COM 802: Communication Research II  
Spring, 2007 - Syllabus

| Professor:     | Gwen M. Wittenbaum, Ph.D.               |
| Office Location: | 559 Communication Arts Bldg.           |
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| Email:         | gwittenb@msu.edu                        |
| Office Hours:  | Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1:30 – 2:30 p.m., and by appointment |

**Class Meets:** Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:20 a.m. – 12:10 p.m. in room 474 COM.

**Required Readings**


Articles and book chapters are posted on Angel (http://angel.msu.edu)

**Course Description**

This course provides in-depth coverage of research design and measurement. As a companion to its precursor, COM 801, this course outlines how to measure constructs of interest and design research to test issues of theoretical importance. Students will learn a variety of research methods, such as experimental and survey designs, laboratory and field research, and methods of studying individuals and groups. The course exposes students to measurement issues (e.g., reliability and validity) and approaches (e.g., self-report measures, behavioral observation and coding). Students will practice evaluating the design and measurement of research articles and reporting their own research.

**Course Objectives**

1. To understand and implement a variety of research designs.
2. To understand and implement a variety of measurement techniques.
3. To practice critical evaluation of research articles.
4. To facilitate the independent conduction and report of research.
Grading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paper 1: Article review</td>
<td>Jan. 18</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper 2: Article review</td>
<td>Feb. 8</td>
<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam 1</td>
<td>TBA</td>
<td>75</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper 3: Article review</td>
<td>March 1</td>
<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam 2</td>
<td>March 29</td>
<td>75</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper 4: Research proposal DRAFT</td>
<td>April 19</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper 4: Research proposal</td>
<td>April 30</td>
<td>75</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
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<td>65</td>
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The final scale employed will be no more stringent than the one listed below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>360 - 400</td>
<td>90 - 100%</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>344 - 359</td>
<td>86 - 89.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>312 - 343</td>
<td>78 - 85.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>280 - 311</td>
<td>70 - 77.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>240 - 279</td>
<td>60 - 69.75%</td>
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Exams

Two exams will be given during the course of the term but will be completed outside of the classroom. Exam questions will be sent via email to students, who will have 2-3 hours to return answers via email. The first exam will cover topics related to the experimental method, whereas the second exam will cover topics related to survey design and measurement. The second exam will not be cumulative. Exams will consist of essay and short answer questions. Students are permitted to use course readings and notes to prepare exam answers. Each exam is worth a maximum of 75 points.

Article Reviews

Each student is required write a formal review of three different articles. The first paper involves summarizing and evaluating features of the Burgoon, Buller, Ebesu, and Rockwell (1994) article. The second paper will focus on evaluating the research design of an article submitted for publication consideration. Students will play the role of ad hoc reviewer, writing a formal review and comments to the editor. The third paper will focus on evaluating the measurement in Johnson and Bechler (1998). Details follow.
Paper 1 – Read the Burgoon, Buller, Ebesu, and Rockwell (1994) article and write a review that summarizes and evaluates features of the experiment. Type and double-space the paper, keeping it to approximately 7 pages or less. Paper 1 is worth a maximum of 30 points.

Summarize and evaluate…
1. the rationale for the study and predictions.
2. the study’s method (design, manipulations, procedure, measurements).
3. the main (important, interesting) results from the study.

In particular, focus on problems with the study’s method. Identify specific flaws in the design and procedure and suggest ways for improvement (e.g., a better way to manipulate one of the independent variables). You may also comment on other issues in the article such as the quality of the literature review, analysis of data, appropriateness of conclusions, and writing style. But, the focus of your analysis should be on the methods.

Paper 2 – Perform a review for an actual manuscript submitted to OBHDP. Evaluate the adequacy of any of the following: literature review, theory, hypotheses, research design, measures, analyses, and clarity of presentation. In particular, focus on the research design and suggest improvements. Write a review that could be shared with the authors and a confidential letter with ratings that could be sent to the editor. There is no page limit for this paper, which is worth a maximum of 40 points.

Paper 3 – Perform a review of Johnson and Bechler (1998). Evaluate the adequacy of any of the following: literature review, theory, hypotheses, research design, measures, analyses, and clarity of presentation. In particular, focus on measurement issues (e.g., reliability, validity) and suggest improvements. Write a review that could be shared with the authors and a confidential letter with ratings that could be sent to the editor. There is no page limit for this paper, which is worth a maximum of 40 points.

Research Proposal

Each student is required to write a proposal for a research project. Students are expected to develop proposed research in their area of interest that is doable (i.e., something that the student intends to conduct or could conduct as a graduate student at MSU). Papers should be approximately 20-25 double-spaced, typed pages following APA format. The research proposal is worth a maximum of 75 points and should be sent via email attachment to gwittenb@msu.edu by 12 noon on Monday, April 30.

During the final week of the semester, students will present their research proposal idea to the class. All students are expected to attend these presentations and actively discuss each student's proposed research project. As such, participation scores will be lowered for students who miss these classes. To facilitate these discussions, students will be required to submit a paper draft to the class by Thursday, April 19 for the instructor and students to read before the class discussions. Additional information regarding the research proposal will be provided later in the semester.
**Class Participation/Preparation**

Students are expected to 1) read the assigned articles before class, 2) come to each class prepared to discuss the reading assignments, and 3) actively participate in the class (e.g., respond to questions and comments posed by others, ask questions about the readings). Students additionally may be asked to complete small homework assignments. Participating in class does not just mean talking. Good class participation involves coming to class on time with questions about the readings to share with the class, volunteering answers to questions that are insightful and provide contrasts and integration, actively listening to others' contributions to discussion, and moving the discussion along toward a shared understanding. Comments about personal experiences can be helpful in discussion as long as a connection is made between the experience and the assigned readings. Class participation is worth a maximum of 65 points.

**Policy**

In general, late work will not be accepted. If circumstances should arise that cause you to turn in an assignment late then it is your responsibility to contact the instructor and make the request before the assignment due date. Acceptance of the request will remain at the discretion of the instructor.

Plagiarism is a serious offense. All written work that you submit in this class must be your own and unassisted by the efforts of other scholars or students, past or present. Each student is responsible for being familiar with the behaviors that Michigan State University considers to be academically dishonest (see General Student Regulation 1.00 in Spartan Life and the homepage of the MSU ombudsman for definitions and policies on cheating and plagiarism). Any student engaging in academic dishonesty will receive, at minimum, zero points on the assignment and may receive a “0.0” final grade per the instructor’s discretion.
**Class Schedule and Reading List**

**WEEK 1**

**Tues., January 9: Introduction to the class**

Crano & Brewer, Ch. 1


**Thurs., January 11: Internal and External Validity, Pt. I**

Crano & Brewer, Ch. 2

Newspaper articles about the Kitty Genovese murder (class handout)


**WEEK 2**

**Tues., January 16: Internal and External Validity, Pt. II**


**Thurs., January 18: Evaluating Research**


**PAPER 1 DUE IN CLASS: ARTICLE REVIEW**
WEEK 3

Tues., January 23: Experimental Design

Crano & Brewer, Ch. 4


Thurs., January 25: The Laboratory Experiment

Crano & Brewer, Ch. 5, 6


WEEK 4

Tues., January 30: Confounds and Manipulation Checks


**Thurs., February 1: Using Experiments to Examine Process**


**WEEK 5**

**Tues., February 6: Field and Quasi-Experiments**

Crano & Brewer, Ch. 7, 9 (pp. 146-161)


**Thurs., February 8: Evaluating Research**

*OBHDP* manuscript to be provided in class.

** PAPER 2 DUE IN CLASS: ARTICLE REVIEW

**February 9-16: Exam 1**

** EXAM 1 will be scheduled outside of class sometime in this date block.

**WEEK 6**

**Tues., February 13: Introduction to Measurement**

Crano & Brewer, Ch. 14, 15


**Thursday, February 15: Reliability**

Crano & Brewer, Ch. 3, pp. 36-45.


**WEEK 7**

**Tues., February 20: Construct Validity**

Crano & Brewer, Ch. 3, pp. 45-57.


**Thurs., February 22: Convergent and Discriminant Validity: MTMM**

WEEK 8

Tues., February 27: The Self-Construal Debate: An Example of Validity


Thurs., March 1: Evaluating Research


** PAPER 3 DUE IN CLASS: ARTICLE REVIEW

WEEK 9
SPRING BREAK, NO CLASSES

WEEK 10

Tues., March 13: Survey Design and Sampling

Crano & Brewer, Ch. 10


Thurs., March 15: Interviewing

Crano & Brewer, Ch. 12


WEEK 11

Tues., March 20: Questionnaire Design


Thurs., March 22: Behavioral Observation

Crano & Brewer, Ch. 11.


WEEK 12

Tues., March 27: Content Analysis

Crano & Brewer, Ch. 13


Thurs., March 29

** EXAM 2 will be scheduled during class time on this date.

WEEK 13

Tues., April 3: Methods of Studying Dyads and Groups, Pt. I

Crano & Brewer, Ch. 17


Thurs., April 5: Methods of Studying Dyads and Groups, Pt. II


WEEK 14

Tues., April 10: The Diary Method


Thurs., April 12: Social Cognition Methods

Visit the IAT website and take one or two tests: https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/demo/index.jsp

Crano & Brewer, Ch. 16


WEEK 15

Tues., April 17: Psychophysiological Measures


Thurs., April 19: Sexism in Research


** PAPER 4 DRAFTS DUE IN CLASS (or by email attachment to instructor and students)

WEEK 16

Tues., April 24: Discussion of student projects

Students will read one another’s paper drafts and provide feedback.

Thurs., April 26: Discussion of student projects

Students will read one another’s paper drafts and provide feedback.

WEEK 17

Monday, April 30

** PAPER 4 DUE BY 12 NOON: RESEARCH PROPOSAL