

California Lutheran University

Bachelor's Degree for Professionals

Research Methods Comm 300

Spring 2016: February 29-May 12, 2016

Monday, 6-9:30 PM

Woodland Hills Center

Classroom: Room 124

Instructor: Dr. Aaron Heresco (please call me Aaron)

Email: aheresco@callutheran.edu

Phone: 814-889-5161

Office: Woodland Hills #103C

Office Hours: Monday: 4-6 PM

Wednesday: 2-4 PM

If you cannot make these times, let me know and I will find another time that works

Drop Date: March 14, 2016 – Last day to add; last day to drop (without a “W”)

Last day to drop without financial penalty (100% tuition charge for classes dropped after this date)

April 11, 2016 - Last day to withdraw without academic penalty (Responsible for 100% of tuition)

Welcome to Communication Research Methods! This course will ask you to consider both “why” and “how” to do research about media and communications. Whether you plan to work in the media industries or want to become an active and media-literate citizen, understanding both how to *do* and how to *analyze* research methods is vital. If you think video games cause violence, romantic comedies lead to relationship problems, or cell phones are changing the way we communicate with each other, it is only through sound research practices that you can speak with confidence about these issues. At the same time, being able to understand research methods also allows us to interrogate and interpret popular polls, news stories, and academic writing. Research is something we do everyday on sites such as Wikipedia, Google, and even Facebook. Thinking more deeply about the process is important both inside and outside the classroom.

Course Description

This course is designed to introduce research methods used in the field of communication and in social science in general. It examines how research is planned and designed, explores both quantitative and qualitative methods, introduces students to processes of data collection and analysis, & gives them experience in conducting original research

Course Goals: Upon completion of this course, you should be able to:

- Gain field-specific knowledge and **information literacy**
- Practice **communication skills (written and oral)**
- Hone **creative and critical thinking** skills
- Develop **quantitative literacy**

Course Texts:

Introducing Communication Research – Paths of Inquiry, **3rd Edition**

By Donald Treadwell

Course Structure:

This will not be your typical lecture-based class. Learning is more fun, and more effective, when multiple modes of instruction are used. There will be short lectures, video clips, some Prezi slides, and (most important of all) practice with the methods we will be discussing. With this in mind, your experience in this class will be largely what you make of it – the more effort you put in, the more you will get out of the course. The critical skills you develop in this course, specifically with regard to media content, will remain useful to you outside of the classroom. Our discussions and assignments may be viewed as an intellectual map; a way for you to grasp the concepts of the course and more fully develop your own thinking. It is my goal that the material and learning from this course do not stop at the classroom doors – consider and use this information to better understand the world around you.

As discussion will be a vital aspect of this class, it is understood that to meaningfully participate in these discussions, you will need to have completed the assigned readings and thought about the topic for that day.

Attendance and Class Participation:

Attendance in class is important. You cannot share with, or learn from, your fellow students if you are not in class. However, I understand that things do come up, so each student is allotted **one** absence per semester. How, when, and if you use them is up to you. You should, however, make every effort to attend all classes, and arrive promptly at the start of each class. Tardiness is rude and disruptive, as is cell phone use. **DO NOT BE LATE TO CLASS.** Please do not use cell phones in class – it is disrespectful to your fellow classmates and to me.

Participation is a critical aspect of this course. Please ensure that you come prepared to class and are willing to offer critiques or opinions of the topics we discuss

Course Grades: There will be 100 possible points in this class. The breakdown is as follows:

Article reviews	20 Points
Methods Review Papers	50 Points
Research Project	30 Points

Grade Scale

93 – 100	A
90 - 92.9	A-
87 – 89.9	B+
83 - 86.9	B
80 – 82.9	B-
77 – 79.9	C+
70 – 76.9	C
60 – 69.9	D
0 – 59.9	F

Methods Review and Practice Papers

This class is largely organized around critical thinking and class discussion. To facilitate both, it is vital that you come to class have read, and thought about, the material for the day. *You will need to turn in a Methods Review Paper to a dropbox on Blackboard by midnight on Sunday.*

For example, the reaction paper for week 1 will be due on Sunday before the start of the week 2 material. The worksheet will encourage you to think about the readings and find ways to apply the topic to your own research interests. A template form with the questions I will ask you to answer is available on Blackboard– you will need to provide responses for each of the weeks’ readings. Over the course of the semester, there will be 10 weeks of reading, and each week’s analysis will be worth a maximum of 5 points. The grade breakdown is as follows:

- 5 Points – it is clear to me that you read and thought critically about the readings.
- 3 Points – it is clear that you did the readings, but did not think critically about them
- 1 Point – It is not obvious that you did the readings, nor thought much about them
- 0 Points – It is obvious that you did not do the readings

Article Reviews

To encourage a broader understanding of methods and how they are applied in both academic and professional settings, we will examine numerous examples of methods-in-action over the course of the term. These article reviews will ask you to think about both the research process and well as the interpretation of various pieces of writing. For example, I will ask you to read an academic article and analyze both the specific method the author uses and how/if that method was appropriate for both the research question and the data gathered.

Research Project

Over the course of the term I will ask you to submit, in increments, components of an original piece of scholarly research – more specifically, an annotated bibliography that explores existing literature on your research topic. It may sound daunting, but going through this process will bring both research and methods to life.

Student Workload/Carnegie Hours:

The expectation for this course is that you will spend the equivalent of 4 hours per week in class (an hour is defined as 50 minutes), and you will spend approximately 9 hours per week studying and completing assignments for this course.

Activity	Instructor-Led Hours		Homework Hours		Remarks
	Weekly	Course	Weekly	Course	
Readings of required text			5	55	Over 11 weeks, uneven distribution
Weekly Classes	3 hr. 20 min.	36 hrs. 40 min.			Includes final exam
Article Reviews				5	
Research Project		2		20	Average, varies by student
Methods Review Papers			2	20	Average, varies by student
Methods Review Response	1	11			
Total		50		100	

Course Evaluations Statement:

All course evaluations are conducted online. Your feedback is important to us. You will receive an email message reminding you when the website is open for your feedback. The link is: <http://courseval.callutheran.edu>

Disability Statement:

California Lutheran University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations in compliance with ADA of 1990 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 to students with documented disabilities. If you are a student requesting accommodations for this course, please contact your professor at the beginning of the semester and register with the Disability Support Services Coordinator, Wendy Jimenez, for the facilitation and verification of need. The Disability Support Services Coordinator is located in the Center for Student Success Office

located at 3259 Pioneer Street, and can be contacted by calling 805.493.3260 or emailing wjimene@callutheran.edu

Statement on Academic Honesty:

The educational programs of California Lutheran University are designed and dedicated to achieve academic excellence, honesty and integrity at every level of student life. Part of CLU's dedication to academic excellence is our commitment to academic honesty. Students, faculty, staff and administration share the responsibility for maintaining high levels of scholarship on campus. Any behavior or act which might be defined as "deceitful" or "dishonest" will meet with appropriate disciplinary sanctions, including dismissal from the University, suspension, grade F in a course or various forms of academic probation. Policies and procedures regarding academic honesty are contained in the faculty and student handbooks.

Plagiarism, cheating, unethical computer use and facilitation of academic dishonest are examples of behavior which will result in disciplinary sanctions. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to:

- word for word copying without using quotation marks or presenting the work as yours
- using the ideas or work of others without acknowledgement
- not citing quoted material. Students must cite sources for any information that is not either the result of original research or common knowledge.

Standards of Student Conduct Statements:

- [Student Life Handbook](#)
- [Academic Honesty Statement](#)

University Harassment Policy

Be civil to each other, both on- and offline. For information on the University's **student harassment policy and rights, please go to the following link:**

[Student Life Handbook](#)

Sexual Misconduct

California Lutheran University does not tolerate any degree of sexual misconduct on or off-campus. We encourage you to report if you know of, or have been the victim of, sexual harassment, misconduct, and/or assault. If you report this to a faculty member, she or he must notify Cal Lutheran's Title IX Coordinator about the basic facts of the incident. More information about your options for reporting can be found at: <http://www.callutheran.edu/title-ix/>

Pearson Library

Pearson Library provides access to scholarly books, journals, ebooks, and databases of full text articles from scholarly journals. To begin using these materials, visit the library web page <http://www.callutheran.edu/library>

There are many ways to contact Pearson Library for research assistance, no matter where you are!

- Email Yvonne Wilber (Professionals liaison) at ywilber@callutheran.edu
- General Library email: CLUlibrary@callutheran.edu
- Library main phone: 805.493.3250
- Text us your question: 805.493.3867
- Get more help at: <http://www.callutheran.edu/library/help/>

CLU Writing Center

The Writing Center provides 1:1 writing consultations, in-person and online, with trained undergraduate and graduate writing consultants. We welcome all writing-related projects at any stage of the writing process across the diverse disciplines of study at CLU. The Writing Center also hosts writing workshops, provides in-class visits, facilitates writing groups, and offers a writer's studio option for longer, sustained projects. Services suit writers of all levels, including traditional undergraduates, graduate students from all fields, all English language learners, and accomplished scholars alike. All members of the CLU community with an @callutheran.edu email address are welcome to make use of our services. For more information, please visit at www.callutheran.edu/writing_center or call 805-493-3257. Please schedule appointments online through MyCLU Blackboard with the yellow "The Writing Center" icon in "Tools," or stop by The Writing Center itself, located in the Darling Collaboration Suite of Pearson Library.

Veterans Resources

If you are a veteran, military member, or a family member of a veteran or military member, please refer to Cal Lutheran's Veterans Resources webpage for important information: <http://www.callutheran.edu/veterans/> Also, if you are a veteran receiving benefits and you are struggling in a class, you most likely qualify for free tutoring. Please contact the Veterans Coordinator, Jenn Zimmerman, veterans@callutheran.edu or 805.493.3648, for more information.

Help Desk

Students may contact the Help Desk about telephone, network, wireless network, software questions password problems, hardware problems, and general consultation (i.e. you cannot log into your MyCLU portal, or you are having problems with Blackboard). Please click on the following link for more information

http://www.callutheran.edu/iss/technology_services/helpdesk.php or call: 805.493.3698

Elements on this syllabus are subject to change

Course Schedule

Week 1 – Research Basics (Parts of a Research Paper)

Treadwell Chapter 1 and 2

Week 2 – Reading Research and Ethical Practices

Treadwell Chapter 3 and 4

Week 3 – Watching and Listening – Qualitative Research

Treadwell, Chapter 11

Week 4 – Content Analysis

Treadwell Chapter 12

Week 5 – Rhetorical and Critical Analysis

Treadwell Chapter 13

Week 6 – Measurement and Quantitative Research
Treadwell Chapter 5

Week 7 – Descriptive Statistics and Summarizing Research
Treadwell Chapter 6

Week 8 – Generalizing Research Results and Inferential Statistics
Treadwell Chapter 7

Week 9 – Sampling
Treadwell Chapter 8

Week 10 – Surveys
Treadwell Chapter 9

Week 11 – Writing and Presenting Research
Treadwell Chapter 14

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