COM 497-002
Seminar in Quantitative Communication Research Methods

Spring 2018
Classroom: Fell Hall 108
Dates & Times: Wednesdays, 6:30 - 9:20 p.m.

Instructor: Kevin R. Meyer, Ph.D.  Email: kmeyer@ilstu.edu
Office Phone: (309) 438-3277  Cell Phone: (309) 299-1961
Office: Fell Hall 408
Office Hours: Wednesdays 4:30 – 6:30 p.m., and by appointment

Required Readings:

Other required readings can be found on the course ReggieNet website free of charge. Citations appear in this syllabus. In addition, you will need a copy of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th edition) from local bookstores or online sellers (ISBN: 9781433805615).

Course Description and Objectives:
The purpose of this class is to teach you scholarly approaches to quantitative communication research methods, research design, data analysis, and reporting of results. According to the graduate catalog, this course is to cover an “introduction to quantitative methods of scholarly research and the critical evaluation of research in communication.” This course is designed to accomplish the following objectives:

1. Provide students with a comprehensive knowledge of quantitative communication research methods.
2. Provide students with the ability to apply research skills through a data-based study.
3. Develop students’ competence in formulating research questions and hypotheses, constructing research designs, conducting data analysis, reporting results, and analyzing implications of findings.
4. Provide students with experience in data entry and statistical data analysis.
5. Develop students’ understanding of sampling, measurement, and scale development in communication research studies.
6. Cultivate students’ abilities to locate, critically read, and summarize research.

To these ends, we will complete a data-driven research proposal and design. I have two general goals for this seminar: first, we will develop your knowledge of communication research and design so you will be prepared for a thesis project, doctoral program, and/or professional pursuits; second, we will build your CV by producing a useable data-set that can lead to submission to a scholarly conference and, later, for publication.
**Professionalism:**
Learning is maximized by reading class materials, note-taking, critical listening, cognitive engagement, and focusing one’s attention by not yielding to distractions. Professionalism includes listening to others’ opinions (although not necessarily agreeing with those viewpoints), actively listening to those who are speaking, and working together in a spirit of cooperation. Collectively, we are a team working together to improve and learn. Be on time for class.

**Special Needs Accommodation:**
Any student needing to arrange a reasonable accommodation for a documented disability and/or medical/mental health condition should contact Student Access and Accommodation Services (SAAS) in 350 Fell Hall, (309) 438-5853, or visit StudentAccess.IllinoisState.edu. I am happy to accommodate any special needs you may have, although I require documentation from SAAS for ongoing accommodations.

**Academic Misconduct Policy:**
Students must be honest in all academic work, consistent with the *Code of Student Conduct*. All ideas are to be appropriately cited in both oral and written form when borrowed, directly or indirectly, from a source. Inadequate citation, unauthorized and unacknowledged collaboration, and/or the presentation of someone else’s work constitute plagiarism. Graduate students must develop a habit of being diligent about carefully and accurately citing sources while avoiding plagiarism of any sort. Acts of dishonesty (including cheating on an exam, falsifying evidence, or plagiarizing an assignment) will result in failing the course and referral for disciplinary action to the office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution. Reporting academic dishonesty is my professional responsibility and I do not hesitate to enforce consequences.

**Attendance Policy:**
Come to class prepared to discuss readings. Perfect attendance is expected. By enrolling in this class, you have committed to being present during all meetings. Absences deprive you of valuable discussions and information. There is a strong correlation between absences and grades; the more class time students miss, the lower the grades they tend to earn. Graduate students should not have issues with attendance, but be aware that missing more than one class period will result in a 5% deduction from your course grade for each additional unexcused absence.

**Late Work and Incomplete Grade Policy:**
An automatic 10% of the points possible will be deducted from late assignments, with an additional 10% deducted for each 24 hours the assignment is late. If these penalties seem steep, please consider that conferences and journals do not accept late work. With documented university excused absences, assignments should be completed *prior* to the absence. As a general rule, incomplete grades will not be given.
**Course Assignments and Grades:**
The grading scale is as follows: A= 100-90%; B= 89-80%; C= 79-70%; D= 69-60%; F= 59% and below. Percentages will be calculated based on points earned from:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points Possible</th>
<th>Your Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IRB Protocol</td>
<td>5 /_____</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm Examination</td>
<td>100 /_____</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Proposal</td>
<td>50 /_____</td>
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<tr>
<td>SPSS Lab Assignments/Results Write-ups</td>
<td>50 /_____</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>100 /_____</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Examination</td>
<td>150 /_____</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Board Participation</td>
<td>20 /_____</td>
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(The board is at: [https://sites.google.com/site/ilstusocstudies/home](https://sites.google.com/site/ilstusocstudies/home))
(If you do not wish to participate in the Research Board, you may complete a 5-page journal article review instead to fulfill this requirement. A sample of this assignment can be found on ReggieNet.)
Total 475 /_____  

**Examinations:**
Exams are closed book/closed notes; however, a handwritten study guide (the length and content will be specified provided prior to each exam) is allowed. Exams will consist mostly of multiple choice, true/false, matching, and fill-in-the blank. The final examination is comprehensive.

**SPSS Lab Assignments/Results Write-ups:**
Students will complete a series of SPSS lab assignments. Results must be written-up in APA Style, 6th edition, in accordance with the examples you will be provided. Due dates will be determined as we proceed to permit flexibility in our schedule.

**Research Paper Project and Presentation:**
Each student will conduct a data-based research study. You will design a research project, construct a survey, collect data, conduct factor analysis and reliability tests, and document the results in a final paper. Papers and references must conform to APA style, 6th edition, be typed double-spaced in 12 point plain Times New Roman font, with 1 inch margins on the sides, top, and bottom. A minimum of 35 sources should be cited meaningfully (mostly peer-reviewed journal articles). Write well and proofread carefully, using level headings to organize the report.

The **IRB Protocol** should be complete and include all necessary elements (i.e., informed consent page and survey questions).

The **Research Proposal** should consist of a title page, abstract (no more than 250 words), complete literature review (approximately 10-15 pages), research questions and/or hypotheses, partial methods section, references list, and appendix with survey instrument.

The **Final Paper** should be approximately 20-25 pages of text (i.e., excluding title page, abstract, references, tables, figures, and appendixes). The paper should contain a title page, abstract, literature review, research questions and/or hypotheses, as well as the methods, results, and discussion sections, references list, and appendix with survey instrument.
Citations for Required Readings, posted on ReggieNet (in the order we read them):


# Tentative Schedule

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<tr>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignments Due</th>
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| W, Jan. 17 | *Philosophy of the Course and Syllabus Policies (rationale for labs, research project, and examinations)  
*Communication Research Methods Overview  
*Directional and Bi-Directional Hypotheses and Research Questions  
*Likert, Likert-Type, and Semantic Differential Scales  
*How to Read Journal Articles (Bonito article example)  
*Activity: Brainstorm Research Topics | *Read Syllabus  
*Explore ReggieNet site  
*Download or print required readings  
*Acquire textbook  
*Read Gladwell (2009) |

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<tr>
<th>Week 2</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignments Due</th>
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| W, Jan. 24 | *Key Concepts in Quantitative Research (replication, validity and reliability, sampling, generalization, testing relationships and differences, four levels of data, experiments and surveys, independent and dependent variables, research designs, random sampling and assignment, operational and conceptual definitions, null hypothesis, significance testing, frequency distributions, measures of central tendency and dispersion, histograms, measures of shape, effect sizes, confidence intervals, p values, Type I and II error, and power and sample size) | *Read Allen, Titsworth, & Hunt (2009) textbook Preface & chapters 1 & 2  
*Read Klein (2011)  
*Read Rosenau (2011)  
*Read Siegfried (2010) |

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<th>Week 3</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignments Due</th>
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| W, Jan. 31 | *Deadline for Approval of Research Projects  
*Null Hypothesis video clip  
*Statistical symbols and notation, and APA style  
*IRB Protocols, Informed Consent, and Research Ethics  
*IRB examples  
*SPSS introduction and menu walk-through | *Read Allen, Titsworth, & Hunt (2009) textbook chapters 3 & 8  

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<tr>
<th>Week 4</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignments Due</th>
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| W, Feb. 7 | *Pretest/Posttest designs  
*Control and Experiment Groups  
*Manipulation Checks  
*Chi-square statistic ($X^2$)  
*Independent and paired-samples t-tests  
*Difference and Change Scores  
*SPSS Lab Assignment | **IRB Protocols & CITI ethics training due  
*Read Allen, Titsworth, & Hunt (2009) textbook chapters 4, 5, & 6 |

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<tr>
<th>Week 5</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignments Due</th>
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| W, Feb. 14 | *F test, Signal and Noise, and Between and Within Subjects Comparisons  
*Analysis of Variance (One way and Factorial ANOVA)  
*Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA)  
*SPSS Lab Assignment  
*Qualtrics introduction and set-up | *Read Allen, Titsworth, & Hunt (2009) textbook chapters 7 & 9  
*Read Levine (2011)  
*Read O’Keefe (2003)  
*Read Wigley (2011)  
*Read Myers (2011) |
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<th>Week 6</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignments Due</th>
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<th>Week 7</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignments Due</th>
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<td>W, Feb. 28</td>
<td>*Simple ($R$), Multiple ($R^2$), Multiple Hierarchical Linear Regression&lt;br&gt;*Meta-Analysis&lt;br&gt;*Variance accounted for, Effect Sizes, and Z scores&lt;br&gt;*Review for Midterm Exam</td>
<td>*Read Allen, Titsworth, &amp; Hunt (2009) textbook chapters 11 &amp; 12&lt;br&gt;*Read Ledbetter, Mazer, DeGroot, Meyer, Mao, &amp; Swafford (2011)</td>
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<th>Week 8</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignments Due</th>
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<tr>
<td>W, Mar. 7</td>
<td>***MIDTERM EXAMINATION</td>
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<th>Week 9</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignments Due</th>
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<tr>
<td>W, Mar. 14</td>
<td>*NO CLASS (Spring Break)</td>
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<th>Week 10</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignments Due</th>
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<th>Week 11</th>
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<th>Week 12</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<td>Week 13</td>
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<td>Assignments Due</td>
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| W, Apr. 11 | *Data Analysis for Research Study  
*Correlation  
*Regression  
*Interaction effects  
*SPSS Lab Assignment | *Read Hinkle, Wiersma, & Jurs (2003) excerpts  
*Read Miles & Shevlin (2001) excerpts |

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<tr>
<th>Week 14</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignments Due</th>
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| W, Apr. 18 | *Content Analysis  
*Data Analysis for Research Study  
*SPSS Lab Assignment | *Read Meyers, Gamst, & Guarino (2006) excerpts  
*Read Min & Feaster (2010) |

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<th>Week 15</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignments Due</th>
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| W, Apr. 25 | *Data Analysis for Research Study  
*Multivariate Statistics  
*SPSS Lab Assignment | *Read Mertler & Vannatta (2005) excerpts  
*Read Ledbetter & Finn (2013)  
*Read Boudewyns & Paquin (2011)  
**Research Board Participation due |

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<tr>
<th>Week 16</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignments Due</th>
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| W, May 2 | *Course Evaluations (bring #2 pencils)  
*Review for Final Exam  
*Data Analysis for Research Study (if needed) | **Final Papers due |

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<tr>
<th>Finals Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignments Due</th>
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| W, May 9 | ***FINAL EXAMINATION in Fell Hall 108  
***5:30-7:30 p.m.  
(Exact Date and Time TBA by Registrar’s Office, so this is just a guess) | **Final Papers due |