New York Institute of Technology  
Department of Communication Arts  
COMM 620 Media Research

INSTRUCTOR’S INFORMATION  
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Instructor's office hours:  
Wednesday 12:00 PM - 2:00 PM Education Hall, Room 250  
Thursday 11:15 AM - 12:15 PM Education Hall, Room 250

COURSE INFORMATION  
Term and date: Fall 2014  
Course number and section: COMM620-W01  
Credits: 3  
Course title: Media Research  
Meeting times: Wednesday 06:00PM - 08:40PM  
Building and room number: Theobald Hall, Room 411  
Prerequisites and co-requisites: None

Course description from catalog  
This course is designed to familiarize the student with the basic research techniques (quantitative, qualitative, background research for creative projects, content analysis, opinion, and audience research) used in the areas of public information, television, film, and instructional communications. It introduces the students to the professional literature of their fields of specialization and to the skills necessary to read and interpret it. Required for all students.

Course goals and objectives  
This course provides a basic grounding in social science research. It will acquaint student with mass communication theory and research design. Students will learn both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Students will also learn how to interpret research findings and critically evaluate their usefulness.

Learning outcomes and instruments of assessment  
By the end of the semester, students will be able to:  
• learn basic knowledge of social science research design  
• gain insight into the relationship of communication theory and research methods  
• understand fundamentals of qualitative and quantitative research methods and learn how to assess and apply methods
• become conversant with conceptualizations and operationalizations
• learn how to interpret research findings and critically evaluate their usefulness
• prepare the intro, literature review and methods sections for a thesis

**Required texts**
• Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches, Fourth Edition [Paperback]
  John W. Creswell (Author)
  Publisher: Sage Publications, Inc.
  American Psychological Association (Corporate Author)
  Publisher: American Psychological Association

**Other readings:**
Additional handouts including PowerPoint presentations and academic articles will be uploaded to Blackboard at least one week prior to each session.  
*Note. Please complete textbook readings and additional handouts on Blackboard in advance of each session.*

**Online Resources:**
• Journal and database locator:  
  [http://www.nyi.edu/library/find_resources/communication_arts](http://www.nyit.edu/library/find_resources/communication_arts)
• Database recommended: Communication and Mass Media Complete  
  You can also explore other databases depending on your topic.
• Some reputable academic journals:  
  *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*  
  *Journal of Communication*  
  *Public Opinion Quarterly*  
  *Journal of Advertising*  
  *Journal of Public Relations Research*  
  *Media Psychology*  
  *Health Communication*  
  *Journal of Health Communication*

**FINAL PAPER AND ASSIGNMENTS**
**Final Paper (40%) – Due December 17**
1. Things to think about:
   - What is the topic of your study? Why is it important?
   - Is there any related literature? What theories and methods have been used? And what are the findings?
- What are your research questions and/or hypotheses? How does your study contribute to the existing literature?
- Which method will you use to conduct the study?

2. Schedule and instructions for each step:
   1) Initial 2-page final paper proposal, **due October 1**
      • Instructions: Identify a topic to study and write an initial 2-page (double spaced) final paper proposal. Good research ideas come from a variety of sources: literature, professional experience, news coverage by credible media, opinion polls from credible organizations, federal government documents, observation, brainstorming, etc. You can draw on different sources for the proposal, and you are required to try a preliminary keyword search in the NYIT library databases, find about 10 articles, read the article abstracts, and have a very basic knowledge of the existing literature relevant to your topic. Please cite all the sources in the paper.

   2) Initial 5–page introduction & literature review sections (a minimum of five academic sources is required), **due November 12**
      • Instructions:
        Search computerized databases and locate about 20 academic articles from peer-reviewed journals that are related to your topic. Read the abstracts and narrow down to at least five academic articles most relevant to your topic. Read them and write the 5-page initial into and literature review sections based on your readings. A literature review is not restricted to peer-reviewed journals or books by experts. News coverage by credible media, opinion polls from credible organizations, federal government documents are all good sources for learning about a problem. You can cite different sources, but be sure to include a minimum of 5 academic articles from peer-reviewed journals. It is important that you summarize important findings and address why the proposed study can enhance this line of research. Include your hypotheses or/and research questions. Please cite all the sources in the paper.
        • Notes. First, please read Research Design Chapter 2 (p. 25-48) for good advice regarding how to do a literature review. Second, you have to familiarize yourself with existing research to make your own contribution. Thus it is important that you spend time on literature review.

   3) Initial 3-page methods section (a minimum of five more academic sources is required), **due November 19**
      • Instructions: Read the method section of the five articles selected earlier. Search computerized databases again and locate about 10 more academic articles from peer-reviewed journals that are related to your study. Read the abstracts and narrow down to at least five more academic articles most relevant to your study. Read them, and pay special attention to the method section. Based on what your have learnt from the class as well as the readings of the method section of all ten selected articles, write the 3-page initial methods section. Please cite all the sources in the paper.
• Note. First, pay special attention to studies that used the same method as you will use. Second, you have to familiarize yourself with how previous studies have been conducted and how related concept has been operationalized to finalize your own method. So it is important that you spend time learning from prior studies.

4) Keep revising your paper by adding five more academic articles.

5) Paper presentations in class, **December 10**
• Instructions: Prepare a 5-slide PowerPoint presentation with the first one slide for intro, the next two slides for literature review, the 4th slide for research questions or/and hypotheses and the final one for methods. Keep the presentation to five minutes.

6) Final version of paper, due **December 17**
• Instructions: The paper should be between 12 to 15 pages in length excluding references. A minimum of 15 academic sources is required. Please follow APA style.

3. Grading format:
• Introduction & literature review sections (40 points)
  - Topic: 10 points
  - Evaluation of existing research: 30 points
  - Research questions and/or hypotheses: 10 points
• Methods section (30 points)
• APA format (10 points)
• Class presentation (10 points)

**Assignments (50%): Assignments are due at the beginning of the meetings.**

**Assignment 1. NYIT IRB training (12.5%), due September 17**
Completing the Required IRB Training All key personnel, including students, are required to complete an online training program before beginning their research. To complete the training, go to [http://phrp.nihtraining.com](http://phrp.nihtraining.com). Once the training is completed, you will be prompted to print out a certificate of completion. Submit an electronic copy via Blackboard and keep a copy for your records.
Source: [http://www.nyit.edu/ospar/irb/#training](http://www.nyit.edu/ospar/irb/#training)

**Assignment 2. Survey (12.5%), due October 15**
You will read a survey study from a reputable academic journal, and answer some questions in your written report. Tentative questions are:
1. What kind of sample is used in the study? And what is the sample size? What is the response rate?
2. State hypothesis one. For hypothesis one, how many primary concepts are involved in the hypothesis?
3. What is the theoretical definition for each concept in hypothesis one?
• If the authors do not provide an explicit theoretical definition for each variable, you must make up a plausible theoretical definition, given what the study is about.
4. What is the operational definition for each concept in hypothesis one?
• If the authors do not provide an explicit operational definition, you must make up a plausible operational definition.
• Tables and figures often provide hints about the operational definitions used, even if the measurement schemes are not explicitly stated.
5. Is hypothesis one supported by the study? How do you know? Discuss how the findings might differ if the concepts were defined (theoretically and operationally) in other ways.

Assignment 3. Content analysis (12.5%), due October 22
You will read a content analysis study from a reputable academic journal, and answer some questions in your written report. Tentative questions are:
1. What is the formal citation for the article?
   • Used the style outlined in the APA stylebook 6th ed.
   • For example:
2. What theory, if any, is used as the basis for the study?
   • Describe its main points, as outlined in the study.
   • If no theory is explicitly named, describe the general area of research.
3. Define the unit of analysis.
4. What kind of sample is used in the study? And what is the sample size?
5. How is the inter-coder reliability? What procedures are used to achieve high intercoder reliability?
6. What is hypothesis 1?
   • Quote it directly from the article, giving appropriate citation using APA style, including the page number, e.g., (Smith & Jones, 1995, p.679)
   • In APA style, direct quotes always include the page number, as do references to specific passages.
   • In APA style, general references to a study refer to the authors and year only.
7. Is hypothesis one supported by the study? How do you know?

Assignment 4. Experiment (12.5%), due October 29
You will read an experiment study from a reputable academic journal, and answer some questions in your written report. Tentative questions are:
1. State hypothesis one. For hypothesis one, what is the independent variable? What is the dependent variable?
2. Please paraphrase hypothesis one using two propositions: 1) If IV=X, then DV=Y (tested by the treatment group); 2) If IV ≠ X, then DV ≠ Y (tested by the control group).
3. How is the independent variable manipulated? (Hint: Find the answer in the “Design” subsection of the “Method” Section on page 122).
4. What is the theoretical definition for the dependent variable in hypothesis one?
5. What is the operational definition for the dependent variable in hypothesis one? (i.e., How is the dependent variable measured?)

6. Is hypothesis one supported by the study? How do you know?

Guidelines to submit assignments and papers:
All assignments and papers should be submitted via Blackboard.
1. When submitted electronically to Blackboard, your filename must be in the following format:
   Lastname_Comm620_Name of the assignment. For instance, if student John Doe submitted final paper assignment, the file name for that assignment should be: Doe_Comm620_Final.
2. At the top of your copy, you must list: your name, the course number, and the name of the assignment.
   Failure to do so will result in grade reduction.

GRADING FORMULA
Textbook readings and additional handouts on Blackboard should be completed in advance of each session.

There will be no final written examination. Students will be graded as follows:
Final Paper 40%
Assignments 50%
Class Attendance and Participation 10%

Assignments not handed on time will have their grades reduced, resulting in a half-grade deduction (example A becomes A-). Also, the instructor cannot guarantee timely feedback to late assignments. Thus it is very important that you stick to the schedule to complete the final paper step by step.

ATTENDANCE POLICY
Students are expected to be on-time for each class and ready to actively participate in class exercises and discussions. You must tell your instructor in advance if you cannot show up on time. Two unexcused absences will result in a half-grade deduction from your average (example: B becomes B-). With three unexcused absences, I’ll assume that you have dropped the class. Official drop paperwork is your responsibility.

Students arriving more than 10 minutes after the start of the class will be considered late; leaving early also will be counted as late. Three latenesses are equivalent to one absence.
WITHDRAWAL POLICY
A student may withdraw from a course without penalty through the end of the 8th week of class during a 14- or 15-week semester and through the 8th meeting during an 8-week course cycle. After this, the student must be doing passing work in order to receive a W grade. Students who are not passing after the 8th week or equivalent will be assigned the grade of WF.

It is the student’s responsibility to inform the instructor of his/her intention to withdraw from a course. If a student has stopped attending class without completing all assignments and/or examinations, failing grades for the missing work may be factored into the final grade calculation and the instructor for the course may assign the grade of WF. The grade of F is used for students who have completed the course but whose quality of work is below the standard for passing.

Withdrawal forms are available in departmental offices and once completed must be filed with the registrar. Students should be reminded that a W notation could negatively impact their eligibility for financial aid and/or V.A. benefits, as it may change the student’s enrollment status (full-time, part-time, less than part-time). International students may also jeopardize their visa status if they fail to maintain full-time status.

A Withdrawal (W) grade is not included in the computation of the grade point average, but it may affect eligibility for financial aid. A Withdrawal Failing (WF) grade is a failing grade and is included in the computation of the grade point average, and it may affect eligibility for financial aid.

ACADEMIC INTERITY AND PLAGIARISM POLICIES
Each student enrolled in a course at NYIT agrees that, by taking such course, he or she consents to the submission of all required papers for textual similarity review to any commercial service engaged by NYIT to detect plagiarism. Each student also agrees that all papers submitted to any such service may be included as source documents in the service’s database, solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers.

Plagiarism is the appropriation of all or part of someone else’s works (such as but not limited to writing, coding, programs, images, etc.) and offering it as one’s own. Cheating is using false pretenses, tricks, devices, artifices or deception to obtain credit on an examination or in a college course. If a faculty member determines that a student has committed academic dishonesty by plagiarism, cheating or in any other manner, the faculty has the academic right to 1) fail the student for the paper, assignment, project and/or exam, and/or 2) fail the student for the course and/or 3) bring the student up on disciplinary charges, pursuant to Article VI, Academic Conduct Proceedings, of the Student Code of Conduct. The complete Academic Integrity Policy may be found on various NYIT Webpages, including:
LIBRARY RESOURCES
All students can access the NYIT virtual library from both on and off campus at www.nyit.edu/library. The same login you use to access NYIT e-mail and NYITConnect will also give you access to the library’s resources from off campus.

On the library’s home page, you will find the “Library Catalog” and the “Find Journals” sections. You will also find "Start Your Research;" select “Video Tutorials” to find information on using the library’s resources and doing research.

Should you have any questions, please look under “Library Services” to submit a web-based “Ask-A-Librarian” form.

SUPPORT FOR STUDENT WITH DISABILITIES
NYIT adheres to the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and the rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504. The Office of Disability Services actively supports students in the pursuit of their academic and career goals. Identification of oneself as an individual with disability is voluntary and confidential. Students wishing to receive accommodations, referrals and other services are encouraged to contact the Office of Disability Services as early in the semester as possible although requests can be made throughout the academic year.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULES
*Again, textbook readings and additional handouts on Blackboard should be completed in advance of each session.

Part I. Mass Communication Research
Session 1 & 2 (September 3 & 10):
• Read:
  - Research Design Chapter 1
  - Blackboard Session 2 handouts
• Lecture:
  - Syllabus review
  - Library resources
  - Mass Communication Research
  - NYIT IRB training
NIH online training program: Protecting Human Research Participants
http://phrp.nihtraining.com/users/login.php
• Homework: Assignment 1. IRB certificate

Session 3 (September 17)
• Read:
  - Research Design Chapter 2, 5, 6 & 7
  - Blackboard Session 3 handouts
• Lecture:
  - Literature review and library resources (.ppt)
  - Introduction, the purpose statement, research questions and hypotheses (.ppt)
• Homework: Initial final paper proposal (2 pages)
• Due: Assignment 1 IRB certificate

Part II. Qualitative and quantitative research
Session 4 (September 24)
• Read:
  - Research Design Chapter 3 p. 64-68, Qualitative theory use
  - Research Design Chapter 7 p. 139-142, Qualitative research questions
  - Research Design Chapter 9
  - Blackboard Session 4 handouts
Lecture:
  - Qualitative research (.ppt)
  - Final paper format and APA style

Session 5 (October 1)
• Read:
  - Research Design Chapter 3 p. 52-63, Quantitative theory use
  - Research Design Chapter 7 p. 143-148, Quantitative research questions and hypotheses
  - Blackboard Session 5 handouts
• Lecture:
  - Basic statistics 1 (.ppt)
  - Elements of quantitative research: Concept (theoretical and operational definitions), variables, unit of analysis, levels of measurement, reliability and validity (.ppt)
  - Hypothesis testing and how to interpret the results (.ppt)

Session 6 (October 8)
• Read:
  - Research Design Chapter 8 p. 155-166, Survey
- Blackboard Session 6 handouts
  • Lecture:
  - Basic statistics 2 (.ppt)
  - Survey (.ppt)
  - Analyze research elements in survey
  • Homework: Assignment 2. Survey
  • Due: Initial final paper proposal (2 pages)

Session 7 (October 15):
  • Read
  - Blackboard Session 7 handouts
  • Lecture:
  - Basic statistics 2 (.ppt)
  - Content analysis (.ppt)
  - Analyze research elements in content analysis
  - Feedback on initial final paper proposal
  • Homework: Assignment 3. Content analysis
  **Due: Assignment 2. Survey**

Session 8 (October 22):
  • Read:
  - Research Design Chapter 8 p. 167-182, Experiment
  - Blackboard Session 8 handouts
  • Lecture:
  Lecture:
  - Basic statistics 3 (.ppt)
  - Experiment (.ppt)
  - Analyze research elements in experiments
  • Homework: Assignment 4. Experiment
  • **Due: Assignment 3. Content Analysis**

Session 9 (October 29)
  • Read:
  - Blackboard Session 9 handouts: Sample articles, etc.
  • Lecture:
  - How to write into and literature review
  - How to write methods sections for different research methods
  - Feedback on survey and content analysis assignments
- Q&A
  • **Due: Assignment 4. Experiment**

**Part III. Ethics and writing**
Session 10 (November 5)
• Read:
  - Research Design Chapter 4
  - Blackboard Session 10 handouts
• Lecture:
  - Citation tools: RefWorks, Databases citation options, Word citation management
  - Feedback on experiment assignment
  - Q&A
  • **Homework: Initial intro and literature review sections (5 pages and a minimum of five academic sources)**

**PART IV. Writing your own paper**
Session 11 (November 12)
• Lecture:
  - Q & A
  • **Homework: Initial methods section (3 pages, and add five more academic sources)**
  • **Due: Initial intro and literature review sections (5 pages and a minimum of five academic sources)**

Session 12 (November 19)
• Lecture:
  - Feedback on initial intro and literature review sections
  - Presentation instructions
  - Q & A
  • **Due: Initial methods section (3 pages, and add five more academic sources)**

Thanksgiving Recess (no class on November 26)

Session 13 (December 3)
• Lecture:
  - Final paper template and how to submit the final paper (SafeAssign or Turnitin)
  - Extra credit for SOURCE
  - Feedback on methods section
- Q & A
  - Homework: Add five more academic sources and revise your final paper

Session 14 (December 10)
- PowerPoint presentations in class
- Homework: Continue revising your final paper

The final version of the paper is due on December 17 (Wednesday). There is no written exam or class meeting in the finals week (December 14-20).

Subject to change. If changes are made students will be notified well in advance.