



EAST TEXAS A&M
UNIVERSITY

Commerce Campus

COMS, 407, 01e, Communication Research Methods and Theory

Communication Studies Program
Department of History & Liberal Studies
COURSE SYLLABUS: Fall, 2026

Course Instructor: Stephen A. Furlich, Ph.D

Office: Ferguson Social Sciences First Floor: Room 131

Office Hours: (Tues./ Thurs. 8:00-9:30AM, 12:15PM-2:00PM)

Class Time: Tues, Thurs. 11:00-12:15 Ed. South 103

E-Mail: Stephen.furlich@etamu.edu

Prerequisites: None

"Having knowledge but lacking the power to clearly express it is no better than never having any ideas at all." Pericles

Communication Studies B.A./B.S.

The Communication Studies program is designed as an area of study to apply scholarly communication research for a variety of careers and personal goals in an interconnected world.

Two general goals of the program for graduates are:

1. Each graduate will be communicatively informed in every communication situation they find themselves in, such as understanding others verbally and nonverbally in professional and personal situations.

2. Each graduate will effectively communicate verbally and nonverbally in each communication situation they find themselves in, such as professional and personal contexts. Furthermore, an essential part of effective communication is the ability to communicate strategically verbally and nonverbally to accomplish one's goals.

“Life is 10% what happens to you and 90% how you respond to it.”

Lou Holtz, Notre Dame Football Coach (Retired)

Course Description

Course Description: This course is a survey of basic human communication research methods focused on developing competencies at various levels. The primary goal is for students to better understand and apply how research is conducted in Communication Studies. Furthermore, emphasis is placed on how students can collect and analyze data in the future, such as for organizations. Emphasis is placed in three primary areas of human communication research: Quantitative, Qualitative, and Critical. Students will write papers that can lead up to research studies.

COURSE INFORMATION

Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings

Textbook(s) Required from Top Hat. Purchases Required.

Required:

Kivunja, C. (2018) (1st Ed.). Research Methods in Education and the Social Sciences

Top Hat Classroom - One Semester (ISBN: 9780986615108)

+ Research Methods in Education and the Social Sciences (ISBN: 9781773303710)

Join Code: 938431

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the importance of research and the value of having accurate, complete, and acceptable information as the basis for critical thinking and decision making on all levels of communication, and will master standards and skills for conducting and using research on various levels for a variety of purposes.
2. Students will understand and apply concepts and technical vocabulary of communication research.
3. Students will compare and contrast three research paradigms (quantitative, qualitative, critical).
4. Students will develop skills for conducting original research.
5. Students will be able to understand and critically evaluate research in scholarly journals.
6. Students will understand the relationship between theory and research methods.
7. Students will understand ethical considerations involved in research collection.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Instructional Methods and Assessment

Student Responsibilities

Checking ETAMU email account three times a week. Checking student grades in MyLeo DL2 Bright Space, Submitting Assignments through MyLeo DL2 Bright Space in Content, Assignments, Appropriate envelopes.

E-Mails: Label your Name, Class, and Section number, Examples: Smith, 1311-01W, in e-mails such as in subject lines.

Course Assignments/Assessments: The History and Liberal Studies supports university policies of academic excellence as noted in the student handbook. Interpretation of grades should be considered within the university framework: A=excellent, B=good; C=average; D=inferior; and F=failure. Final grades in this course will be based on:

GRADING

Final grades in this course will be based on the following scale:

A = 90%-100%

B = 80%-89%

C = 70%-79%

D = 60%-69%

F = 59% or Below

Weights of the assessments in the calculation of the final letter grade.

3 Tests in D2L Course Shell for 50 QUESTIONS

E-Mails: Label your Name, Class, and Section number, Examples: Smith, 316-01, in e-mails such as in subject lines.

Tests = 60% (Test 1 = 20%; Test 2 = 20%; Test 3 = 20%)

Article Critique 1 (Quantitative) = 5%

Article Critique 2 (Qualitative) = 5%

Article Critique 3 (Communibiology) = 5%

Article Critique 4 (Critical) = 5%

Final Paper = 10%

Top Hat Quizzes = 10%

TOTAL = 100%

*** Tests - (60%)**

20% Test 1

20% Test 2

20% Test 3

Students preparing for tests should study how concepts are related to each other, how they differ, and come up with personal examples of the concepts. The test questions are usually not straight forward definitions but often give an example and ask the student which concept the example best represents.

***Please only submit written assignments as attachments in WORD in Content, Assignments, Proper Envelop. Other files such as PDF files are too difficult to grade.**

Papers (1, 2, 3, 4)* Journal Critiques Papers - (20%) Four journal article critiques for 5% of total grade each.

Paper 1 Quantitative,

Paper 2 Qualitative,

Paper 3 Communibiology

Paper 4 Critical

You will summarize and critique the strengths and weaknesses of scholarly journal articles. You can choose your own articles but they must have data collection. The paper should be at least **1 1/2 pages** double-spaced with one-inch margins. **Emphasis is on using specific terminology from the book and how to apply those ideas.**

Some of the issues you should address are

1. General summary of the article.
2. The theory or model used in the article.
3. How well are the RQs or hypotheses answered?
4. How was data collected and analyzed?

5. How can the findings be useful?

6. How the specific research approach influenced what was studied, how it was studied, and the findings. (Quant, Qual., Critical, or Communibiology).

Submit WORD document: Course Shell, Activities, Assignments, appropriate envelop labeled for each Paper.

Major Paper: *Research Project– (10%) Communication Studies Portfolios- All Majors MUST save their paper.

Students will address an **introduction, literature review, rationale, research design, and research questions or hypotheses of a research study, & theory** that they can collect data for in the future and describe each section and how theory is integrated into it. The project can be quantitative or qualitative. The purpose of the project is to understand how to set up a research study that can be used to collect and analyze data in the future. Students should briefly address each of the sections listed above and how they relate to each other and the overall theory of the study. Each section should be addressed. This project does not require data to be collected. At least **5 sources** should be cited in the review of literature section. The paper should be at least 3 pages double-spaced with one-inch margins. Emphasis is on using specific terminology from the book and how to apply those ideas.

Each student will submit their paper and reference page of at least 5 sources through Course Shell, Content, Assignments for this class in then the appropriate file .

Top Hat Quizzes Chapters- (10%)

There are 10 weeks of quizzes. Quiz questions are located for each chapter on the left side of the course ebook in a specific envelop for each test. Each will have quiz questions for 1% of the overall grade for each particular week. The purpose of these questions are to learn important concepts for each chapter. Not all questions in a chapter have points for answering them.

Assignments will be submitted electronically through

Course Shell, Activities, Assignments, and then the appropriate file

Each paper must be received by 5:00 P.M. Central Time Friday the week it is assigned. Please do not send an e-mail asking if your paper was received until at least 1 week after it is due. Answering e-mails about receiving the papers slows down the process of grading speeches. An e-mail from the Instructor to ALL students will be sent AFTER ALL papers have been graded to notify the class that paper assignment grades have been posted.

*** Course Behaviors**

Students may lose 10% of their final grade or be dropped from the class for acting disrespectful the first time. This includes but is not limited to offensive comments to another student, cellphone in class, leaving early, etc. Students can receive an 'F' in the class for academic dishonesty. This includes but is not limited to cheating on tests, using previous work from another class for assignments, copying another's work from anywhere, etc.

Course Procedures

Assignments - Assignments must be completed on time. Late work will result in loss of points. Academic integrity is expected on all course assignments and activities. Violations of academic integrity (e.g., plagiarism, cheating, etc.) are serious offenses and will be dealt with according to university policy.

Make-Up Assignments and Examinations - If you miss an exam or paper submission deadline it must be for one of the following types of documentable reasons: death in the family, severe personal illness, university sponsored activities, etc. If you have an unexcused absence on a day you are scheduled to make a presentation or take a test, you cannot make up that presentation or test. Additionally, because of time constraints, the instructor may elect not to grant make-up speeches for any reason. In order to take a make-up examination you must submit verifiable and official documentation to your instructor (e.g., a doctor's note for the specific day missed). If your request is approved, you may take a make-up test on the appointed day. All make-up exams must be given for qualified persons within 2 weeks of the missed test.

Please note this is a tentative schedule for topics that will be explored this semester.

Slight changes may be made as the semester progresses.

An important reminder:

All **Papers** and **Exams** are in bold. Notice how these are close to each other.

Therefore, it is imperative for you to plan ahead and prepare in advance so you don't fall behind in the course.

Keeping up with the readings and staying active in class are the best ways to stay afloat in this class.

*+2% final grade no more than 1 absence.

Communication Research Methods Fall, 2026

Dates are Tues. of each week.

Aug. 20 R: **Quiz 1:** Introduction, Syllabus, Theory and Research Part 1

Aug 25 Tues: Ch. 1

Aug. 27 R: Theory and Research Part 2, Theory in Article Example, Description of Journal Article Critique

Assignments	
Sept. 1 Theory and Research Part 3, Example of primary and Secondary Sources, library article search demo. (goog)	
Sept. 3: Quiz 2 , Ch. 2	
Sept. 8: Quiz 3 : Ch. 3 Example of primary and Secondary Sources, library article search demo. (goog)	
Sept. 10: Quiz 4 : Ch. 4, Research Report Article Example, Critical Essay Example, test 1 review sheet post	
Sept. 15 : Ch. 5, 6	
Sept. 17 : Test 1 (Theory Presentation 1, 2, 3; Book Ch. 1, 2, 3, 4)	
Sept. 21 Ch. 7, Interpretive Article Example	
Sept. 23 Journal Article Critique 1 Due (Quant.)	
Sept. 29	Quiz 5 : Ch. 8
Oct. 1	Ch. 9
Oct. 6	Quiz 6 : Ch. 10
Oct. 8	No Class Fall Break
Oct. 13	Ch. 11
Oct. 15	Journal Article Critique 2 Due (Qual.)
Oct. 20	Ch. 12
Oct. 22	Test 2 (Ch. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12)
Oct. 27	Quiz 7 , Ch. 13
Oct. 29	Journal Article Critique 3 Due (Communibiology)
Nov. 3	Quiz 8 : Ch. 14
Nov. 5	Ch. 15, meta-analysis example
Nov. 10	Quiz 9 : Ch. 16
Nov. 12	Journal Article Critique 4 Due (Critical)
Nov. 17	Ch. 17
Nov. 19	Ch. 18, 20

Nov. 24	Quiz 10
Nov. 26	Thanksgiving No class
Dec. 1	Final Projects Papers
Dec. 8	Test 3

I'm looking forward to getting to know each one of you!

Have a great semester!