Required text and course materials


Additional readings posted on WebCampus (http://webcampus.nevada.edu).

Course overview

Course description

Regardless of your intentions with your MA degree, having a basic competence in social scientific research methods is a critical component to graduate work. It provides you with the knowledge and skills necessary for designing and conducting your own research, critiquing others’ research, and critically consuming research outside of academia. It is extremely important you understand how research is planned, conducted, analyzed, and presented as well as the factors that impact its quality. Therefore, the purpose of this course is to acquaint you with the basic concepts and issues involved with research methods used by social scientists.

This course will focus empirical research methods by examining issues surrounding research ethics, validity and reliability, sampling, survey design, experimental methods, thematic and content analysis, and basic statistical methods. Throughout the course, you will be asked to examine research and test your knowledge by critiquing exiting methodologies. The end result of this course should be an improvement in your ability to conduct sound empirical research and analyze the work of others.

Course goals & learning objectives

By the end of this course, I expect you to

- understand the commitments, goals, basic processes, and underlying components of science and the scientific process
- understand and apply the ethical decisions involved in conducting sound research, including current IRB procedures, and the historical developments that contributed to current ethical guidelines and IRB procedures
- know the connections between conceptualization and operationalization of variables
- know the threats to validity and reliability
- know issues surrounding sampling and recruitment for social scientific research
- be aware of the strengths, weakness, and implications of different research methods
- be familiar with basic statistical procedures for answering research questions and testing hypotheses
- know and use the correct terminology of social scientific research
- critically evaluate research methods and outcomes in professional journals and popular media
- design, execute, and report a social scientific research project

By achieving these course goals, you also will work towards achieving several Learning Objectives for your BA in Communication Studies.

Course prerequisites

You must be of graduate standing and have successfully completed the CITI/OPRS training (by no later than T Jan 29, provide me the reference number provided with the title “Stage 1. Basic Course Passed” to
Evidence successful completion). Experience with and access to computers, email, WebCampus, and the UNLV library (the actual building and online resources) also are necessary.

Course format
Class days will consist of lectures, discussions, examples, and applications. These will be based on and extend from the readings and assignments you are to have prepared prior to class attendance. Your success and the success of this course are dependent on your preparation and participation. Therefore, I do expect you to be actively engaged in the lecture and ideas we will be discussing. You are responsible for all information discussed in class and covered in readings. It is your responsibility to achieve the goals of this course through the opportunities provided to you.

The subject matter of this course can be complex and difficult. Therefore, it is essential that you provide feedback, ask questions, and be involved in discussions in order to indicate what you are struggling with, test your understanding, and obtain additional information and clarification. This will provide a more rewarding experience for everyone. This course may be rigorous and time consuming for many students. It is vital that you keep up with readings, assignments, lectures, and contribute to class discussions in productive ways.

- The best way to make sure that you understand the material is to participate in the discussions and come to class prepared by reading thoroughly. Participation does not necessarily mean talking a lot. Providing valuable insights and helping others do the same is absolutely necessary for participation. Participation also includes being polite, courteous, and respectful in your responses to others’ ideas. Any time you have concerns or questions about someone’s conduct in class, or if you have other issues you would like to discuss, please feel free to contact me.
- You may use your computer and/or e-reader in class; however, cell phones, iPods, etc. are not permitted. If at any time your technology use becomes a distraction to you, your peers, or the instructor (e.g., facebook is open, text messaging, taking pictures, etc.), you will be asked to put it away and may lose the privilege to have electronic devices in class. If there is an emergency for which you are expecting a phone call or text message (e.g., your father is in the hospital), please notify Dr. McManus at the beginning of the class session. Otherwise, all phone calls are subject to being answered or text messages responded to by Dr. McManus (i.e., turn off your phone and put it out of eye sight during class time).
- Arrive to class on time. Tardy arrivals and leaving class early (one minute or one hour late) interrupt your opportunity and others’ ability to concentrate and learn. You also may miss important announcements and other information that may benefit you in the future. If you do arrive late, enter quietly and avoid becoming a distraction to other class members.
- The more you expose yourself to research (regardless of the metatheoretical perspective, methods used, or area of focus), the more you understand and appreciate the research process. In addition to attending Comm Studies Brown Bags, I encourage you to attend GUA College Colloquia and Scholar Series.

Policies and procedures

Academic conduct
- Academic integrity is a legitimate concern for every member of the campus community; all share in upholding the fundamental values of honesty, trust, respect, fairness, responsibility and professionalism. By choosing to join the UNLV community, you accept the Academic Misconduct Policy. Students enrolling in UNLV assume the obligation to conduct themselves in a manner compatible with UNLV’s function as an educational institution. When faced with difficult choices, I encourage you to always take the ethical path.
- One example of academic misconduct is plagiarism. Plagiarism is using the words or ideas of another, from the Internet or any source, without proper citation of the sources.
- Academic misconduct also may include, but is not limited to, “cut and copy”-ing from original work, cheating on an examination, stealing or having unauthorized possession of examinations, substituting one person for another at an examination, submitting another person’s work, submitting your own work
that you submitted in another course, facilitating acts of dishonesty by others, falsifying data, fabricating citations, and tampering with the academic work of other students.

- For more information, see the [Student Academic Misconduct Policy](#) (approved December 9, 2005).

**Copyright**

UNLV requires all members of the University community to familiarize themselves and to follow [copyright and fair use requirements](#). You are individually and solely responsible for violations of copyright and fair use laws. UNLV will neither protect nor defend you nor assume any responsibility for employee or student violations of fair use laws. Violations of copyright laws could subject you to federal and state civil penalties and criminal liability, as well as disciplinary action under University policies.

**Attendance**

Class attendance is mandatory. Attendance is critical for keeping up with this course, mastering the material, and participation. A missed class will have detrimental consequences on your final grade (5% deduction for each class missed). Tardiness is equally unacceptable. A late arrival and/or leaving class early (regardless of how late or early) is the same as an absence. This holds for mid-class session breaks. Should you miss class, it is your responsibility to notify Dr. McManus and to obtain the information missed from a class member.

Any student missing class quizzes, examinations, or any other class or lab work because of observance of religious holidays shall be given an opportunity during that semester to make up missed work. The make-up will apply to the religious holiday absence only. It shall be the responsibility of the student to notify the instructor within the first 14 calendar days of the course for fall and spring courses (excepting modular courses), or within the first 7 calendar days of the course for summer and modular courses, of his or her intention to participate in religious holidays which do not fall on state holidays or periods of class recess. For additional information, review the [Religious Holidays Policy](#).

**Late work and incompletes**

All work is due at the time and date specified on the course schedule. Additional time will not be provided. **Late work is not accepted.** Incompletes will not be awarded (except in extreme circumstances). An inherent part of any course is to prepare you for real life circumstances outside the student role (e.g., convention presentations, future graduate work, and professional employment). Late submissions, if accepted, will result in a substantial grade deduction (10% per day, not class period). If you arrive late on the day of the exam, you have only the remaining class time to complete the exam.

**Written work**

All written work must be submitted as a .doc or .docx and follow [APA 6th edition](#) standards for formatting and citations. Work submitted in any other format will be not be graded. Work must be uploaded to the appropriate WebCampus assignment dropbox by the time specified on the syllabus. If it is submitted in the wrong dropbox, via email, or any other method, it will be considered “not submitted”. The only exception to this policy is the weekly discussion questions, which may be submitted in the body of an email.

**University Resources**

**Title IX**

Title IX maintains that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and support applied to offenses against other protected categories (e.g., race, national origin, etc.). This may take place on campus or off campus with university affiliated individuals. If you (or someone you know) has been harassed or assaulted because of sex or gender and feel this hurts your ability or opportunity to a fair and equitable educational experience, please speak with someone. UNLV provides several [Title IX resources](#), and you may talk with a [Title IX Coordinator](#).
Rebelmail
E-mail is appropriate for brief questions that need short responses. It is not a substitute for office hours. I make every effort to respond to email within 24 hours, but I do not guarantee a response in 24 hours.

By policy, faculty and staff should e-mail students' Rebelmail accounts only. Rebelmail is UNLV’s official e-mail system for students. It is one of the primary ways students receive official university communication such as information about deadlines, major campus events, and announcements. All UNLV students receive a Rebelmail account after they have been admitted to the university. Students' e-mail prefixes are listed on class rosters. The suffix is always @unlv.nevada.edu. Emailing within WebCampus is acceptable.

Disability Resource Center (DRC)
The UNLV Disability Resource Center (SSC-A 143, 702-895-0866) provides resources for students with disabilities. If you feel that you have a disability, please make an appointment with a Disabilities Specialist at the DRC to discuss what options may be available to you. If you are registered with the UNLV Disability Resource Center, bring your Academic Accommodation Plan from the DRC to me during office hours so that we may work together to develop strategies for implementing the accommodations to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course. Any information you provide is private and will be treated as such. To maintain confidentiality, do not approach me during class to discuss your accommodation needs.

UNLV Libraries
Students may consult with a librarian on research needs. For this class, the subject librarian is Susie Skarl. UNLV Libraries provides resources to support students' access to information. Discovery, access, and use of information are vital skills for academic work and for successful post-college life. Access library resources and ask questions at https://www.library.unlv.edu/.

The Academic Success Center (ASC)
Information can be found at http://www.unlv.edu/asc.

UNLV Writing Center
Information can be found at http://writingcenter.unlv.edu/.

Transparency in Learning & Teaching
Information can be found at https://www.unlv.edu/provost/teachingandlearning and https://www.unlv.edu/provost/transparency.

Assignments
Discussion leadership & activity (10%)
Once during the semester, in dyads, you will develop and present a 30 minute hands-on class discussion-activity that examines and applies the concepts and methods covered in the unit. The goal is to provide students an opportunity to practice using the concepts and methods in a way that improves their mastery of the material. These will be presented at the start of the assigned class session. See assignment for details.

Unit assignments (best 4 of 5 @ 5% each = 20% total)
After the conclusion of each unit, you will complete an individual assignment to help you prepare your final research paper and review course material for exams. Each unit assignment will require you to review the ideas covered in the unit, apply them, and analyze the application using course materials to help develop your final research project. All assignments must comply with APA 6th edition (2nd printing) standards for formatting and editing as well as all technical expectations for course work (see grading philosophy below). All five assignments must be submitted (and completed in earnest). See assignment for details.
In-house exam on terms (20%)
A significant part of research methods involves learning the language/terminology. Therefore, an in-house exam (90 minutes) on the empirical research methods terms will test your knowledge of the terminology covered in this course up through the mid-term. Questions will be short answer (ranging from a couple of sentences to a paragraph depending on the item). The goal in your responses is to be succinct but accurate and complete. You will be provided a study guide (i.e., a list of terms) to assist in preparation one week before the exam, but start the first day of class making flash cards and study notes of key terms and how they are related to one another.

In-house comprehensive final exam (20%)
Similar to MA Comprehensive Exam cumulating experience, a comprehensive in-house final exam during finals week will be administered. The exam will be consisting of short answer and essay questions that test your breadth and depth of understanding and mastery of the material covered throughout the semester and your achievement of course goals and learning objectives. To prepare, use and add to the study guide provided for the Exam on Terms; review assigned readings to critique their methods; review notes and readings; apply, define, explain, and justify course ideas in your assignments and final paper as you work on them throughout the semester; and review discussion leadership materials.

Research paper presentation and feedback discussion (5%)
This assignment has two parts:
1. During the final class session, you will present your paper (in its working condition), and your classmates will provide constructive feedback, advice, and suggestions to help you improve the paper prior to submitting it at the end of finals week. The presentation should be a 10 – 12 minute conference style presentation briefly overviewing the literature review and rationale, reviewing the methods, explaining the results, and presenting the highlights of the discussion. Prior to and following your presentation, you will provide informed, thoughtful feedback to the other students.
2. The Friday before in-class presentations, you will exchange your paper (in its working condition via email) with two people in class to receive (and provide to others) thorough written feedback regarding their writing, APA, technical requirements, and completion of assignment requirements. When you email your feedback to the papers’ authors, cc Dr. McManus on the email. Feedback must be provided to the papers’ authors by 3:59pm Tuesday, May 7.

Research paper (25%)
You will develop, conduct, and write up an original analysis of data from one of the research projects Dr. McManus has designed and conducted. Your original empirical research study must offer (1) a rationale and literature review, (2) at least 1 research question (RQ) or 1 hypothesis (H) which must be derived from existing empirical research and theory, (3) the methods section detailing the data collection procedures sampling, measure and/or coding employed to operationalize constructs, (4) the results section detailing the analytical procedures and results of the analytical procedures, and (5) the discussion section explaining the important theoretical and social implications of the results and offering an in-depth, thorough critique of the study conducted. The final paper must conform to all APA 6th edition writing, formatting, and citation guidelines. See assignment for details.

* All written work must be submitted as a .doc or .docx. Work submitted in any other format will be returned ungraded. Also, work must be uploaded to the appropriate WebCampus assignment dropbox no later than the time specified on the syllabus. If the paper is submitted in the wrong assignment dropbox, via email, or any other submission method, it will be considered “not submitted”.
Grades

Grading scale

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<th>Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93.0% and up</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90.0%-92.95%</td>
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<td>B+</td>
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Grading philosophy

My philosophy on grading is that students earn grades through their demonstration of skills and knowledge of the material in a manner fitting the assignments’ requirements. In other words, your grades are your responsibility. I can only indicate where your work falls in comparison to the University’s, Department’s, and course standards and expectations. Simply attending class and satisfactorily completing work constitutes a “C” grade. A “B” grade is earned through surpassing basic expectations. An “A” grade is earned by performing exceptionally and far exceeding expectations.

All work for this course will be assessed according to the

1. clarity of argument and rationale, using the literature as evidence;
2. scope and focus in your work;
3. conciseness and clarity of writing (paying attention to detail in your writing, methods, and theory);
4. knowledge of the topic;
5. depth of your analysis;
6. unique contribution of your ideas to the existing literature;
7. use of scholarly references, and
8. proper use of APA 6th edition (2nd printing) formatting, editing, and citation guidelines (e.g., double spaced, 1 inch margins, 12 point Times New Roman font, parenthetical citations). In-text citations must be provided whenever you include an idea that is not your own, and each source must be fully documented on a reference page at the end of the paper following APA guidelines.

Grade availability

All written work is to be submitted electronically to the appropriate WebCampus assignment submission folder. All assignments must be uploaded by the day and time designated or it is late (see “Late work” below).

University policy does not permit grades to be discussed over the phone or email due to the inability to verify your identity via these media. If you have questions about your performance in this course please schedule an appointment to discuss your concerns.
Tentative Daily Schedule

Unit 1: Introduction to research methods

Jan 22

Topics
- Introductions
- Course overview
- Introduction to empirical research methods: What is science?

Readings
- Baxter & Babbie: Ch. 1 & 3
- APA manual: Ch. 2 (also tag Ch. 3 & 4 for future reference regarding writing and grammar issues)

As you read for our first class, think about what is science? And, consider how science is used to understand and build knowledge and theory regarding communication. Think about the differences between “doing science” and “presenting scientific knowledge.”

Jan 29

***Due: Unit 1 assignment (IRB CITI training certificate)

Topics
- IRB guest
- Research ethics

Readings
- Baxter & Babbie: Ch. 5
- APA manual: Ch. 1

All the readings for this week discuss issues, concerns, and questions a researcher must ask and be able to answer regarding what is “the right thing to do” when conducting research. Some issues have been “answered” in the sense that the US federal government strongly encourages us to do certain things in our research studies. Some issues need to be thoughtfully considered and addressed in the design of the research. While reading and when completing the CITI training, what are some of the most striking ideas that you encountered (e.g., what is surprising, “no-duh”, “I can’t believe people actually did that! How awful!” or “I never would have thought of that!”)? Why? How do you think these things could impact how research is conducted? How could these things constrain what we are able to learn about human behavior? How could these issues provide opportunities for (or benefit) research on human behavior?

Unit 2: Conceptualization & operationalization

Feb 5

Topics
- Concept ➔ conceptualization ➔ operationalization ➔ variable
- Identifying and developing the concepts and relationships to be studied
- Research questions (RQs) and hypotheses (Hs)
- Variables (IV, DV, & maybe a few others)

Readings
- Baxter & Babbie: Ch. 2, 4, & pp. 106–121 (stop at “Criteria for the trustworthiness of measures”)
- An “oldie but goodie” — this
article is a classic in IPC for many reasons. For COM 712, attend to how Burgoon and Hale develop the topoi and conceptualize them. You may also consider reading their 1987 follow-up “Validation and measurement of the fundamental themes of relational communication” (also in CM).

- Floyd, K., Pauley, P. M., & Hesse, C. (2010). State and trait affectionate communication buffer adults’ stress reactions. Communication Monographs, 77, 618 – 636. doi: 10.1080/03637751.2010.498792. Pay attention to how they defined, developed, and distinguished between concepts, how the explanations offered in the LitReview were used to develop the Hs and RQs, and how the concepts are operationalized as variables in the Hs, RQs, and in the methods section.


Feb 12

***Due: Class leadership discussion & activity #1 (Conceptualizing the IV & DV; Writing the RQ & H)

Topics
- Operationalization -> variable (cont.): Measurement
  - Types of data (self-report v. observational)
  - Unit of analysis
  - Levels of measurement
  - Reliability

Readings
- Baxter & Babbie: pp. 121 (starting with “Criteria for the trustworthiness of measures”) – 128 (end of chapter)
- Burgoon, J. K., Johnson, M. L., & Koch, P. T. (1998). The nature and measurement of interpersonal dominance. Communication Monographs, 65, 308 – 335. Dr. Burgoon and her students were at it again – conceptualizing and operationalizing like good scientists. In this article, Burgoon et al. walk through the identification and conceptualization of “dominance” and then develop a measure that captures their conceptualization (that’s one way to ensure good conceptualization-operationalization match!)
- Hall, J. A., Cater, S., Cody, M. J., Albright, J. M. (2010). Individual differences in the communication of romantic interest: Development of the flirting styles inventory. Communication Quarterly, 58, 365 – 393. DOI: 10.1080/01463373.2010.524874 This article develops a measure of flirting. Look at how the items were developed and refined, how Hall and colleagues determined the “goodness” of the items and the overall measure. This study also provide a preview into several validity issues to be discussed in the next lecture.
- Smith, R. E., Leffingwell, T. R., & Ptacek, J. T. (1999). Can people remember how they coped? Factors associated with discordance between same-day and retrospective reports. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 76, 1050 – 1061. doi: 10.1037/0022-3514.76.6.1050. As you read this, notice the ways Smith et al. assessed coping (nearly concurrent vs. retrospective) and how they compare. Think about how the selection of measures and when a variable is assessed can influence your Hs & RQs and the conclusions you can make for a study.
- George & Mallery: Ch. 6, 7, 18, & pp. 265 – 270 (if not familiar with what reliability is or how to do it in SPSS)

Feb 19

***Due: Unit 2 assignment due (Conceptualizing & operationalizing your final project)

Topics
- Validity
  - Measurement validity (issues of conceptualization-operationalization fit)
Internal validity
External validity

**Readings**

- Biglan, A., Severson, H., Ary, D., Faller, C., Gallison, C., Thompson, R., Glasgow, R. & Lichtenstein, E. (1987). Do smoking prevention programs really work? Attrition and the internal and external validity of an evaluation of a refusal skills training program. *Journal of Behavioral Medicine, 10*, 159 – 171. What conclusions can be made about a study when many of the participants drop out of the study over time? Biglan and colleagues’ study discusses how internal and external validity threats can drastically change the results and our knowledge.
- Wrzus, C., Wagner, J., & Neyer, F. J. (2012). The interdependence of horizontal family relationships and friendships relates to higher well-being. *Personal Relationships, 19*, 465 – 482. doi: 10.1111/j.1475-6811.2011.01373.x. The authors explored some differences between friendships and familial relationships. Pay attention to how these authors operationalized their concepts and consider measurement and external validity issues while reading this article.
- Zhao, X., Strasser, A., Cappella, J. N., Lerman, C., & Fishbein, M. (2011). A measure of perceived argument strength: Reliability and validity. *Communication Methods and Measures, 5*, 48 – 75. doi: 10.1080/19312458.2010.547822. These scholars compare and contrast several approaches to empirically assessing argument strength and then argue for and develop their own scale. In addition to considering all three forms of validity concerns addressed in this article, also think about how (un)important it is to carefully consider the measure selected for a study to accurately and consistently capture a variable.

Feb 26

**Due: Class leadership discussion & activity #3 (Validity)**

**Topics**

- Sampling
- Non-probability
- Probability
- Recruitment

**Readings**

- Baxter & Babbie: Ch. 7
- Ejiogu, N., Norbeck, J. H., Mason, M. A., Cromwell, B. C., Zonderman, A. B., & Evans, M. K. (2011). Recruitment and retention strategies for minority or poor clinical research participants: Lessons from the healthy aging in neighborhoods of diversity across the lifespan study. *The Gerontologist, 51*, S33 – S45. The authors briefly identify the major problems experienced when sampling minority and poor populations then provide advice to improve recruitment of these individuals and how to avoid attrition in a longitudinal study.
- Peterson, R. A. (2001). On the use of college students in social science research: Insights from a second order meta-analysis. *Journal of Consumer Research, 28*, 450 – 461. Although the context for his work is on consumers, Peterson discusses the weaknesses and strengths of relying solely on college students as research participants. In addition to noting the implications he identifies, consider how a college student sample may impact internal and external validity as well as how it could impact the theoretical and practical implications of a study.
researchers should carefully consider this issue.

Mar 5

***In-house exam on terms (covers all of Units 1 & 2)***

Unit 3: Survey & Questionnaire Design

Topics
- Distinguishing surveys from other empirical methods
  - What are surveys
  - When are they appropriate to use
- Designing and constructing surveys
  - Understanding impact of design choices
  - Items: Type, ordering, & location
  - Construction: Layout & visual design; evaluating
- Administering surveys
  - 2 general approaches
  - Formats: types, advantages & disadvantages

Readings
- Baxter & Babbie: Ch. 8

The two empirical articles are examples of different types of surveys. A light reading list this week because of the exam, but read these articles not just to introduce you to survey methods, but also to help prepare you for the exam. As you read these, think about (1) how the survey was used to answer RQs and test Hs, (2) what are the similarities and differences in how these surveys were conducted, and (3) the questions/items—do they have good conceptualization-operationalization fit? (4) How do the items (and overall design) impact reliability and validity? (5) Evaluate their sampling and recruitment procedures.

Mar 12

***Due: Class leadership discussion & activity #4 (Designing surveys)***

Topics
- Challenges of survey research
- Strengths/advantages of survey research

Readings
These authors offer a discussion and analysis of online surveys and whether (or not) the data from them are worthy of consideration. Matsunaga, M. (2010). Testing a mediational model of bullied victims’ evaluation of received support and post-bullying adaptation: A Japan-U.S. cross-cultural comparison. Communication Monographs, 77, 312 – 340. DOI: 10.1080/03637751003758235 This study provides an example of a web-based online survey, which is becoming increasingly common in research today. In addition to studying a sensitive topic in an online environment, Matsunaga also addresses issues of survey research in multiple cultures.


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**Unit 4: Experimental Design**

**Mar 19**

***Due:*** Unit 3 assignment due (If you were to answering your RQs/test your Hs via survey design…)

**Topics**

- Distinguishing experiments from other empirical methods
- Defining characteristics of experiments: Control, Manipulation, & Randomization
- Testing for causation
- Types of data
- Elements of “doing” experimental designs
  - Fit to study purpose
  - Informing participants
  - Manipulating IV & manipulation checks
  - Random assignment
  - Confederates

**Readings**

- Baxter & Babbie: Ch. 9 & 10

All three empirical studies are examples of experimental design. As you read, pay attention to how they utilize control, manipulation, and randomization. Also, what similarities and differences do you notice across the articles? What validity threats do you see in each of the studies?

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**Mar 26 (Spring Break)**

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**Apr 2**

***Due:*** Class leadership discussion & activity #5 (Designing experiments)

**Topics**
### Types of experimental designs
- Terminology
- True experimental
- Quasi experimental
- Pre-experimental
- Factorial designs

### Readings

*All of the articles are different types of experimental designs – can you determine which type each study employed? What seem to be the common validity threats for that type of experimental design? Like for the first set of readings in this unit, pay attention to how they utilize control, manipulation, and randomizations.*

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**Unit 5: Qualitative approaches**

***Due:*** Unit 4 assignment due (If you were to answering your RQs/test your Hs via experimental design…)

#### Topics
- Distinguishing qualitative approaches other empirical methods
  - What they do
  - When are they appropriate
  - Types of claims that can be made
- Options
  - Ethnography
  - Interviews
  - Textual analysis
- The qualitative process
  - Preparation
  - The data
  - Sample size questions

#### Readings
- Baxter & Babbie: Ch. 13, 14
  
  Kramer’s article provides an effective, but brief, example of a study conducted via ethnography. As you read the methods and findings, several things should stand out to you as being very different than the research articles we have read up to this point. Be ready to discuss what these differences are (and maybe some similarities) and your reactions to these differences as well as the types of insight and knowledge they offer.
wartime deployment: Wives’ perspectives revealed through relational dialectics. *Communication Monographs, 76*, 421 – 442. DOI: 10.1080/03637750903300239

Sahlstein and colleagues use Retrospective Interview Technique (RIT) to explore the dialectical tensions the wives of deployed soldiers experience. Think about what this technique is, how it was used to answer the RQs, whether this is a “good” way to answer the RQ, and how the scholars prepared for conducting and analyzing the interviews.


Back to the old “how much each enough” question. Sampling size is different in qualitative research compared to quantitative research, but the question always remains. What do you think about the sampling differences compared to survey and experimental research? What about the recommendations offered?

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**Topics**

- Starting analysis
- Transcribing
- Unitizing
- Qualitative analyses
  - Coding (Open & axial coding; Constant-comparative, Thematic coding)
  - Grounded theory
- Validity & reliability in qualitative research

**Readings**

- Baxter & Babbie: Ch. 16

Following interviews data collection methods, Fisher used grounded theory to gain an understanding of how communication functioned to help and harm these mothers and daughters in their responses to cancer. As you read, focus especially on her methods (especially the procedures and data analysis) and how her findings helped her answer the RQs.


The authors discuss several different ways to engage in content analysis ranging in terms of deductive and inductive approaches.


Following interviews data collection methods, Golish (now Afifi) used thematic analysis to identify the common experiences in stepfamilies and the communication behaviors that lead to and help them manage the experiences. Consider how her data collection methods and data analysis methods are similar to and different from Fisher’s.

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**Unit 6: Statistical analyses**

**Topics**

- Preparing quantitative data for analysis
- Codebooks
Data entry & data cleaning
Descriptive v. Inferential statistics

Readings
- Baxter & Babbie: Ch. 11
- George & Mallory: Ch. 3, 4; review Ch. 6, 7, 18
- Choose 2 articles that we have already read to re-read. Focus on the methods and results section and the statistics presented. What types (descriptive vs. inferential) are used in each section? Are they effective at helping you understand who was studied and how the RQs and Hs were answered? What confuses you about these statistics and the way they are presented?

Apr 30

***Due: Class leadership discussion & activity #7 (Linking conceptualization, study design, and analytical methods)

Topics
- Choosing the correct inferential statistic
- Group comparisons ($\chi^2$, t-tests, ANOVAs)
- Associations (Correlations, regressions)

Readings
- Baxter & Babbie: Ch. 12
- APA Manual: Ch. 5
- George & Mallory: Ch. 8, 11, & 12 (conducting group comparisons in SPSS)
- George & Mallory: Ch. 10, 15, & 16 (conducting tests of association in SPSS)
- Choose 2 articles that we have already read to re-read. Focus on the statistics used to answer the RQs and to test the Hs. What patterns do you notice? Why did they use a particular statistic to answer the RQ or to test the H? Can you decipher the meaning of the statistics? What confuses you about these statistics and the way they are presented?

Wrap-up

May 7

***Due: Final research paper oral presentation

Topics
- Your final papers
- Tying up loose ends
- Final issues, questions, etc.

Readings
- 2 Classmates’ papers & provide feedback

T May 14 @ 6:00-8:00pm

In house comprehensive final exam (covers Units 1 – 6) See the full final exam schedule

Friday, May 17 @ noon

***Due: Final research paper due