

JOUR 460: Research Methods in Strategic Communication
Fall 2018: T/TH 4:00pm – 5:15pm
(STFL 100)

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Office Hours:	T 10:00 -11:00 am, W 10:00 -11:00 am and by appointment

Note:

The schedule below may be modified and any potential changes will be announced in advance.

GREETINGS:

Welcome to Research Methods! This course is designed to introduce you to strategic communication research methods and enable you to develop your own research and data interpretation skills. We will discuss the main research methods used in our field and how they apply to various strategic communication questions. You should find this course challenging and fun.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

“Students conduct, analyze and apply research to develop strategy and guide decisions related to communication campaigns. In addition to studying qualitative and quantitative research methods as well as basic statistics, students develop critical thinking skills by defining research problems and producing insightful solutions. Prerequisite: Admission to the School of Journalism and JOUR 433 for students who started at KU prior to Fall 2012. For students starting Fall 2012 and after, prerequisite is admission to the School of Journalism and JOUR 320.”

ABOUT THIS SYLLABUS

This syllabus contains detailed information about everything. During the semester, if you have any questions, look at the syllabus first. Then, if you don’t understand something presented in the syllabus, ask questions. It is your responsibility to read, understand, and follow the syllabus. I should not have to constantly remind you of deadlines when it is clearly marked on the syllabus and on Blackboard.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

- Understand the relationship between research methods and strategic communication questions
- Understand data collection and analysis procedures
- Explain the difference between quantitative and qualitative research methods
- Develop a research design and research instruments based on a specific question
- Conduct primary research using a specific research method
- Write a research report with recommendations grounded in your own research

TEXTBOOK

The required textbook for this course is *Social Science Research: Principles, Methods, and Practices* by Anol Bhattacharjee. It is an open-source text book freely available online. Additional reading materials will be posted on our Blackboard site. I expect you to have read all the assigned material before class. This will help you better understand the day's topic and will facilitate our discussions.

COURSE EVALUATION

Class Participation/Attendance	5%
Individual Assignments	15%
• Google Analytics Certificate (12%)	
• Research Participation (3%)	
Group Research Assignment	40%
Midterm	20%
Final	20%
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Total	100%

GRADING SCALE

Points for each graded assignment and total points for the semester listed on the scale below determine letter grades.

A = 93-100%	C = 73-76%
A- = 90-92%	C- = 70-72%
B+ = 87-89%	D+ = 67-69%
B = 83-86%	D = 63-66%
B- = 80-82%	D- = 60-62%
C+ = 77-79%	F = 59% or below

ATTENDANCE AND IN-CLASS ASSIGNMENTS (10%)

• **Participation:** Your participation will impact the quality of this course. We will be addressing various aspects of strategic communication research, so regardless of your specific interests, you

are expected to take advantage of our discussions to express how you feel about certain communication matters related to your future career.

To encourage you to learn how to apply concepts learned in class and research methods into practice, there will be some in-class assignments. These assignments will consist of questions based on the lecture and/or reading assigned for the class. Laptops or smartphones are allowed to participate in the in-class activities, but are NOT to be allowed for texting, checking emails, or surfing the Web.

- **Attendance:** I'll take attendance at the *beginning* of each class. Students are expected to attend *all* classes *on time*. Attendance is crucial to the success of this class. More than two unexcused absences will affect your final grade. Each additional absence will take away two points from your final grade. For instance, if you have three unexcused absences and your final calculated grade is 91, you will receive an 89 for the class. If you have four unexcused absences, I will deduct four points from your final calculated grade. Late arrivals (more than 10 minutes) will be counted as an absence. If you have more than four unexcused absences, you are eligible to be dropped from the course. Excused absences (especially for exams) will be granted only under highly unusual circumstances, such as documented medical emergencies, death of an immediate family member and official KU business. Family gatherings, weddings, vacations, leaving early for the break, etc. do not qualify. Official documents will be required and may be kept by the professor for a certain period of time.

INDIVIDUAL ASSIGNMENTS (15%)

1) Google Analytics Academy (12%)

ALL students in this class will be required to complete the Google Analytics Academy courses (Google Analytics for Beginners) and obtain the certificate by the end of the semester. Following the "Google Analytics Certification Process Guide," students should take the online courses on their own time as a self-paced lab. You will have one class session devoted to completing the courses (refer to course schedule). This is not something that you will be able to complete overnight – start as early as you can. The process of certification (and the certificate itself) will be extremely helpful to your resume and your future career as you prepare to jump into the job market in your senior year. I must have a digital copy of your certificate by the last class session (May 3rd).

Google Analytics Academy can be found at the following link:

<https://analytics.google.com/analytics/academy/>

2) Research participation (3%)

This course is part of the research participant pool for the School of Journalism and Mass Communications, which means that you are expected to participate in research studies in our field as part of your overall grade. You are each expected to take part in three studies this semester, worth 3% of your final grade (1% per completed study). Researchers will contact you directly during the semester with specific details about their study. If you do not wish to participate in a study, you will have the option to write a summary of a peer-reviewed research

article instead (please see guidelines on Blackboard). If you do not wish to participate in any study, you will have to write three research summaries in order to obtain full credit. Please note that you are each responsible for either participating in the studies or writing the research summaries. Deadlines to participate in the studies or write the research summaries will be set by the researchers.

GROUP RESEARCH ASSIGNMENTS (40%)

Research is learned by doing research. Therefore, you will be conducting a real-world research project this semester. 4-5 students will work together as a team. As a team, you will conduct secondary and primary research, and make sense of your findings in a series of reports. Your grade for your team research assignments will be calculated as follows:

- Secondary research (15%)
- Focus Group
 - Moderator guide (10%)
 - Focus group report (25%)
- Survey
 - Survey Questionnaire (10%)
 - Survey report (25%)
- Infographic & Final presentation (15%)
- Peer evaluation (Weight factor: your actual contribution % will be multiplied to your total team score)

Important deadlines regarding the research project are marked in the “due date (group project)” column of the class schedule. Presentation is required and all students are required to attend class during others’ presentations. We will discuss each assignment in more detail during the semester.

Each group will meet individually with the instructor for a progress checkup on Nov 15st. This is the time to ask *final* questions as you are wrapping up your research project – it is not the time to start your project. Do not take the project lightly and begin early!

****FREE RIDERS BEWARD!** There will be an anonymous peer evaluation at the end of the group work. If you don’t do your part, your grade will suffer.

Two Exams (20% each)

Two exams will be held in class during regularly scheduled class period. Exams are designed to test your knowledge and application of the main ideas covered in the text chapters, class discussions and lecture notes. The exams will consist of a series of multiple choice questions, T/F questions and open-ended questions. The exams will not be cumulative. Dates of these exams have been scheduled tentatively, but may change depending upon progress in the class. It is important to note that **you cannot make up a missed exam for a grade. No excuse will be accepted.**

GENERAL COURSE POLICIES

Your responsibility

You are responsible for the class materials and announcements even if you do not attend class. Please do not email me and ask whether you've missed anything important today. Get lecture notes from your fellow students if you are absent.

The University of Kansas email account (@ku.edu) will be used as a primary vehicle for official communications including announcements of any changes in the course schedule or assignments. Thus, it is your responsibility to regularly monitor your KU email account. I will use the class Blackboard space to post class materials. Email is the best way to reach me out of scheduled office hours. It is recommended that you use your KU email account when corresponding with me, since messages sent from other servers can be interpreted as junk or spam and thus not received.

Finally, I reserve the right to modify this syllabus. Any changes will be announced in class and/or on our Blackboard site and become official.

Classroom behavior

Our class time is a time for learning. The atmosphere of the classroom is one of mutual respect. This means that you'll be treated with respect, and that you are expected to treat the instructor and other students with respect as well.

- Turn all cell phones off.
- Be on time.
- Don't read the newspaper, surf the Internet, study for other exams or talk to other people.
- Be engaged, active and respectful.
- Inappropriate, vulgar, obscene, threatening or other negative discourse will not be tolerated.

Cell phones & Laptops:

Refrain from using cell phones/pagers in class; please turn them off during class time unless it's requested by the instructor for learning purposes. I've found the use of technology during class (e.g., Facebook browsing, Twitter updates, shopping, checking wedding photos) is a sign of showing disrespect of the instructor and student presenters in front of you. Using technology also interferes your learning and contribution in class. All mobile devices, gadgets, etc., including phones, iPods, iPads, etc must be SILENCED and STORED during all class periods.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

In this class, and in all journalism classes, honesty and integrity are critical. Any work you do must be original and reflect your own ideas, thoughts, and research. In a work setting, if you choose to violate professional standards, you will be fired. In this class, if you choose to violate

the standards for academic integrity, you'll fail the course, and you may be expelled from or denied admission to the School of Journalism. Here is the journalism school's official policy statement:

Policy on Plagiarism and Fabrication/Falsification

The William Allen White School of Journalism and Mass Communications does not tolerate plagiarism, fabrication of evidence and falsification of evidence. Penalties for plagiarism, fabrication or falsification can include a failing grade for the course and expulsion from the School of Journalism and Mass Communications. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, fabrication or falsification, please consult the professor of the course. *The following definitions are from Article II, Section 6, of the University Senate Rules and Regulations, revised FY98.*

Plagiarism

- Knowingly presenting the work of another as one's own (i.e., without proper acknowledgement of the source). The sole exception to the requirement of acknowledging sources is when the information or ideas are common knowledge.

Fabrication and Falsification

- Unauthorized alteration or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.

Journalism School Policy on Classroom Attendance:

No student may add a journalism class after the 20th day of a semester.

Students must attend their classes and laboratory periods. Instructors may take attendance into account in assessing a student's performance and may require a certain level of attendance for passing a course. Instructors may choose to drop students from a course, based on attendance, without consent. The School of Journalism reserves the right to cancel the enrollment of students who fail to attend the first class or laboratory meeting.

INCLEMENT WEATHER AND SPECIAL NEEDS

In the event of inclement weather, the decision to cancel classes is made by KU officials. To determine whether snow or icy conditions have canceled classes, call 864-7669 (864-SNOW). The Office of Disability Resources (DR), 22 Strong Hall, 785-864-2620 (v/tty), coordinates accommodations and services for KU students with disabilities. If you have a disability for which you may request accommodation in KU classes and have not contacted DR, please do so as soon as possible. Please also contact me privately in regard to this course.

COPYING OR RECORDING OF CLASSROOM LECTURE

Course materials prepared by the instructor, as well as content of all lectures presented by the instructor, are the instructor's property. Video and audio recording of lectures without instructor

consent is prohibited. On request, the instructor usually will permit students to record lectures, on the condition that these recordings are only used as a study aid by the individual making the recording. Unless the instructor gives explicit permission, recordings of lectures may not be modified and must not be transferred or transmitted to any other person, whether or not that individual is enrolled in the course.

COMMERCIAL NOTE-TAKING

Pursuant to the University of Kansas' [Policy on Commercial Note-Taking Ventures](#), commercial note-taking is not permitted in this course. Lecture notes and course materials may be taken for personal use, for the purpose of mastering the course material, and may not be sold to any person or entity in any form. Any student engaged in or contributing to the commercial exchange of notes or course materials will be subject to discipline, including academic misconduct charges, in accordance with University policy. **Please note:** note-taking provided by a student volunteer for a student with a disability, as a reasonable accommodation under the ADA, is not the same as commercial note-taking and is not covered under this policy.

CONCEALED HANDGUNS

Individuals who choose to carry concealed handguns are solely responsible to do so in a safe and secure manner in strict conformity with [state and federal laws](#) and [KU weapons policy](#). Safety measures outlined in the KU weapons policy specify that a concealed handgun:

- Must be under the constant control of the carrier.
- Must be out of view, concealed either on the body of the carrier, or backpack, purse, or bag that remains under the carrier's custody and control.
- Must be in a holster that covers the trigger area and secures any external hammer in an un-cocked position
- Must have the safety on, and have no round in the chamber.

The Career and Outreach Office at Stauffer-Flint, Room 120, provides services for all students at the William Allen White School of Journalism and Mass Communications. If you need assistance with resume and cover letter development, job search strategy, internships, mock interviews and LinkedIn profile, schedule an appointment with Steve Rottinghaus at steve_rottinghaus@ku.edu. Make sure to follow job and internship postings on Twitter at [@Rhaus90](#).

J-School Generations is an annual event during KU Homecoming that brings together J-School alumni and students to connect, network and have fun. Alumni "take over" journalism classes on Thursday, Sept. 27, and students are invited to attend a TED-style talk with three of our alumni. On Sept. 28, we have student/alumni teams compete in a trivia and games contest and networking opportunities. Our alumni, who work in all facets of journalism and strategic communication, are eager to share their advice with you. Learn more and sign up for events at <http://journalism.ku.edu/j-school-generations>.

Tentative Course Schedule

	Dates	Topics	Required Readings	Due dates
1	21-Aug	Course Introduction		
	23-Aug	Research Basics	Ch.1 (pp.1-6)	
2	28-Aug	Thinking Like a Researcher, Research Ethics	Ch.2 (pp.9-13) & Ch.3 (pp.20-24)	Meet with your group
	30-Aug	Secondary Research (Library Instruction Session)	Using library and database resources (BB)	
3	4-Sep	Workshop: Secondary Research		Team contracts due at the beginning of class—hardcopy submission
	6-Sep	Qualitative Research	Introduction to qualitative research (BB)	
4	11-Sep	Qualitative Research (Cont.)	Brief guide for focus groups (BB)	Discuss focus group days/times: Need to be conducted between 9/24-10/12
	13-Sep	Workshop: Moderator Guide	Moderator Role (BB)	Secondary research report by 5pm
5	18-Sep	Workshop: Conducting a Focus Group 1	Ch.9 (pp.78-80) Conducting focus groups (BB)	
	20-Sep	Quantitative research 1	Ch. 7 (pp.55,56,57), Ch.8 (pp.65-70) Ch.9 (73-75, 80-82), Ch.10 (83-87)	FGI moderator guide by 5pm
6	25-Sep	FGI (No class)		
	27-Sep	J-School Generation (Speaker: Sarah Stern)	Class time: 4:00pm-4:45pm	
7	2-Oct	Google Analytics (Heather)		
	4-Oct	Midterm Review		
8	9-Oct	Midterm		
	11-Oct	Fall Break (no class)		
9	16-Oct	Quantitative research 2	Ch. 6 (pp.43-49), Ch. 9 (pp.75-78)	
	18-Oct	Workshop: Developing Survey Questions	Ch. 6 (pp.43-49), Ch. 9 (pp.75-78)	
10	23-Oct	Workshop: Developing Survey Questions		Survey questionnaire by 5pm
	25-Oct	Qualtrics		
11	30-Oct	Workshop: Analyzing Qualitative Data I	Analyzing focus group data (BB); Ch.13 (pp.113-115)	
	1-Nov	Workshop: Analyzing Qualitative Data II	Ch.13 (pp.113-115)	
12	6-Nov	Workshop: Analyzing Quantitative Data I	Ch.14 (pp.119-122)	
	8-Nov	Workshop: Analyzing Quantitative Data II		Focus group report by 5pm
13	13-Nov	Data visualization & Infographic (Heather)		

	15-Nov	Meeting with Instructor		
14	20-Nov	Online Session (No class)		
	22-Nov	Thanksgiving		
15	27-Nov	Workshop: Data visualization & Infographic/ Exam Review		
	29-Nov	2nd Exam		Survey group report by 5pm
16	4-Dec	Presentation		
	6-Dec	Presentation		Infographic due by 5pm

**** The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary. You are responsible for changes announced in class or via email.***