

Date	Topics	Readings	Assignment due
08/29-09/02	Introduction to Research and the Three-Phase Research Process & The Pre-Research Phase and the Decision Maker	P&Mc-Ch.1 & 2	Choose article for review from list
09/07 & 09/09	Content Analysis & Applied Public Relations Research <i>09/05 Labor day – no classes</i>	P&Mc-Ch.11 & Cul-Ch.4	Make up groups and meet 1 st time
09/12-09/16	Social Network Analysis (SNA) & The Research Phase and the Research Expert & Foundations of Measurement & Getting Started	& Materials on reserve (SNA); & P&Mc-Ch.3 & Hoc-Ch.6 & SPSS-Ch.1	Choose group topic for final research project
09/19-09/23	More Research Methods & Advertising Research & Descriptive Statistics	P&Mc-Ch.14 & Bow-Ch.5 & SPSS-Ch.3	Choose topic for Web review - Individual Reports due on day of class discussions
09/26-09/30	The Survey Questionnaire & Measuring Instruments & Entering and Modifying Data	P&Mc-Ch.4 & Hoc-Ch.7 & SPSS-Ch.2	- Individual Reports due on day of class discussions
10/03-10/07	The Survey Questionnaire, Selecting Survey Respondents, & Interviewer Training and Survey Data Collection & Test Construction	P&Mc-Ch.4, 5, 6, & 7 & SPSS-Ch.8	- Individual Reports due on day of class discussions
10/10-10/14	Coding and Processing Survey Data & Survey Data Analysis and Statistics & Graphing Data	P&Mc-Ch.7 & 8 & SPSS-Ch.4	- Individual Reports due on day of class discussions
10/17-10/21	Experiments & Children. Television, and Violence & Nonparametric Inferential Statistics	P&Mc-Ch.12 & Tra-Ch.11 & SPSS-Ch.7	- Individual Reports due on day of class discussions
10/24-10/28	Focus Groups and One-on-One Depth Interviews & Television Sex/Sexuality and Pornography	P&Mc-Ch.13 & Tra-Ch.10	- Individual Reports due on day of class discussions
10/31-11/04	Researching Racial and Ethnic Minorities & Research in the Academic Environment & Research Applications, Ethics, and the Future of Communication Research	P&Mc-Ch.15, 16, & 17	- Individual Reports due on day of class discussions
11/07-11/11	Correlation, causality and path analysis & Prediction and Association 7 Parametric Inferential Statistics	SPSS-Ch.5 & 6	DUE: Web review - Individual Reports due on day of class discussions
11/14-11/18	Reporting Survey Research Results	P&Mc-Ch.9	- Individual Reports due on day of class discussions
11/21	<i>More on Reporting</i> <i>11/23-11/26 Thanksgiving recess-no classes</i>	P&Mc-Ch.9	- Individual Reports due on day of class discussions
11/28-12/02	The Post-Research Phase and the Decision Maker & PRESENTATIONS	P&Mc-Ch.10 & SPSS-Ch.7	Class PRESENTATIONS
12/07	<i>Synthesis topics</i> “Real & Imagined Realities”	No reading!!!	No reading!!!
	<i>12/08/05 Classes End</i>		

Room for updates: changes:

--

Instructor: Emil Coman Phone: 860-465-0661 This class relies heavily on Blackboard, check it as often as possible: <http://www.easternct.edu/depts/its/Blackboard/index.htm> email: comprocess@yahoo.com

Office Hours: Mon., Wed., & Fri. 3:00-4:00pm & by appointment; Mail Box: **Media Center r. 253**

Office: **Eastern Hall, room 31** *web site:* www.geocities.com/comprocess (if you ever forget it, just “google” e.g. my name or “ECSU *AND* mass comm”)

Course Description: This basic research methods course introduces students to the rigorous research methodology employed in mass communication. This is an applied course designed to teach students practical skills needed for completing a mass comm research project and disseminating its results. The final end product of this class is a final presentation of a group research.

Course objectives:

- to understand the basic characteristics of scientific theories in social sciences and the specifics of systematic mass comm research;
- to understand the major research methodologies used in mass comm research, particularly as they are employed in PR and advertising;
- to be able to critically and objectively interpret published and public research reports;
- to become familiar with setting up a basic research design, asking relevant questions and pursuing a research project designed to answer these questions, chiefly in the fields of PR and advertising;
- to learn the mechanics of assembling a convincing research report of their own or others' findings in a mass communication area and present their results in front of peers or decision makers;
- to become familiar with the basic features of the statistical software SPSS, as well as Microsoft Excel;
- to learn how to perform basic statistical analyses of data and interpret results;
- to improve your scholarly researching skills and your ability to construct convincing research papers and presentations.

Textbooks:

1 P&Mc. Poindexter, P. M., & McCombs, M. E. (2000). *Research in Mass Communication*. Boston: Bedford / St. Martin's ISBN 0-312-19162-6 www REQUIRED

2 SPSS. Cronk, B. C. (2004). *How to Use SPSS (3rd Ed.)*. Los Angeles, CA: Pyrczak Publishing. ISBN 1-884585-15-9 Pyrczak Publishing, Los Angeles, CA www REQUIRED

3. Materials that will be made available electronically by instructor (*don't purchase* them!):

- a **Cul.** Ch. 4 Applied Public Relations Research Hugh M. Culbertson, pp. 53-74
- b **Bow.** & Ch. 5 Advertising Research Tom Bowers, pp. 76-90, in *Mass communication research and theory, 2003*, edited by Guido H. Stempel III, David H. Weaver, G. Cleveland Wilhoit. Y Pearson Education, Inc. Boston, MA
- c **Tra.** Ch. 11 Children, Television, and Violence, pp. 131-144
- d **Tra.** & Ch. 10 Television Sex/Sexuality and Pornography, pp. 117-130, in Traudt, Paul J. (2005). *Media, audiences, effects: an introduction to the study of media content and audience analysis*. Pearson Education, Inc. Boston, MA
- e **Hoc.** Ch. 6 Foundations of Measurement 123-147
- f **Hoc.** & Ch. 7 Measuring Instruments 148-169 in Hocking, John E. *Communication research, 2003*, edited by John E. Hocking, Don W. Stacks, Steven T. McDermott, 3rd edition, Pearson Education, Inc., Boston, MA

Materials on reserve will be made available by instructor for your convenience in electronic format; when available through electronic databases provided by ECSU library, URL links will be included.

If you are a student with disability and believe you will need accommodations for this class, it is your responsibility to contact the Office of Accessibility Services at (860) 465-5573. To avoid any delay in the receipt of accommodations, you should contact the Office of Accessibility Services as soon as possible. Please understand that we cannot provide accommodations based upon disability until we have received an accommodation letter from the Office of Accessibility Services. Your cooperation is appreciated.

Grades: Being an applied course designed primarily for advanced communication majors, this class requires completion of a research group project, reviews of published mass comm research articles, a Web review of a one research methodology, weekly applied assignments, and participation in weekly discussions (I know, it sounds like a lot!). There are no formal exams in this class.

GRADING format

40 % Weekly assignments

30 % Group research project (paper & group presentation)

10 % Written research article review and leading the class discussion on it

10 % Web review of a research methodology

10 % Participation: Attendance - 8% + Class Participation - 2 % **(Right/Left hand^{ME})**

ATTENDANCE policy: Attendance is expected in this class; it is also built in the final grade, but if one misses more than 1/5th of all classes, i.e. 8 classes, any such 1/5th will result in an additional one letter grade deduction from the final grade. If you miss 1/5th of all 40 classes, or 8 classes, you'll get one letter grade less (say from A to B). If you miss 2/5^{ths}, your grade will lose 2 letter grades (say from A to C).

Grades generally follow this distribution:

Course Grade	Accumulated %	Course Grade	Accumulated %
A	93.3-100	C+	77-79.99
A-	90-93.29	C	73-76.99
B+	87-89.99	C-	70-72.99
B	83-86.99	D+	65-69.99
B-	80-82.99	D	60-65

Short guidelines for assignments (more detailed instructions will be provided later on):

1. Weekly assignments will not be labor intensive, but will keep you in good shape with applied stuff.
 2. Group research project (paper & group presentation): groups will choose a topic of their own interest for an applied mass comm research feasible during the semester. Then the research questions or hypotheses will be formulated, the appropriate research design will be identified, the data will be collected, data entered and analyzed; a final paper will be written and finally the project will be collectively presented to class.

- being a course designed for advanced comm students that major in PR and advertising in particular, the topics for the group projects will revolve around PR and advertising issues. Other topics will be approved however, in accordance with students' interests.

3. Written review of a research article and leading the class discussion on it: you will pick one article from the list provided, and then will present a summary of the piece and lead a short class discussion on major findings, implications, and suggestions (you will be the expert on that piece, the class does not need to read the article!).

The written review will be 2-3 pages long, and will address **primarily** the methodological side of the article: you are expected to evaluate, critique the methods and results sections and offer suggestions and alternative solutions.

To match your interests and help you on the job market, the additional readings will be primarily applied research illustrating the application of a research methodology to the fields of advertising and PR.

4. Web review of a research methodology: you will choose a particular research methodology or a data analysis tool and run a Web search on the subject; the result will be a list with the most important, trustworthy and interesting WWW links, annotated.

5. Participation: being there plus saying anything (does not need to be smart, interesting or valid).

Emailing Guidelines: You should send assignments **through Blackboard**; if you attach files (reviews, papers, etc) please attach them as a Single Web Page (HTML file): when you save it in Word (or Excel), there is an option to save it as Web Page, or html file. Word (or doc) files tend to be able to carry viruses, which does not happen with html.

FIGURE 1.3 p. 10 Some Research Methods Used in the Communication Field

- Survey
 - Telephone survey or poll
 - Mail survey
 - Face-to-face or in-person survey
 - Intercept survey
 - E-mail, fax, online, Internet, World Wide Web survey or poll
 - Tracking poll or panel survey
 - Exit poll
- Content Analysis
- Experiment
- Focus Group
- One-on-One Depth Interview
- Observation
- Case Study
- Testing
 - Copy testing
 - Concept testing
 - Trial research
 - Market testing
- Evaluation Research
- Syndicated Research
- Secondary Analysis
- Academic Qualitative Methods
 - Ethnography
 - Reception studies
 - Cultural studies
 - Textual studies
- Multiple Research Methods

Project ideas:

- **Choose one successful media personality or show or product and try to explain its path to success.**
- Re-write a media story (article, etc.) to strip it of public relations embellishments. Notice and analyze the differences, e.g. in terms of audience reactions.
- Evaluate the valence of the moral (or other kind of) impact of the Jerry Springer show.
- Compare the Jerry Springer and the Maury TV shows.

Research in Mass Communication A Practical Guide

Paula M. Poindexter & Maxwell E. McCombs

1. Introduction to Research and the Three-Phase Research Process
2. The Pre-Research Phase and the Decision Maker
3. The Research Phase and the Research Expert
4. The Survey Questionnaire
5. Selecting Survey Respondents
6. Interviewer Training and Survey Data Collection
7. Coding and Processing Survey Data
8. Survey Data Analysis and Statistics
9. Reporting Survey Research Results
10. The Post-Research Phase and the Decision Maker
11. Content Analysis
12. Experiments
13. Focus Groups and One-on-One Depth Interviews
14. More Research Methods
15. Researching Racial and Ethnic Minorities
16. Research in the Academic Environment
17. Research Applications, Ethics, and the Future of Communication Research

SPSS

1. Getting Started
2. Entering and Modifying Data
3. Descriptive Statistics
4. Graphing Data
5. Prediction and Association
6. Parametric Inferential Statistics
7. Nonparametric Inferential Statistics
8. Test Construction
9. Determining the Appropriate Significance Test
10. Practice Exercise Data Sets

Research Methods list of readings, assigned to review & lead class discussion: posted and downloadable from Blackboard

1. 09/07
PR2. CONTENT ANALYSIS & CRISIS PR:
[The Sources Behind the First Days of the Anthrax Attacks: What Can Practitioners Learn?](#) By: Duhe', Sonya Forte. *Public Relations Quarterly*, Spring2005, Vol. 50 Issue 1, p7-12, 6p, 4 charts; [PDF Full Text](#)
2. 09/12
PR4. **OR on SEMANTIC SOCIAL NETWORK ANALYSIS**
Opportunity in paid vs. unpaid public relations internships: A semantic **network analysis**, *Public Relations Review*, Volume 23, Issue 4, Winter 1997, Pages 377-390
Michael L. Maynard [PDF \(960 K\)](#)
3. 09/21
PR10. [The Day the Media Buried Competition](#). By: Kirkpatrick, Miles A.. *Public Relations Quarterly*, Fall2003, Vol. 48 Issue 3, p12-14, 3p [PDF Full Text](#)
4. 09/28
PR5 [Survey: PR students consider themselves to be inadequately prepared to tackle brand strategy](#). By: Robinson, Tom. *Public Relations Tactics*, May2005, Vol. 12 Issue 5, p12-13, 2p [PDF Full Text](#)
5. 10/05
PR18. [War News Media Coverage: What the U.S. Army in Iraq could learn from past combat correspondents](#). By: Steward, Hal D.. *Public Relations Quarterly*, Spring2005, Vol. 50 Issue 1, p35-38, 4p, 1bw [PDF Full Text](#)
6. 10/12
Ads11. Short overview: [Insight through ethnography: researching children in a different way](#). By: Peile, Lucy. *International Journal of Advertising & Marketing to Children*, Oct2003, Vol. 5 Issue 1, p63-67, 5p [PDF Full Text](#) (86K)
7. 10/19
PR7. [Focus Group Interviews: The Internet as a Political Campaign Medium](#). By: Soon Park, Hyun; Marina Choi, Sejung. *Public Relations Quarterly*, Winter2002, Vol. 47 Issue 4, p36, 7p [PDF Full Text](#)
8. 10/26
PR13. [Public Relations and Public Responsibility](#). By: Stone, John D.. *Public Relations Quarterly*, Spring2005, Vol. 50 Issue 1, p31-34, 4p, 1 chart [PDF Full Text](#)
9. 11/02
Ads7. [Does Publicity Outperform Advertising? An Experimental Test of the Third-Party Endorsement](#). By: Cameron, Glen T.. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 1994, Vol. 6 Issue 3, p185, 23p; [PDF Full Text](#)
10. 11/09
BRroadcasting3. [Reading Between the Lines](#). By: Tugend, Alina. *American Journalism Review*, Mar2003, Vol. 25 Issue 2, p46, 6p, 5bw [PDF Full Text](#) (1.3MB)