

**Communication Studies 3114: Section 1
Communication Research**

Instructor: Andrea J. Vickery

Classroom Information: *Meets:* M, W, and F *Time:* 9:30-10:20am *Location:* Coates 237

Contact Information: *Email:* avicke4@lsu.edu *Office:* Coates 317 *Phone:* (225) 578-0249

Office Hours: M 10:30-12:00pm, W 10:30-11:30am, F 10:30-12:00pm & by appointment

Catalog Statement: Techniques and procedures in communication research; topic development, research design, data collection, data analysis; examination of recent research in communication.

Course 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, persuasion). No prior knowledge of research methods is expected. The goals of this course include:*

- 1.) *Describe principles of theory construction and the use of theory in communication research*
- 2.) *Develop an understanding of the 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 the fundamental techniques of statistical analysis of data.*

*I look forward to working with you this semester as you start your journey as a communication researcher. In addition to the course goals, this class should prepare you for your future encounters with research – some of you will become **consumers** of research, evaluating and interpreting research that impacts your work and personal life. Others will become **curators** of research, responsible for sharing and conveying the value and findings of research within organizations. Some will even become **creators** of research, conducting research in to advance theoretical and practical questions. No matter what your future holds, this class should be valuable to you and help you understand how research is conducted and analyzed.*

Required Course Textbook: *Straight Talk about Communication Research Methods* by Davis, Powell, & Lachlan (2013, Second Edition) ISBN #9781465209191

Other Materials Needed: Three 882-E Scantrons

Course Assessment and Assignments

Your grade in this class will be comprised of the following assignments. Assignment details are posted to Moodle. The assignments and descriptions include:

1 – Exam #1 (Unit 1)	20%
2– Exam #2 (Unit 2)	20%
3 – Exam #3 (Unit 3)	20%
4 – Research Paper & Presentation	30%
5 – Assignments	10%
Total Course Assessment	100%

Exams – 60% of your grade

You will have three exams, each worth 20% of your grade. These exams will cover in-class lectures and the materials in your textbook. Each exam covers a unit (previewed on the course schedule). Your exams will be primarily True/False, Matching, and Multiple Choice Questions. You will receive a study guide for each exam. Because of the importance of this material, no grades will be dropped. During Exam 3 (final exam period), you will have an opportunity to complete a comprehensive section – *this is optional*. Your grade on the comprehensive section will replace the lower of your two grades on Exam 1 or 2. There is no penalty for doing worse on the comprehensive section; if you do worse on the comprehensive section than on Exam 1 or 2, this grade will not replace your prior grades.

Research Paper and Presentation – 30% of your grade

You will work individually or with a group of classmates on a research paper where you develop a questionnaire, collect data, write up your data analysis, and present this paper to the class. This project will include a number of small assignments as well as a final report, these assignments carry less weight than the final written report you submit. Your paper and presentation grades include self-evaluation, peer evaluation (as applicable), and instructor evaluation.

Assignments – 10% of your grade

You will complete reflection papers, article abstracts, in-class writing, participate in research projects, take quizzes, and complete other homework assignments to help you learn and practice the material from the lectures and your book. Take-home and written assignments will be announced and explained in class. Written work must be turned in by the due date and time specified on the course schedule (updated on Moodle) and announced in class. Some of the written work including the article abstracts and IRB Human Subjects Training will carry greater weight than other assignments. These assignments can be submitted late, but late work is subject to a 10% deduction for every calendar day it is late (maximum 50% deduction).

Grading and Grading Scale

Your assignments and assessments are graded on the following scale. You will see these grades (e.g., B+, 88%, 88/100) on your assignments as well as on your final grade comprised of all assessment materials. The meaning of these grades comes from the LSU General Catalog. **Final grades will NOT be rounded up and there are no bonus points or extra credit in this course.**

Grade (GPA Weight)	Scale	Meaning
A+ (4.3)	97.00-100.00%	<i>Indicates distinguished mastery of material</i>
A (4.0)	93.00-96.99%	
A- (3.7)	90.00-92.99%	
B+ (3.3)	87.00-89.99%	<i>Indicates good mastery of material</i>
B (3.0)	83.00-86.99%	
B- (2.7)	80.00-82.99%	
C+ (2.3)	77.00-79.99%	<i>Indicates acceptable mastery of material</i>
C (2.0)	73.00-76.99%	
C- (1.7)	70.00-72.99%	
D+ (1.3)	67.00-69.99%	<i>Indicates minimally acceptable achievement</i>
D (1.0)	63.00-66.99%	
D- (0.7)	60.00-62.99%	
F (0.0)	00.00%-59.99%	<i>Failing</i>

I understand how important grades are to you. I will grade your work in a timely fashion, following clear rubrics and assignment instructions. If at any point you are concerned with your grade, make an appointment to meet with me and we will review your work. *Do not wait until it is too late to meet with me about your grades!*

Course Policies

Attendance Policies: You are expected to attend every class session, in accordance with PS-22. Communication is an active process, so in order to benefit from course focusing on communication, it is important that you are present to learn, practice, and develop your communication research skills. You should be ready for each class session, having read and prepared assignments. Excessive absences will be reported to LSU CARES and/or the Dean of your College.

- If you find out that you have to miss class for an excused absence, you should inform me as soon in advance as possible. Excused Absences include those valid reasons outlined in Policy Statement #22 and include *illness, family emergency, legal obligations, military obligations, religious obligations, special curricular activities*. In order to turn in work late with no penalty, your excused absence must be for the *assignment due date*. I require documentation and have a 1 week deadline in which you must complete all make up work. You can still submit work after that deadline, but it will be subject to the late penalty.
- If you miss class for reasons other than excused absences, you are responsible for making an appointment with me or asking classmates for their notes. Your work is still due on the announced due dates, even if you have missed the assignment due date (or the day before class when assignments were announced).
- **Technology in class** – devices (phones, smart watches, tablets, and laptops) should be used productively. All alerts and sound should be switched OFF before entering the classroom. If you are found using your device to check social media, chat, shop, or do other activities (including homework for other classes) during class, I will ask you to leave. If you are expecting an important phone call or text (babysitter, work, job interview), inform me before class begins and find a way to screen calls/texts without being disruptive to the class.

Grade Discussion Policies: I have found face-to-face chats are quicker and more efficient than back-and-forth emails about grades. Any discussion about your grades and assignments should be handled *in person* during my office hours or scheduled appointments. Before emailing me about grades, know that I can answer only general questions via email and I will likely direct you back to this syllabus or Moodle for detailed information.

- **24 Hour Policy** – Reviewing grades can be an emotional experience – please make sure 24 hours have elapsed since you received your grade have passed so we can discuss the *content* of your grades versus the *emotions* you feel about your grade. Bring your assignments with you to our meetings.
- **Seven Days Policy** – You have seven days after your grade is posted to Moodle to dispute grades (i.e., request adjustments to grades). After a week, we can still discuss your work so you understand how your grade was calculated and how you can improve for the next assignment, but no adjustments will be made after that time. If your grade is an input error (physical copy has one grade, Moodle has another), please show me the assignment as soon as possible and I will update Moodle. Group grades are best discussed with at least two members of the group present. For your final exam, you have until Monday December 14 at noon to dispute your grade.

Classroom Civility: I want our classroom to be focused on learning and practicing effective communication:

- Respect the rights of other presenters and audience members. Give everyone time to present their ideas – do not attack or discredit these ideas. Practice effective communication (including effective listening).
- Use devices only as appropriate for the day's activities. Turn off alerts at all times.
- Come to class on time and prepared, ready to listen and to participate in all activities and discussions. Ask questions; seek to resolve group conflicts appropriately.
- Read emails, and respond to those which specifically request a reply – this includes emails from group members and your instructor. Expectations for all email responses (student/student; student/instructor) are 24 hours on weekdays, 48 hours on weekends.
- Respect our classroom! Help move desks and chairs back to their original position after activities.

If you don't think you can follow these standards, please find another course.

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 of Disability Services (115 Johnston Hall) so that such accommodations may be arranged. After you receive your accommodation letter, please meet with me so that we can discuss the provisions of those accommodations as soon as possible.

General Statement on Academic Integrity- Louisiana State University adopted the Commitment to Community in 1995 to set forth guidelines for student behavior both inside and outside of the classroom. The Commitment to Community charges students to maintain high standards of academic and personal integrity. All students are expected to read and be familiar with the LSU Code of Student Conduct and Commitment to Community, found online at www.lsu.edu/saa. It is your responsibility as a student at LSU to know and understand the academic standards for our community. Students who are suspected of violating the Code of Conduct will be referred to the Office of Student Advocacy and Accountability. For undergraduate students, a first academic violation could result in a zero grade on the assignment or failing the class and disciplinary probation until graduation. For a second academic violation, the result could be suspension from LSU. For graduate students, suspension is the appropriate outcome for the first offense.

Group work and Unauthorized Assistance - All work must be completed without assistance unless explicit permission for group or partner work is given by the instructor. This is critical so that I can assess your performance on each assignment. If a group/partner project is assigned, the student may still have individual work to complete. Read the syllabus and assignment directions carefully. You might have a project with group work and a follow up report that is independently written. When in doubt, e-mail me or ask during a class session if an assignment can be completed in group work. Seeking clarification is your responsibility as a student. Assuming group/partner work is okay without permission constitutes a violation of the LSU Code of Student Conduct.

Plagiarism and Citation Method - As a student at LSU, it is your responsibility to refrain from plagiarizing the academic property of another and to utilize appropriate citation method for all coursework. In this class, it is recommended that you use APA to cite sources. Ignorance of the citation method is not an excuse for academic misconduct. Remember there is a difference between paraphrasing and quoting and how to properly cite each respectively. One tool available to assist you in correct citations is the “References” function in Microsoft Word. This program automatically formats the information you input according to the citation method you select for the document. This program also has the ability to generate a reference or works cited page for your document. The version of Microsoft Word with the “References” function is available in most University computer labs. A demonstration of how to use this tool is available online at www.lsu.edu/saa.

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, etc. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find the appropriate resources at www.students.lsu.edu/deanofstudents/title-ix

Schedule Changes - Your instructor will work to minimize schedule changes and will announce such changes as far as in advance as possible. By the same token, it is your responsibility to keep informed of these changes and meet with your instructor if these changes interfere with other obligations outlined in PS-22.

Changes to Syllabus (Content, Assessment, & Policies) - This version of the syllabus is current as of 8.21.15. Please stay up to date on schedule changes, adjustments, and other notifications announced in class and on the course Moodle page.

By remaining enrolled in this course, you agree to the policies outlined in this syllabus and the university’s academic integrity, conduct, and attendance policies.

Course Schedule- Fall 2015
See Moodle for updated calendar and deadlines

Unit 1: Theory Building in Communication – August 24 – September 25

Big Questions: What is theory? What are sources of knowledge? What are definitions, models, and theories of communication? What are current lines of research? How do we access research? How do we frame questions? How do we review the literature and develop a rationale?

Topics Include:

- Introduction to Communication Research
- Research Perspectives
- Ethics of Research
- Citing Sources
- Accessing Previous Research
- Literature Reviews

Covers Chapter 1-5 and all in-class lectures and activities

Unit 2: Research Methods – September 28 – October 23

Big Questions: What is incorporated in empirical research? What are the stages of research? How do we operationalize and measure communication? How do we develop questionnaires? How do we conduct survey research? What are experiments?

Topics Include:

- Variables
- Communication variables
- Measurement
- Reliability and validity
- Survey Research
- Experimental Design
- Sampling Methods

Covers Chapters 6-10, 12, and all in-class lectures and activities

Unit 3: Data Analysis – October 26 – December 4

Big Questions: How do we analyze quantitative data? What are the measures of central tendency? What are descriptive statistics? How do we test hypotheses? What are inferential statistics? How do we discuss our findings? How do we present our data in reports?

Topics include:

- Hypothesis Testing
- Chi-Square
- Correlation
- T-Tests
- Other statistical tests (ex: ANOVA)
- Presenting Research

Covers Chapter 13 and all in-class lectures and activities

Final Exam is on Friday December 11 from 7:30 – 9:30 AM in our classroom (Coates 237)