

JOUR 460: Research Methods in Strategic Communication
Spring 2018: T/TH 11:00am – 12:15pm
(STFL 100)

Instructor:	Dr. Hyejin Bang
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Office Hours:	T 10:00 -11:00 am, TH 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.”

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	10%
Individual Assignments	15%
• Google Analytics Certificate (12%)	
• Research Participation (3%)	
Group Research Assignment	35%
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.

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

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 (35%)

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 (5%)
 - Focus group report (20%)
- Survey
 - Survey Questionnaire (15%)
 - Survey report (20%)
- Final Presentation
 - Final Report (20%)
 - Presentation (5%)
- 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 the final written report is due at the time of your final presentation. All students are required to attend class during others’ presentations.

Each group will meet individually with the instructor for a progress checkup on April 19st. At the meeting, be prepared to discuss the group project theme, specific methodology to be used for the group project, expected outcomes, and other questions or concerns regarding the group project. Signup sheets for this group meeting will be provided the week prior. 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!

Two group project topics are described in greater detail below. Your research group must select one of the two topics and decide on a specific research question that you will answer throughout the rest of this semester. These topics are intentionally broad in order to give you more freedom in selecting a research question of your choice.

Using various research methods, your research group should attempt to answer the question you posed at the beginning of the semester with surveys, observation, and focus groups. Based on the data collected through these methods, you will learn how to analyze the data. At the last class, your research group will present the results to the rest of the class and turn in a formal, written report of these findings. These topics are current, up-to- date problems that significantly impact our society and the entire world. Your efforts will contribute to the past and current research endeavors made by scientists around the world to resolve these important problems.

Group Project Topics:

- 1) Green advertising: climate change has become a significant problem, concerning scientists and policy makers worldwide. Yet, consumers are either unaware of “green” alternatives that they are able to purchase or perceive green products to be of lesser quality compared to other non-green products. How can green products and brands survive in this competitive market and how can advertisements help boost sales and awareness among consumers?
 - o Components to think about (including but not limited to): background research on earlier efforts from green products and brands; Relevant research on green advertising; Consumer perceptions about green products and brands; Consumer perceptions about green advertising; Elements of a successful “green” advertising campaign; Evaluation of a “green” advertising campaign

- 2) Healthy food advertising: obesity is a new epidemic that plagues the nation, particularly the southern states. Sugary drinks are favored over non-sugary ones such as milk or water. Junk and fast food are preferred over healthy ones. Do healthy, wholesome food products such as fruits, vegetables, water, and milk have a chance against mega-corporates such as Coca-Cola and McDonalds? Can a successful advertising campaign make a difference? If so, what are the elements of a successful ad?
 - o Components are similar to those listed above

****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.

Midterm & Final (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.

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. The use of cell phone or other electronic devices can impact your total grade. 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 -- *Adopted May 7, 2004:*

- 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 this 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(s) of this course.

School Laboratories

The School provides computer and broadcast laboratories for student use. The computer lab in 105 Stauffer-Flint will be open the following hours during the semester: Sunday: noon to 10 p.m.; Monday-Thursday 5-10 p.m.; and Friday 9-5 p.m. Computers are available on a first-come, first-serve basis.

The Weir Production Laboratory in the Dole Center will be open 10 a.m. – 8 p.m. Monday-Thursday and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Friday. Students may sign-up for editing time and equipment on a first-come, first-serve basis through Outlook Web Access, www.mail.ku.edu. Instructions are available on the J-School Web site, www.journalism.ku.edu. (Look under the “reservations” link on the right side of the page.) Students may reserve camera equipment no more than three hours at a time and for editing equipment no more than two hours at a time.

All times are subject to change. For the first two full weeks of the semester, the Weir Production Laboratory will close at 5:00 p.m. Extended lab hours will be announced later in the semester.

There are adequate laboratory resources available for students who complete their assignments in a timely manner.

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.
- The KU Office of Student Financial Aid is required by federal law to determine whether students who receive aid are attending each class in which they are enrolled. Instructors are required to report to that office absences of students who have stopped attending and names of those who have enrolled but never have attended. Students who do not attend classes may be required to repay federal and/or state financial aid.
- Students who receive any form of financial aid should learn all requirements including minimum hours of enrollment and grades to qualify for and retain that aid.

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.

Tentative Course Schedule

	Dates	Topics	Required Readings	Due dates
1	16-Jan	Course Introduction		
	18-Jan	Research Basics	Ch.1 (pp.1-6)	
2	23-Jan	Thinking Like a Researcher	Ch.2 (pp.9-13) & Ch.3 (pp.20-24)	Meet with your group
	25-Jan	Secondary Research	Using library and database resources (BB)	
3	30-Jan	Workshop: Secondary Research		
	1-Feb	Qualitative Research	Introduction to qualitative research (BB)	
4	6-Feb	Qualitative Research (Cont.)	Brief guide for focus groups (BB)	Focus group days/times
	8-Feb	Workshop: Moderator Guide	Moderator Role (BB)	Secondary research by 5pm
5	13-Feb	Workshop: Conducting a Focus Group 1	Ch.9 (pp.78-80)	
	15-Feb	Workshop: Conducting a Focus Group 2		FGI moderator guide by 5pm
6	20-Feb	Google Analytics (Heather)		
	22-Feb	Google Analytics (Heather)		
7	27-Feb	Midterm		
	1-Mar	Survey Research 1	Ch. 7 (pp.55,56,57), Ch.8 (pp.65-70)	
8	6-Mar	Survey Research 2	Ch.9 (73-75, 80-82), Ch.10 (83-87)	
	8-Mar	Workshop: Developing Survey Questions	Ch. 6 (pp.43-49), Ch. 9 (pp.75-78)	
9	13-Mar	Workshop: Analyzing Qualitative Data	Analyzing focus group data (BB); Ch.13 (pp.113-115)	Survey questionnaire by 5pm
	15-Mar	Workshop: Writing Qualitative Findings & Report		
10	20-Mar	Qualtrics		
	22-Mar	Spring Break		
11	27-Mar	Spring Break		
	29-Mar	Experimental Design 1	Ch.10 (pp.83-88)	Focus group report by 5pm
12	3-Apr	Experimental Design 2	Ch.10 (pp.83-88)	
	5-Apr	Workshop: Analyzing Quantitative Data	Ch.14 (pp.119-122)	
13	10-Apr	Workshop: Analyzing Quantitative Data		
	12-Apr	Data Visualization		
14	17-Apr	Google Analytics Day		Survey Report by 5pm

	19-Apr	Meeting with Instructor (Each Group)		
15	24-Apr	Final Exam		
	26-Apr	Final Presentation		
16	1-May	Final Presentation		
	3-May	Final Presentation & Written Reports Due		Revised Report & Google Analytic Certificate 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.***