

JOUR 460 (# 17857)
Research Methods in Strategic Communication

Fall 2019: M/W: 3:00 – 4:15 p.m.
1146 Integrated Science Building (CDS1)

Instructor:
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Office hours:
-Mondays: 9:30–10:30
-Wednesdays: 1:30–2:30
-By appointment

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Greetings:

Welcome to Research Methods! This course is designed to introduce you to strategic communication research methods and enable you to develop your own research and data interpretation skills. We will discuss the main research methods used in our field and how they apply to various strategic communication questions. You should find this course challenging *and* fun.

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Course description from the KU catalog:

“Students conduct, analyze and apply research to develop strategy and guide decisions related to communication campaigns. In addition to studying qualitative and quantitative research methods as well as basic statistics, students develop critical thinking skills by defining research problems and producing insightful solutions. Requirement: Must obtain a grade of C (2.0) or above to advance in the curriculum. Prerequisite: Admission to the School of Journalism and JOUR 320 with a grade of C (2.0) or above.”

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Learning Objectives:

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

- Understand the relationship between research methods and strategic communication questions
- Understand data collection and analysis procedures
- Develop a research design and research instruments based on a specific question
- Conduct secondary social media research on a particular communication problem
- Conduct primary research using a specific research method
- Write a research report with recommendations grounded in your own research

Reading:

The required textbook for this course is *Social Science Research: Principles, Methods, and Practices* by Anol Bhattacharjee. It is an open-source text book freely available online. Additional reading materials will be posted on our Blackboard site. I expect you to have read all the assigned material before class. This will help you better understand the day's topic and will facilitate our discussions.

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Attendance & Expectations:

You are expected to attend all class sessions. Some absences are excused, such as illnesses accompanied by a doctor's note, family emergencies, athletic commitments, religious holidays and other similar reasons but please let me know in advance when possible so we can make arrangements to make up the missed classes.

More than two unexcused absences will affect your final grade. Each additional absence will take away two points from your final grade. For instance, if you have three unexcused absences and your final calculated grade is 91, you will receive an 89 for the class. If you have four unexcused absences, I will deduct four points from your final calculated grade. Late arrivals (10 minutes) will also negatively affect your grade. Two late arrivals equal one absence. If you have more than four unexcused absences, you are eligible to be dropped from the course.

Participation is an important element of this course. An engaging conversation will enhance your understanding of certain concepts as well as create a healthy learning environment. Therefore, you are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the assigned readings.

During our discussions, please respect the ideas of your peers. You are encouraged to challenge someone's particular reasoning as long as you stay courteous. You will not be judged on your personal opinions. However, I expect you to frame your arguments using the research methods concepts we will have addressed and clearly articulate the steps of your reasoning.

You are allowed to bring laptops to class as long as you use them responsibly. However, I will ask you to close your laptops during our in-class exercises and parts of our workshops. If your laptops are distracting the class, that is, if your peers are paying more attention to your computer screen than to our class, I will ban laptop use in class for everyone. As for cell phones, please put them on silent mode. If you are expecting an important call, please let me know at the beginning of class and sit next to the classroom door.

You are responsible for completing all assignments on time. Assignments are due by the start of the class session on the date indicated unless otherwise specified on our schedule. All

assignments must be typed in size 12 font, double-spaced, and sent via [email to erba.projects@gmail.com](mailto:erba.projects@gmail.com). You do not need to turn in a hard copy. If you are absent, you must email your assignment by the due date/time. I will mark down late assignments (10 minutes after the due date/time) by two points for each late day. Extensions may be granted only as circumstances warrant. If you do not submit an assignment within one week of its due date, you will automatically lose the points for that assignment.

Clear writing, free of spelling and grammatical errors is expected. The quality of your writing will affect your grade on written assignments: poor writing will result in poor grades (see grading rubric on Blackboard).



Assignments:

You will complete the following assignments for your final grade (see Blackboard for guidelines):

- Class Participation: 5%
- Research Participation Pool: 3%
- Google Analytics Certificate: 7%
- Exams: 30%
- Individual Research Assignments: 20%
- Team Research Assignments: 35%

Class Participation: 5%

As mentioned above, your participation will impact the quality of this course. We will be addressing various aspects of strategic communication research, so regardless of your specific interests, you are expected to take advantage of our discussions to express how you feel about certain matters related to such an important aspect of your future career.

Participation includes comments and involvement in our in-class discussions, group exercises and workshops; comments or links relevant to the class posted on our Blackboard discussion board; as well as other material you will share with our class.

Research Participation Pool: 3%

This course is part of the research participant pool for the School of Journalism and Mass Communications, which means that you are expected to participate in research studies in our field as part of your overall grade. You are each expected to take part in three studies this semester, worth

3% of your final grade (1% per completed study). Researchers will contact you directly during the semester with specific details about their study. If you do not wish to participate in a study, you will have the option to write a summary of a peer-reviewed research article instead (please see guidelines on Blackboard). If you do not wish to participate in any study, you will have to write three research summaries in order to obtain full credit. Deadlines to participate in the studies or write the research summaries will be set by the researchers.

Google Analytics Certificate: 7%

You are required to complete the “Google Analytics for Beginners” course from the Google Analytics Academy and obtain your certificate by the end of the semester. Following the “Google Analytics Certification Process Guide,” you will complete the course at your own pace. This is not something that you will be able to complete overnight – start as early as you can. The process of certification (and the certificate itself) will be extremely helpful to your resume and your future career as you prepare to enter the job market. You must email me a copy of your certificate by the last day of classes (Thursday December 12). Google Analytics Academy can be found [here](https://analytics.google.com/analytics/academy/).
(<https://analytics.google.com/analytics/academy/>)

Exams: 30%

There will be two exams that will consist of a series of multiple choice questions. Exams may also include short open-ended questions. They will not be cumulative. You will be allowed to bring one 4x6 index card containing notes (recto verso) from our classes to help you with the exam. However, all information on the index card must be hand-written. I will collect all index cards after the exams to make sure you used them appropriately.

Individual Research Assignments: 20%

As part of our research project, you will each submit the following assignments: moderator guide (20%), survey questionnaire (20%), focus group coding (20%), an infographic (25%), and a reflection (15%).

Team Research Assignments: 35%

As a team, you will conduct secondary and primary research, and make sense of your findings in a series of reports. Your grade for your team research assignments will be calculated as

follows: Secondary research (25%); Moderator guide (5%); Focus group transcript (5%); Focus group code table (10%); Focus group report (27.5%); survey report (27.5%).



Grades:

To calculate your final grade, I will use the following scale:

A = 93-100%	C = 73-76%
A- = 90-92%	C- = 70-72%
B+ = 87-89%	D+ = 67-69%
B = 83-86%	D = 63-66%
B- = 80-82%	D- = 60-62%
C+ = 77-79%	F = 59% or below

I will only round grades up at the 0.8 level. Therefore, your grade must reach 0.8 for me to round it up. For example, if your final grade is 89.80, I will round it up to 90.00. On the other hand, if your grade is 89.79, it will stay as it is.



Important resources:

JSchoolTech provides technical training through workshops, small-group training and online tutorials. It offers support for class assignments, as well as opportunities to apply learning in new ways. View and sign up for events [here](http://www.jourtech.dept.ku.edu/) (http://www.jourtech.dept.ku.edu/).

The Career and Outreach Office at Stauffer-Flint, Room 120, provides services for all students at the William Allen White School of Journalism and Mass Communications. If you need assistance with resume and cover letter development, job search strategy, internships, mock interviews and LinkedIn profile, schedule an appointment with Steve Rottinghaus at steve_rottinghaus@ku.edu. Make sure to follow job and internship postings on Twitter at [@Rhaus90](https://twitter.com/Rhaus90).

J-School Generations is an annual event that brings together J-School alumni and students to connect, network and have fun. It will take place on Thursday Oct. 24 and Friday Oct. 25. Our alumni, who work in all facets of journalism and strategic communication, are eager to share their advice with you. Learn more and sign up for events [here](http://journalism.ku.edu/j-school-generations) (http://journalism.ku.edu/j-school-generations).



Academic Integrity:

The William Allen White School of Journalism and Mass Communications does not tolerate plagiarism, fabrication of evidence and falsification of evidence. Penalties for plagiarism, fabrication or falsification can include a failing grade for this course and expulsion from the School of Journalism and Mass Communications. If you have any questions about what constitutes original work, plagiarism, fabrication or falsification, please consult the professor(s) of this course.

Original work: The expectation when you come to this class is that you’ve come to learn, to be creative, to stretch your imagination, and expand your skills. Therefore, all the work you do in this class must be original. That means no ‘recycling’ of assignments or papers from other classes, in the J-School or outside the J-School. Don’t recycle research papers, news stories, marketing plans, etc. If you conducted a study or a research paper on any aspect of strategic communication research for another class, you cannot modify it for this class. Any efforts to recycle material will be regarded as academic dishonesty.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is stealing. You take someone else’s ideas, thoughts, or words, and you present them as your own original work. This includes taking ideas from written sources, such as books, as well as materials on the Internet. Cutting and pasting materials from the Internet and presenting that work as if it were your own is plagiarism. There may be times when you want to incorporate another person’s ideas, opinions, and words into the papers you write, to make a point or to provide background. If you do, it is essential that you attribute that information—that you explain where the information came from and give credit where credit is due. “Recycling” past interviews or research from previous J460 students and presenting it as your own falls into the category of plagiarism.

Fabrication and Falsification: Fabrication and falsification mean that you made it up. This can include making up an entire interview or embellishing a fact, quote, or statistic to make it sound better. Don’t do it.



Journalism School Policy on Classroom Attendance:

No student may add a journalism class after the 20th day of a semester.

Students must attend their classes and laboratory periods. Instructors may take attendance into account in assessing a student's performance and may require a certain level of attendance for passing a course. Instructors may choose to drop students from a course, based on attendance, without consent.

The School of Journalism reserves the right to cancel the enrollment of students who fail to attend the first class or laboratory meeting.

Seeking Assistance:

You are urged to attend office hours or meet with me by appointment to discuss any questions pertaining to the course, the readings, exams and assignments, or career prospects and opportunities. You should not hesitate to seek continuing assistance throughout the semester.

The University of Kansas is committed to helping all students learn. Please be aware that the KU Office of Student Access Services coordinates accommodations for all students who are eligible. If you have a disability for which you wish to request accommodations and have not contacted this office, please do so as soon as possible. Information about services can be found at <https://disability.ku.edu/>. Or you can visit the office on the first floor of Strong Hall. The phone number is: 785-864-4064. The email is: achieve@ku.edu. Please contact me privately regarding your needs in this course.

Financial Aid Policy:

The KU Office of Student Financial Aid is required by federal law to determine whether students who receive aid are attending each class in which they are enrolled. Instructors are required to report to that office the absences of students who have stopped attending and the names of those who have enrolled but never have attended. Students who do not attend classes may be required to repay federal and/or state financial aid.

Students who receive any form of financial aid should learn all requirements including minimum hours of enrollment and grades to qualify for and retain that aid.

Copying or Recording of Classroom Lectures:

Course materials prepared by the instructor, as well as content of all lectures presented by the instructor in class and on Blackboard, are the instructor's property. Video and audio recording of lectures without instructor consent is prohibited. On request, the instructor will usually permit students to audio tape lectures, on the condition that these audio tapes are only used as a study aid by the individual making the recording. Unless the instructor gives explicit permission, recordings of lectures may not be modified and must not be transferred or transmitted to any other person,

whether or not that individual is enrolled in the course. This also applies to any lecture notes and other content prepared by the instructor on Blackboard.

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Commercial Note-Taking:

Pursuant to the University of Kansas' [Policy on Commercial Note-Taking Ventures](#), commercial note-taking is not permitted in this course. Lecture notes and course materials may be taken for personal use, for the purpose of mastering the course material, and may not be sold to any person or entity in any form. Any student engaged in or contributing to the commercial exchange of notes or course materials will be subject to discipline, including academic misconduct charges, in accordance with University policy. Please note: note-taking provided by a student volunteer for a student with a disability, as a reasonable accommodation under the ADA, is not the same as commercial note-taking and is not covered under this policy.

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Concealed Handguns:

Individuals who choose to carry concealed handguns are solely responsible to do so in a safe and secure manner in strict conformity with [state and federal laws](#) and [KU weapons policy](#). Safety measures outlined in the KU weapons policy specify that a concealed handgun:

- Must be under the constant control of the carrier.
- Must be out of view, concealed either on the body of the carrier, or backpack, purse, or bag that remains under the carrier's custody and control.
- Must be in a holster that covers the trigger area and secures any external hammer in an uncocked position
- Must have the safety on, and have no round in the chamber.

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Inclement Weather:

In the event of inclement weather, the decision to cancel classes is made by KU officials. To determine whether snow or icy conditions have canceled classes, call 864-7669 (864-SNOW).

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Note:

The schedule below may be modified and any potential changes will be announced in advance.

	Topic	Required readings	Due dates
Week I			
M. Aug. 26	Thinking about research		
W. Aug. 28	Research basics	Chapter 1: pp. 1-6	
Week II			
M. Sept. 2	No class: Labor Day		
W. Sept. 4	Thinking like a researcher	-Chapter 2: pp. 9-13 -Chapter 3: pp. 22-24	
Week III			
M. Sept. 9	Secondary research	-Using library and database resources (BB)	Team contracts
W. Sept. 11	Workshop: Secondary research		Focus group times (conducted by 10/11)
Week IV			
M. Sept. 16	Qualitative research	-Introduction to qualitative research (BB)	
W. Sept. 18	Qualitative research (cont.)	-Brief guide for focus groups (BB)	Secondary Research Report: Th. 9/19, 3pm
Week V			
M. Sept. 23	Workshop: Moderator guide & conducting a focus group	-Moderator role (BB)	Individual moderator guide: T. 9/24, 3pm
W. Sept. 25	Workshop: Conducting a focus group (cont.)	-Conducting focus groups (BB) -Chapter 9: pp. 78-80	Team moderator guide: Th. 9/26, 3pm
Week VI			
M. Sept. 30	Quantitative research	-Chapter 9: pp. 73-75 -Chapter 9: pp. 80-82 -Chapter 10: pp. 83-87	
W. Oct. 2	Quantitative research (cont.)	-Chapter 7: pp. 55, 56, 58 -Chapter 8: pp. 65-70	
Week VII			
M. Oct. 7	Workshop: Types of scales	-Chapter 6: pp. 43-49	
W. Oct. 9	Exam 1		
Week VIII			
M. Oct. 14	No class: Fall Break		
W. Oct. 16	Google Analytics		Transcript: 10/17 3pm

Week IX

M. Oct. 21	Workshop: Developing survey questions	-Chapter 9: pp. 75-78	
W. Oct. 23	Workshop: Developing survey questions (cont.)		Survey questionnaire (individual): Th. 10/24, 3pm

Week X

M. Oct. 28	Workshop: Analyzing qualitative data	-Analyzing focus group data (BB) -Chapter 13: pp. 113-115	Individual focus group coding: T. 10/29, 3pm
W. Oct. 30	Workshop: Analyzing qualitative data (cont.)		Team focus group table: Th. 10/31, 3pm

Week XI

M. Nov. 4	Workshop: Writing Qualitative Findings	-Creating excerpt-commentary units (BB)	
W. Nov. 6	Workshop: Analyzing quantitative data	-Chapter 14: pp. 119-122	Focus group report: Th. 11/7, 3pm

Week XII

M. Nov. 11	Workshop: Analyzing quantitative data		
W. Nov. 13	Workshop: Writing quantitative results		

Week XIII

M. Nov. 18	Data Visualization (SF 111)		
W. Nov. 20	Data Visualization (SF 111)		

Week XIV

M. Nov. 25	Work on survey report		Survey report: T. 11/26, 3pm
W. Nov. 27	No class: Thanksgiving		

Week XV

M. Dec. 2	Workshop: Infographic		
W. Dec. 4	Exam 2		Infographic: Th. 12/5, 3pm

Week XVI

M. Dec. 9	Workshop: Revising reports		
W. Dec. 11	Concluding remarks & Reflection		Reflection & Google Analytics Certificate: Th. 12/12, 3pm