

## COMMUNICATION INQUIRY

### COMM 30000

SECTION 002

FALL, 2001

Instructor: Dr. Janet Meyer

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Office hours: Tuesday and Thursday: 2:30 - 5:00 pm  
Wednesday: 2:30 – 3:00 pm  
(or by appointment)

Pre-requisite: COMM 25902 (Communication Process)

Meeting time: 5:30 – 6:45 pm -- D301 Music/Speech Building

Call number: 19300

#### Course objectives

This course provides an introduction to the research methods employed in the study of communication. The objectives of the course are:

- to consider the primary methods employed to study organizational communication, interpersonal communication, mass communication, and public opinion;
- to provide an introduction to the procedures employed to analyze and report data collected via these methods;
- to provide a basis for understanding and criticizing the communication research reported in scholarly publications; and
- to provide an opportunity to conduct research on some aspect of communication that you find interesting.

#### Text

Stacks, D. W., & Hocking, J. E. (1999). Communication research (2nd ed.). New York: Longman.

## Course requirements

Exams: There will be two exams plus a final exam. The exams will be primarily objective in format (i.e., multiple-choice, matching, etc.) with some short-answer questions. Material covered on exams will include the course readings as well as additional information presented in lectures. Each exam, including the final, will be based only upon material covered since the last exam. Each exam will be graded on a 100-point basis where scores of 90 to 99 may be considered in the A range, scores of 80 - 89 in the B range, 70 - 79 in the C range, 60 - 69 in the D range and below 60 an F.

Research project: Working as part of a small group, you will be asked to conduct a research project that investigates some aspect of communication. For example, you might conduct a study to determine whether male and female college students differ in the attitudes they hold toward a public policy issue (gun control, environmental issues, animal rights, etc.). Or, you might ask whether couples that self-disclose a greater amount of private information have relatively happier relationships. Alternatively, you might conduct a survey that investigates satisfaction with dorm life, satisfaction with KSU, attitudes toward marriage, etc. At the end of the term, your group will be asked to turn in a single paper of roughly 18 pages that describes your project. Your group will also be asked to make a presentation that summarizes your project for the class (about 20 minutes in length).

Both your paper and your presentation to the class should contain the following seven sections: (a) a Theoretical Background that provides a brief summary of prior research related to your study; (b) a Rationale for your study; (c) a statement of your hypotheses (or research questions); (d) a Method section that describes the instruments and/or procedures that you employed to collect your data; (e) a Results section that reports the statistical procedures employed to analyze your data (and the results); (f) a Discussion section that interprets your results with respect to your hypotheses; and (g) a Conclusion section that considers the limitations of your study and makes suggestions for future research on that topic. Additionally, your paper should contain a References section. Your group's paper must conform to American Psychological Association (APA) style. A detailed description of the research project assignment and information about APA style will be handed out in class.

## Grading

The above requirements will be weighted in the following manner in assigning final grades in the course:

Exam 1	20%
Exam 2	20%
SPSS computer assignment	5%
Final exam	25%
Research project - group grade	20%
“ ” - individual grade	10%

Course grades will be assigned according to the following scale:

90 - 100	points	A
80 - 89	“	B
70 - 79	“	C
60 - 69	“	D
< 60	“	F

### **Attendance**

You will be allowed three ‘unexcused’ absences without a negative effect on your grade. Each subsequent absence, unless it is excused, will lower your course grade by three points on the final 100-point scale. For an absence to be considered excused, you must either turn in a written excuse (e.g., for a medical problem, athletic trips, etc.) or obtain my permission for the absence to be excused prior to the day that you will miss class (unless this is impossible).

Attendance in this class is especially important for two reasons. First, you will spend class time meeting in groups to develop and execute a research project. It places an unfair burden on other members of the group when one member is absent from these meetings. Second, there will be a fair amount of material presented in lectures that is not in the readings. This material will be covered on exams and will be crucial to completing your research project successfully.

**Course Registration:** It is the policy of Kent State University that students are not permitted to attend classes for which they are not officially enrolled. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure proper enrollment in classes. You are advised to review your official class schedule during the first two weeks of the semester to ensure proper enrollment. Should you find an error in your class schedule, you have until Friday of the second week of classes to correct it. If registration errors are not corrected by that date and you do continue to attend and participate in classes for which you are not officially enrolled, you are advised now that you will not receive a grade at the conclusion of the semester.

### **Course Outline and Readings**

Unless indicated otherwise in class, all readings should be completed prior to the class session - for which they are listed.

DATE	TOPIC	READINGS
T 8/28	Course introduction	
Th 8/30	The scientific process	Ch. 1, 2

T 9/4	Measurement techniques	Ch. 6, 7
Th 9/6	Measurement principles - Reliability and validity	“
T 9/11	“ ”	
Th 9/13	Descriptive statistics (measures of central tendency, measures of variability, correlation coefficient)	Ch. 14
T 9/18	“ ”	
Th 9/20	“ ”	
T 9/25	Review session	
Th 9/27	<u>1st exam</u>	
T 10/2	Inferential statistics (hypothesis-testing, t tests)	Ch. 15
Th 10/4	“ /GROUP MEETING #1	
T 10/9	“	
Th 10/11	“ /GROUP MEETING #2	
T 10/16	Using SPSS software to analyze data	(handout)
Th 10/18	“ ”	
T 10/23	Human Subjects Committee forms /GROUP MEETING #3	
Th 10/25	Survey research	Ch. 10, 11
T 10/30	“	
Th 11/1	“ /GROUP MEETING #4	
T 11/6	Review session /GROUP MEETING #5	
Th 11/8	<u>2nd exam</u>	

T 11/13	Experimental research	Ch. 12, 13
Th 11/15	“ /GROUP MEETING #6	
T 11/20	“ /GROUP MEETING #7	
Th 11/22	THANKSGIVING	
T 11/27	Content analysis /GROUP MEETING #8	Ch. 8
Th 11/29	Project presentations	
T 12/4	Project presentations <i>(All project papers due)</i>	
Th 12/6	Participant observation method / Review	Ch. 9