COM 401 Research Methods

FALL 2008 Syllabus

Instructor: Marc A. Le Pape
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COURSE DESCRIPTION:
- COM 401 Communication Research Methods (3)
- Exploration of quantitative and qualitative research methods commonly used in communication studies.
- Prerequisite: 201 or consent.

CLASS SCHEDULE
The class is scheduled from August 25th to December 19th 2008, and is taught on Tuesday from 3:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. in BUSAD E203.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:
This is an introductory course on research methods. The objectives of the course is to enable students to:

♦ Develop an understanding and an appreciation of the quantitative and qualitative research methods relevant to satisfactorily address a particular research question.

♦ Develop an understanding of the principles and processes involved in developing and addressing a specific research question.

♦ Develop core competencies in writing a research proposal.

♦ Develop a solid background in elementary statistics and data analysis.

♦ Acquire fundamental skills in the use of bibliographic software: EndNote or BibTeX.

♦ Acquire fundamental skills in the use of a Statistical Analysis Software: SPSS, or R.
REQUIRED TEXTS
There are 3 required textbooks for this class.


OPTIONAL TEXTS
Optional books should be bought only after discussing your specific needs with the instructor.

1. Introductory Statistics with R by Peter Dalgaard [4]

2. Data Manipulation with R by Phil Spector [5].

3. Discovering Statistics Using SPSS by Andy Field [6].

SOFTWARE
I will be help you familiarize yourself with any software you choose to use for this class.

◆ All commercial software for this course, i.e., SPSS and EndNote, is available at the Communication labs in Crawford Hall’s first and second floors.

◆ Alternatively, BibTeX and R are free software. BibTeX is a package for creating bibliographies in LaTeX documents. LaTeX, BibTeX and R compile and run on Windows and a wide variety of UNIX platforms including Linux and Mac OS X.

EXAMINATIONS

Midterms
▪ There will be 2 midterms exams in this class. Exams questions are likely to reach deep into the course material, so you cannot hope to do well on them unless you keep up with all readings and assignments from the very beginning of the course. There will be no make up exams except under extenuating circumstances such as documented medical or family emergencies.

Final Exam
▪ The final will an in class comprehensive, closed book, closed notes exam.
GRADING & GRADES ALLOCATION

The instructor Does Not Grade on a Curve.

- A curve implements a relative grading system. When a curve is used, there is no fixed score that earns an "A", "B", etc. Instead, the letter grade becomes an expression of how well any one student performs relative to the rest of the class. In assigning grades for the class the instructor uses fixed scores exclusively.

- The instructor believes that assigning grades should be done as objectively as possible and that grades should measure a student's performance relative to university curriculum standards for a senior level course.

- Please understand that you, the student, determine your grade, not the instructor.

Grades Allocation

- Your final letter grade is based on a cumulative score computed from a weighted average of your attendance, your homework, your participation, and your exams.

- Your score on the following items will determine your final grade based on a maximum possible score of 100 Points:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graded Items</th>
<th>Points Allocation</th>
<th>Grade Distribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance &amp; Participation</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homework</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Exams (Fifteen points each)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
<td>100 Points</td>
<td>100% of Class Grade</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note that the final letter grade is a measure of how well a student meets the objectives of a particular class taught during a particular academic term and reflects the following academic achievements standards:

- A: Excellent
- B: Superior
- C: Average
- D: Inferior
- F: Failure

As recommended by the University of Hawaii at Manoa the +/- grading scale will be used. Specifically, the grades will be allocated as follow:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Grade Point</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>98-100</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94-97</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-93</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-86</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-76</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67-69</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>63-66</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>60-62</td>
<td>0.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0-59</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MISCELLANEOUS

- **Incomplete [I]**
  Students requesting an incomplete must meet two criteria:

  1. They must, at the time of the request, be passing the course with a grade of B or better.

  2. They must provide the instructor with compelling proof of either a legal, medical, or family obligation of an emergency nature as objective and legitimate grounds for the request.

- **Withdraw [W]**
  It is your responsibility to know all deadlines and modalities for withdrawal from the class, including the inclusion or omission of a “W” on your transcripts. An academic officer must approve requests for course withdrawal made after the drop deadlines. Please check with your advisor for more information.

- **Academic Honesty**
  The instructor strictly enforces the policies of the University of Hawaii regarding academic dishonesty. There is zero tolerance for plagiarism and cheating. Cheating or plagiarism on any assignment or exam will result in a grade of F for the assignment or the exam and the offense will be documented in your student file. A second instance will result in a grade of F for the class and immediate referral to the Dean of the College of Social Sciences. Please don’t do it.

- **Disclaimer**
  The instructor reserves the right to change any part of this syllabus at anytime in consultation with the students.
REFERENCED TEXTBOOKS:


