Syllabus
COMM 300 – Introduction to Communication Research
Tues/Thurs – 2:20 ~ 3:40 pm
FAC 140

Instructor: Dr. Jieyoung Kong
Email: Jieyoung.Kong@wku.edu
Phone: (270) 745-6578
Office: FAC 141
Office Hours: TBA & by appointment

Required Materials:
2. Regular and frequent access to Blackboard.
   ✓ Assignment instructions, posting discussion, online exams, submitting assignments and receiving feedback will occur via BB.

Recommended Text:
Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (6th ed.)

Course Description:
This course introduces the basics of contemporary communication research methods. It covers basic quantitative and qualitative methodologies, humanistic and social scientific perspectives and their underlying assumptions used in the communication field. Assignments provide opportunities for students to design and propose a research topic of interest as well as to evaluate existing research to develop an eye and skills for research. The aim of the course is to develop application skills so that students can conduct research and report their findings to relevant audience and stakeholders.

Course Objectives:
Upon successfully completing this course you should be able to:
- Understand basic research approaches and concepts.
- Define important research terms.
- Understand the strengths and weaknesses of major research methods.
- Evaluate research articles in the field of communication.
- Translate data analysis.
- Understand research ethics.
- Design a research study.
- Write professionally formatted and cited research papers.

Course Communication:
Most information you will need for the course will be announced in class and via the course Blackboard. Check Blackboard daily for latest announcements and information.

I will be available during office hours. If you need to contact me at other times, email me. Be sure to include COMM300 in the subject line and allow 48 hours for me to respond. If you have not heard from me after 2 business days, please resend your email. This is YOUR responsibility.

Disability Resource Center:
If you are registered with the Office for Student Disability Services in Downing University Center (Tel: (270) 745-5004), please notify me so that I may make accommodations as needed.

2014-11-06
**Classroom Climate:**
Throughout the semester, the instructor and the students will be working together to create a classroom climate conducive for active participation and group learning. This includes paying attention to others, showing respect, and being tactful in expressing opinions and thoughts that do not polarize and refrain from using denigrating or potentially offensive language.

**Attendance:**
Attendance is required for you to succeed in this course. The only “excused” absences are,

a) religious holidays,
b) university-sponsored events (athletic teams, debate and forensics, etc.), and
c) a documented illness or emergency.

In all three cases, for an absence to be excused, you will need to provide me with a written documentation. If you are going to miss class for religious holidays or university-sponsored events, please notify me at least one week in advance so that appropriate accommodations can be made. I will NOT offer make-up exams or accept late work unless an absence is excused.

I understand that things do come up and there may be a time you cannot attend. Thus, you have a total of TWO unexcused absences. *Late arrivals or early departures will be counted as an absence.* Any absence thereafter will result in a loss of your entire participation points.

If you have missed class, it is YOUR responsibility to visit the Blackboard and contact your classmates to obtain missing materials. Do NOT rely on the instructor to provide you with class lecture notes or assignments if you are unable to attend class. Therefore, I strongly encourage informal networks in class. It is a good idea to exchange phone numbers or email addresses with one or more students.

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<tr>
<th>Classmate’s Name</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Phone number</th>
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**Cell Phones, Laptops, iPods, and Other Technology:**
This is a side note to disruptive behavior that warrants its own category. Your cell phone, iPods, and laptops should be for your convenience, not my or your fellow classmates’ inconvenience. When you are in class, it is not convenient for you to be using cell phones or iPods. It is extremely disruptive and shows a complete lack of common courtesy. If I find you texting during class or your phone goes off in the middle of the class, I will keep your phone until the class is over. If you want to use your laptop you must sit in the first row of the classroom. If I catch you using your laptop for something other than related to this class, I will ask you not to bring your laptop to class anymore. Exception is, if there is an emergency situation and it requires that you check your phone, let me know at the beginning of class.

**Academic Assistance on Campus**
The Learning Center (located in the Downing University Center, A330), a.k.a. TLC@DUC, provides free supplemental education programs for all currently enrolled WKU students. TLC@DUC offers certified, one-on-one tutoring in over 200 subjects by appointment, walk in, or online. For detailed information call (270) 745-6254 or visit the webpage at [www.wku.edu/tlc](http://www.wku.edu/tlc)
**Academic Integrity:**
Academic misconduct will not be tolerated: please read the WKU Student Handbook, [http://www.wku.edu/handbook/](http://www.wku.edu/handbook/). It includes, but is not limited to, cheating on an exam, presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, using the same paper for more than one class, and fabricating or inventing data. A student who engages in unethical behavior will receive ZERO for that assignment and/or failing grade for the entire course.

Avoiding plagiarism is **EASY**: (1) provide the names of the authors of all ideas that are not your own, and (2) paraphrase another’s works and ideas in your own words with proper citation (refer to APA or MLA style). For an online tutorial on plagiarism, visit [http://isites.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do?keyword=paraphrasing](http://isites.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do?keyword=paraphrasing) Please be advised, we will be using SafeAssignment, a plagiarism-detecting tool for this class.

**Course Assignments:**
Most of the assignments are due by MIDNIGHT (the night) of the due date. All assignments must be submitted electronically via SafeAssignment on Blackboard unless explained otherwise. Due to issues of compatibility with Blackboard and certain hardware and software, your assignment file must be saved in “.doc” or “.docx” suffix. *If I cannot open your file or it cannot be read by SafeAssignment, you will receive a ZERO on that work.*

All written assignments must conform to the APA style. If you are not familiar with either style, you can visit the Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL), [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/)

**CITI Training Course (50 points):**
At the beginning of the semester, you will be required to complete the online CITI training course (via WKU IRB compliance center) to earn certification that will last for three years. The training modules and sections are geared for a wide variety of research subjects encompassing animal, DNA, and humans. You will only need to take those for human subjects: (1) Social/Behavioral Research Course (for research that involves live human beings) and (2) Social and Behavioral Responsible Conduct of Research Course (RCR). This helps to ensure that you are acquainted with key ethical and legal concerns when conducting research. Further directions will be provided in class.

**Research proposal (total of 150 points):**
The purpose of this assignment is for you to apply what you have learned by designing a research study on an important communication topic of your interest. The assignment involves multiple steps, which can be roughly divided into four parts: (1) 2 potential research topic/issue with 5 bibliographies per topic/issue (5 points per topic/issue), (2) a 4-page literature review (40 points), (3) a 1-page proposal of research methodology (10 points) (3) a 7-page full research proposal (70 points), and (4) an in-class proposal presentation and peer proposal evaluation (each worth 10 points). First, you will indentify a research question/topic you would like to investigate and search existing literature to locate peer-reviewed sources. Second, you will then write your first full draft of literature review. This helps to position your study within the larger research clusters on the one hand and to develop your hypothesis/foil that sets the stage for your research inquiry. Third, as you revise your literature review, you will develop the rest of the research proposal, namely the method of your investigation, modes of analysis and anticipated findings, and the contribution you anticipate your study will make to existing body of knowledge/understanding. You will also present your entire proposal in class in the Research Conference Week. Fourth and last, you will evaluate your classmate’s research proposal, involving critique as well as giving constructive feedback. Detailed directions will be announced in class.
Evaluating published research articles (80 points):

You will undertake TWO analysis and evaluation of published research. The first is a 4-page critical evaluation of a quantitative study (40 points). The second is a 4-page critical evaluation of a qualitative study (40 points). The purpose of these assignments are to help you develop criteria for evaluating a study(s) by examining critically at what the author is claiming, evaluate the research methods, analytical procedures, and look for strengths and problems of the claims and/or arguments as a whole. Further directions will be posted on course BB.

Exams (150 points):

There will be THREE online exams (each worth 50 points) over the course of the semester. They will be multiple-choice, true/false, and matching type questions. They will cover material from your readings, lecture and in-class activities. These exams will be administered online, so it is your responsibility to ensure that your Blackboard access provides an optimum online testing environment. Please check with IT Help Desk about the most compatible web browser with your computer. WIRED connection is preferred; wireless connections have been known to disconnect/eject users even when their test-taking is in progress.

Participation (70 points):

Participation is essential for success in this class! Participation starts as a function of attendance, but participation is more than just being in class. You are expected to come to class prepared and to participate actively in both discussions and activities. Making thoughtful contributions, asking questions that expand the thinking of the class and communicating respectfully with thoughts/opinions different from yours are an integral part of learning. Frequent tardiness or inconsiderate behavior (reading paper, sleeping, being disruptive, etc.) will lower your participation grade. You cannot make up participation points or an activity/assignment if you are absent.

Grading Scale

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Points Range</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>90% and up</td>
<td>450 – 500 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>80-89.9%</td>
<td>400 – 449.5 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70-79.9%</td>
<td>350 – 399.5 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60-69.9%</td>
<td>300 - 349.5 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>0-59.9%</td>
<td>299.5 points and below</td>
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