Description: Introduction to Communication Research

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**Academic group:** FOART  
**Academic org:** FOA004  
**Student contribution band:** 1  
**ASCED code:** 100700

**STAFFING**
Examiner: Julianne Stewart  
Moderator: Dianne Jones

**SYNOPSIS**
Mass Media, Communication, and Public Relations research projects require variously a range of methods, both qualitative and quantitative. The researcher needs to be able to identify a research problem, decide on research objectives and select appropriate method/s to carry out the research. This course examines, from both practical and critical perspectives, a range of qualitative and quantitative research methods relevant to professional and academic needs in the mass communications field. These methods include focus groups, content analysis, in-depth interview and survey methods, as they are used in current research practices in the fields of Journalism, Film, Communication and Public Relations.

**OBJECTIVES**
On completion of this course students will be able to:

1. identify and critically analyse a variety of communication research methods currently employed by researchers in relevant fields of interest;  
2. evaluate qualitative and quantitative research data, in the context of declared methodological frameworks  
3. understand the concept of reliability and validity as applied to different types of research.

**TOPICS**

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<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. The political and ethical contexts of research practice in Media and Communication Studies, Film and Television Studies, Journalism and Public Relations</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Overview of qualitative and quantitative approaches to communication research - major research paradigms.</td>
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3. Ethnographic methods in communication research, including: - interview techniques; - focus group techniques; - participant observation.

4. Statistical methods in communication research, including: - sampling; - social surveys; - questionnaire design; - opinion sampling.

5. Textual analysis, both quantitative and qualitative.

6. Application of methods to communication contexts.

7. Analysing qualitative data: manual and computerised methods.

8. Analysing quantitative data: statistical package for the social sciences.

9. Reliability and validity in quantitative and qualitative communications research.

TEXT and MATERIALS required to be PURCHASED or ACCESSED

ALL textbooks and materials are available for purchase from USQ BOOKSHOP (unless otherwise stated). Orders may be placed via secure internet, free fax 1800642453, phone 07 46312742 (within Australia), or mail. Overseas students should fax +61 7 46311743, or phone +61 7 46312742. For costs, further details, and internet ordering, use the 'Textbook Search' facility at http://bookshop.usq.edu.au click 'Semester', then enter your 'Course Code' (no spaces).


REFERENCE MATERIALS

Reference materials are materials that, if accessed by students, may improve their knowledge and understanding of the material in the course and enrich their learning experience.

Asian Journal of Communication 302.2 P7
Australian Journalism Review 079.94 P8
Australian Studies in Journalism 079.94 P10
Communication 302.2 P1
Communication Research 302.2072 P1
Communication Research Trends 302.2072 P2
Communication Yearbook 001.5 P1
Continuum 302.23 P2
Critical Studies in Mass Communication 302.2 P3
Discourse and Society 401.41 P1
European Journal of Communication 302.2 P5
Feminist Studies (Social Sciences on Disk - full text data base)
Gold Reports of the International Public Relations Association
Human Communication Research 302.2 P8
The Journal of Communication 301.16 P1
Journal of Communication Inquiry 302.2 P6
Journal of International Communication
Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly 301.160973 P1
Media Asia 301.16 P2
Media Culture and Society 302.234 P1
Media Information International 301.160994 P1
Nordicom
The Public Relations Journal
Public Relations Quarterly 659.2 P1
Public Relations Research and Education
Public Relations Research Annual 659 Pub
Public Relations Review 659.2 P2
Signs 305.4 P2
Theory Culture and Society 301.01 P1
Theory and Method in Sociology: A Guide for the Beginner 301 Jon
Australian Journal of Communication 302.2 P2

**STUDENT WORKLOAD REQUIREMENTS**

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ASSESSMENT DETAILS

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NOTES
1. All quizzes are self-marking and may be completed at the student's own pace. They have no assessment weighting and are optional.
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IMPORTANT ASSESSMENT INFORMATION

1. Attendance requirements:
   There are no attendance requirements for this external course. However, it is the student's responsibility to study all material provided to them or required to be accessed by them to maximise their chance of meeting the objectives of the course and to be informed of course-related activities and administration.

2. Requirements for students to complete each assessment item satisfactorily:
To complete each of the assessment items satisfactorily, students must obtain at least 50% of the marks available for each assessment item.

3 Penalties for late submission of required work:
If students submit assignments after the due date without prior approval, then a penalty of 10% of the total marks available for the assignment will apply for each of the first FIVE working days late, after which a zero mark will be given.

4 Requirements for student to be awarded a passing grade in the course:
To be assured of a passing grade, students must demonstrate, via the summative assessment items, that they have achieved the required minimum standards in relation to the objectives of the course by obtaining at least 50% of the total weighted marks for all summative assessment.

5 Method used to combine assessment results to attain final grade:
The final grades for students will be assigned on the basis of the weighted aggregate of the marks (or grades) obtained for each of the summative assessment items in the course.

6 Examination information:
There is no exam for this course.

7 Examination period when Deferred/Supplementary examinations will be held:
Given the details under (6) above, there are no deferred exams for this course. However, if any deferred/makeup work is granted, it would have to be submitted by a date set by the examiner.

8 University Regulations:
Students should read USQ Regulations 5.1 Definitions, 5.6. Assessment, and 5.10 Academic Misconduct for further information and to avoid actions which might contravene University Regulations. These regulations can be found at the URL http://www.usq.edu.au/corporateservices/calendar/part5.htm or in the current USQ Handbook.

ASSESSMENT NOTES

1 (a) The due date for an assignment is the date by which a student must despatch the assignment to the USQ. The onus is on the student to provide proof of the despatch date, if requested by the Examiner. (b) Students must retain a copy of each item submitted for assessment. This must be despatched to USQ within 24 hours if requested by the Examiner. (c) In accordance with University’s Assignment Extension Policy (Regulation 5.6.1), the examiner of a course may grant an extension of the due date of an assignment in extenuating circumstances such as documented ill-health. (d) Students who have undertaken all of the required assessments in the course but who have failed to meet some of the specified objectives of the course within the normally prescribed time may be awarded the temporary grade: IM (Incomplete-Makeup). An IM grade will only be awarded when, in the opinion of the examiner, a student will be able to achieve the remaining objectives of the course after a period of non-directed personal study. (e) Students who, for medical, family/personal, or employment-related reasons, are unable to complete an assignment or sit for an examination at the scheduled time, may apply to defer an assessment in the course. Such a request must be accompanied by appropriate supporting documentation. One of the following temporary grades may be awarded: IDS (Incomplete - Deferred Examination; IDM (Incomplete Deferred Make-up); IDB (Incomplete - Both Deferred Examination and Deferred Make-up).