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 are applicable to this course. 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:**
ISBN: 9781506369051

Paperback $85 (new)

E-book $50 (180-day rental)

The textbook is available for purchase in Prairie Lights bookstore, Iowa City -- 319-337-2681; M-F 10:00 am – 6:00 pm; Saturday 9 am-6 pm).

A hard copy version will available on Course Reserve in the UI Main Library. I have been informed that the publisher has not yet released the e-book version for library acquisition.

**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**

**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 – 50 points
• Covers weeks 1-5, including readings, lecture, video, guest presentations, and activities such as group exercises, etc.

Exam 2 – 50 points
• Topics covered will be announced the week prior to the exam.

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.

Group presentation and report – 30 points
• Guidelines and calendar will be given for this assignment.

Total Points = 200

Grading Scale
The final grade is determined by the total number of points earned during the semester.
The grade of A+ is not 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%
D- 60-62%
F  59% and below
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

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.

Nondiscrimination in the class

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.

SDS students

I work with students who have SDS letters, to accommodate their listed needs, enabling them to meet the course requirements, including exams. SDS students are strongly advised to provide documentation (SDS letters) within the first two weeks of classes. You can email the SDS letter to me (sujatha-sosale@uiowa.edu).

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 get in touch with me at the earliest.
In-class Participation and Attendance Policy (for Zoom class sessions)

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. Attendance refers to being there. Participation refers to actively engaging in the session, contributing productively to discussions, and to group exercises. 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 three (3) 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) if not a Covid-19 illness absence, then 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. If the situation will necessitate too many absences or any other difficulties for meeting course requirements for the semester, I will advise you accordingly.

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 for practical and logistical reasons I cannot cover the material with the same amount of detail as I do in class.

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 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.

Week 1 – Introduction
   Tuesday (1/26)
   Course introduction

   Thursday (1/28)
   Text, Chapter 1, Getting Started; Chapter 2, First Decisions

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Week 2 – Introduction, continued
   Tuesday (2/2)

   Thursday (2/4)
   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 (2/9)
   Treadwell, Chapter 4, You Could Look It Up

   Locke et al, Reading Research chapter – pdf on ICON

   Thursday (2/11)
   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)

Sociological Review, 80 (55), 960-984. Scholarly article in a peer-reviewed journal – pdf on ICON

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**Week 4 – Research ethics and quality**

**Tuesday (2/16)**
Text chapter 3 on Ethics in Research

APA style – Purdue OWL guide (link on ICON)

**Thursday (2/18)**

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 (2/23)**
Watt & van den Berg reading, Research Procedures – pdf on ICON

**Thursday (2/25)**
TBA

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

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**Week 6 – Exam 1**

**Tuesday (3/2)**
Exam 1 review – on your own. March 2\textsuperscript{nd} is the first non-instruction day for the semester. Per UI policy, there will be no classes and office hours held today.

**Thursday (3/4)**
Exam 1

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**Week 7 – Preparation for quantitative research**

**Tuesday (3/9)**
Text, chapter 6, Sampling

**Thursday (3/11)**
Text, chapter 5, Measurement
Statistics 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 (3/16)
Text, chapter 9, Surveys

Thursday (3/18)
Text, chapter 11, Content analysis

Week 9 – Preparation for qualitative research: Design, procedures, considerations
Tuesday (3/23)
READ Saldana, chapter 4, Qualitative Research Design (pdf on ICON)

Thursday (3/25)
Babbie, Chapter 10, Qualitative Field Research, pp 295-303 (pdf on ICON)

Week 10 – Focus groups, observation, interviews – possible guest lectures this week
Tuesday (3/30)
Focus groups
Lenhart et al, Social media and romantic relationships (Pew study)

Text, Chapter 13

Thursday (4/1)
Text, chapter 13

Boyce & Neale: Conducting in-depth interviews (link on ICON)

Week 11 – Guest lectures
Tuesday (4/6)
Presenter TBA

Thursday (4/8)
Presenter TBA
**Week 12 – Social Media and Audience Analysis**

**Tuesday (4/13)**

**Wednesday (4/14)**
April 14th is UI’s second and final non-instruction day for this semester. Per UI policy for this day, I will not hold office hours.

**Thursday (4/15)**

*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 (4/20)**
Exam 2 review

**Thursday (4/22)**
Exam 2

**Week 14 – Group work preparation**

**Tuesday (4/27)**
Group research time in class

**Thursday (4/29)**
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 (5/4)**
Group presentations

**Thursday (5/6)**
Group presentations
Week 16: Finals week
No final exam; group project report and peer evaluation document due Monday May 10th 2021, 5 pm.

Enjoy Summer!

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
Information for Undergraduates Spring 2021

Absences and Attendance
Students are responsible for attending class and for contributing to the learning environment of a course. Students are also responsible for knowing course absence policies, which vary by instructor. All absence policies, however, must uphold the UI policy related to student illness, mandatory religious obligations, including Holy Day obligations, unavoidable circumstances, and University authorized activities (https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook/attendance-absences). Students may use the CLAS absence form to aid communication with the instructor who will decide if the absence is excused or unexcused; the form is located on ICON within the top banner under "Student Tools."

Academic Integrity
All undergraduates enrolled in courses offered by CLAS have in essence agreed to the College's Code of Academic Honesty. Academic misconduct affects a student's related grade and is reported to the College which applies an additional sanction including suspension. Outcomes about misconduct are communicated through UI email (https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook/academic-fraud-honor-code).

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 a mental health, attention, learning, vision, and a physical or health-related condition) by registering with Student Disability Services (SDS). The student is then responsible for discussing specific accommodations with the instructor. More information is at https://sds.studentlife.uiowa.edu/.

Administrative Home of the Course
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 related policies. Other UI colleges may have different policies for courses offered by that college. CLAS policies may be found here: https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook.

Classroom Expectations
Students are expected to comply with University policies regarding appropriate classroom behavior as outlined in the Code of Student Life (https://dos.uiowa.edu/policies/code-of-student-life/). This includes related UI policies and procedures that all students have agreed to regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. Particularly, each student must wear a face mask when in a UI building, including a classroom. The density of seats in classrooms has been reduced, and in some instances, this will allow 6 feet or more of distance.
while other cases, it may be less. Regardless, wearing a face mask and maintaining as much distance as is possible are vital to slowing the spread of COVID-19. In the event that a student disrupts the classroom environment through the failure to comply with a reasonable directive of an instructor or of the University, the instructor has the authority to ask that the student to leave the space immediately for the remainder of the class period. Additionally, the instructor is asked to report the incident to the UI Office of Student Accountability, with the possibility of additional follow-up with the student. Students who need temporary alternative learning arrangements (TALA) for a future semester related to COVID-19 should visit this website for more information: https://coronavirus.uiowa.edu/temporary-alternative-learning-arrangements-tala.

Class Recordings: Privacy and Sharing
Some sessions of a course could be recorded or live-streamed. Such a recording or streaming will only be available to students registered for the course. These recordings are the intellectual property of the faculty, and they may not be shared or reproduced without the explicit written consent of the faculty member. Students may not share these sessions with those who are not enrolled in the course; likewise, students may not upload recordings to any other online environment. Doing so is a breach of the Code of Student Conduct and in some cases is a violation of the Federal Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Communication and the Required Use of UI Email
Students are responsible for official correspondences sent to the UI email address (uiowa.edu) and must use this address for all communication within or with UI (Operations Manual, III.15.2).

Complaints
Students with a complaint about an academic issue should first visit with the instructor or course supervisor and then with the Chair of the department or program offering the course; students may next bring the issue to the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. See this page for more information: https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook/student-rights-responsibilities.

Final Examination Policies
The final exam schedule 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 information. No exams of any kind are allowed the week before finals with a few exceptions made for particular types of courses such as labs or off-cycle courses: https://registrar.uiowa.edu/final-examination-scheduling-policies.

Nondiscrimination in the Classroom
The University of Iowa is committed to making the classroom a respectful and inclusive space for people of all gender, sexual, racial, religious, and other identities. Toward this goal, students are invited in MyUI to optionally share the names and pronouns they would like their instructors and advisors to use to address them. 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 (https://diversity.uiowa.edu/cod; +1 319 335-0705 or (diversity.uiowa.edu)

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, please see https://osmrc.uiowa.edu/.