

# Quantitative Methods/Communication Research (CMST 487/508)

Fall 2020 TTH 1:10-2:25pm

Zoom: <https://tennessee.zoom.us/j/4114689797>

**Instructor:** Dr. Jenny Crowley  
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**Office Hours:** W 10-12:30pm drop in office hours on Zoom:  
<https://tennessee.zoom.us/j/97514142552>  
Face to face appointments, when necessary, are available upon request

## **Course Description:**

The purpose of this graduate course is to familiarize you to quantitative research methods for the study of communication. This course will cover different research designs (e.g., content analysis, survey, experiment), procedures, and the use of descriptive and basic analytical statistics. Developing an understanding of quantitative methods in communication research will enable you to be a critical consumer of scholarly research and apply quantitative methodologies to various research situations. The course will also emphasize the strengthening of argumentation and writing skills necessary for communication research. In so doing, this course will prepare you for future graduate coursework, a master's project or thesis, and life in and beyond the academy.

## **Course Objectives:**

- Recognize the methods and procedures available for communication research
- Develop theory-driven research questions and hypotheses
- Consume and critique quantitative research in academic journals
- Understand, interpret, and conduct statistical analyses
- Propose your own original research study employing quantitative methods

## **Course Materials:**

Wrench, J. S., Thomas-Maddox, C., Richmond, V. P., & McCroskey, J. C. (2016). *Quantitative Research Methods for Communication* (3rd ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.

## **Course Assignments:**

**Participation.** Talk! Discussion among class members will “make or break” a grad seminar. Come to class prepared to engage in thoughtful reflection on the day’s reading. Bring clarification questions about the material and questions you believe will provoke discussion.

**CITI Training.** You are responsible for completing CITI training by the date indicated on the syllabus. This online training is sponsored by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and addresses ethical responsibilities of individuals conducting human subjects research. Students will need to complete the Social & Behavioral Research – Basic/Refresher course. Information about CITI training can be found here: <https://irb.utk.edu/training/>

**Research Proposal.** During the semester, you will propose a research study employing quantitative methods. The project has several components: statement of the research problem, literature review, methods section, peer review, and final draft.

Early in the semester you will submit a typed one-page document that identifies the problem that will be addressed by your research project. Describe the question you want to answer with your research. In addition, start developing an argument for the study – is there a knowledge gap in the literature or conflicting results that require further exploration and explanation? Problem statements will be discussed in conferences with the instructor.

You will then write a literature review, which will draw upon existing research and theory to justify several hypotheses (between 2–5). Variables must be clearly identified and one variable must be a communication variable. The methods section will provide a complete and detailed explanation of the research design. The research design must address all your hypotheses.

Towards the end of the semester, you will participate in peer reviews. Paper drafts will be shared with the entire class and you will be assigned to be the ‘lead reviewer’ to one paper. You will provide this student with a written document that discusses the strengths and weaknesses of the paper. In addition, as the lead respondent you will guide the class through a discussion of the paper. For the remaining student papers, you will act as an additional reader and contribute to the in-class discussion of a given paper. Your grade for peer reviews will be based on your written review of a paper, your facilitation of class discussion when acting as lead reviewer, and your participation when giving feedback to other papers.

At the end of the semester, you will submit a final draft of your research proposal. Final drafts must respond to all feedback received from the instructor regarding the literature review and methods sections, as well as feedback received from classmates during the peer review process. For the final draft, include a brief summary of the statistical tests you will use to test your hypotheses. The final draft should be no more than 15 pages in length (not including title page and references). All documents must conform with APA style 7. Documents that do not adhere to APA guidelines may be returned to you for further revision. To compensate for the different times students will receive peer feedback on their drafts, the final paper is due to the instructor on a staggered schedule: papers evaluated 11.12 will be due by noon on November 30<sup>th</sup>, papers evaluated 11.17 will be due by noon on December 3<sup>rd</sup>, and papers evaluated on 11.24 will be due by noon on December 7<sup>th</sup>.

**Calculating the Final Grade:**

Participation	20%	Methods	15%
CITI Training	5%	Peer Review	20%
Problem Statement	5%	Final Draft	20%
Literature Review	15%		

**Grading:** The following is the grading scale used in this course: A = 93 to 100, A- = 90 to 92.9, B+ = 87 to 89.9, B = 83 to 86.9, B- = 80 to 82.9, C+ = 77 to 79.9, C = 73 to 76.9, C- = 70 to 72.9, D+ = 67 to 69.9, D = 63 to 66.9, D- = 60 to 62.9, F = 0 to 59.9.

## **Course Policies:**

**Late Assignments:** Course assignments must be turned in or completed in class on the day they are due. Late work is acceptable **only by arrangement with me**, and it may not always be possible to make up an assignment. If you need a make-up opportunity or extension for any assignment, you need to contact me **before** the class period in which the assignment is due. Extensions or make up work will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:** Any student who feels they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact Student Disability Services in Dunford Hall, at 865-974-6087, or by video relay at, 865-622-6566, to coordinate reasonable academic accommodations.

**CCI Diversity Statement:** The College of Communication and Information recognizes and values diversity. Exposing students to diverse people, ideas and cultures increases opportunities for intellectual inquiry, encourages critical thinking, and enhances communication and information competence. When all viewpoints are heard, thoughtfully considered, and respectfully responded to, everyone benefits. Diversity and fairness unite us with the wider professional and global community.

**Academic Integrity:** Academic integrity is taken very seriously. If you violate academic standards of conduct, you risk failing this course or possible suspension from the university. Violations include (but are not limited to) cheating, plagiarism, use of a paper that has been turned in by you or someone else in another class, and unauthorized possession of exam materials. **If caught engaging in academic dishonesty in this course you will receive a zero in the course.** You are responsible for being familiar with university policies on such matters; including a thorough understanding of the university's Honor Statement:

*An essential feature of the University of Tennessee is a commitment to maintaining an atmosphere of intellectual integrity and academic honesty. As a student of the university, I pledge that I will neither knowingly give nor receive any inappropriate assistance in academic work, thus affirming my own personal commitment to honor and integrity.*

**COVID-19:** Students are required to wear face masks at all times and maintain social distancing (6 feet between individuals in traditional classrooms, or, in instructional laboratories and similar settings, only a few minutes in closer proximity when absolutely necessary to achieve learning objectives). Students who are feeling ill or experiencing symptoms such as sneezing, coughing, or a higher than normal temperature will be excused from class and should stay at home. Instructors have the right to ask those who are not complying with these requirements to leave class in the interest of everyone's health and safety. In the event that a student refuses to comply with these requirements, the instructor has the right to cancel class. Additionally, following other simple practices will promote good health in and out of the classroom, such as frequent and thorough hand washing, wiping down desks and seats with disinfectant wipes whenever possible, not sharing personal items such as pens and cell phones, and avoiding crowded hallways and other enclosed spaces. The Volunteer Creed reminds us that we bear the torch in order to give light to others. As Volunteers, we commit to caring for one another and for the members of the communities in which we live, work, and learn. This semester, the University asks that we all

demonstrate the Volunteer spirit by following these and other health guidelines and requirements.

**Tentative Course Schedule:**

Week	Sessions	Topic of the Week	Reading	Due
1	TH 8.20	Introduction to the Course	Syllabus	Read and Sign 'A Letter from Dr. C'
2	T 8.25	Ways of Knowing	Chap. 1,2	
	TH 8.27	Ways of Knowing	Chap. 1,2	CITI Training
3	T 9.1	Identifying the Research Problem	Chap. 4, 5	
	TH 9.3	Identifying the Research Problem	Chap. 4, 5	
4	T 9.8	Variables	Chap. 6	Problem Statement
	TH 9.10	Article Analysis	Readings TBD	
5	T 9.15	Conferences with Instructor		
	TH 9.17	Conferences with Instructor		
6	T 9.22	Measurement	Chap. 7	
	TH 9.24	Reliability and Validity	Chap. 8	
7	T 9.29	Survey Design	Chap. 9	
	TH 10.1	Survey Design	Chap. 9	Literature Review
8	T 10.6	Article Analysis	Readings TBD	
	TH 10.8	Content Analysis	Chap. 10	
9	T 10.13	Experimental Design	Chap. 11	
	TH 10.15	Sampling	Chap. 13	
10	T 10.20	Hypothesis Testing	Chap. 14	
	TH 10.22	Descriptive Statistics	Chap. 15	Methods
11	T 10.27	Chi-Square	Chap. 16	
	TH 10.29	<i>t</i> Tests	Chap. 17	
12	T 11.3	ANOVA	Chap. 18	
	TH 11.5	Correlation	Chap. 19	
13	T 11.10	Regression	Chap. 20	
	TH 11.12	Peer Reviews, I		
14	T 11.17	Peer Reviews, II		
	TH 11.19	<b>NCA, No Class</b>		
15	T 11.24	Peer Reviews, III		