**Communication Survey Research**

**SCOM 386: MW 2:30pm – 3:45pm Harrison 111**

**Fall 2017**

**Professor:** Dr. Lindsey Harvell-Bowman

**Email:** [harve2La@jmu.edu](mailto:harve2La@jmu.edu)

**Office:** Harrison 1292

**Office Hours:** MW 9am – 11am and by appointment

**Course Description:**

Consideration of survey problems and methods unique to communication. Emphasis on using survey research methodology in communication audits, public relations problems and public opinion polling. The course emphasis will be on survey conceptualization, sampling designs, questionnaire construction, data collection methods, web survey software, SPSS computer analyses, and report presentations.

**Course Objectives and Goals:**

* To understand theory and methods of survey research.
* To design and plan a public opinion survey.
* To examine accuracy of survey data.
* To examine reliability of survey results.
* To learn to analyze survey data.
* To learn to evaluate survey data.

**Textbooks:**

Nardi, P.M. (2006). *Doing Survey Research: A Guide to Quantitative Methods (3rd ed.).* Boston:

Allyn & Bacon.

Fink, A. (2013). *How to Conduct Surveys: A Step-by-Step Guide (5th ed.).* Beverly Hills: Sage

Publications.

Kirkpatrick, L.A., & Feeney, B.C. (2015). *A Simple Guide to SPSS for Version 23.0.* Boston, MA: Cengage Learning.

**Evaluation:**

**Exams:** 4 exams (based on texts, links, and lecture) – 40%

**Survey Research Project:** The completed binder and presentation – 50%

**Miscellaneous/Participation/Exercises/Labs:** 10%

Class participation includes: web surveys, group exercises, homework, attendance, research participation, labs (due one week after assigned), and other miscellaneous items (including Gallup poll and current event discussions). I expect that you will have read the assigned readings before coming to class. I expect you to ask questions and make meaningful contributions. I will assess through my own subjective observation whether this is occurring.

**Grading Scale:**

A = 94% - 100%

A- = 90% - 93.9%

B+ = 87% - 89.9%

B = 84% - 86.9%

B- = 80% - 83.9%

C+ = 77% - 79.9%

C = 74% - 76.9%

C- = 70% - 73.9%

D+ = 67% - 69.9%

D = 64% - 66.9%

D- = 60% - 63.9%

F = 0% - 59.9%

***Note: Doing the minimum work will likely result in a C grade, for satisfactory work. Earning a B or A requires doing beyond the minimum. Simply completing the assignment does not guarantee an A.***

**Attendance**:

Attendance at all class meetings is expected and is essential to your success in this class. Arriving to class late or leaving early is not acceptable without prior permission. Note: if you miss class when points are being awarded (i.e., in-class assignments, participation, etc.) **you will not be able to make up these points**. Try not to miss on those days.

**Miscellaneous:**

1. All written work should be typed.
2. All assignments should adhere to APA 6th edition.
3. Assignments are due at the beginning of class. **No late work will be accepted, unless proof of illness (i.e., a hospital stay) or death is provided.**
4. You are responsible for work assigned while you were absent.
5. Due to computer viruses, **no written assignments may be turned in via email or computer disks over the course of the semester. Nothing is turned in on Canvas.**
6. Please staple your work prior to coming to class. **Not doing so will result in a point reduction.**
7. Research completed for assignments must include information from peer-reviewed journals. See individual assignments as they arise for more specificity.
8. All students are required to check canvas for information on class assignments throughout the semester. I will try to let you know in class when assignments will be posted. However, **do not contact me via Canvas**, I do not check those messages and only answer messages via my university email address.
9. The class schedule and syllabus are subject to change at my discretion.
10. Grade appeals must be within 1 week of the assignment. If you do choose to appeal a grade, and I find something else wrong with your assignment or test, those additional points will be taken off at that time.
11. Cell phones and other electronic devices must be turned off during class. **Laptops, ipads, ipods, kindles, nooks, etc. are not allowed in class.**
12. Be sure information is written and organized in a coherent manner. See the Reading and Writing Lab (Wilson Hall) for free help if you have had problems with this in the past.
13. Extra credit opportunities may be available, but not likely.
14. Good luck this semester! You’re going to do great!

**Assignments:**

**Homework #1: Find a web survey form (5 points):**

Find a web survey that has at least 15 questions. It can be from a .com, .org, .edu, .gov, or .net site. Please print out the form and bring a copy to class for discussion.

**Homework #2: Pass the IRB (20 points):**

1. Take the training modules for passing the IRB located at: <http://www.jmu.edu/researchintegrity/irb/irbtraining.shtml>.
2. It is helpful to take the quizzes at the end of each module.
3. Make sure you take the student test for Social/Behavioral Research Course
4. Send your email results to me **after you have passed.**

**Homework #3: Become a participant (10 points):**

Due after you have completed 2 actual product surveys (over 15 questions). This does not include screening surveys. NOTE: You will probably be asked to do a number of screening surveys before you are actually asked to evaluate a product or service or provide your opinions on a political issue. PLEASE DO THIS EARLY IN THE SEMESTER to make sure you get the chance to participate.

1. Join at least 2 of the following survey research organizations:

[www.mysurvey.com](http://www.mysurvey.com)

[www.zoompanel.com](http://www.zoompanel.com)

[www.lightspeedpanel.com](http://www.lightspeedpanel.com)

[www.linescale.com](http://www.linescale.com)

[www.zogby.com](http://www.zogby.com)

surveysavvy.com

harrisopollonline.com

or another market research survey organization. (please get approval if you choose another organization.)

Please answer all questions in the surveys as honestly as you can. You do not need to give them your address however, as you will note, many of these organizations do provide some incentive for participating and you may want to receive their compensations. That is entirely up to you.

1. Briefly describe each survey. If it is for a consumer product such as toothpaste, merely state that you are being asked to evaluate a brand of toothpaste. You od not need to state which brand of toothpaste. In fact, many of the surveys you complete will have a secrecy clause. Note that as you evaluate your surveys.
2. What do each of the surveys have in common?
3. Do the surveys seem significantly different from each other? Why or why not?
4. Describe the visual layout of the surveys. For example, do you see one question on the screen at a time or can you scroll down and see all of the questions? Do you like the visual layout of the surveys? Why or why not?
5. Are the questions asked in a non-biased manner? Why or why not?
6. What did you learn about how surveys solicit information from people?

**SCOM 386 TEAM PROJECT (250 POINTS):**

Your team **(groups of 3-4. No more than 4 is allowed in one group)** will select a problem, social issue or public opinion issue that you wish to examine (many times a paper is chosen from a 280 paper from your group). Choose carefully, because you will be working on it throughout the semester. This project will include an introduction, literature review, method section with a detailed and well thought out survey, sample construction, web form production, and a results and discussion section that includes data collection, data entry, statistical analyses and a group presentation.

At the end of the semester, team members will evaluate each member’s contribution to the work effort. **If an individual is consistently evaluated as not contributing, that team member’s grade will be reduced accordingly.** Thus, at each stage of the project, members must be fully committed to the team.

**Team Introduction (approximately 2-3 pages total):**

This portion of the paper should introduce the topic you are investigating. The majority of this section should be an argument for why this topic is important to study. Additionally, a brief introduction of your theory is necessary. Last, you will include your purpose statement.

**Team Literature Review (approximately 7-10 pages total):**

The literature review should begin with a section outlining the theory that is guiding your project and review relevant and recent research in line with that theory. **Papers that do not have a theory will not receive a passing grade.**

The paper should then review the relevant research. This should include examining the most important factors that scholars feel are relevant to your topic. This is also the place where you define concepts and variables under consideration and relate it to other studies that have been previously undertaken. Make sure you cover your independent and dependent variable/variables thoroughly. Research should come from peer-reviewed journals and texts that are relevant to your topic. You will need at least ***25 different peer-reviewed journal article sources cited*** for your paper. If you are considering a very current issue, information can also be included from popular sources and/or conference papers, although you should not rely heavily on these sources and ***they do not count*** as part of your 25 articles. Please be sure to review all of the variables under study. Please do ***not*** use conference papers.

The paper will be graded on what Ward and Hansen (1987) consider crucial to a literature review. This includes clarity, verifiability, accuracy, recency, relevance, sufficiency, internal consistency, external consistency, comparative quality, and contextuality. In simpler terms, it will be graded on: properly defining the problem (or issue), providing research on each aspect of the problem, limiting the problem to the relevant aspects of the issue being examined, providing valid and reliable sources for assertions, providing good interpretations of sources, organization, consistent writing style, APA 6th edition format, 12-point font with 1-inch margins, as well as being engaging to read. Be sure to include a cover page, running head, and page numbers as APA 6th edition requires.

**Revising and resubmitting the paper multiple times throughout the semester is key to receiving a good grade on this project.**

In a 3-ring binder, please include ***all*** copies of the journal articles you are using for your literature review (**note: Only the first page of each journal article is needed**). Please place them in alphabetical order by the first author’s last name.

**TEAM SURVEY**

The survey will be graded on all aspects that have been covered in the previous 7 weeks of class. This includes how you chose to measure each variable. Mistakes here will result in a lower grade. It will also be examined with relation to the paper you will have written and revised along the way. In other words, does the survey instrument flow logically from the paper you have written and the issue you are examining. Also, does it operationalize the variables that you are trying to assess for your research question(s) and/or hypotheses. And, did you measure it in the correct way in order to test your hypotheses.

Be prepared to reviews and resubmit the survey ***multiple*** times throughout the semester.

Please include your previously graded literature review as well as the journal articles you are using with your survey when you submit this.

**TEAM IRB FORMS**

The team will prepare the appropriate IRB documents and survey for review by members of the IRB. **The team may not collect data until this has been completely satisfactorily.**

**TEAM METHOD**

The team will prepare an appropriate method section addressing the sample chosen, procedures used, and operationalization of variables. This section will include the following subsections in this order: Participants, Measures, and Procedure.

Please include your graded literature review and survey as well as the journal articles you are using with your survey.

**TEAM DATA ANALYSES (Results and Discussion)**

The team will explain and perform appropriate data analyses for the research questions and/or hypotheses being examined. Teams must know what test is appropriate to run. Additionally, a discussion section must follow outlining what the results mean to the larger field of literature as well as discuss implications, limitations, and future research.

Please include your graded literature review, methodology, and survey as well as the journal articles you are using with your survey.

**TEAM PRESENTATION**

The team will give a 10-15 minute powerpoint presentation of the project at the end of the semester presenting your results.

**TEAM PEER EVALUATIONS**

Please complete a peer evaluation for each member of your group by the day you present your final paper. You do not need to fill one out for yourself. This evaluation will be posted on Canvas and will be completed electronically through Qualtrics.

**FINAL PROJECT NOTEBOOK DETAILS**

***Final team project report should include a paper copy of the following:***

Grading Rubric (located on Canvas)

Cover page (with running head/page numbers)

Abstract (on a separate page about your study’s findings – approximately 50 words and 5 keywords noted on the next line after the abstract ends)

Introduction

Review of Literature

Hypotheses

Method

Participants

Measures (including the operationalization of variables – provide questions and

Cronbach alpha’s for each scale you used)

Procedure

Results

Make sure you present results adhering to APA 6th edition

Discussion

Conclusions

Per hypothesis

Implications

Limitations

Future Research

References

Appendix (a copy of your survey)

The notebook should include the above final paper copy at the front of the notebook.

* followed by the 1st draft of your graded literature review with my comments
* followed by your graded survey with my comments
* followed by your SPSS output for the analyses you included in your methods section (e.g., Cronbach alpha’s)
* followed by your SPSS output for the analyses you included in your results section (descriptive – 1st paragraph of results – e.g., TOT variables means and standard deviations; then output for hypotheses e.g., t-tests, correlation output, regression output, etc.) label output by Hypothesis 1, Hypothesis 2, etc..
* followed by notes written by me to you for how to conduct your analyses (e.g., usually this is information we work on together in my office – generally 1-2 sheets of paper, or emails on this regarding your hypotheses)
* then the articles you included in your literature review

At this time you should also include your follow-up IRB report with all of your signatures as well as one copy of your IRB approval notification.

**UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGE INFORMATION**

1. ***Statement of academic honesty***: Plagiarism and other forms of cheating are not tolerated. You are here to get the most of your college education, cheating in any form does not allow this to occur. Please do not be tempted to violate the honor code. You can peruse the university’s honor code at <http://www.jmu.edu/gened/honor.html>.
2. Making references to the work of others strengthens your own work by granting you greater authority and by showing that you are part of a discussion located within an intellectual community. When you make references to the ideas of others, it is essential to provide proper attribution and citation. Failing to do so is considered academically dishonest, as is copying or paraphrasing someone else’s work. The consequences of such behavior will lead to consequences ranging from failure on an assignment to failure in the course to dismissal from the university. Because the disciplines of the Humanities value collaborative work, you will be encouraged to share ideas and to include the ideas of others in our papers. Please ask if you are in doubt about the use of a citation. Honest mistakes can always be corrected or prevented.
3. **First-Week Attendance Policy –** At the instructor’s discretion, any student registered for a class in the College of Arts and Letters who does not attend the first two (2) scheduled meetings of the class (or does not attend the first scheduled meeting of a class that meets once a week) may be administratively dropped from the class. Students dropped for non-attendance will be notified via email by the Dean of the College. Students who fail to attend the first two meetings of a class for which they are registered but do not receive an email notification have not been administratively dropped by their instructor. Unless those students drop the course on their own, they will receive a grade at the end of the semester.
4. If you need an ***accommodation based on the impact of a disability,*** you should contact the Office of Disability Services (Wilson Hall, Room 107, [www.jmu.edu/ods](http://www.jmu.edu/ods), 540-568-6705) if you have not previously done so. Disability Services will provide you with an Access Plan Letter that will verify your need for services and make recommendations for accommodations to be used in the classroom. Once you have presented me with this letter, you and I will sit down and review the course requirements, your disability characteristics, and your requested accommodations to develop an individualized plan, appropriate for SCOM 386.
5. JMU abides by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act, which mandate reasonable accommodations be provided for students with documented disabilities. If you have a disability and may require some type of instructional and/or examination accommodations, please contact me early in the semester so that I can provide or facilitate provision of accommodations you may need. If you have not already done so, you will need to register with the Office of Disability Services, the designated office on campus to provide services for students with disabilities. The office is located in Wilson Hall, Room 107 and you may call 540-568-6705 for more information.
6. If you need to miss class on grounds of ***religious observation,*** students should notify me no later than the first week of class and reasonable and appropriate accommodations will be made.

**JMU WEATHER POLICY**

If class is cancelled due to weather conditions (or other events) be prepared to resume class where we have left off. For example, if we are supposed to have an exam on Tuesday and class is canceled on that day be prepared to take the exam on the next day class is scheduled. JMU cancellation policy for classes and examinations can be found at <http://www.jmu.edu/JMUpolicy/1309.shtml>. In the event that class is cancelled for inclement weather, I expect you to continue with your readings as assigned. **Note: if too many classes are cancelled, we may resume class on Canvas with online lectures while the university is closed.**

Decisions to close university operations will be made by the President or a designee. If the decision to close is made, announcements will be made on the JMU radio station 1610AM, on the JMU Homepage ([www.jmu.edu](http://www.jmu.edu)) and on area radio and television stations.

**FINAL EXAMINATIONS MISSED OR RESCHEDULED DUE TO INCLEMENT WEATHER OR EMERGENCY**

In response to inclement weather and other emergencies, the university may be forced to cancel or reschedule final examinations. Decisions to close university operations will be made by the President, or a designee. If the decision to close the university and reschedule final examinations is made, announcements will be made as noted above. When the university closes due to weather or other type of emergency, faculty will administer regularly scheduled examinations at a time designated by the university unless otherwise announced in the course syllabus. The official make up time will be designated as part of the closing announcement. Unless otherwise notified, examination locations will be the same as the location for the regularly scheduled exam.

If it is determined that exams cannot be given because of inclement weather or other emergency, faculty will assign final grades to students based on the exams, tests, and projects completed prior to the regularly scheduled exam.

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

**Week 1 (8/28 – 9/1)**

Introduction to survey research

Read Chapters 1 and 2 (Doing Survey Research)

***Homework #1 (Find a web survey) Due W 8/30***

**Week 2 (9/4 – 9/8)**

Methods of Scientific Inquiry

Research writing

Is a survey appropriate?

Read Chapter 1 (How to …)

Read Chapter 3 (Doing Survey Research)

***Homework #2 (Pass the IRB) Due W 9/6***

***Topic Due M 9/4***

**Week 3 (9/11 – 9/15)**

Conducting surveys and the research process (Week 2 cont’d)

***Homework #3 (Participate in a survey) Start Process***

***Introduction Rough Draft Due W 9/13***

**Week 4 (9/18 – 9/22)**

Survey Design

Types of Surveys

Read Chapter 5 (How to …)

***Team Paper/Literature Review Due M 9/18***

***Exam 1 (Chapters 1,2,3 Doing … and Chapters 1,5 How to … Lecture) W 9/20***

**Week 5 (9/25 – 9/29)**

Writing Questions

Read Chapter 2 and 3 (How to …)

Read Chapter 4 (Doing survey research)

***Work on survey and IRB forms***

**Week 6 (10/2 – 10/6)**

Index and scale construction

Sampling

Read Chapter 4 (How to …)

Read Chapter 5 (Doing Survey Research)

***Team Survey Due & Revised Literature Review due M 10/2***

***First draft of Human Subjects proposal due M 10/2***

***Exam 2 (Chapters 2,3,4 How to …, Chapters 4 and 5 Doing … Lecture and Web and Qualtrics info) W 10/4***

**Week 7 (10/9 – 10/13)**

Sampling

Work on case study

***Final revisions of survey and human subjects proposals due M 10/9***

***After my approval, submit human subjects proposal and final survey to IRB at researchintegrity@jmu.edu and via campus mail to MSC 5728 (with signatures – yours and mine)***

**Week 8 (10/16 – 10/20)**

Data collection

Data coding

Read Chapter 6 (How to …)

Read Appendix A, Appendix B, Chapters 1,2,3,4, and 5 (SPSS)

Read JMU and SPSS (INSERT LINK)

***Collecting data if you have received IRB approval …***

***Draft of method due W 10/18***

**Week 9 (10/23 – 10/27)**

Data entry

Data cleaning

Codebooks

Descriptive statistics

Read Introduction to SPSS (INSERT LINK)

Read Chapter 6 (Doing Survey Research)

Read Chapter 6 (SPSS)

Read Chapters 7,8,9, and 17 (SPSS)

Read Chapter 7 (Doing survey research)

***Labs due, collecting data***

**Week 10 (10/30 – 11/3)**

Inferential statistics

Read Chapter 7 (How to …)

Read Chapters 10,11,14, and 15 (SPSS)

Read Chapters 8 and 9 (Doing survey research)

***Labs due, collecting data***

***Homework #3 due W 11/1***

**Week 11 (11/6 – 11/10)**

Inferential statistics

Read Chapters 14,15, and 16 (SPSS)

Read Chapter 9 (Doing survey research)

Read Chapter 10 (Doing survey research)

Read Chapter 7 (How to …)

***Exam 3 (Chapters 6, 7 How to …, Chapters 6,7,8,9 Doing …, Chapters 1-11, 14-17, Appendices A & B in SPSS) M 11/6***

***Results/Discussion Due 11/6***

***Labs due***

**Week 12 (11/13 – 11/17)**

***Labs Due***

WORK WEEK

**Week 13 (11/20 – 11/24)**

**NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING BREAK**

**Week 14 (11/27 – 12/1)**

Team Presentations

***Peer evaluations due M 11/27 - Check Canvas Announcements for Link***

**Week 15 (12/4 – 12/8)**

No Class – Work on paper and study for final exam

***Final paper/Binder due 12/6 by Noon to my office in 1292 Harrison Hall***

**Final Exam: Monday December 11th – 1pm – 3pm[[1]](#footnote-1)**

1. You are required to take the final exam at this time. No excuses will be granted. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)