, The Export of Meaning: Cross-Cultural Readings of 'Dallas'

Ki-Taek Chun, Extreme Response Style in Cross-Cultural Research

Mark Easterby-Smith, Cross-Cultural Collaborative Research: Toward Reflexivity

Week 6 Doing Cultural Studies

Paul Du Gay, Doing Cultural Studies: The Story of the Sony Walkman

Further reading (optional):

Richard Johnson, What is Cultural Studies Anyway?

Terry Threadgold, Cultural Studies, Critical Theory and Critical Discourse Analysis

Week 7 Analysis and theorization

(1) James Clifford, Partial Truths

(2) Pertti Alasuutari, Theorizing in Qualitative Research: A Cultural Studies Perspective

Week 8 Visual research

David Gauntlett, Using New Creative Visual Research Methods to Understand the Place of Popular Media in People's Lives

Week 9 Internet research

Steven Schneider, The Web as an Object of Study

Further reading (optional):

John Newhagen, Why Communication Researchers Should Study the Internet: A Dialogue

Sonia Livingstone, Children's Use of the Internet: Reflections on the Emerging Research Agenda

Laura Garton, Studying Online Social Networks

David Gefen, Gender Differences in the Reception and Use of E-Mail

Week 10 Survey

Ross Coomber, Using the Internet for Survey Research

Further reading (optional):

Michael Burton, Cross-Cultural Surveys Today

Timothy Johnson, Approaches to Equivalence in Cross-Cultural and Cross-National Survey Research

A. Aldridge and K. Levine, Surveying the Social World: Principles and Practice in Survey Research

Week 11 and Week 12 Student Presentation

Details TBA

Week 13 and Week 14 Revision Seminar

Details TBA

Textbooks

This course doesn't have any textbook.

Attendance Policy

Attendance is highly recommended.

Please note: Your participation (development of your critical thinking) in the classroom is integral to the course and its evaluation.

Students studying at The American University of Paris are expected to attend ALL scheduled classes, and in case of absence, should contact their professors to explain the situation. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of any specific attendance policy that a faculty member might have set in the course syllabus. The French Department, for example, has its own

attendance policy, and students are responsible for compliance. Academic Affairs will excuse an absence for students' participation in study trips related to their courses.

Attendance at all exams is mandatory.

IN ALL CASES OF MISSED COURSE MEETINGS, THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR COMMUNICATION WITH THE PROFESSOR, AND FOR ARRANGING TO MAKE UP MISSED WORK, RESTS SOLELY WITH THE STUDENT.

Whether an absence is excused or not is ALWAYS up to the discretion of the professor or the department. Unexcused absences can result in a low or failing participation grade. In the case of excessive absences, it is up to the professor or the department to decide if the student will receive an "F" for the course. An instructor may recommend that a student withdraw, if absences have made it impossible to continue in the course at a satisfactory level.

Students must be mindful of this policy when making their travel arrangements, and especially during the Drop/Add and Exam Periods.

Grading Policy

Read critically, think critically and write critically

Two review essays, total 2000 words (before the mid-term, deadline Week 5/6) 20%

Based on reading materials and seminar discussions, students will be asked to engage with essay writing. The review essays are intended to train you to read the text critically. You will be given 2 articles before the mid-term and asked to write: (1) What are the main arguments of the articles? (2) What do you think about the articles, their strengths and weaknesses? Assessment will focus on (1) Clarity of expression, (2) Imaginativeness, (3) Critical appraisal, (4) Depth of interpretation. AND feedback, etiquette (e.g. no chat, no phone text check, while others present). Specific guide for writing and feedback will be given during the Friday seminars. Students will first learn and practice each element above; and then move on to combine some of the elements; and finally, integrate all the elements into a critical paper/essay.

Response papers, total 3000 words (every week, from Week 1 to Week 10) 20%

The purpose of the response papers is to encourage you to read closely the assigned materials before coming to the classroom. You will be asked to outline the key points of the materials and open up the seminar discussion based on that writing.

Presentation on the final research paper, and feedback / reflection (from Week 11) 10%

The following content should be highlighted in your presentation on the final research paper. Please see the specific description below: (1) Background, (2) Research question, (3) Rationale and Method, (4) Analysis and findings, (5) Discussion. After your presentation, you will be given detailed feedback from the professor, and you will be asked to write and submit the feedback together with your reflection on the feedback.

Final research paper, 4000 words (deadline Week 11 Tuesday) 50%

The assignment will normally contain the following sections, although they may be adapted as appropriate to the specific research conducted. The word limit is 4000 words, excluding bibliography and appendices.

Abstract (approx. 100 words)

This should summarize the main aim, method and findings of the report.

Background (approx. 600 words)

This should provide a background for the topic, including a justification for the topic or issue chosen and the concepts used, citing relevant theoretical or other sources where appropriate. The purpose is to address the implicit questions: why do this piece of research, why do it now, how will it relate to what has been done before?

Research question (approx. 50 words)

This should be a clear statement of the research question(s) to be explored in your report. It should be a specific and 'answerable' question, appropriate to the methods employed and data to be collected.

Rationale for the method used (approx. 600 words)

This should present a justification for selection of the method used to address the research question, citing relevant methodology sources where appropriate. This should acknowledge known advantages and disadvantages for the method and consider how these may affect your report, whether positively or negatively.

Method (approx. 600 words)

This section should provide a sufficiently detailed account of the decisions taken and procedure followed. It should explain how you have operationalized the research question and so how you

have generated the findings obtained. The purpose is to ensure accountability, so that someone else reading the report has sufficient information to replicate the process or to identify its strengths and weaknesses. Depending on research question and the method selected, this section may be divided into subsections (for example, sampling, recruiting, questions of access, designing interview schedule, ethics and consent, etc), following the narrative of the research.

Analysis and findings (approx 800 words)

This section should describe any decisions and procedures for analysis of the data or materials. It should provide a brief outline of the main or key findings. This section should demonstrate the development of a detailed analysis. .

Discussion (approx. 800 words)

This should integrate the background, research question and analysis sections. The purpose is to discuss the findings by relating them back to the research question in particular, and to related findings or issues in the field of investigation more generally. The section should also include a self-critical assessment of the advantages and disadvantages of research decisions taken and of any successes or flaws in the implementation of the project.

Conclusion (approx 400 words)

Overview of the key points of the report, drawing out any wider implications and including consideration of further research questions for future researchers.

Bibliography

This should include all cited references, presented accurately in a standard format.

Appendices

As appropriate, this should include any materials without which understanding or assessment of the research is impeded. While the appendices should not contain 'everything that might be relevant', you should include, at the least, for example, for interviews: interview schedule(s), interview transcript.

In general, you will be rewarded for demonstrating the following characteristics:

Content

(1) Relevance to the course

(2) Wide reading

(3) Development of argument

(4) Accurate citation of references (including adequate bibliography)

Presentation

(5) Clarity of expression

(6) Explicit structure

(7) Consistency of purpose

(8) Clear conclusion

Critical Judgement

(9) Depth of interpretation

(10) Imaginativeness

(11) Critical appraisal

(12) Thoroughness of analysis

Grade A range is for outstanding work that achieves all that could reasonably be expected of a university BA student, and demonstrates many (at least 7) of the 12 characteristics above in relation to the **argument** presented.

AND include all the sections specified above:

Abstract (approx. 100 words), Background (approx. 600 words), Research question (approx. 50 words), Rationale for the method used (approx. 600 words), Method (approx. 600 words), Analysis and findings (approx 800 words), Discussion (approx. 800 words), Conclusion (approx 400 words), Bibliography, Appendices.

AND achieve the Student Learning Goals, particularly:

NOT just repeat what the book says, but try to have a “dialogue” (e.g. question why? what else?)

NOT apply the theory blindly or dutifully, but try to evaluate its strengths and weaknesses (e.g. based on the society where you come from) and gain a nuanced, contextualized understanding of the theory/knowledge.

NOT demonstrate immaturity or offensiveness to any constructive criticism on your work, but try to appreciate and incorporate it in order to improve your work significantly.

Grade B range is for work that demonstrates an integration of some (at least 5) of the 12 characteristics above but presents an **under-developed argument**.

AND include all the sections specified above:

Abstract (approx. 100 words), Background (approx. 600 words), Research question (approx. 50 words), Rationale for the method used (approx. 600 words), Method (approx. 600 words), Analysis and findings (approx 800 words), Discussion (approx. 800 words), Conclusion (approx 400 words), Bibliography, Appendices.

Grade C range is for work that adopts some (at least 3) of the 12 characteristics above but does **not present any argument**.

AND include all the sections specified above.

Abstract (approx. 100 words), Background (approx. 600 words), Research question (approx. 50 words), Rationale for the method used (approx. 600 words), Method (approx. 600 words), Analysis and findings (approx 800 words), Discussion (approx. 800 words), Conclusion (approx 400 words), Bibliography, Appendices.

Fail is one in which the course learning goals are not properly understood, key issues are not identified, the essay is badly organized, and requires an adequate range of reading and attention to the above characteristics.

Other
