

TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY
College of Liberal Arts
Department of Communications

COMM 3150: Communication Research Methods (Fall 2020)

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Office location: Zoom or Phone

Office Hours: MW: 2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

TR 2:30 p.m. -3:30 p.m.

Class Time: TR 12:45 p.m. – 2:10 p.m.

Class Location: Online

Contacting your professor: I would normally talk about my office location in the PAC and that you are welcome to stop by, but things are different this term. I will hold virtual office hours, during which time you can schedule an appt. for a Zoom meeting or a phone call. Most issues can be handled during synchronous class meetings or e-mail. To e-mail me, first, please do NOT use the link in eLearn; instead e-mail me at mjeffres@tnstate.edu from your e-mail account. Messages you send through eLearn do NOT come to my e-mail inbox; they are in a separate inbox in eLearn, and I prefer not to use it. Second, if you send me an e-mail or a voicemail, please include the following information: (1) A proper greeting, “Hello Dr. Jeffress...” (2) proper identification, “This is FirstName LastName in your research methods course”, (3) your phone number and best time to reach you (if a voicemail or you want me to call you), and (4) a brief explanation of your request. I will NOT reply to e-mails that do not include items 1 and 2 above. Before you contact me with a question, please reference the syllabus and eLearn. I am not obligated to reply to messages on weekends or after normal business hours. Please do not allow yourself to become overwhelmed. I am here to help you. I genuinely want you to enjoy this class and succeed in it. However, it is unrealistic for you to e-mail me late in the evening, on weekends, or within a narrow window of time before an assignment is due and expect me to reply in short order.

Required Text and Materials: Berger, A. A. (2020). *Media and communication research methods* (5th ed.). Los Angeles: Sage. (One copy is on reserve in library).

Highly Recommended Text: *The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th Ed.)

Course Description: COMM 3150 Communication Research Methods (3). This course introduces students to the research methods scholars and communication professionals use to study the human communication process. Major course topics include the philosophy of scientific research, fundamental considerations in the design of quantitative and qualitative studies (measurement & sampling), methods for gathering qualitative and quantitative data (focus group interviews, experiments, surveys & content analyses) and basic methods for analyzing quantitative and qualitative data. ENGL 1020 and junior or senior standing.

This and other communication studies courses target the following

Communication Studies Learning Outcomes:

This course is part of the core curriculum for the Communication Studies program major, the learning objectives of which are:

LO-01: Specialized knowledge and skills: Students should have knowledge of the history and specializations of Communication Studies as an academic field.

LO-02: Communicate effectively: Students will demonstrate an ability to accomplish communicative goals in oral, written, and/or multi-media forms.

LO-03: Apply communication theories and perspectives to critical inquiry: Students should employ communication theories and perspectives to engage in critical inquiry.

LO-04: Commitment to cultural sensitivity: Students should exemplify a commitment to embrace cultural differences and demonstrate responsibility of cultural sensitivity.

LO-05: Commitment to civic engagement: Students should explain the importance of communication in civic life and advocate a course of action to address community issues.

Student Learning Objectives for this course: Upon successful completion of this course students should be able to:

- Conduct research, synthesize, document, and organize materials for presentation in both written and oral formats
- Demonstrate an ability to work consistently, logically, and dependably within an allotted timeframe.
- Develop a critical understanding and appreciation of the quantitative and qualitative research methods and theories necessary for conducting communication research
- Develop a greater understanding of the principles and processes involved in developing and addressing a specific research question
- Develop core competencies in writing a research proposal
- Effectively utilize the library for conducting research within academic communication and some related discipline(s).

REQUIRED ASSIGNMENTS:

1. Preliminary Prospectus Mini-Assignments:
 - a. General Introduction, Statement of the Problem, & preliminary RQs
 - b. Significance & Purpose and Scope & Limitations
 - c. Annotated Bibliography
 - d. Literature Review
 - e. Methodology and Revised RQs
2. Class Facilitation
3. Tutorials: Students are required to attend four writing center tutorials.
4. Research Proposal Poster/PowerPoint Presentation (students will either create a poster board and video record an oral presentation alongside their poster board or create a PowerPoint slideshow and give oral presentation with slideshow. In either case the presentation must be 4-6 minutes followed by a Q&A period of 2-3 minutes.
5. Final Prospectus Paper (8-12 pages)

METHODS OF EVALUATION*:

		LO1	LO2	LO3	LO4	LO5
Mini-Prospectus						
Assignments	10%		√	√	√	√
Misc. Assignments	10%					
Class Facilitation	10%	√	√	√		
Tutorial Sessions	10%		√			
Research Proposal						
Presentation	20%	√	√	√	√	√
Final Prospectus Paper	40%	√	√	√	√	√

Grade Scale: A: 90% or above; B: 80-89%; C: 70-79%; D: 60-69%; F: 59% or less
 *I reserve the right to administer a mid-term and/or final exam, if I judge that a significant number of students are not doing the reading or engaging in

COURSE POLICIES

1. Attendance. Students are required to attend all classes, tutorials, group project meetings, and complete all readings and assignments. We will have synchronous virtual class meetings via Zoom for most of the term. Toward the end of the term, optional tutorial workshops will be held in place of class for students to receive feedback on their work.

A. Unexcused absences. According to campus policy, all students are required to attend classes regularly and punctually. Students are allowed unexcused absences equal to one week's classes: MW classes two (2) TR classes two (2) and for a single class one (1) during the regular semester. A 5% final grade penalty will be assessed for each unexcused absence in excess of two. Any student who has four (6) unexcused absences will automatically fail the course. No missed assignments, quizzes or exams due to an unexcused absence can be made-up and a zero will be entered as the grade. It is solely the discretion of the instructor to accept any make-up work resulting from an unexcused absence. If make-up work resulting from an unexcused absence is accepted, it will be with a penalty of 5% off per day late.

B. Tardiness. Classes will begin and end on time and roll will be taken. Anyone arriving after roll call will be marked tardy. Anyone leaving class after less than 30 minutes will be marked absent. Anyone leaving class after 30 minutes will be marked tardy. Two tardies equal one unexcused absence.

C. Excused absences. Life happens. Your instructor understands this. However, students must understand that there are many unethical students who try to take advantage of an instructor's empathy. Therefore, any excused absence must be approved at least 48 hours in advance (except for legitimate emergencies, of course) and be verified with appropriate and sufficient documentation. Any student who attempts to submit fake excused absence documentation will automatically fail the course.

D. Understand that even excused absences have consequences and can make it difficult for a student to pass a course. It is the student's responsibility to make up any work missed during an excused absence and to complete any extra assignment that the instructor may require for the student's

absence from class participation. Any make-up work from an excused absence will be accepted without penalty if completed within the terms made by the instructor; however, as a general rule, no make-up work for an excused absence will be accepted past one week from the original due date.

The following is a list of common circumstances that are NOT excused:

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| (1). Traffic | (6). Schedule conflicts with other courses |
| (2). Babysitting | (7). Routine medical/dental appointments |
| (3). Job Interviews | (8). Campus meetings (clubs, advisors, etc.) |
| (4). Job work schedule | (9). Picking up family/friends
from the airport (or anywhere else) |

E. You will get out of this class what you choose to take from it. I strive to be fair, impartial, respectful, and understanding toward every student. I will give my best effort to you as an instructor and provide you with every opportunity to succeed in this course. In return, I expect your best effort as a student and will encourage you to that end. If you want to know about my philosophy of education, then please read my “Useless Degrees” blog on my Web site. You must be disciplined and put in the time and effort to succeed. As the old saying goes, “By the inch, it’s a cinch; by the yard, it’s hard.”

2. R-E-S-P-E-C-T. This course encourages free and critical thinking with minimal censorship of topics. I desire to facilitate an open and safe learning environment. Everyone should feel welcomed to share his/her views and questions without fear of belittlement. We represent different races, ethnicities, ages, religious views, political persuasions, sexual orientations, levels of mental and physical ability, etc. Under no circumstances will disrespect be tolerated. Any student who exhibits disrespectful behavior toward the instructor or any other member of class may be asked to leave or even be dropped from the course. At the same time, may we all realize that just because people disagree with our point of view does not mean they are personally attacking us. Let us talk about issues that matter and stretch ourselves to listen, think critically, and discuss them respectfully.

3. It is your responsibility to attend class and to complete all required reading and assignments prior to attending class in order to be prepared for class and contribute to it. Pop quizzes based on readings and/or prior lectures are always a possibility (Yes, I have a way to administer pop quizzes through a Zoom meeting). If you miss a class meeting for any reason, you will be held responsible for all material covered and announcements made in your absence. You are responsible for contacting a fellow classmate to find out what you missed. You are accountable to the attendance policy listed above.

4. Class will start and end on time. You deserve to get your money’s worth. Therefore, shortchanging yourself and others by engaging in disruptive behaviors such as leaving class early, falling asleep or resting head on desk, packing up books and supplies near the end of class, etc. is unacceptable. Such interruptions/disturbances of class may result in disciplinary action and even being dropped from the class. (Note, that eLearn and Zoom provide me with detailed reports related to your attendance/participation).

Academic Dishonesty: Cheating and/or plagiarism (including copying someone else’s work, using “cheat sheet”, quoting without citation, turning in papers for other class without the professor’s approval) will result in zero points

and be reported to the school. You must do your own work; grading is on the basis of the work *you* do. While I do encourage students to help each other by coaching and critiquing speeches, you must not share actual work. If I find that you have plagiarized work, in part or in whole, from another student or from outside of class, or you have assisted another student in plagiarism, your grade for that assignment will be a zero. If I find that you have shared work — i.e., accessory of plagiarism — your grade for that assignment will be zero.

Legitimately quoted work must be properly marked and attributed. Information and ideas taken from other sources must be attributed, even if they are not direct quotations. If I find that you have copied on a test, or shared answers (giving or receiving), your grade on that test will be zero. No make-ups are allowed on tests or assignments which are in violation of the standards of academic integrity. Any plagiarism, cheating, or other violations of academic integrity, as spelled out in your *TSU Student Handbook*, will earn a grade of zero for that assignment. Two such violations in the semester will result in a grade of F for the semester. Below are some of the guidelines that may help students avoid accidental plagiarism or cheating:

1. Give citation whenever you paraphrase or summarize other people's ideas or words.
2. Quote whenever you use exact words from other people's text.
3. Don't use notes or study aids in quizzes or exams unless the instructor has other arrangements.
4. Don't fabricate information and data in your writing or report.
5. Don't use or circulate previously given exam materials.
6. Don't submit the same paper to more than one class without obtaining prior permission from the class instructor

Disability Accommodation Statement

TSU is committed to creating inclusive learning environments and providing all students with opportunities to learn and excel in their course of study. Any student with a disability or condition which might interfere with his/her class performance or attendance may arrange for reasonable accommodations by visiting the Office of Disability Services (ODS). ODS is located in Kean Hall, room 131 and can be reached at 963-7400 or www.tnstate.edu/disabilityservices. You will be required to speak with ODS staff and provide documentation of the need for an accommodation. If you qualify for an accommodation you will be provided with a document stating what type of classroom accommodations are to be made by the instructor. This document will be provided to your instructor by ODS, but you are encouraged to follow-up with the instructor. Accommodations will only be provided after the instructor receives the accommodation instructions from ODS; accommodations are not retroactive. You must follow this process for each semester that you require accommodations.

Sexual Misconduct, Domestic/Dating Violence, Stalking

TSU recognizes the importance of providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. If you (or someone you know) has experienced or is experiencing any of these incidents, there are resources to assist

you in the areas of accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, and making referrals for assistance with legal protective orders and more.

Please be aware that most TSU employees, including faculty and instructors, are “responsible employees”, meaning that they are required to report incidents of sexual violence, domestic/dating violence or stalking. **This means that if you tell me about a situation involving sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking, I must report the information to the Title IX Coordinator.** Although I have to report the situation, you will still have options about how your situation will be handled, including whether or not you wish to pursue a formal complaint. Our goal is to make sure you are aware of the range of options available to you and have access to the resources you need.

You are encouraged to contact TSU’s Title IX Coordinator to report any incidents of sexual harassment, sexual violence, domestic/dating violence or stalking. The Title IX coordinator is located in the Office of Equity and Inclusion, McWherter Administration Building, Ste. 260 and can be reached at 963-7494 or 963-7438. For more information about Title IX and TSU’s SART or policies and procedures regarding sexual, domestic/dating violence and stalking please visit: www.tnstate.edu/equity.

If you wish to speak to someone confidentially, who is not required to report, you can contact the TSU Counseling Center, located in the basement of Wilson Hall, at 963-5611 or TSU Student Health Services, located in the Floyd Payne Campus Center room 304, at 963-5084. You may also contact the following off campus resources: Sexual Assault Center of Nashville at 1-800-879-1999 or www.sacenter.org or the Tennessee Coalition to End Domestic & Sexual Violence at 615-386-9406 or www.tncoalition.org.

Harassment & Discrimination

Tennessee State University is firmly committed to compliance with all federal, state and local laws that prohibit harassment and discrimination based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, disability, religion, retaliation, veteran status and other protected categories. TSU will not subject any student to discrimination or harassment and no student shall be excluded from participation in nor denied the benefits of any educational program based on their protected class. If a student believes they have been discriminated against or harassed because of a protected class, they are encouraged to contact the Office of Equity and Inclusion at McWherter Administration Building, Ste. 260, 615-963-7494 or 963-7438, www.tnstate.edu/equity.

CLASS AND ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE COURSE SCHEDULE

Please note the schedule given below is a tentative schedule and changes can be made at the instructor’s discretion. To keep on top of any possible changes in the course schedule, regular attendance in class is necessary (For information regarding TNeCampus Academic Calendar, access the website at: http://www.tnstate.edu/academic_affairs/documents/AcademicCalendar_2020_2021.pdf)

Dates	Chapters & Topics	Assignment Due
8/18 T	Ice Breaker & Syllabus	
8/20 TH	Discussion of Ch. 1	Research Ideas
8/25 T	Discussion of Ch. 2	What, Why & How of Research
8/27 TH	Workshop on Topics	Come to workshop with at least 2 research topic ideas written out on paper.
9/1 T	Zoom Library Workshop	
9/3 TH	Workshop for assignment 1	
9/8 T	Zoom Literature Review Workshop	Make 1st appt to Writing Center
9/10 TH	Zoom Literature Review Workshop	Final approved topic due
9/15 T	Key points about academic writing and APA style	Readings will be assigned
9/17 TH	Group 1 presents Ch. 3	Assignment 1: General introduction to topic and statement of problem and preliminary RQs due (250-400 words).
9/22 T	Group 2 presents Ch. 4	Make 2nd appt to Writing Center Now is time to reach out to a librarian for help with Assignment 2
9/24 TH	Workshop for assignment 3	
9/29 T	Group 3 presents Ch. 5	Assignment 2: Annotated bibliography of 10 sources due. (100-150 words per source.)
10/1 TH	Group 4 presents Ch. 7	
10/6 T	Group 5 presents Ch. 8	Assignment 3: Significance and Purpose and Scope and Limitations due (200-250 words)
10/8 TH	Group 6 presents Ch. 10	
10/13 T	Group 7 presents Ch. 11	Make 3rd appt to Writing Center
10/15 TH	Group 8 presents Ch. 12	
10/20 T	Group 9 presents Ch. 13	Assignment 4: Literature Review Due & revised RQs (if applicable) (750-1250 words)
10/22 TH	Group 10 presents Ch. 14	
10/27 T	Workshop for assignment 5	Make 4th appt to Writing Center
10/29 TH	Group 11 presents Ch. 15	
11/3 T	Workshop on presenting a research proposal	Assignment 5: Methodology due (300-500 words)
11/5 TH	No Class	Work on presentations
11/10 T	Student Presentations	Students in Groups 9-11, participate in Presentation Discussion Forum
11/12 TH	Student Presentations	Students in Groups 6-8, participate in Presentation Discussion Forum
11/17 T	Student Presentations	Students in Groups 3-5, participate in Presentation Discussion Forum
11/19 TH	Student Presentations	Students in Groups 1-2, participate in Presentation Discussion Forum
11/24 T	No Class	Final research prospectus draft due in eLearn by midnight 12:45 p.m. (8-12 pages plus References)

IMPORTANT NOTE/DISCLAIMER: This syllabus may be modified at any point in the semester based on the instructor's evaluation of the class needs. In the event that changes/adjustments are necessary students will be informed well in advance.



Syllabus Agreement Form

Student Name (please print): _____ T#: _____

Semester/Year: Fall 2020 Professor's Name: Dr. Michael S. Jeffress

Class Name: COMM 3150-Communication Research Methods Class/Section#: N/A

This form verifies that you have read the contents of this course syllabus. By signing this form, you understand enrolling in this course equals following the policies and procedures outlined by the Professor in this syllabus. You agree to meet the scheduled deadlines and to adhere to the attendance policy.

Often students do not earn the grade they believe they should. This lack of success usually stems from not reading the syllabus, not adhering to the assignment deadlines, not regularly attending class and being tardy to class. You have been informed of the contents of this syllabus and agree, by signing below, to achieve success by adhering to the policies therein.

Print Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____