

Department: Communication Sciences

Course No: COMM 200Q

Title: Research Methods in Communication

Credits: 3

Contact: Ross Buck

Catalog Copy: -200Q. Research Methods in Communication (Formerly offered as COMS 231Q) Either semester. Three credits. Prerequisite: COMM 100 or COMS 102 or consent of instructor. Recommended preparation: MATH 101 or equivalent. The scientific approach as it specifically applies to communication.

Q Criteria: This course focuses on the application of quantitative research methods to investigate principles of communication. The first portion of the course addresses issues of study design and measurement of communication variables. The rest of the course focuses on the quantitative analysis of communication data, including descriptive and inferential statistics. First, the algebraic equations for a variety of statistics are taught (e.g., mean, median, mode, variance, standard deviation, z-scores, standard error, confidence intervals, t-test for the difference between two means, chi square test of independence, Pearson product moment correlation). Second, students complete both ungraded and graded problem sets designed to test their ability to apply and calculate these statistics. Students are required to show their work and are graded on how they solved the problem at each stage, not just their answer. Third, the final exam also involves problems that require students to (a) make decisions about appropriate statistics, (b) calculate some statistics, and (c) interpret the results of statistical tests.

Role of Grad Students: -Typically we teach one mass lecture section, taught by a faculty member each semester. About four lab/discussion sections are taught by experienced TAs under the direction of the faculty member teaching the lecture portion. TAs have had at least the first two courses in our graduate quantitative research methods sequence and are selected because of their proficiency with quantitative statistical analysis.

Supplementary Information: A example syllabus (with heading Coms 231q) and problem sets (problem set #1, #2, summer #2 have been sent with this proposal. The Q committee should have a total of five documents related to this course, including the proposal. These documents are on file in the GEOC office.