

***Communication Research***  
CMST 3114-01, 10:30-11:50 TTH, 127 Coates  
Spring 2015

**Dr. Renee Edwards**

edwards@lsu.edu

136A Coates Hall, 578-6821

Office Hours: TTH 12:30-1:30 **and** by appointment or drop in.

**Catalog Statement**

Techniques and procedures in communication research. Topic development, research design, data collection, data analysis. Examination of recent research in communication.

**Goals**

This course is designed to introduce students to questions asked by communication researchers and the quantitative methods that researchers use to answer them. The course has no formal prerequisites, but it is expected that students understand the communication process and have some familiarity with at least one content area of communication (e.g., interpersonal relationships, group decision-making, nonverbal communication). No prior knowledge of research methods is expected. The goals of the course are to:

1. Describe principles of theory construction and the use of theory in communication research
2. Develop understanding of ethical issues in communication research
3. Familiarize students with existing literature in communication and how to access it
4. Create and develop student interest and knowledge concerning empirical research in communication,
5. Teach the logic and basic techniques of experimental and survey research as used in communication research
6. Introduce students to fundamental techniques of statistical analysis of data

**Service-Learning**

This section of CMST 3900 is a service-learning course. “Service-learning is a credit-bearing, educational, experience in which students participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs and reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility” (Bringle & Hatcher, 1995). For additional information about service-learning visit the Center for Community Engagement, Learning, and Leadership’s website at <http://uiswcmsweb.prod.lsu.edu/ccell/>

In this course, students will conduct a survey for one or more non-profit organizations. Thus, additional goals of the class are to

1. Aid the community agency in obtaining useful program assessment information, and
2. Introduce students to the value of community work.

### **Textbook**

Davis, C. S., Gallardo, H. P., & Lachlan, K. A. (2012). *Straight talk about communication research methods* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Dubuque, IA: Kendall Hunt.

### **Exams**

Exam 1	20%
Exam 2	20%
Final Exam	20%

### **Group Project**

You will work individually or with a group of classmates on a service-learning project, 30% of final grade. The project will include a number of small assignments as well as a final report. Grades will be based on self-evaluation, peer evaluation (as appropriate), and instructor-evaluation.

### **Attendance, Participation, Written Work**

This grade, 10%, will be based on reflection papers, article abstracts, in-class writing, participation in research projects, and other homework. Written work must be turned in by the due date/time. Late work will lose points (10 per calendar day). Some of the written work (e.g., the IRB certification and article abstracts) will carry greater weight than other written work.

### **Course Units**

- I. Theory Building in Communication: Sources of knowledge. Definitions, models and theories of communication. Current lines of research. Accessing research. Framing questions. Reviewing the literature and constructing a rationale.
- II. Research Methods: The empirical dimension. Stages of research. Operationalization and measurement. Questionnaire development. Survey research and experimental design.
- III. Data analysis. Descriptive and Inferential Statistics.

## **Notice**

The Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973: If you have a disability that may have some impact on your work in this class and for which you may require accommodations, please see a coordinator in the Office for Disability Affairs (112 Johnston Hall) so that such accommodations may be arranged. After you receive your accommodation letters, please meet with me to discuss the provisions of the accommodations as soon as possible (during the first two 2 weeks of class).

## **Moodle**

Assignments will be announced in class and posted on Moodle. Topics, reading assignments, and grades will be recorded - you should check regularly. Some assignments or quizzes will be conducted on Moodle. If a grade is posted incorrectly, you need to contact me by email, *within one week*, in order to make a correction.

## **Topics**

1. Intro to the course, syllabus.
2. Introduction to communication research
3. Empirical research
4. Ethics
5. Previous research and APA
6. Literature reviews
7. Variables
8. Communication variables
9. Descriptive statistics
10. Measurement
11. Reliability and validity
12. Survey research
13. Content analysis
14. Experimental design
15. Sampling methods
16. Hypothesis testing
17. Chi-square
18. Correlation
19. T-tests
20. Presenting research

**Final Exam:** Wednesday, May 6, 3:00-5:00 p.m.