

ICMC 204 • Research Methods & Basic Statistics in Communication & Cultural Studies • 4 Credits (4-0-8)

Media and Communication Program
Fine and Applied Arts Division Mahidol
University International College

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Text & Materials

The following textbook is required and necessary for the successful completion of this course.

Donald F. Tredwell. (2019). *Introducing Communication Research: Paths of Inquiry* (4th edition). Sage.

The following sites may be of assistance to students in this course:

<https://methods.sagepub.com/methods-map> or <https://apastyle.apa.org/blog> or <https://www.facebook.com/AlrefaeRM/>

Course Description & Objectives

Introduction to media and communication research; uses interdisciplinary approach e.g., social science and humanity to solve research problems empirically. Topics include asking the “right” questions, procedures in conducting research, basic principles of research, random sampling, questionnaire design, experimental research design, and content and research data analysis.

Upon completing this course, students will have (1) investigated the knowledge theories, and metatheoretical perspectives that underlie research in the communication and cultural studies industries, (2) conceived of and formulated significant research questions, (3) determined appropriate research tools and methods for the questions being asked, and (4) conducted and presented an independently researched project.

Course Assignments & Evaluation

The following assignments must be completed by each student in order to pass the course. Final course grades will be based on the percentage of points earned for each assignment.

<u>Graded Assignments</u>	<u>% of Grade</u>
Research labs	20%
Research article critique	15%
Research Project	65%
Proposal	20%
Report	30%
Poster	15%
Total Possible	100%

Grading Scale

A (90-100), B+ (85-89), B (80-84), C+ (75-79), C (70-74), D+ (65-69), D (60-64), and F (0-59)

Research Labs

In addition to including attendance, students will complete assignments throughout the trimester designed to give them an opportunity to (a) practice the skills and methods learned in the course and (b) creatively apply course concepts. Some labs will be completed during class time while others will be completed as homework. Readings and class discussions are designed to prepare students to complete these inquiry based assignments. These assignments will be completed in class (though not every day), will not be announced before hand, and cannot be made up even with an excused absence.

Research Article Critique

This assignment provides an opportunity for students to demonstrate they understand research methods and conclusions. Students will summarize an article of their choice by critiquing its questions, methods, results, and conclusions. This summary should be a 10 minute presentation that answers these seven questions:

1. In a very tiny nutshell (one slide at most), what is the article about?
2. What theory(ies) is (are) the author(s) using? How is the theory guiding the research? Or is there no sign of theory? If there is no sign of theory, can you think of one that might be applicable?
3. What is the research design/methodology? Is it appropriate to the questions asked? Are there any apparent weaknesses? Are there particular strengths?
4. Who are the research participants (if applicable) or what is the unit of analysis? How were they (was it) sampled or selected? Are they (Is it) the appropriate population (unit of analysis) to study?
5. What questions have been answered? That is, what do you know now that you didn't know before? What is the "take away" message?
6. What questions are left unanswered? What new questions have been raised?
7. What is your evaluation of this article? Thumbs up? Thumbs down? Or, maybe you think the author(s) had no opposable thumbs? Why?

Research Project

This term long project is dedicated to designing and executing an original media and communication research project from start to finish. In teams, students will have to carefully design their research and justify their decisions, analyze their data, present their findings, and prepare a final report. There are three major components to this project:

1. Proposal – teams will create a proposal detailing: a problem statement, theoretical orientation, review of background literature, hypotheses or research questions, the method students will use, the rationale for using the method, and details about recruiting participants.
2. Report – teams will prepare a final report that consists of a problem statement, theoretical orientation, literature review, overview of the method, results, conclusions, and a copy of their instrument.
3. Poster – teams will prepare a poster presentation of their project and its findings that will be presented in an academic conference style session arranged for the course.

Performance Evaluation Standards

Specific criteria for each assignment will be provided. I will use these general evaluation criteria:

- A Grades or Excellent Work – There is a clear focus on what the assignment should achieve and it is structured accordingly. The assignment is well-written/presented and free of errors.

There is clear evidence of a thoughtful and original approach. The student has developed opinions on the issues being considered and can explain and support those opinions persuasively. The relevant literature and class material have been considered and integrated into the assignment, with appropriate referencing. Where research has been carried out, the method used is appropriate and well-explained.

- B Grades or Above Average Work – The assignment is effectively planned, organized, and written/presented. The student has a clear understanding of the topic and has read enough to be familiar with key concepts and/or theories from the course. There is evidence that the student has developed individual ideas, can explain them clearly, and can integrate them with course material.
- C Grades or Average Work – The basic requirements of the assignment have been met. The student has a general understanding of the topic and has written/presented the assignment so that it can be clearly understood. Use of relevant course material is made.
- D Grades or Poor Work – The student has not met the minimum requirements of the assignment. The topic is not well-understood and there is little evidence of understanding course materials. The assignment is poorly written/presented and lacks logic and supporting evidence for ideas.
- F Grades or Unacceptable Work – The student has not met the basic requirements of the assignment and shows no understanding of the topic or course materials.

Course Policies & Rules

Attendance Policy

Attendance will be taken every class period as regular attendance and active participation is expected. You are expected to arrive for class on time and stay for the whole class period. I will count you present if you are in the classroom within 30 minutes from when the class starts. If you enter the classroom more than 30 minutes after class has started, you will be considered absent. Per MUIC Grading Policy, your course project will not be graded if you fail to attend 80 percent of the total class time. Please be aware that any absence, tardy, or leaving early may affect your final grade. Additionally, coming to every class meeting does not guarantee that you will pass the class; you actually have to both attend class meetings and successfully complete course work to earn a passing grade.

Preparing for Class is Essential

Be sure to set aside time to prepare for this class. As this is a lecture class, projects are done outside of class time. The information shared each day in class is designed to help you to be able to work on the projects outside of class. You should take notes and summaries of our time in class. Informed work is far more likely to arise from documented notes than hazy recall. Notes will also aid in studying for exams.

Late Work

Assignments are expected at the beginning of class on the due date. All students are expected to turn in their own assignments. Exceptions, if allowed at all, are only for special cases I have been notified about and approved beforehand. Late assignments will result in a minimum 20% deduction from the points possible, with an additional 20% deducted each week the assignment is late. Short of you being admitted to the hospital, most situations are not considered dire personal emergencies. In cases of documented university sanctioned events or approved exceptions, assignments should be completed prior to the absence. Talking to me after a missed class or on the day an assignment is due will result in no possible make-up.

Academic Misconduct

Students are expected to be honest in all academic work. All work is to be appropriately cited in both oral and written forms when it is borrowed, directly or indirectly, from another source. Unauthorized and unacknowledged collaboration and/or the presentation of someone else's work warrants plagiarism. Unless otherwise noted, all work should be done on an individual basis. Documented cases of academic misconduct, including cheating on an exam, plagiarizing a written or oral assignment, or the falsification or fabrication of material or sources, will result in a grade of zero for that assignment and possibility an F for the course. I do not make distinctions about severity; all academic misconduct will be treated the same.

Professionalism

I want all students, in some way, to take part in the learning community of our class. I assume that you want to come to class and that you want to understand the course material while in class. Unless otherwise instructed, personal technology should not be used in class. Sleeping, chatting with another student or on a mobile phone, e-mailing, social networking, instant messaging, playing games, watching videos, listening to music, taking selfies, doing work for another course, going in and out of the classroom, etc. are not allowed while class is in session. Our time in class should focus on course materials and activities. We should show respect and honor one another by cooperating together in a professional manner. Anyone who violates these standards of professionalism will be asked to leave class.

Communiqués and Moodle

I will develop an email list and Line group to use in sharing announcements and other communiqués for this class. I will also upload course learning material to the course's page on Google Classroom (<https://classroom.google.com>). Students must use their @student.mahidol.edu email accounts to sign-up for the course's Classroom page. You are responsible for any information sent over e-mail or Line or posted on Classroom.

Always Ask for Help

My job is to guide you through a process of learning by creating an environment that is challenging and engaging. As always, what you get out of this class is also a function of your effort in the class. So ask questions, stop by my office, at another mutually agreed upon place, or e-mail me to chat. I am always willing to review rough drafts for any assignment. Good work does not happen the night before. It is a process of drafting and redrafting. You are welcome to submit early drafts of your work at least 3 days before assignments are due if you would like suggestions on improving your work.

Tentative Course Schedule for ICMC 204 during 2nd Trimester 2020-2021

Week	Topics, Readings, and Assignments
1	Introduction to the course Overview of the research process
2	Paradigms & reasoning in research Importance of literature reviews
3	Designing research Formulating questions & problems
4	Sampling research populations Research ethics
5	Quantitative & qualitative research
6	Research workshop: Proposals due **
7	Research workshop: Research instruments
8	Research article critique presentation ** Research workshop: Data collection
9	Quantitative & qualitative data analysis
10	Research workshop: Data analysis
11	Research conference poster session **
12	Research workshop Final drafts
13	Research reports due via TurnItIn by 12.00 hours
<p>Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You should do the readings before coming to class on the day indicated and bring your learning materials with you each day • “**” indicates a day you must come to class or else your grade will be penalized • This schedule is subject to change based on student learning necessities; changes, if made, will be announced in class 	