**Course Instructor**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Dr. Sujatha Sosale</th>
<th>Class</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Associate Professor</td>
<td>12:30 – 1:45 PM, TTh, E205 AJB</td>
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<tr>
<td>W329 AJB</td>
<td><strong>Office hours</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone: (319) 335-3428</td>
<td>2:30 – 4:00 Tues., 1:30 – 3:00 Wed., or by appt.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:sujatha-sosale@uiowa.edu">sujatha-sosale@uiowa.edu</a></td>
<td><strong>DEO: Professor David Ryfe</strong></td>
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<td>Campus address: E305B AJB</td>
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<td>E-mail: <a href="mailto:david-ryfe@uiowa.edu">david-ryfe@uiowa.edu</a></td>
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**Course description**

This course will introduce you to basic research methods and techniques used in media and communication industries to understand the public’s preferences and tastes on the one hand, and media messages on the other. These approaches help media and communication industries create more effective messages, whether they are informative (news) or persuasive (strategic communication) messages, in order to reach appropriate audiences. Learning the basics of research in the “real world” will also involve reading, evaluating, and generally working with academic research approaches and procedures that professional researchers in the industry typically use.

The **objectives of this course** are:

1. To question what we routinely read, hear, and see in the media such as poll data, survey reports, business reporting, or consumer preferences;
2. To identify, explain, and evaluate the stated problems, key findings, and suggested solutions (if provided) in published research (in popular media and industry or trade publications)
3. To select appropriate methods for finding answers to specific questions about media audiences by learning the approach, features, purposes, advantages, and limitations of various research methods most commonly used in media industries;
4. To gain an appreciation of the practical aspects of research, like developing a basic understanding of typical numerical information used in media research, constructing research instruments, understanding a coherent research design.

**JMC Learning Outcomes**

The School of Journalism and Mass Communication is committed to your academic and professional success. In line with this commitment, we have identified particular learning outcomes that every student should obtain by the time they earn a JMC degree. You can find more information about these learning outcomes here: [http://clas.uiowa.edu/sjmc/undergraduate-programs/assessment](http://clas.uiowa.edu/sjmc/undergraduate-programs/assessment). We regularly assess the curriculum to determine whether students are achieving these outcomes.

Broadly speaking, the following outcomes apply to this course:

**Law and ethics:**

- Students will demonstrate an ability to anticipate and recognize ethical issues when they arise and to reason through them taking multiple perspectives and contexts into account.
• Students will demonstrate an ability to explain their ethical approaches and reasoning about a particular dilemma in terms that can be understood by a diverse group of people.

Media literacy:
• Students will develop critical thinking skills to analyze and interpret media messages through an understanding of media practices and institutions.

Writing and storytelling:
• Students will display the ability to access and analyze data, report facts accurately, research and edit information responsibly and in a manner commensurate with professional standards.

Textbook and course materials:

Required Textbook:
ISBN-10: 1483379418

The textbook is available for purchase in the Iowa Hawk Shop (UI Bookstore) located in the Iowa Memorial Union. It is also available online. New, used, and e-book copies are available. The Hawk Shop website also suggests alternate sources for purchasing or renting the book. (319-335-3179; M-F 8:00 am – 5:00 pm).

Other materials:
In addition to the textbook a variety of readings is prescribed for the course. They are specified in the course calendar further down in the syllabus, and posted on ICON either in the form of chapters and articles, or links through which the readings can be accessed.

ICON
You are responsible for keeping up with course materials and any changes that may occur periodically by checking ICON regularly.

Assignments / Grading

Discussion posts – 4, total of 40 points (points will differ)
• For this assignment, you will post responses for 4 topics, all based on course materials (readings, reports, guest presentations, etc.).
• For each post a prompt will be given to which you will post two to three paragraphs in the discussion area on ICON. Each of your posts should be presented as a mini paper in response to the prompt.
• You should then respond to one post in the spirit of discussion. For example, if I provide a prompt on the topic of sampling, your first post should be 2-3 paragraphs in length, presented as a mini paper. You should post one response to any of your classmates’ first post.
• Details will be discussed in class and posted on ICON
• Assigned throughout the semester – refer assignment guidelines and calendar document on ICON.
Article analyses – 2 @ 25 points, total 50 points
- Two articles for identifying the research problem, methods used, application of the methods, findings, and lessons learned.
- Details will be discussed in class and posted on ICON.

Exam 1 – 50 points
- Covers weeks 1-5, including readings, lecture, and guest presentations. The exam will be taken online on ICON. Details will be given in class.

Exam 2 – 50 points
- Covers weeks 7-10 till semester end.

Exam 3 – 50 points
- Covers weeks 12-15 – scheduled as the final exam. The date for the final exam will be given by the Registrar’s office.

Group presentation – 30 points
- Guidelines and calendar will be given for this assignment

Attendance and Participation – 30 points
- Every student gets one “grace” absence. Each additional unexcused absence will result in an automatic 2.5-point deduction from your Attendance grade. For example, 3 unexcused absences will result in a maximum Attendance and Participation grade of 25/30.
  - Note: See attendance policy below.
- Your participation grade will reflect our assessment of your preparedness, cooperation, and contribution. While attendance means “showing up,” preparedness means completing the assigned readings and tasks on time, cooperation means working well with others, and contribution means adding value to class discussions and activities.

Total Points = 300

Grading Scale
The final grade is determined by the total number of points earned during the semester.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>97-100%</td>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-96%</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-86%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-76%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72%</td>
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<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67-69%</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>63-66%</td>
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<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>60-62%</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>59% and below</td>
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Attendance Policy
Excused absences will be granted only if (a) you are missing class for a documented illness, mandatory religious obligation, or University-sponsored activity, (b) you email me prior to the start of the class period you are missing, AND (c) you provide official documentation within one week of the absence. In your email notification to me, include your date of absence and reason for absence; provide the documentation separately, in hard copy format.
Missed Class

If you miss class, it is your responsibility to learn what was covered that day and acquire notes from your fellow classmates. Please do not send the following emails:

1. “What did I miss?”
2. “Did I miss anything important?”

The answer to #1 is “Lots,” and the answer to #2 is “Yes.” I am happy to discuss course content during office hours, but I cannot cover the material with the same amount of detail as I can in class.

Late Policy

Assignments that are submitted late will face a 10 percent penalty per day late, beginning at the exact due date/time and including weekends and holidays. For example, an assignment that would have received a 93% if it were turned in on time will receive an 83% if submitted ten minutes late, 73% if submitted two days late, and so on. If you miss an assignment deadline or an exam without prior notification, due to an emergency, you will need to provide credible documentation for the absence within a week of the due date.

Extra Credit

There is no guarantee but there may be limited extra credit opportunities during the semester. Students will be notified of these opportunities via email if such opportunities should come up. You should not anticipate (a) that extra credit assignments will be made available, and (b) that the amount of extra credit offered will be great enough to make a significant impact on your final grade.

Electronic Communication

As per university policy, you are responsible for all official correspondences sent to your University of Iowa e-mail address (@uiowa.edu).

Academic Misconduct

The assignments for this course will require you to read carefully and convey in your own words your understanding of the material. Appropriate citing and quoting practices should be followed. Plagiarism, even if inadvertent, will not be tolerated. Per college policy, we are required to report academic misconduct the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences.

According to the University of Iowa Academic Policies, academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to:

- Using direct quotations without quotation marks and/or without crediting the source
- Paraphrasing information and ideas from sources without crediting the source
- Failing to provide adequate citations for material obtained through electronic research
- Downloading and submitting work from electronic databases without citation
- Submitting material created/written by someone else as one’s own, including purchased papers, artistic works, photography, and electronic media.
- Submitting material in part or whole from one’s own previous work or work in other classes

In short, plagiarism occurs whenever someone else’s work or idea is presented as your own, or when your own work in other classes in the past or present is presented as work done for this course in this term. Students are responsible for understanding this policy. For full information see http://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook/academic-fraud-honor-code
Resources for Students
Students may find the University of Iowa’s Writing Center to be useful for this course as well as OWL; the Tutor Iowa site is also very valuable for students seeking extra help. In addition, the campus library is very accommodating to distance students.

- U of I Writing Center: http://writingcenter.uiowa.edu/
- The Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL): https://owl.english.purdue.edu/
- Tutor Iowa: http://tutor.uiowa.edu/
- APA reference formatting style: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/
Course calendar

**Note:** This is a working calendar. Deviations may be necessary at times. It is the student’s responsibility to keep informed of the calendar at all times. Changes to the calendar, if any, will be announced in class and on the ICON opening page. Some adjustments may be made in the calendar to accommodate unexpected guest presentation opportunities.

**Week 1 – Introduction**

**Tuesday (1/16)**
Course introduction
Higgerson, Digital Journalism Trends – link on ICON

**Thursday (1/18)**
Porter, Late Night Ratings tvbythenumbers link on ICON

Poindexter and McCombs chapter – pdf on ICON

Text, Chapter 1, Getting Started

**Week 2 – Introduction, continued**

**Tuesday (1/23)**

**Thursday (1/25)**

Saldaña, chapter 1 – pdf on ICON

Due on ICON: Bio sheet

**Week 3 – Reading and understanding published research**

**Tuesday (1/30)**
Treadwell, Chapter 4, You Could Look It Up

Locke et al, Reading Research chapter – pdf on ICON
Thursday (2/1)
Practice articles for analysis
New Survey–Information Environment and the informed American (October 2016)–AP-NORC study press release

Anderson & Perrin (May 2017), Report on Technology Adoption Patterns (Pew study)


Week 4 – Research ethics and quality
Tuesday (2/6)
Text chapter on Ethics in Research

APA style – Purdue OWL guide (link on ICON)

Thursday (2/8)
Video link on ICON
And companion article link on ICON

Due on ICON: Article analysis 1

Week 5 – Exam 1
Tuesday (2/13)
Exam 1 review

Thursday (2/15)
Exam 2 review

Week 6 – Preliminary considerations and procedures
Tuesday (2/13)
Watt & van den Berg reading, Research Procedures – pdf on ICON

Thursday (2/15)
Watt & van den Berg

Due on ICON: Article analysis 2

Week 7 – Preparation for quantitative research
Tuesday (2/27)
Text, chapter 8, Sampling
Thursday (3/1)
Text, chapter 5, Measurement

Raju, “Statistics…primer for media” (link on ICON)

Week 8 – Surveys, content analysis
Tuesday (3/6)
Text, chapter 9, Surveys

Ferenstein, Surveys Q and A on Silicon Valley politics (link on ICON)

Thursday (3/8)
Text, chapter 12, Content analysis

Mitchell & Barthel, Local news media ecosystems (link on ICON)

SPRING BREAK! (3/13 & 3/15)

Week 9 – Preparation for qualitative research: Design, procedures, considerations
Tuesday (3/20)
Saldana, chapter 4, Qualitative Research Design (pdf on ICON)

Thursday (3/22)
Babbie, Chapter 10, Qualitative Field Research, pp 295-303 (pdf on ICON)

Week 10 – Exam 2
Tuesday (4/3)
Wind up, Exam 2 review

Thursday (4/5)
Exam 2

Week 11 – Focus groups, observation, interviews
Tuesday (3/27)
Focus groups
Lenhart et al, Social media and romantic relationships (Pew study)

Text, Chapter 11, Watching and Listening (Observation)

Thursday (3/29)
Text, chapter 11

Boyce & Neale: Conducting in-depth interviews (link on ICON)
**Week 12 – Social Media and Audience Analysis**
**Tuesday (4/10)**  

**Thursday (4/12)**  

**Week 13 – Social media and audience analysis**
**Tuesday (4/17)**  
Reading TBA

**Thursday (4/19)**  
Group project meeting

**Week 14 – Social media and audience analysis**
**Tuesday (4/24)**  
Reading and/or guest lecture TBA

**Thursday (4/26)**  
Group project meeting

**Week 15**
**Tuesday (5/1)**  
Group presentations

**Thursday (5/3)**  
Group presentations

**FINAL EXAM DATE: TBA by the Registrar’s Office**

Enjoy Summer!
Administrative Home
The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences is the administrative home of this course and governs matters such as the add/drop deadlines, the second-grade-only option, and other related issues. Different colleges may have different policies. Questions may be addressed to 120 Schaeffer Hall, or see the CLAS Academic Policies Handbook at http://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook.

Electronic Communication
University policy specifies that students are responsible for all official correspondences sent to their University of Iowa e-mail address (@uiowa.edu). Faculty and students should use this account for correspondences (Operations Manual, III.15.2, k.11).

Accommodations for Disabilities
A student seeking academic accommodations should first register with Student Disability Services and then meet with the course instructor privately in the instructor's office to make particular arrangements. See www.uiowa.edu/~sds/ for more information.

Academic Honesty
All CLAS students or students taking classes offered by CLAS have, in essence, agreed to the College's Code of Academic Honesty: "I pledge to do my own academic work and to excel to the best of my abilities, upholding the IOWA Challenge. I promise not to lie about my academic work, to cheat, or to steal the words or ideas of others; nor will I help fellow students to violate the Code of Academic Honesty." Any student committing academic misconduct is reported to the College and placed on disciplinary probation or may be suspended or expelled (CLAS Academic Policies Handbook).

CLAS Final Examination Policies
The final examination schedule for each class is announced by the Registrar generally by the fifth week of classes. Final exams are offered only during the official final examination period. No exams of any kind are allowed during the last week of classes. All students should plan on being at the UI through the final examination period. Once the Registrar has announced the date, time, and location of each final exam, the complete schedule will be published on the Registrar's web site and will be shared with instructors and students. It is the student's responsibility to know the date, time, and place of a final exam.

Making a Suggestion or a Complaint
Students with a suggestion or complaint should first visit with the instructor (and the course supervisor), and then with the departmental DEO. Complaints must be made within six months of the incident (CLAS Academic Policies Handbook).

Understanding Sexual Harassment
Sexual harassment subverts the mission of the University and threatens the well-being of students, faculty, and staff. All members of the UI community have a responsibility to uphold this mission and to contribute to a safe environment that enhances learning. Incidents of sexual harassment should be reported immediately. See the UI Comprehensive Guide on Sexual Harassment for assistance, definitions, and the full University policy.
Reacting Safely to Severe Weather

In severe weather, class members should seek appropriate shelter immediately, leaving the classroom if necessary. The class will continue if possible when the event is over. For more information on Hawk Alert and the siren warning system, visit the Department of Public Safety website.

*These CLAS policy and procedural statements have been summarized from the web pages of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and The University of Iowa Operations Manual.