Methodologies in Communication Research

Communication 150, Spring 2021
Section 1: Monday and Wednesday 4-5:50pm (lecture)
Section 2: Monday and Wednesday 2-3:50pm (lecture)
Online

Professor Georgia Kernell (she/her/hers)
OH Mon. 3:15 – 5pm.
https://ucla.zoom.us/j/7867103163.
gkernell@ucla.edu

TA Derek Holliday (Section 1) (he/him/his)
OH Wed. 9:30-11:30am.
https://ucla.zoom.us/j/98678265340?pwd=TmZacXI2QkFqajdHcDJkVC9QMXNJZz09
deholliday@ucla.edu

TA Andrea Metzgar (Section 2) (she/her/hers)
OH Tues. 12:15-2pm.
https://ucla.zoom.us/j/93793245645?pwd=WXRtcmx6THRtOVdEcDNqRDVuV0gvQT09
ametzgar@ucla.edu

You must attend your discussion section on zoom each week. You are welcome to attend either TA’s office hours as well as my own.

Course Objectives
In this course you will learn how social science research is conducted. You will gain an understanding of the tools that social science researchers used to study society and will become an informed consumer of social science findings. This includes learning about question formation, hypothesis generation, data collection, experiments, surveys, qualitative research, measurement, statistics, and the normative implications of your work.

Lectures
All classes will be asynchronous with the following exceptions: the first day of class, exams, and final project presentations. Please watch the lectures assigned for a given day before your section on that day. Lectures will be made available 48 hours in advance of class time.

Assigned Work and Grading
Your final course grade will be based on a weighted average of your scores on homework (20%), a midterm exam (15%), a final exam (25%), section attendance and participation (7.5%), lecture quizzes (7.5%) and a final project (25%).

Homework
All assignments will be posted on the course CCLE site and should be submitted to the CCLE site for grading. The assignment due dates and times (PST) are as follows:
Assignment 1: Sunday, April 4, 5pm
Assignment 2: Sunday, April 11, 5pm
Assignment 3: Tuesday, April 20, 5pm
Assignment 4: Sunday, May 9, 5pm
Assignment 5: Sunday, May 16, 5pm
Assignment 6: Sunday, May 23, 5pm

Homework assignments will be made available approximately six days before they are due. Homework can be turned in 24 hours late for a 20% penalty, but it will not be accepted after that time unless there is an unforeseen, documented, and verified emergency. You are welcome to hand-write your homework and turn in a scanned copy. You are also welcome to work on homework assignments with other students in class (either section). If you choose to work with other students, please write the names of all students you worked with on your assignment.

Exams
Exams will be held synchronously during your scheduled class time (midterm) and during the final exam time on June 7 (final). You will need a working camera, microphone, and speakers for the exam. Please arrange a quiet location where you can concentrate while taking the exam.

Section Attendance and Participation
Each week your attendance in section will be recorded. Please be on time and ready to discuss the assigned materials for that week. You are expected to have watched the lectures assigned for the day of your section and complete the readings before your section meeting. So, if you have section on a Monday, you must watch the lecture associated with that day prior to the section meeting. You will receive full credit for section participation if you show up on time for the section and if you participate in your group break-out rooms when applicable. Your participation grade also reflects attendance in the required synchronous lectures.

Lecture Quizzes
There is an online quiz associated with each lecture video. Although I ask you to watch the video before class on the day of section, you have until 8pm that evening to finish your lecture quiz. (This ensures that students in sections that meet both before and after the regularly scheduled classtime both have the ability to attend section prior to the quiz if they prefer.) I will drop your two lowest quiz grades.

Final Projects
Each student will participate in a group project in a team of four students. All group members will come from the same section. Your team will come up with an original research proposal using one or more of the research methods developed in class. The proposal should address an original research question that has something to do with communication. You will form groups in section during the third week of class. Full guidelines for the final project can be found on CCLE at that time. Each group will present their final project one of the two presentation days listed below.

Final Project: Monday, May 24 or Wednesday, May 26
Readings

There are three types of readings for this course. The main textbook for this course is:


In the stats portion of the class (~last 1/3 of the term) we will use a second textbook:


Readings from this textbook will be posted on the course website. You do not need to purchase this book.

In addition, most class sessions also include articles listed from the popular and academic press. Please complete all readings in *advance* of the date which they appear and be prepared to discuss them in section.

Academic Integrity

I take academic integrity very seriously. You may not plagiarize, copy answers from an online source, state that an emergency prevented you from attending class if it did not, use someone else’s graded homework, communicate with someone else during an exam, or obtain the answer key for any textbook. These are only a handful of examples of academic integrity violations. If any of these or other violations occur, you will most likely fail the class and may face other repercussions from UCLA. The department and school does not take these violations lightly. People have been suspended for cheating in my class before and expelled from UCLA for cheating in communications courses. Please read information on UCLA’s academic integrity policy here: [http://www.deanofstudents.ucla.edu/Portals/16/Documents/StudentGuide.pdf](http://www.deanofstudents.ucla.edu/Portals/16/Documents/StudentGuide.pdf). I reserve the right to upload your work to turnitin (plagiarism detection software).

Other

Absences on the day of a test will only be excused in cases of an unforeseen, documented emergency. These will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. I do not give early exams.

All students with disabilities that may require special accommodations should contact the UCLA Office for Students with Disabilities (A255 Murphy Hall; 310-825-1501; 310-206-6083 [telephone device for the deaf] as soon as possible.

**All grading-related issues will be handled first by Derek (Section 1 students) or Andrea (Section 2 students).**
Schedule

Mon. March 29. Introduction & Research Design
Readings: none

Other
• Due to the synchronous class time, my OH will be by appt only this week.

Wed. March 31. Research Design (2) & Causality
Readings:
• Singleton and Straits, Chapters 1 & 4
• Robert Cooper, “Don’t Throw Away Your Kids' Pillows Just Yet,” Science 2.0, 2/21/2012.

Mon. April 5. Measurement
Readings:
• Singleton and Straits, Chapters 5

Wed. April 7. Sampling.
Readings:
• Singleton and Straits, Chapter 6
• Charlotte McDonald, “Do 55% of Syrians really want President Assad to stay?” BBC News, 2/25/2012

Mon. April 12. Experiments (1)
Readings:
• Singleton and Straits, Chapter 7.

Wed. April 14. Experiments (2) and Surveys (1)
Readings:
• Singleton and Straits, Chapter 8 and 9

Mon. April 19. Surveys (2) and Field Research
Readings:
• Singleton and Straits, Chapters 10 and 11

Wed. April 21. Research Ethics
Readings:
- Singleton and Straits, Chapter 3
- Madison Park, “Medical journal retracts study linking autism to vaccine,” CNN, 2/2/2010
- “Flu Researchers Will Halt Controversial Studies for 60 Days,” MedPageToday, 1/20/2012
- An Experiment Gives Cash Aid to the Poor. Is that Ethical?

Mon. April 26. Midterm
The exam will be held synchronously on zoom and CCLE. Please have your camera turned on for the entire exam.

Wed. April 28. Displaying Data and Descriptive Statistics for a Single Variable
Readings:
- Hayes, Chapter 4-4.3.3 (Note: This means read from the beginning of chapter 4 up through and including section 4.3.3.)
- Recommended, but not required: Dennis C. McCormac, “Political Number Games,” The Baltimore Sun, 1/5/2012

Mon. May 3. Probability, Sampling Distributions, and the Normal Distribution
Readings:
- Hayes, Chapter 5-5.3.2
- Lisa Fleisher, “Wide Variations Spark Skepticism,” The Wall Street Journal, 2/25/2012 (also available on CCLE)

Wed. May 5. Confidence Intervals
Readings:
- Hayes, Chapter 7-7.2.3

Mon. May 10. Statistical Significance
Readings:
- Hayes, Chapter 8-8.2

Readings:
- Hayes, Chapter Sections 4.7-4.7.1, 4.7.3, 4.8

Mon. May 17. Regression (1)
Readings:
- Chapter 12-12.1.2
**Wed. May 19. Regression (2) and Replication Crisis.**
*Readings:*

**Mon. May 24 & Wed. May 26. Group Project Presentations.**
*Readings: none.*

*Other:*
  - Due to the synchronous class time, my OH will by appt only this week. Please contact me if you would like to make an appointment after the presentations.

**Wed. June 2. Review**
*Readings: none.*

*Other:*
  - Due to the Memorial Day holiday, my OH will be moved to Thursday, June 3 3:30-5:30.

**Mon. June 7. 6:30-8:30pm. Final Exam.**
The exam will be held synchronously on zoom and CCLE. Please have your camera turned on for the entire exam.