

JOUR 304 (Section 006)
Mass Communications Research
Spring 2012

Class Time: 11:00 -12:15 a.m. Tuesday & Thursday
Classroom: Coliseum (COL) 3003

Instructor: Dr. Miron Varouhakis
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Office hours: Tue. & Thu. 10 a.m. – 11 a.m. & 1 p.m. – 2 p.m. (or by appointment)

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Course web site: <http://blackboard.sc.edu>

Overall Course Objectives

JOUR 304 is an introductory research methods course for those who have no prior experience or course work in research. **The pre-requisites are Jour 201 and a course in statistics.** The course is designed to accomplish these objectives:

For better or worse, leaders in government and business make decisions based on research, and the use of research will only increase as the world becomes more complex. If you are to participate in making these decisions, or if you want to better understand whether the decisions reflect the research, you need to understand the nature of research. Methods of social science research are taught in this course. The first goal of the course is for each student to become a more sophisticated research consumer. A second goal of the course is for each student to be able to design research, conduct research, perform analyses on the data collected, communicate the results clearly to an audience of communication scholars, and to do so in an ethical manner.

Specific Objectives for Ad/PR Students

- To learn how to apply research to understand consumers/target audience and how to transform research into insights and knowledge leading to creative and effective campaigns.

Specific Objectives for Journalism Students

- To learn about the basics of precision journalism and report of opinion polls for various media platforms: print, electronic and online.

Text

Hocking J. E., Stacks D. W., & McDermott S. T. (2003). *Communication Research*. Pearson Education Inc. (Required) (**Available at USC Bookstore, Russell House**)

Jour 304 Blackboard Web Page

The course syllabus, assignments, test results and other course materials will be posted on the “*Blackboard*” web page for you (<http://blackboard.sc.edu>). Specifically,

- The syllabus and test results will be posted under “*Course Documents*.”
- Assignments will be posed under “*Assignments*.”
- Announcements will be posted throughout the semester as needed.

Course Requirements and Learning Activities

(1) Exams on text and lectures (60%)

There will be three non-cumulative exams. All are in-class, closed book, objective exams, which will consist of multiple choice and true/false questions. The second exam only covers the materials since the first and the third the material since the second. The exam dates are **February 16** and **March 20**. The **final: April 30**.

(2) Class research project (30%)

You will write a research paper based on data you will collect and analyze. Sections of the paper will be written and submitted in two early drafts and a final form. You will receive feedback for the first two sections that will help you write a better final paper.

The paper will have the following sections and approximate lengths:

I. Introduction – One page

II. Literature review – Four to six pages – First draft of I & II due on **February 2** during class.

III. Hypotheses – One to two pages

IV. Method – Two pages – Second draft of I & II and first draft of III & IV due on **March 22** during class.

V. Results -- Two to three pages

VI. Conclusions – Two pages – Final paper due **April 19**, no later than the class period. It can be turned in earlier.

Plus – tables and abstract

Grading

(1) Weights

Exam 1	20%
Exam 2	20%
Exam 3	20%
Research Project	30%
Participation/contribution	10%
Total	100%

(2) Grade scale

A = 91 or above, or the top 10% of the class, whichever number is greater; B+ = 85.0 – 90.9; B = 80.0 – 84.9; C+ = 75.0 – 79.9; C = 70.0 – 74.9; D+ = 65.0 – 69.9; D = 60.0 – 64.9; F = below 60.0.

Attendance Policy and Make-up Work

Regular attendance is important. I will do the roster every class. If you are late, it is your responsibility to remember to sign the attendance sheet that same day, after class. You will NOT be allowed to sign after that.

Per University Bulletin regulations, absences (excused or unexcused) exceeding **10%** of all class periods are considered by the University to be "**excessive.**" That would mean you're allowed: **3 cuts** in a TTH class. If a student exceeds the allowable number of cuts, each additional missed class costs the student *one point* off his or her final average. Furthermore, any student missing **25%** or more of all classes (namely **7 cuts** in a TTH class) will automatically lose *a full letter grade* off their final course average. And, any student missing any exam during the session will receive an *F* in the course, regardless of their final average. **NO** makeup exams will be given unless the student notifies me prior to the exam and can verify that he/she was:

- (1) under a doctor's care or hospitalized at the time of the exam,
- (2) on a university-sanctioned trip,
- (3) away from school due to a major medical emergency involving a member of their immediate family, or,
- (4) experiencing some sort of personal trauma.

The same policy applies to all individual assignments. I understand there are certain individual emergencies that may come up. So, if you have any major medical/personal problems (such as a USC sanctioned trip), please let me know in advance and provide me with appropriate documentation.

Communicating with the Professor

You can contact me during my office hours (see top of first page of syllabus) or by appointment. E-mails are also welcome. I check my e-mails around 12 p.m. every day. Having said that, I will make sure that I respond to your e-mail within 24 hours. You can also talk to me right before or right after class.

In Class Procedures

You are all experienced students and you have worked hard in order to be in this class. I expect that your behavior in the class will reflect the investment that you have made in your education. Please make sure that your cell phone is either turned off or on "silent" mode as you arrive in class. It is in your best interest to make sure that you pay attention, take notes, and participate actively in the class.

Examination Dates and Paper Due Dates

First examination **Thursday, February 16.**

First paper draft due **Thursday, February 2.**

Second examination **Tuesday, March 20.**

Second paper draft due **Thursday, March 22.**

Final paper due **Thursday, April 19.**

Third examination **Monday, April 30**

CLASS SCHEDULE*

Week Dates Topics & Class Activities Required Readings

JANUARY

10: Introduction

12: How do we know?

Readings: Hocking, Stacks & McDermott, Chapters 1, 16

17: Reporting Research

Readings: Hocking, Stacks & McDermott, Chapters 4, 17

19: Theory in Communication research

Readings: Hocking, Stacks & McDermott, Chapter 2

24: Theory continued

Readings: Hocking, Stacks & McDermott, review Chapter 2

26: Foundations of Measurement

Readings: Hocking, Stacks & McDermott, Chapter 6

31: Foundations of Measurement -- Continued

Readings: Hocking, Stacks & McDermott, review Chapter 6

FEBRUARY

2: Measuring instruments (1st Draft Paper Due)

Readings: Hocking, Stacks & McDermott, Chapter 7

7: Measuring instruments

Readings: Hocking, Stacks & McDermott, review Chapter 7

9: Quantitative sampling

Readings: Hocking, Stacks & McDermott, Chapter 10

14: Quantitative sampling--continued

Readings: Hocking, Stacks & McDermott, review Chapter 10

16: **First Examination – Covers chapters 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 17.**

21: Survey research

Readings: Hocking, Stacks & McDermott, Chapter 11

23: Survey research--continued

Readings: Hocking, Stacks & McDermott, review Chapter 11

28: Descriptive statistics

Readings: Hocking, Stacks & McDermott, Chapter 14\

MARCH

1: Descriptive statistics--continued

Readings: Hocking, Stacks & McDermott, review Chapter 14

6: **SRING BREAK – NO Classes**

8: **SRING BREAK – NO Classes**

13: Ethics

Readings: Hocking, Stacks & McDermott, Chapter 3

15: Catching up before the exam

20: **Second examination – covers chapters 3, 10, 11, 14**

22: Inferential statistics (2nd Draft Paper Due)

Readings: Hocking, Stacks & McDermott, Chapter 15

27: Inferential statistics -- continued

Readings: Hocking, Stacks & McDermott, review Chapter 15

29: Qualitative research

Readings: Hocking, Stacks & McDermott, Chapter 9

APRIL

3: Qualitative research—continued Content analysis

Readings: Hocking, Stacks & McDermott, Chapters 8, review Chapter 9

5: Content analysis—continued

Readings: Hocking, Stacks & McDermott, review Chapter 8

10: Experimental research

Readings: Hocking, Stacks & McDermott, Chapter 12

12: Experimental research -- continued

Readings: Hocking, Stacks & McDermott, review Chapter 12

17: Experimental strategies and designs

Readings: Hocking, Stacks & McDermott, Chapter 13

19: Experimental strategies and designs – continued (**Final Paper Due**)

Readings: Hocking, Stacks & McDermott, review Chapter 13

FINAL EXAMINATION

Will cover chapters 8, 9, 12, 13, 15

April 30 at 9:00 a.m., room COL 3003