
COMMUNICATION THEORY & RESEARCH METH. in Fall 2020 (CM2051)

Course Code	CM2051	Professor(s)	Youna Kim
Prerequisites	None	Office Number	G-304 (or Teams)
Class Schedule	F: 09:00-10:35 in PL-3 T: 14:30-16:05 in PL-3	Office Hours	Meeting by appointment
Credits	4	Email	ykim@aup.edu
Semester	Fall 2020	Office Tel. Ext.	824

Course Description

This course explores research methods commonly used in the social sciences in general and in media and communications in particular in order to conduct original empirical research and produce an academic research paper. The research methods are qualitative and quantitative (e.g. personal in-depth interviewing, focus group discussion, ethnography, participant observation, cross-cultural comparative research, critical cultural studies approach, visual research, Internet research, survey). Specifically, the course will provide students with a practical and critical understanding of integral elements in research activity, research writing and knowledge production, including (1) research proposal, (2) key research question, (3) research methodology, (4) critical literature review, (5) data collection and data analysis/interpretation, (6) argumentation, (7) research presentation and intellectual dialogue. It will equip students to design and conduct their own empirical research, specializing in specific research methods relevant to their research projects. Students will be encouraged to critically evaluate others' research within their field of study. This course expects students to read widely and to integrate critical thinking, theory and data, thereby increasing their understanding of the role of social research in the field of media and communications.

COURSE

EXPECTATIONS: **Read critically, think critically and write critically**

During this course, you should:

- NOT expect a “right answerism”, but try to explore widely (e.g. expose yourself to a variety of perspectives).

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- NOT just repeat what the book says, but try to have a “dialogue” (e.g. question why? what else?)
 - NOT apply the theory blindly or dutifully, but try to evaluate its strengths and weaknesses (e.g. based on the society where you come from) and gain a nuanced, contextualized understanding of the theory/knowledge.
 - NOT demonstrate immaturity or offensiveness to any constructive criticism on your work, but try to appreciate and incorporate it in order to improve your work significantly.

Course Learning Outcomes

Design a research proposal.

Formulate a key research question based on critical thinking.

Identify research methodology and operate relevant methods in the research field.

Produce a critical literature review by recognizing the strengths and weaknesses of existing studies.

Collect data and analyze/interpret the data in depth.

Develop an argument in depth.

Defend research presentation and intellectual dialogue on research outcomes.

General Education

[PLEASE REMOVE THIS SECTION IF THE COURSE DOES NOT FULFILL ANY GLACC REQUIREMENT]

GLACC

The Global Liberal Arts Core Curriculum (GLACC) degree requirements include the following categories of courses:

- Integrative Inquiry (coded CCI)
- Experiential learning (coded CCX)
- Research, Interpretation, and Writing (coded CCE)
- Digital Literacy and Communication (coded CCD)
- Disciplinary Research Methods and Writing (coded CCR)
- Quantitative Reasoning (coded CCM)
- Experimental Reasoning Course with Lab (coded CCS)
- Expression Française (coded FR)

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- AUP Capstone (coded CCC)

This course can be used to fulfill the [INDICATE THE REQUIREMENT(S) FULFILLED BY THE COURSE] requirement and as such has the following learning outcomes:

[INDICATE THE GENERAL EDUCATION LEARNING OUTCOMES]

Course Outline

The default assumption is that all classes will be held onsite (and thus synchronous and face-to-face). Any exception to this always needs to be approved by the professor. If you cannot come to the classroom for a reason concerning Covid-19, please inform the professor in advance (at least 24 hours before class) and explain the reason in a written form (by email), so that the professor can contact you individually to organize an alternative way.

The following outline is subject to change, depending on your level of understanding and your own final research project. Exceptionally, this semester is relatively short and thus intensive.

All reading materials will be circulated to students.

Friday 25 September: Syllabus / Orientation

Week 1 – Week 5: Final Research Project Preparation

For each class, please read the following materials (and watch short videos, when required) BEFORE class and be prepared to discuss and write about key questions (to be raised by the professor).

Week 1 Tuesday 29 September: Critical Thinking / Formulating a Research Question (1)

Please watch three short videos (below) BEFORE class and be prepared to discuss and write about key questions (to be raised by the professor).

What is research? (video)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BJhpQs82uR8>

Bell Hooks, *Cultural Criticism and Transformation* (video)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KLMVqnyTo_0

Stuart Hall, *Race, the Floating Signifier* (video)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bMo2uiRAf30>

Week 1 Friday 2 October: Critical Thinking / Formulating a Research Question (2)

C. Wright Mills, *Sociological Imagination* (Chapter 1 The Promise)

Judith Shapiro, *From Sociological Illiteracy to Sociological Imagination*

Week 2 Tuesday 6 October: In-depth Interviewing / Focus Group Discussion / Data Collection (1)

Ann Oakley, *Interviewing Women*

Further reading (optional):

Youna Kim, *The Body, TV Talk and Emotion: Methodological Reflections*

Pierre Bourdieu, *Weight of the World: Social Suffering in Contemporary Society*

Week 2 Friday 9 October: In-depth Interviewing / Focus Group Discussion / Data Collection (2)

Jenny Kitzinger, *Qualitative Research: Introducing Focus Group*

Further reading (optional):

Norman K. Denzin, *The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research*

David Morgan, *Rethinking the Focus Group in Media and Communications Research*

Week 3 Tuesday 13 October: Ethnography / Participant Observation / Data Collection (3)

Debra Spitulnik, *Anthropology and Mass Media*

OR Judith Stacey, *Can There be a Feminist Ethnography?*

OR Paul Atkinson, *Ethnography and Participant Observation*

Further reading (optional):

Paul Willis, *Learning to Labor: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs*

Youna Kim, *Women, Television and Everyday Life in Korea: Journeys of Hope*

George Marcus, *Ethnography In/Of the World System: The Emergence of Multi-Sited Ethnography*

Week 3 Friday 16 October: Critical Literature Review (1)

You will be asked to bring your critical literature review (1) to the classroom in order to discuss in depth and receive feedback for the development of your final research project.

For details, please see the Grading section.

Week 4 Tuesday 20 October: Cross-Cultural Comparative Research

Sonia Livingstone, *On the Challenges of Cross-National Comparative Media Research*

Further reading (optional):

T. Liebes and E. Katz, *The Export of Meaning: Cross-Cultural Readings of 'Dallas'*

Mark Easterby-Smith, *Cross-Cultural Collaborative Research: Toward Reflexivity*

Week 4 Friday 23 October: Critical Literature Review (2)

You will be asked to bring your critical literature review (2) to the classroom in order to discuss in depth and receive feedback for the development of your final research project.

For details, please see the Grading section.

Week 5 Tuesday 27 October: Critical Cultural Studies Approach

Paul Du Gay, *Doing Cultural Studies: The Story of the Sony Walkman*

Further reading (optional):

Richard Johnson, *What is Cultural Studies Anyway?*

Terry Threadgold, *Cultural Studies, Critical Theory and Critical Discourse Analysis*

Week 5 Friday 30 October: Data Collection (4)

This class will engage with final questions & answers concerning data collection in the research field in order to encourage you to complete data collection and bring your data to the classroom next week (Week 6).

Week 6 – Week 8: Final Research Project Completion

You will learn how to write and complete your final research paper by including: 1) Key Research Question, (2) Background/Context and Critical Literature Review, (3) Rationale and Method, (4) Data Presentation and Data Analysis/Interpretation, (5) Argument/Conclusion. Please follow the professor's step-by-step instructions and feedback in order to complete your final research paper by the deadline Week 9 Tuesday 24 November. (Details TBA)

Week 6 Tuesday 3 November: Data Analysis/Interpretation (1)

You will be asked to bring your data in order to learn how to analyze/interpret the data.

Week 6 Friday 6 November: Data Analysis/Interpretation (2)

Perti Alasuutari, *Theorizing in Qualitative Research: A Cultural Studies Perspective*

Further reading (optional):

James Clifford, *Partial Truths*

Week 7 Tuesday 10 November: Visual Research / Data Analysis/Interpretation (3)

David Gauntlett, *Using New Creative Visual Research Methods to Understand the Place of Popular Media in People's Lives*

Please watch two short videos (below) BEFORE class and be prepared to discuss and write about key questions (to be raised by the professor).

Representing Identities (Part I: Method)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LtS24lqluq0>

Representing Identities (Part I: Findings)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q0pvPs4Ky2o>

Week 7 Friday 13 November (Fall break, NO classes at the AUP)

Week 8 Tuesday 17 November: Internet Research / Argumentation (1)

Steven Schneider, *The Web as an Object of Study*

Further reading (optional):

John Newhagen, *Why Communication Researchers Should Study the Internet: A Dialogue*

Sonia Livingstone, *Children's Use of the Internet: Reflections on the Emerging Research Agenda*

Laura Garton, *Studying Online Social Networks*

Week 8 Friday 20 November: Survey / Argumentation (2)

Ross Coomber, *Using the Internet for Survey Research*

Further reading (optional):

Michael Burton, *Cross-Cultural Surveys Today*

Timothy Johnson, *Approaches to Equivalence in Cross-Cultural and Cross-National Survey Research*

A. Aldridge and K. Levine, *Surveying the Social World: Principles and Practice in Survey Research*

Week 9 – Week 11: Student Presentation, Feedback and Discussion

The following content should be highlighted in your presentation on your final research paper: (1) Key Research Question, (2) Background/Context and Critical Literature Review, (3) Rationale and Method, (4) Data Presentation and Data Analysis/Interpretation, (5) Argument/Conclusion. After your presentation, you will be given detailed feedback from the professor, and you will be asked to write and submit the feedback together with your reflection on the feedback. (Details TBA)

Week 9 Tuesday 24 November: Student Presentation, Feedback and Discussion (1)

Week 9 Friday 27 November: Student Presentation, Feedback and Discussion (2)

Week 10 Tuesday 1 December: Student Presentation, Feedback and Discussion (3)

Week 10 Friday 4 December: Student Presentation, Feedback and Discussion (4)

Week 11 Tuesday 8 December: Student Presentation, Feedback and Discussion (5)

Week 11 Friday 11 December: Student Presentation, Feedback and Discussion (6)

Final Exam Period Friday 18 December: Reflection on Feedback, Revision Seminar

After your presentation (Week 9 – Week 11), you will be given detailed feedback from the professor, and you will be asked to write and submit the feedback together with your reflection on the feedback. (Details TBA)

Textbooks

This course doesn't have any textbook.

Attendance Policy

The default assumption is that all classes will be held onsite (and thus synchronous and face-to-face). Any exception to this always needs to be approved by the professor. If you cannot come

to the classroom for a reason concerning Covid-19, please inform the professor in advance (at least 24 hours before class) and explain the reason in a written form (by email), so that the professor can contact you individually to organize an alternative way.

Attendance is highly recommended.

Please note: Your participation (development of your critical thinking) in the classroom is integral to the course and its evaluation.

Students studying at The American University of Paris are expected to attend ALL scheduled classes, and in case of absence, should contact their professors to explain the situation. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of any specific attendance policy that a faculty member might have set in the course syllabus. The French Department, for example, has its own attendance policy, and students are responsible for compliance. Academic Affairs will excuse an absence for students' participation in study trips related to their courses.

Attendance at all exams is mandatory.

IN ALL CASES OF MISSED COURSE MEETINGS, THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR COMMUNICATION WITH THE PROFESSOR, AND FOR ARRANGING TO MAKE UP MISSED WORK, RESTS SOLELY WITH THE STUDENT.

Whether an absence is excused or not is ALWAYS up to the discretion of the professor or the department. Unexcused absences can result in a low or failing participation grade. In the case of excessive absences, it is up to the professor or the department to decide if the student will receive an "F" for the course. An instructor may recommend that a student withdraw, if absences have made it impossible to continue in the course at a satisfactory level.

Students must be mindful of this policy when making their travel arrangements, and especially during the Drop/Add and Exam Periods.

Grading Policy

Two review essays, total 2000 words

(deadlines Week 3 Friday 16 October and Week 4 Friday 23 October) 20%

Please respect the deadlines. Late submissions will NOT get any feedback.

You will look into academic journals and choose two research articles that are useful for your own research project. The review essays are intended to train you to read the text critically and ultimately produce a critical literature review, in the end. You will choose two research articles and will be asked to write: (1) What are the main arguments of the articles? (2) What do you think about the articles, their strengths and weaknesses? Assessment will focus on (1) Clarity of expression, (2) Imaginativeness, (3) Critical appraisal, (4) Depth of interpretation. Specific guidelines for writing and feedback will be given during classes.

Class engagement and response papers, total 3000 words

(in all classes, Tuesdays and Fridays) 20%

Please read assigned materials (and watch short videos, when required) BEFORE class and be prepared to discuss and write about key questions (to be raised by the professor). You will be asked to outline the key points of the materials and open up seminar discussions based on that writing. The purpose of the response papers is to encourage you to read closely the assigned materials and engage with the important learning process in the classroom.

Presentation on the final research paper, and feedback / reflection

(from Week 9 Tuesday 24 November) 10%

The following content should be highlighted in your presentation on the final research paper. Please see the specific descriptions below: (1) Key Research Question, (2) Background/Context and Critical Literature Review, (3) Rationale and Method, (4) Data Presentation and Data

Analysis/Interpretation, (5) Argument/Conclusion. After your presentation, you will be given detailed feedback from the professor, and you will be asked to write and submit the feedback together with your reflection on the feedback.

Final research paper, 4000 words

(deadline Week 9 Tuesday 24 November) 50%

Please follow the professor's step-by-step instructions and feedback in order to complete your final research paper by the deadline. Late submissions will NOT get any feedback.

The assignment will normally contain the following sections, although they may be adapted as appropriate to the specific research conducted. The word limit is 4000 words, excluding bibliography and appendices.

Abstract (approx. 100 words)

This should summarize the key research question/objective, key concept(s), method, analysis and argument of the research project.

Key Research Question/Objective (approx. 100 words)

This should be a clear statement of the key research question to be explored in your project. It should be a specific and "answerable" question, appropriate to the method(s) employed and data to be collected.

Background/Context and Critical Literature Review (approx. 900 words)

This should provide a background for the topic, including a justification for the topic or issue chosen and the key concept(s) used, citing relevant theoretical or other sources where appropriate. The purpose is to address the implicit questions: Why do this piece of research, why do it now, how will it relate to what has been done before?

Rationale and Method (approx. 900 words)

This should present a justification for selection of the method used to address the research question, citing relevant methodology sources where appropriate. This should acknowledge known advantages and disadvantages for the method and consider how these may affect your research, whether positively or negatively. Most importantly, this section should provide a sufficiently detailed account of the decisions taken and procedure followed. It should explain how you have operationalized the research question and so how you have generated the findings obtained. The purpose is to ensure accountability, so that someone else reading the research paper has sufficient information to replicate the process or to identify its strengths and weaknesses. Depending on the research question and the method selected, this section may be divided into subsections (for example, sampling, recruiting, questions of access, designing interview schedule, ethics and consent, etc.), following the narrative of the research.

Data Presentation and Data Analysis/Interpretation (approx. 1500 words)

This section should describe any decisions and procedures for analysis of the data or materials. With data presentation, it should provide a detailed outline of the main or key findings. This section should demonstrate the development of a detailed analysis. Furthermore, this section should integrate the background, research question and analysis sections. The purpose is to discuss the findings by relating them back to the research question in particular, and to related findings or issues in the field of investigation more generally. The section should also include a self-critical assessment of the advantages and disadvantages of research decisions taken and of any successes or flaws in the implementation of the project.

Argument/Conclusion (approx. 500 words)

This concluding section should highlight the argument as a whole and explain the argument in depth. This can be an overview of the key points of the research paper, drawing out any wider implications and including consideration of further research questions for future researchers.

Bibliography

This should include all cited references, presented accurately in a standard format.

Appendices

As appropriate, this should include any materials without which understanding or assessment of the research is impeded. While the appendices should not contain “everything that might be relevant”, you should include (at the least, for example, for interviews) interview schedule and interview transcript.

In general, you will be rewarded for demonstrating the following characteristics:

Content

- (1) Relevance to the course
- (2) Wide reading
- (3) Development of argument
- (4) Accurate citation of references (including adequate bibliography)

Presentation

- (5) Clarity of expression
- (6) Explicit structure
- (7) Consistency of purpose
- (8) Clear conclusion

Critical Judgement

- (9) Depth of interpretation
- (10) Imaginativeness
- (11) Critical appraisal
- (12) Thoroughness of analysis

Grade A range is for outstanding work that achieves all that could reasonably be expected of a university BA student, and demonstrates many (at least 7) of the 12 characteristics above in relation to a **well-developed argument**.

AND include all the sections specified above:

Abstract, Key Research Question/Objective, Background/Context and Critical Literature Review, Rationale and Method, Data Presentation and Data Analysis/Interpretation, Argument/Conclusion, Bibliography, Appendices.

AND demonstrate the Student Learning Outcomes, and the Course Expectations, including:

- NOT just repeat what the book says, but try to have a “dialogue” (e.g. question why? what else?)
- NOT apply the theory blindly or dutifully, but try to evaluate its strengths and weaknesses (e.g. based on the society where you come from) and gain a nuanced, contextualized understanding of the theory/knowledge.
- NOT demonstrate immaturity or offensiveness to any constructive criticism on your work, but try to appreciate and incorporate it in order to improve your work significantly.

Grade B range is for work that demonstrates an integration of some (at least 5) of the 12 characteristics above but presents an **under-developed argument**.

AND include all the sections specified above:

Abstract, Key Research Question/Objective, Background/Context and Critical Literature Review, Rationale and Method, Data Presentation and Data Analysis/Interpretation, Argument/Conclusion, Bibliography, Appendices.

Grade C range is for work that adopts some (at least 3) of the 12 characteristics above but does **not present any argument**.

AND include all the sections specified above.

Abstract, Key Research Question/Objective, Background/Context and Critical Literature Review, Rationale and Method, Data Presentation and Data Analysis/Interpretation, Argument/Conclusion, Bibliography, Appendices.

Fail is one in which the course learning outcomes and the course expectations are not properly understood, key issues are not identified, the researcher paper is badly organized, and requires an adequate range of reading and attention to the above characteristics.

Other
