

**Fall 2005**  
**RESEARCH METHODS IN COMMUNICATION**  
**COMM 502**

**Course Information:**

Instructor	Tatyana Dumova; tatyana.dumova@und.edu
Course No., Time & Location	#13391; M 3:00–5:50 pm; 1 & 228 O’Kelly Hall
Office Hours	T 3:30–5:30 pm & W 5-6 pm 223 O’Kelly Hall; tel. (701) 777-4726

**Catalog Description:**

Comm 502. Study of the methodologies of historical, descriptive, survey, and experimental research in communication. Restricted to graduate students. 3 credits

**Course Overview:**

In this course, you will be studying the issues that concern communication scholars and the research methods they use. This is a graduate course. The expectations are that you will be an active participant in your own learning, that you will be reading and discussing material as a fully engaged member of the class, and that you will be seeking out ways to understand and make use of the material in the course.

**Course Goals:**

1. Understand the relationship between theory, methodology, and research practice.
2. Be conversant with the most significant issues in communication research.
3. Be familiar with major research methodologies; understand their strengths and weaknesses.
4. Be able to critically evaluate published communication research.
5. Design a research project in communication and write and present a research proposal.
6. Use the Internet as a tool to design and conduct research in communication.

**Required Texts:**

Keyton, J. (2006). *Communication research: Asking questions, finding answers* (2nd ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.

Pyrzczak, F. (2005). *Evaluating research in academic journals: A practical guide to realistic evaluation* (3rd ed.). Glendale, CA: Pyrczak Publishing.

Additional readings may be assigned as needed.

**Recommended:**

Patten, M. L. (2005). *Proposing empirical research: A guide to the fundamentals* (3rd ed.). Glendale, CA: Pyrczak Publishing.

Lin, C. A., & Atkin, D. J. (2002). *Communication technology and society: Audience adoption and uses*. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.

**Course Schedule:*****Unit 1. Research Assumptions/Traditions/Controversies/Issues***

This unit introduces general issues regarding the nature of communication research, major research traditions and their histories, and issues that concern researchers and others about how research is conducted and how results are used. Your own research interests will be explored so that we can gear course material and discussions more directly.

Readings: **Keyton chapters 1-5, 8, 14; Pyrczak chapters 2-5, Appendix A**

Aug 29	Introduction to the course
Sept 12	The role of theory in research. Research as a process
Sept 19	Scientific method. What are the current controversies in the field?
Sept 26	Ethics in research. Human subjects research workshop/certification

***Unit 2. Data Collection/Sampling/Measuring/Analysis***

The unit will focus on the specific issues involved in various methods of data collection and analysis in communication research.

Readings: **Keyton chapters 6-7, 10-12; Pyrczak chapters 6-8, Appendices B & C**

Oct 3	Data measurement. Sampling. Validity & reliability
Oct 10	Data collection. Internet-based tools
Oct 17	Data visualization. SPSS. Data analysis. Secondary data analysis
Oct 24	Testing for differences. Testing for relationships

***Unit 3. Research Methodologies/Designs***

This unit will take up different research approaches and the benefits and drawbacks to different methodologies.

Readings: **Keyton chapters 8-9, 13-16; Pyrczak chapters 9-11, Appendix D**

Oct 31	Experimental designs. Survey research. Content analysis. Interaction analysis
Nov 7	Observation. Interviewing. Web-based techniques. Digital video
Nov 14	Ethnography. Historical method
Nov 21	Interpretation

***Unit 4. Putting It All Together***

Before research is conducted, the researcher must think through the project completely and sometimes justify the project and approach for institutional approvals or funding purposes. At this stage you should be ready to do a proposal for a project that you would like to and intend to pursue, for your master's thesis or some other purpose.

Readings: **Keyton chapters 17-18; Pyrczak chapter 12, Appendix E**

Nov 28	TBA
Dec 5	Presentations
Dec 12	Final exam time. No exam but all papers are due by 3:15 pm on this day.

**Methods of Instruction:**

Methods of instruction in this course will include discussion of the readings, lecture and demonstration, individual and group research exercises, as well as the use of audio-visual presentation technologies and Web-based course management tools.

**Methods of Evaluation:**

*Assignments & Assessment*

- Research proposal (approximately 10-12 pages) - 40%
- Research critique (4-5 pages) - 20%
- In-class research exercises (e-Randomizer, SPSS, Internet-based ANOVA, etc.) - 30%
- Internet-based data collection instrument - 10%

*Grading Scale*

- A: 94–100 %
- B: 80– 93 %
- C: 70– 79 %
- D: 60– 69 %

**Classroom Policies:**

- Regular attendance is necessary to be successful in this course. You can submit a written synopsis of the assigned readings to make up for a missed class.
- Please do not hesitate to ask me for assistance when needed.
- All projects should be completed on time. For each day an assignment is late two percent of the grade will be deducted.

**Disability Statement:**

If you have a disability, you may be entitled to receive individualized accommodations intended to assure you an equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from the course.

To request disability accommodations, please make an appointment to see the instructor. All students will be accommodated to meet their needs. For more information and assistance, please call Disability Services at (701) 777-3245.

**Academic Honesty:**

All students are subject to the UND Code of Student Life, including but not limited to, issues of Scholastic Dishonesty.

**Cultural Diversity Statement:**

The School of Communication is committed to bringing the richness of cultural diversity to all students. Through active engagement, the School of Communication endeavors to provide multi-cultural opportunities, to reduce cultural stereotypes, to embrace cultural differences, and to promote respect for cultural diversity.

**Acknowledgment:**

I would like to express my sincere thanks to Dr. Lana Rakow for sharing her Spring 2003 COMM 502 syllabus which provides a foundation for the present course.