

MC 6110

QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS

Spring 2009

Class	Instructor
Day: M	Name: Jason B. Reineke, Ph. D.
Times: 6:00 pm – 9:00 pm	E-mail: jreineke@mtsu.edu
Room: 230 John Bragg Mass Communication Building (COMM)	Office: 264 John Bragg Mass Communication Building (COMM)
Web Site: https://elearn.mtsu.edu Login using Pipeline username and password, click course link	Office Hours: 9:00am – 11:30, Tu & W During class break (see below) By appointment TBA

Required Texts

Babbie, E., Halley, F. S., Zaino, J. S. (2007). *Adventures in social research: Data analysis using SPSS 14.0 and 15.0 for Windows*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Hayes, A. F. (2005). *Statistical methods for communication science*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Earlbaum Associates.

Readings uploaded to D2L.

Catalog Description

Techniques of communication research emphasizing survey and experimental methods. Sampling, questionnaire construction, data gathering, and statistical methods.

Reasonable Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

If you have a disability that may require assistance or accommodations, you should speak with me about these issues and contact the Office of Disabled Student Services (0120 KUC, dssemail@mtsu.edu, 615-898-2783) immediately if you have not already done so. I can only make accommodations for a disability with the guidance of DSS.

Academic Integrity and Misconduct

Academic integrity will be maintained in this course and academic misconduct will not be tolerated in this course. If I so much as suspect academic misconduct in this course, I am required by the university to report it to the Office of Judicial Affairs and Mediation Services (<http://frank.mtsu.edu/~judaff/>). Academic misconduct includes plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, and facilitation. See <http://frank.mtsu.edu/~judaff/integrity.htm> .

All homework assignments, the midterm exam and the final project in this course are to be completed, in their entirety, by you alone as an individual student unless I specifically indicate otherwise in writing. There is no group work in this course. You are not to provide assistance to other students. You are not to request assistance or advice of any kind from anyone other than appropriate university representatives. Appropriate university representatives include library staff, DSS staff (for students dealing with the impact of a disability), and me (of course).

If a student in this course is found responsible for academic misconduct, the task in question will receive a score of zero points.

If you have a question about academic integrity or misconduct, just ask. It will be much easier for everyone involved to talk about it beforehand than to deal with a hearing and punishment later. Since this is a graduate course, I expect mature conduct.

Coursework and Grading

Your grade in this course will be determined by your performance on three primary types of coursework: homework assignments, a midterm exam and a final project. Point values for each of these are:

5 homework assignments	
at 10 pts. each	50 pts.
Midterm exam	50 pts.
Final project	100 pts.
TOTAL	200 pts.

Generally, final letter grades will be assigned at 10% increments, with A 90% (180 pts.) or more, B 80-89% (160-179 pts.), C 70-79% (140-159 pts.), D 60-69% (120-139), and F 59% (119 pts) or less. Plus/minus determinations will be based on proximity of % to the cutoffs. I reserve the right to modify this system downward depending on the distribution of grades. In other words, if

only 1 student exceeds the 90% criterion but 5 hit 89%, I may choose to move the A cutoff down to 89%. I do not grade on a curve. You get the grade that you deserve regardless of how the class as a whole performs.

Handouts detailing the specifics of each evaluative tasks will be provided as relevant throughout the course.

Class Format

We have a three-hour class, and three hours is a long time to talk about research design and statistics. As such, we'll break things up. Generally speaking, we'll meet for eighty minutes to begin the class. We'll then take a twenty-minute break. Since we have a night course, and I know it is impractical for many of you to attend my regular office hours, the primary reason for this break is so that you can ask questions, meet with me one-on-one, or schedule a meeting outside of class if necessary. Obviously, you can also use the time to eat, make phone calls, take a deep breath and clear your mind, etc. We'll then typically have about eighty more minutes of class. We can discuss this format on the first night of class, and modify it if it is reasonable to do so.

Readings should be done before the class meeting they are listed under on the course schedule below. The Babbie et al. (2007) text is a highly applied, and quite rudimentary guide to data analysis and using SPSS. Readings from Babbie et al. (2007) should be considered introductions to analysis. The Hayes (2005) text is the best book on statistics in the field of communication and includes many excellent examples, as well as more in-depth, detailed discussions of the statistical topics we'll discuss in this class. We will also cover the three basic quantitative research designs in communication research: surveys, content analysis, and experiments. Since we'll be spending more time on statistics, and I didn't want to require you to purchase a third expensive text book for this course, I will make readings on design available to you through the course D2L page. These readings are for your individual, educational use. You should only retain one copy of each of these reading, discard them at the end of the course, and not distribute them to others.

Tentative Nature of this Syllabus

This syllabus represents a contract in the works. Events that occur over the semester may require changes to the administration of the course and therefore the syllabus. Any changes will

be announced in class and on the D2L site. It is your responsibility to keep up with any such modifications and be aware of current policies, due dates, etc.

Course Schedule

Week	Topic(s) / Reading	Assignments, etc.
<p><i>Week 0</i> January 12-16 Reading and Notes</p>	<p><i>Back to School</i> No class No readings</p>	
<p><i>Week 1</i> January 19-23 Reading and Notes</p>	<p><i>No class</i> MLK Day No readings</p>	
<p><i>Week 2</i> January 26-30</p>	<p><i>Introduction</i> Tonight we'll go over administration of course, determine what you know already, and begin our discussion of social science research and statistical analysis. Readings: 1) Hayes (2005) Chapters 1-3 (pp.1-44) 2) Babbie et al. (2007) Chapters 1-3 (pp. 1-34)</p>	
<p><i>Week 3</i> February 2-6 Reading and Notes</p>	<p><i>Research Design 1: Surveys</i> <i>Getting Started with SPSS</i> We'll talk about considerations in developing and administering questionnaires, and take a first look at SPSS. Readings: 1) <i>In D2L</i>: From Baxter & Babbie (2004). Survey Research. 2) Babbie et al. (2007) Chapter 4 and 5 (pp. 35-80) Chapters 7 and 8 (pp. 103-146)</p>	<p>Homework 1 Assigned 02-02 Due 02-06</p>

Week	Topic(s) / Reading	Assignments, etc.
<p><i>Week 4</i> February 9-13 Reading and Notes</p>	<p><i>Research Design 2: Content Analysis</i> <i>Data Description</i> We'll start by discussing ways of analyzing media content. Then, we'll discuss the basics of data analysis, including graphing, descriptive statistics, and reliability. 1) <i>In D2L</i>: From Baxter & Babbie (2004). Quantitative Text Analysis. 2) Hayes (2005) Chapter 4 (pp.45-82) Chapter 6 (pp. 103- 128) 3) Babbie et al. (2007) Chapter 6 (pp. 81-102)</p>	<p>Homework 2 Assigned 02-09 Due 02-13</p>
<p><i>Week 5</i> February 16-20 Reading and Notes</p>	<p><i>Research Design 3: Experimentation</i> <i>Project Consultation 1</i> About half the class will deal with a discussion of experimental designs. Then, I'll meet with each of you to discuss your idea(s) for your final project. 1) <i>In D2L</i>: From Baxter & Babbie (2004). Experiments.</p>	
<p><i>Week 6</i> February 23-27 Reading and Notes</p>	<p><i>Bivariate Relationships and Hypothesis Testing I</i> This week's discussion will focus on analyses appropriate for examine the relationship between various combinations of two types of variables, and how to use statistical analysis to determine whether the evidence suggests a <i>significant</i> relationship. 1) Babbie et al. (2007) Chapters 13 and 14 (pp. 223-292)</p>	
<p><i>Week 7</i> March 2-6 Reading and Notes</p>	<p><i>Bivariate Relationships and Hypothesis Testing II</i> Continues discussion from week 6 1) Hayes (2005) Chapter 8 (pp. 158-182) Chapters 10 and 11 (pp. 210-270)</p>	<p>Homework 3 Assigned 03-02 Due 03-06</p>

<i>Week</i>	<i>Topic(s) / Reading</i>	<i>Assignments, etc.</i>
<i>Week 8</i> <i>March 9-13</i> Reading and Notes	<i>Spring Break</i> No readings	
<i>Week 9</i> <i>March 16-20</i> Reading and Notes	<i>Midterm</i> <i>Project Consultation 2</i> You will have two hours to complete the midterm. The rest of class will be used for consultations/updates on your projects	MIDTERM
<i>Week 10</i> <i>March 23-27</i> Reading and Notes	<i>Mixed Methods</i> <i>Simple Linear Regression</i> A brief discussion of how principles of different designs are sometimes combined in research. A first look at regression. 1) Hayes (2005) Chapter 12 (pp. 271-309) 2) Babbie et al. (2007) Chapter 16 (pp. 307-326)	
<i>Week 11</i> <i>March 30-April 03</i> Reading and Notes	<i>Multiple Linear Regression</i> Multiple linear regression, the communication scientist's most important tool. 1) Hayes (2005) Chapter 13 (pp. 310-365)	Homework 4 Assigned 03-30 Due 04-03
<i>Week 12</i> <i>April 6-10</i> Reading and Notes	<i>ANOVA</i> Multicategorical analysis techniques 1) Babbie et al. (2007) Re-read pp. 281-285 2) Hayes (2005) Chapters 15 (pp. 366-406)	Homework 5 Assigned 04-06 Due 04-10

<i>Week</i>	<i>Topic(s) / Reading</i>	<i>Assignments, etc.</i>
<p><i>Week 13</i> <i>April 13-17</i> Reading and Notes</p>	<p><i>Loose Ends</i></p> <p>I'll do an example project presentation so you have an idea what's expected (I'll also post an example response in D2L). We'll have sign-ups for the "formal" final project meetings. The remainder of the time will be for informal project consultation.</p>	<p>Final Project OUTLINE Due 04-17</p>
<p><i>Week 14</i> <i>April 20-24</i> Reading and Notes</p>	<p><i>Final Project Meetings 1</i></p> <p>Required twenty-minute meetings to discuss the status of your final project. Keep alert for sign-up opportunity.</p>	
<p><i>Week 15</i> <i>April 27-May 1</i> Reading and Notes</p>	<p><i>Final Project Meetings 2</i></p> <p>Required twenty-minute meetings to discuss the status of your final project. Keep alert for sign-up opportunity.</p>	<p>Final Project PAPER Due 05-01</p>
<p><i>Week 16</i> <i>May 4-8</i> Reading and Notes</p>	<p><i>Presentations</i></p> <p>Class is still MONDAY AT 6:00pm Each student will deliver a 5- to 10-minute presentation on her/his project. I will determine the order of presentation. Attendance for all presentations required.</p>	