



COM 2600: Seminar in Communications Research Online Course / Summer I - 2010

June 1 - July 6 2010

Prerequisites: Intro to Mass Comm

Dr. DiMarco

Mass Communication

Office: Bent Hall 434

Tel: 718-990-1688 (I will be checking messages daily if you need to speak with me)

Email: dimarcoj@stjohns.edu (the best way to communicate with me during the course)

Course links and file downloads at SJU Central: COM 2600 (this is the HUB for the online course)

Course Overview

Course Description

Students will learn about the theory and practice of communication research and marketing research. Coverage will include secondary data and sampling, the construction of survey instruments, interviewing, the control of field activities, and the tabulation and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data.

Students will gain practical research skills and concepts while executing research projects.

3 Credit hours

Required Textbook and Materials

BOOK: Doing media Research, 2nd edition by Priest. Available at the SJU bookstore or online at www.drdimarco.com/class

- Excel Data Worksheet and Random Number Generator (Download from SJU central- Files section)
- Research report sample (Download from SJU central-Files section)
- Sample size calculator (Links section)

Learner Objectives

Objectives:

After successfully completing the course, students will be able to:

- participate in online discussions
- identify and define the purposes of research
- write and develop survey questionnaires, valid interview questions, and create research reports
- conduct a literature review and write an annotated bibliography entry
- conduct sampling and content analysis for quantitative goals
- conduct interviews for qualitative goals
- edit documents using track changes
- identify and define the importance of values and ethics in the practice of research

Grading

Writing Assignment Assessment (RUBRIC):

All writing assignments will be graded according to the following criteria (rubric). Each assignment will receive a rating from 1 to 4 (4= excellent, 3=acceptable, 2=acceptable with revisions, 1=unacceptable needs rewrite)

Format + deadline(12 pt, single spaced, 1 inch margins) (did you get it in on time)

Spelling (all correct?)

Punctuation (all correct?)

Clarity of content (concise, vivid writing)

Course Management and Expectations of Students:

Special computer requirements: St Johns Central access.

Technical skills required of students: St Johns Central access, Adobe Acrobat, Microsoft Word, Internet search and retrieval of documents

How many times must you post to the MESSAGE BOARD?

The message board is for threaded discussions, not submitting assignments. There are TWO threaded discussion questions posted. To complete the posting requirement you should post ONE TOPIC and comment on at least one comment posted by a classmate. Your comment should be civil and well reasoned to provide evidence why you do or do not agree with their point of view. TWO POSTS TOTAL. Two paragraphs maximum per post.

TIME: Post comments and assignments by the due date listed. Check the message board and course site daily for messages, posts, and edited work.

ASSIGNMENT and EXERCISE PROCEDURES:

- students will submit writing assignments and exercise answers as WORD documents through the FILES section of SJU CENTRAL to their NAMED FOLDER. These assignments will be marked up and graded in WORD using TRACK CHANGES and sent back for revision and resubmission. For exercises, post only the pages requested. Copy and paste the pages into a separate document for each assignment. Do not explore anyone's folder but your own. The folders and files are tracked through the system so please use only your assigned folder.

- Assignments will be returned within 1 week-no revisions on these-so take time to do it right initially. The final assignment can be revised and resubmitted by the end of the semester.

****ALL WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS SHOULD BE POSTED TO YOUR NAMED FOLDER IN THE FILES SECTION OF SJU CENTRAL. (Word Docs) DO NOT USE DOCX. Save files as Word 2003 (.doc)

Participation / Online Post	20 points	
Chaps 1, 2, 3 - Exam (OB)	20 points	
Chapter 4 ques 1-3 + lit review		20 points
Chapter 5, 6 Final exam (OB)	20 points	
Final paper	20 points	
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		100 points

Weekly Exercises and Writing Assignments Due

Complete ALL EXERCISES LISTED BELOW.

Week 1 - JUNE 1-3, 2010

Due by June 7, noon. Comment/reply by Weds, June 9. 20 points

READ CHAPTERS 1, 2, 3 and complete Post assignment

Post Assignment - 20 Points

READ CHAPTERS ONE, TWO, and THREE FIRST!

You must answer 1-4 and then post a question to a classmates post. Then answer any questions to your post.

Access the library database in SJU Central. Find a news article from the NY Times or Wall Street Journal from the 1960's that contains report data on **basic research** or **applied research** (specify which one it is) and summarize the findings from the research posted in the article by answering the following questions:

1. What is the area being researched (children, economics, etc)? (4)
2. Who conducted the research? ---What year? (4)
3. What were the specific findings? (4)
4. Include a link to the article. (4)
5. REPLY TO A CLASSMATES POST:

Post a thoughtful question about the research and the data presented to a classmate. When you receive a question, try to answer it on the message board. (4 pts)

Late Posts Lose 50%. ALL POSTS GO IN THE MESSAGE BOARD.

POST #1 IS DUE ON THE COURSE MESSAGE BOARD BY Monday **JUNE 7**. **All post should be posted to the message board**

Week 2 - JUNE 7 - JUNE 10

Due by Friday June 11, noon. 20 points

READ CHAPTERS 1, 2, 3 and complete the Open Book exam

Answer all the questions on the exam inside the exam document (exam.doc). You can use your textbook but this is an individual exercise. If you share an answer with a classmate and it is detected, you will fail the exam.

Week 3 - JUNE 14 - JUNE 18

Due by Friday June 19, noon. 20 points

READ CHAPTER 4 and complete questions 1, 2, and 3 on page 70 (restate the question in your answer)

(use library database - proquest - peer reviewed only)

Next, access the library database in SJU Central. Use Proquest - peer reviewed.

Choose one peer review article and complete the following lit review:

Provide an APA citation for the article.

1. What is the area being researched (children, economics, etc)? (4)
2. Who conducted the research? ---What year? (4)

3. What were the specific findings? (4)
4. Include a link to the article. (4)

Week 4 - JUNE 21 - JUNE 24

Due by Friday June 25, noon. 20 points

READ CHAPTER 5 and 6 and complete the open book Final exam.

Answer all the questions on the exam inside the exam document (exam.doc). You can use your textbook but this is an individual exercise. If you share an answer with a classmate and it is detected, you will fail the exam.

Week 5 - JUNE 28 - JULY 6

Due by Friday June 25, noon. 20 points

FINAL RESEARCH PROJECT: Quantitative Research project and paper

“Democratic Party and Republican party in the New York Times”

You are a media researcher for a PR firm. Your new client is the Democratic Party. Before you can advise the party you need to compile some data and conclusions using sound research methods (survey research will be used). The quantitative goals of this research are to use the NY Times website to determine which party has had more articles in the NY times from Jan 2010-May 31 2010. Use the NYT search engine to find articles for the keywords “democratic party” and “republican party” and then “democratic party and republican party”. You will count all the articles for the month and determine the total number of articles for both, then the frequency(%) of articles for each party.

You will present statistics in the form of frequency distributions (%’s) and confidence levels (+ or -) (I’ll provide the formulas and the Excel worksheet). You will provide an analysis of results in a research report.

You will combine the findings from the qualitative study into the final research report.

FINAL PROJECT: RESEARCH PAPER OUTLINE & STEPS

(this paper should be approximately 3 pages)

Background

1. Write a 2 paragraph background on what **you think** the current coverage of each party is...which party do you think is getting more coverage in the NY Times? (one paragraph each.)

Research questions

2. Write one paragraph that states your research questions (RQ)

The following research questions were explored during this study

(RQ1=How many articles have been published about **either** the Democratic and Republican parties from May-June 2010?)

(RQ2=How many articles have been published exclusively about the Democratic Party?)

(RQ3=How many articles have been published exclusively about the Republican Party?)

(RQ4=How many articles have been published about **both** the Democratic and Republican parties from Jan 2010- May 31 2010?)

Methodology

1. Define your sample population (the NY Times website search results for the month of Jan 2010 produced ___articles, the month of Feb 2010 produced ____articles, etc. for a total of _____articles)
2. Define your categories (what will you be counting...you will be counting the number of democratic party articles, republican party articles, and combined articles for the months of Jan, Feb, March, April, May,)
3. Perform the data analysis and data entry (use the spreadsheet at SJU Central)

Findings and Conclusions

1. Compile and analyze the data found from “counting the articles”. Present a summary of how many of each article was found for each month.
2. Write up an analysis of what this data shows (someone is getting more coverage)
3. Provide your final conclusions for the study in 1-2 paragraphs. Suggest future studies.

Drafts are due by June 28 if you want feedback. Final papers and due on July 6; this is the final day of the course.