Course Instructor
Dr. Sujatha Sosale
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Class
3:30 PM – 4:45 PM, TTh, E205 AJB
Drop-in office hours – Tues. 12:30 – 2 pm Wed.
1:30 – 3:00 pm, or by appointment

DEO: Professor David Ryfe
Campus address: E305B AJB
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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, and writing to effectively communicate research procedures and findings.

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). We regularly assess the curriculum to determine whether students are achieving these outcomes.
Broadly the following outcomes apply to this course:

**Law and ethics:**
- Develop the ability to anticipate and recognize ethical issues when they arise and to reason through them taking multiple perspectives and contexts into account.
- 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:**
- Develop critical thinking skills to analyze and interpret media practices and messages through an understanding of the ways in which media industries function.

**Media history:**
- Understand the history of media in the context of industries and identify transformations in audiences, engagement, and business practice over time.

**Writing and storytelling:**
- Develop 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:**
This edition will be used for the course and exams.

The textbook is available for purchase in the Iowa Hawk Shop (UI Bookstore -- 319-335-3179; M-F 8:00 am – 5:00 pm) located in the Iowa Memorial Union. It is also available online.

**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.

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**Assignments / Grading**

**Submit assignments on ICON.** Only Word format will be accepted.

**Discussion posts – 3, total of 20 points (points may differ)**
- For this assignment, you will post responses for 3 topics, all based on course materials (readings, reports, guest presentations, etc.).
• For each post a prompt will be given to which you will post your response in the discussion area on ICON. Once you submit your post, you will be able to see others’ posts in the discussion area.
• You should then respond to at least one post by a classmate in the spirit of discussion.
• 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 @ 15 points, total 30 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 – 60 points
• Covers weeks 1-5, including readings, lecture, video, guest presentations, and activities such as group exercises, etc.

Exam 2 – 80 points
• Covers weeks 7-12, including readings, lecture, video, guest presentations, and activities such as group exercises, etc.

Group presentation and report – 40 points
• Guidelines and calendar will be given for this assignment

In-class participation – 20 points
• Your in-class participation grade will reflect the instructor’s assessment of your preparedness, cooperation, and contribution. 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. There are no points given for attendance. There are penalty points for absences – see under Course Policies below.

Total Points = 250

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

No A+ given in this course

A  93%-100%
A-  90-92%
B+  87-89%
B  83-86%
B-  80-82%
C+  77-79%
C  73-76%
C-  70-72%
D+  67-69%
D  63-66%
Late submission of assignments and missed exams

Meet deadlines. Ensure you have successfully uploaded assignments to ICON before the deadline. A delay past 10 minutes of the deadline will begin accruing late submission penalty points. For each late day, including weekends and holidays, and starting 10 minutes past the submission time on ICON 2 points will be deducted (this includes working days and weekends). Late submissions after working day 5 will be counted as a missed assignment and will carry a score of zero (0).

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 one week of the due date.

Extra Credit

There is no guarantee for 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.

Course Policies

In-class Participation and Attendance Policy

In-class participation requires attendance. There is no separate attendance grade for the course. However, there are penalties for absences beyond the 3 grace absences allowed (see below).

To ensure you earn in-class participation points: Be in class on time. Other than the occasional 5-minute delay in arriving to class, habitual late arrival to class, habitual departure from class when class is in session, and disappearance from the session for long periods of time will all be noted and will affect both your attendance and in-class participation grades. Please ensure the parking meters are fed adequately before class time and that you arrive to class on time. Physical presence plus attention and participation in class counts as attendance. Being physically present but otherwise disengaged, using screen media activities when they are not required will count as an absence.

Past four (4) grace absences, further absences will result in a deduction of three (3) points from the course total per absence. Excused absences will be granted only if:
(a) you are missing class for a documented illness, mandatory religious obligation, or University-sponsored activity,
(b) file a Student Absence form (available on ICON, Student Tools drop-down menu) prior to the start of the class period you are missing, except for absences because of emergencies which, by definition, are unforeseen,
(c) in case of emergencies you provide official documentation (Student Absence Form) within one week of the absence. Past the one-week period, the absence will automatically carry the penalty of 3 points per absence, and
(d) you inform me at the beginning of the semester, or at the earliest that you know, of any health-related reason for which you are required to miss classes.
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.

Electronic Communication

As per university policy, you are responsible for all official correspondences sent to your @uiowa.edu email. Please check regularly for emails from me. ICON announcements will also be used as the official communication medium for this class.

If you need to get in touch with me by e-mail send it directly to me at sujatha-sosale@uiowa.edu, and not through ICON. I will communicate individually with you through your uiowa.edu address. Occasionally I may use the group e-mail on ICON to make some announcements. Announcements are posted in the Announcements page on the course ICON.

No-screen Policy

Research now shows that using electronic devices such as laptops and smartphones when class is in session results in worse grades for students because they affect knowledge retention and processing that are necessary for effective learning. The no-screen policy will help you to perform better in the course. Per the policy, use of these devices during lecture will result in a reduction of your attendance and participation grades. You can use these devices for in-class exercises when I indicate, but refrain from using them during lecture.

SDS students

Students who have documentation from Student Disability Services (SDS) for accommodations must present the documents and meet with the professor before the third week of classes. Simply emailing the forms to your TA and professor is not sufficient. For more information, please see the section titled Accommodations for Disabilities under The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences: Policies and Resources page at the end of the syllabus. If you have other health or personal circumstances (not covered by SDS) that might affect your ability to be successful in this course, please speak with the professor as soon as possible.

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://elas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook/academic-fraud-honor-code

Resources for you
You can access the University of Iowa’s Writing Center for help of any kind with written work. They can go over your paper, help you express more effectively, help you with proof-reading tips, etc. The Tutor Iowa site is also very valuable for students seeking extra help.

• 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/
• Student Center, E350 Adler Journalism Building
Course calendar

Note: This is a working calendar. Deviations may be necessary at times. Keep yourself informed of the calendar at all times. Changes to the calendar, if any, will be announced in class and on ICON Announcements.

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**Week 1 – Introduction**

**Tuesday (1/21)**
Course introduction

**Thursday (1/23)**
Text, Chapter 1, Getting Started; Chapter 2, First Decisions

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**Week 2 – Introduction, continued**

**Tuesday (1/28)**
Chapters 1 and 2 – pdf on ICON

**Thursday (1/30)**
Saldaña, chapter 1 – pdf on ICON
Video clips on ICON

_Due on ICON: Bio sheet_

_Due on ICON: Discussion post 1 on Thursday, 1/30, 5 pm_

_Response to discussion post 1 on Saturday, 2/1, 5 pm_

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

**Tuesday (2/4)**
Treadwell, Chapter 4, You Could Look It Up

Locke et al, Reading Research chapter – pdf on ICON

**Thursday (2/6)**
**Practice articles for analysis - Workshop**
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)

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**Week 4 – Research ethics and quality**

**Tuesday (2/11)**
Text chapter 3 on Ethics in Research

APA style – Purdue OWL guide (link on ICON)

**Thursday (2/13)**

Video: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sS81W1xHuVw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sS81W1xHuVw)
And companion article [http://www.userfocus.co.uk/articles/7-sins-of-user-research.html](http://www.userfocus.co.uk/articles/7-sins-of-user-research.html)

Due on ICON: Article analysis 1, Thursday, 2/13 at 5 pm

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**Week 5 – Preliminary considerations and procedures**

**Tuesday (2/18)**
Watt & van den Berg reading, Research Procedures – pdf on ICON

**Thursday (2/20)**
Watt & van den Berg

Due on ICON: Article analysis 2, Thursday 2/20, 5 pm

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**Week 6 – Exam 1**

**Tuesday (2/25)**
Exam 1 review

**Thursday (2/27)**
Exam 1

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**Week 7 – Preparation for quantitative research**

**Tuesday (3/3)**
Text, chapter 6, Sampling
Thursday (3/5)
  Text, chapter 5, Measurement

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

Due on ICON:  Discussion post 2 on Thursday, 3/5 at 5 pm
Response to discussion post 2 on Saturday, 3/7 at 5 pm

Week 8 – Surveys, content analysis
Tuesday (3/10)
  Text, chapter 9, Surveys

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

Thursday (3/12)
  Text, chapter 11, Content analysis

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

SPRING BREAK! (3/17 & 3/19) No classes

Week 9 – Preparation for qualitative research: Design, procedures, considerations
Tuesday (3/24)

READ Saldana, chapter 4, Qualitative Research Design (pdf on ICON)

Thursday (3/26)
  Babbie, Chapter 10, Qualitative Field Research, pp 295-303 (pdf on ICON)

Week 10 – Focus groups, observation, interviews – possible guest lectures this week
Tuesday (3/31)
  Focus groups
  Lenhart et al, Social media and romantic relationships (Pew study)

Text, Chapter 11, Watching and Listening (Observation)

Thursday (4/2)
  Text, chapter 11

Boyce & Neale: Conducting in-depth interviews (link on ICON)
**Week 11 – Guest lectures**

**Tuesday (4/7)**
Presenter TBA

**Thursday (4/9)**
Presenter TBA

**Week 12 – Social Media and Audience Analysis**

**Tuesday (4/14)**

**Thursday (4/16)**

*Due on ICON: Discussion post 3 on Thursday, 4/16, 5 pm
Response to discussion post 3 on Saturday 4/18, 5 pm*

**Week 13 – Exam 2**

**Tuesday (4/21)**
Exam 2 review

**Thursday (4/23)**
Exam 2

**Week 14 – Group work preparation**

**Tuesday (4/28)**
Group research time in class

**Thursday (4/30)**
Group research consultations with the instructor

*Due on ICON: Discussion post 4 on Thursday, 4/30, 5 pm
Response to discussion post 4 on Saturday 5/2, 5 pm*

**Week 15 – Group presentations**

**Tuesday (5/5)**
Group presentations
Thursday (5/7)
Group presentations

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Week 16: Finals week
No final exam; group project report and peer evaluation document due Monday May 11th 2020, 5 pm.

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Enjoy Summer!
CLAS Teaching Policies & Resources

Administrative Home
The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS) is the administrative home of this course and governs its add/drop deadlines, the second-grade-only option, and other policies. These policies vary by college (https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook).

Electronic Communication
Students are responsible for official correspondences sent to their UI email address (uiowa.edu) and must use this address for all communication within UI (Operations Manual, III.15.2).

Accommodations for Disabilities
UI is committed to an educational experience that is accessible to all students. A student may request academic accommodations for a disability (such as mental health, attention, learning, vision, and physical or health-related condition) by registering with Student Disability Services (SDS). The student should then discuss accommodations with the course instructor (https://sds.studentlife.uiowa.edu/).

Nondiscrimination in the Classroom
UI is committed to making the classroom a respectful and inclusive space for all people irrespective of their gender, sexual, racial, religious or other identities. Toward this goal, students are invited to optionally share their preferred names and pronouns with their instructors and classmates. The University of Iowa prohibits discrimination and harassment against individuals on the basis of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, and other identity categories set forth in the University’s Human Rights policy. For more information, contact the Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity at diversity@uiowa.edu or diversity.uiowa.edu.

Academic Integrity
All undergraduates enrolled in courses offered by CLAS have, in essence, agreed to the College's Code of Academic Honesty. Misconduct is reported to the College, resulting in suspension or other sanctions, with sanctions communicated with the student through the UI email address.

CLAS Final Examination Policies
The final exam schedule for each semester is announced around the fifth week of classes; students are responsible for knowing the date, time, and place of a final exam. Students should not make travel plans until knowing this final exam information. No exams of any kind are allowed the week before finals. (https://clas.uiowa.edu/faculty/teaching-policies-resources-examination-policies.)

Making a Complaint
Students with a complaint should first visit with the instructor or course supervisor and then with the departmental executive officer (DEO), also known as the Chair. Students may then bring the concern to CLAS (https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook/student-rights-responsibilities).

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 must uphold the UI mission and contribute to a safe environment that enhances learning. Incidents of sexual harassment must be reported immediately. For assistance, definitions, and the full University policy, see https://osmrc.uiowa.edu/.
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Stay up-to-date on deadlines, events, scholarships, internships, alumni & more!

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