

**COMM5310 –COMM RESEARCH METHODS**

**Classroom: CAS 106**

**We 6 PM -8:45 PM**

**Instructor: Yezi Hu**

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**Office Hours: Tu Th 12:30 PM-3:30 PM or by appointment**

**Course Description:** This course offers a foundational introduction to research methods, with a particular focus on quantitative approaches in communication and related fields. Designed for beginners, the course guides students through the research process. Key topics include causation, validity, survey and experiment design, and basic statistical analysis. Through lectures, practical assignments, and student presentations, students will gain essential skills in quantitative research, preparing them to conduct reliable and effective studies in their future academic or professional endeavors.

**Student Learning Outcomes:** By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- **Understand Basic Research Concepts:**  
Students will be able to explain fundamental research concepts, including the distinction between theory, concepts, and operational definitions, and their role in the research process.
- **Evaluate Research Validity and Reliability:**  
Students will be able to assess the internal and external validity of research designs, as well as the reliability and validity of measurement instruments used in quantitative studies.
- **Conduct a Literature Review:**  
Students will develop the skills to identify gaps in existing research literature and synthesize relevant studies to inform their own research projects.
- **Identify and Apply Quantitative Research Methods:**  
Students will demonstrate the ability to select and apply appropriate quantitative research methods, including survey design, experiment design, and content analysis, to address research questions in communication and related fields.
- **Design and Analyze Research Studies:**  
Students will be able to design a basic research study, including the selection of variables, measurement scales, sampling methods, and data collection techniques, and conduct preliminary data analysis using correlation, regression, t-tests, and ANOVA.
- **Understand Basic Statistical Results:**  
Students will be able to interpret basic statistical results from quantitative studies, such as mean, standard deviation, confidence interval.
- **Apply Research to Professional Practice:**

Students will understand the role of research in marketing, advertising, and public relations, and be able to apply research methods to real-world communication challenges.

- **Communicate Research Findings:**  
 Students will develop the ability to present research proposals and findings effectively through written reports and oral presentations, demonstrating clarity, coherence, and adherence to academic standards.
- **Collaborate on Research Projects:**  
 Students will engage in group work to collaboratively design and present a research proposal, demonstrating the ability to work effectively as part of a research team.

**Course Requirements**

1. **Required Readings:**

A. Principles and Methods of Social Research, Page & Parnell, 4<sup>th</sup> edition, ISBN: 9781003271734

- i. A free e-textbook version can be found in the school library  
<https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/mono/10.4324/9781003271734/principles-methods-social-research-william-crano-marilynn-brewer-andrew-lac?context=ubx&refId=5e8a1029-e2d9-402c-b49f-18abe147654e>
- ii. Book chapters can be found on Canvas

2. **Statistical software**

SPSS (1-month free trial)  
 Jamovi (Free)

**Evaluation and Grade Calculation**

Attendance and in-class discussion	10%
CITI training	5%
Research proposal	30%
Empirical study presentation	15%
Mid-term exam	20%
Final exam	20%

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Total	100%
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Percent	Letter Grade
90% - 100%	A
80% - 89%	B
70-79%	C
60-69%	D
59% and below	F

1. CITI training-Social & Behavioral Research (5% )

This is a training regarding social responsibility and ethics in social research. Students need to submit the certificate to Canvas by Sep.13. The registration process can be found from <https://www.utt Tyler.edu/research/office/compliance/files/irb/citi-registration-process.pdf>

2. Research Proposal Development and Presentation (30%)

In this assignment, students will develop a comprehensive research proposal in two stages.

- a. Mid-term research idea presentation (10 pts): The first stage involves writing a proposal that includes a literature review, research questions, and hypotheses. This proposal should critically analyze existing research, identify a gap in the literature, and formulate clear and testable research questions and hypotheses. The proposal must be written in APA style and will be presented as a 10-minute presentation during the mid-term. The presentation should include a PowerPoint slide deck that effectively summarizes the key points of the literature review and outlines the proposed research questions and hypotheses.
- b. Final research proposal presentation (20 pts): The second stage of the assignment builds on the first proposal by incorporating the research method and analysis plan. Students will expand their initial proposal to include a detailed description of the research design, sampling method, data collection procedures, and data analysis techniques. This final proposal will also be written in APA style and will be presented as a 20-minute presentation during the final week of the course. The presentation should include a PowerPoint slide deck that clearly communicates the research design and methodology, as well as how the data will be analyzed to answer the research questions. The proposal should be turned in by Dec.6

3. Empirical study presentation (15%)

In this assignment, students will deliver a 20-minute presentation on a communication-related empirical research article that aligns with the week's lecture topics. The goal of the presentation is to use the selected article as a case study to demonstrate how specific research methods are applied in communication studies. Students are expected to provide a clear and detailed explanation of the research method used in the study, highlighting its relevance and application to the broader field of communication. One week prior to their presentation, students must share the selected article with the professor for approval. During the presentation, students should also distribute a set of bullet points to their classmates, summarizing the key aspects of the research method and findings. Following the presentation, students will lead a 10-minute discussion with the class, encouraging critical analysis and engagement with the research method and its implications.

4. Mid-term exam (20%)

This is a take-home exam. The questions will be uploaded on Canvas on 10/4, and the students have the whole week to answer the questions. The answers need to be submitted by 10/13.

5. Final exam (20%)

This is a take-home exam. The questions will be uploaded on Canvas on 12/4, and the students have the whole week to answer the questions. The answers need to be submitted by 12/13.

6. In-class participation (10%)

Class attendance is required, and in-class class discussions and questions are highly encouraged and appreciated.

7. Extra points:

- a. Slang sharing (1pt) A three-minute presentation to teach me one slang term from either local culture or Gen Z.
- b. Each students can share two slangs in max.

## **Class Policies and Expectations**

### **1. Classroom Policies and Expectations**

- A. Work hard - learning requires constant reading, researching, thinking, discussing, and working with your classmates and me. Everyone has something important to contribute. My job is to present new information and prepare a climate in which you can contribute your own special knowledge. Your job is to be prepared to contribute.
- B. Participate – you must be an active part of the course to succeed. You will also have to give effort outside of class.
- C. Treat each other with respect and display common classroom courtesies.
  1. You are responsible for your attitude and how you treat others. I will not tolerate name calling, fighting, students belittling each other for differing opinions, etc. I expect you to act like adults, show each other respect, and to challenge yourself and each other to learn/understand opinions you may not agree with. If you are not treating individuals with respect or are causing a distraction, you will be asked to leave the classroom.
- D. Grading – The grading process begins with the assumption that the work is good, which earns a grade within the range of a “B.” To earn an A, you must show exceptional understanding of the material, utilizing additional sources, examples, and original thought. This means going beyond stating the obvious, the simple answer, or what Google says. Additionally, poor organization, not following assignment instructions, grammar/spelling, lack of depth and thought, failing to illustrate an understanding of the material, etc. will result in your grade being lowered.
- E. I use Canvas and email to communicate, post assignments and readings, present feedback and provide a space for you to communicate with your classmates. I expect you to check both daily and stay aware of what is coming up.

1. It is highly recommended that you download the Canvas application and adjust your settings to allow for notifications.
- F. Communicate - If you have a problem with anything throughout the semester, getting an assignment in on time, needing to be absent from a class, getting your book, checking out equipment, or anything I'm doing as a professor, talk to me about it. I cannot help you or fix the problem if I am unaware of it.

## 2. Assignment Policies

- A. Assignments do have deadlines and these deadlines need to be met. It is your responsibility to utilize time outside of class in an effective manner so you can ensure that you submit each assignment before the due date and time.
  - a. For many assignments, not all, the submission folder will stay open for one week after the due date. Any assignments turned in after the due date will receive a point per day deduction. Specific point values that will be deducted each day can be found on the assignment overviews on Canvas. It is your responsibility to know when the assignment is due for full credit, when the assignment closes, and the number of points that will be deducted each day for late submissions. Assignments will not be accepted after this final date.
  - b. All the assignments will be graded within one week.
- B. Assignments and due dates may be changed at the instructor's discretion with fair notice to students.
- C. I will not accept assignments via email unless there are issues with Canvas and the email includes your assignment and a screenshot of the Canvas malfunction.
- D. Merely completing all assignments does not guarantee that you will pass the course. You must put forth effort and show an understanding of the material to earn a satisfactory grade.
- E. Spelling, grammar, and neatness count and you will lose points on assignments if your submissions are not edited.
- F. You are required to utilize **APA format** for any assignment that requires the utilization of outside sources.
- G. I will not accept screenshots of assignments. Unless otherwise indicated, all assignments must be typed, formatted to be a .DOC, .DOCX, PPT, or PPTX.(Pages, Google Drive, and other online word processors must be exported to this specific format), and submitted via Canvas.
- H. Assignments will be discussed in the first class, students will be given a course schedule, Canvas includes a syllabus function that outlines upcoming due dates, due dates can be seen listed on each assignment under the assignment tab in Canvas, assignment due dates can be added to your Canvas calendar, I have provided a list of graded assignments and activities and the date they are due, and each due date will be listed in the course modules.
- I. It is your responsibility to ensure that your assignments are being submitted correctly to Canvas by the due date and time. If an assignment appears to be not submitted beyond the assignment closing, it will receive a zero. If you do not

regularly check your grades or check Canvas for technical errors, there is little that can be done at the end of the semester. If you do experience technical difficulties submitting assignments, you must email me before the assignment closes and, if the issue persists, contact IT.

- J. Students will adhere to the highest standards of academic honesty. Plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated. A student who is caught doing either will earn a “0” for that assignment and will be subject to academic and disciplinary action. If a student is caught a second time, they will automatically fail the course.

a. In addition to UT Tyler’s Student Conduct and Discipline policy, plagiarism/cheating includes the use of papers or other materials previously submitted in my classes or other professors’ classes, as well as video and audio recordings. I expect you to submit work created specifically for this class during this semester.

**b. Artificial Intelligence Statement**

UT Tyler is committed to exploring and using artificial intelligence (AI) tools as appropriate for the discipline and task undertaken. We encourage discussing AI tools’ ethical, societal, philosophical, and disciplinary implications. All uses of AI should be acknowledged as this aligns with our commitment to honor and integrity, as noted in UT Tyler’s Honor Code. Faculty and students must not use protected information, data, or copyrighted materials when using any AI tool. Additionally, users should be aware that AI tools rely on predictive models to generate content that may appear correct but is sometimes shown to be incomplete, inaccurate, taken without attribution from other sources, and/or biased. Consequently, an AI tool should not be considered a substitute for traditional approaches to research. You are ultimately responsible for the quality and content of the information you submit. Misusing AI tools that violate the guidelines specified for this course (see below) is considered a breach of academic integrity. The student will be subject to disciplinary actions as outlined in UT Tyler’s Academic Integrity Policy.

For this course, I encourage you to explore using artificial intelligence (AI) tools, such as ChatGPT, for all assignments and assessments. Any such use must be appropriately acknowledged and cited, following the guidelines established by the APA Style Guide, including the specific version of the tool used. However, you cannot simply copy and paste answers from AI. The process of training AI and improving answers is required to share. The submitted work should include screen-shots to show the exact prompt you used to generate the content and the AI’s complete response as an appendix. Because AI-generate content is not necessarily accurate or appropriate, you must assess the validity and applicability of any submitted AI output. You will not earn full credit if inaccurate, invalid, or inappropriate information is found in your work.

[APA Style Citation Information](#)

### Course Schedule

Date	Agenda	Due today
<b>Week One: Overview</b>		
8/28	<u>Course introduction:</u> Syllabus, schedule, assignment overview, etc. Basic concepts	<u>Reading:</u> Ch. 1 Sign up for slang sharing and student presentations
<b>Week Two: Research process</b>		
9/4	internal and external validity; Examining hypothesis	<u>Reading:</u> Ch. 2
<b>Week Three: Literature review</b>		
9/11	Literature review; Guest speech: library tutorial	<u>Reading:</u> Denney and Tewksbury, 2013 Knopf, 2006 <a href="https://resources.nu.edu/researchprocess/literaturegap">https://resources.nu.edu/researchprocess/literaturegap</a> <a href="https://mydissertationeditor.com/gap-in-the-literature/">https://mydissertationeditor.com/gap-in-the-literature/</a> <a href="https://sites.middlebury.edu/middsciwriting/overview/organization/gap-statements/">https://sites.middlebury.edu/middsciwriting/overview/organization/gap-statements/</a>  <u>Submission:</u> CITI training certificate (9/13) <u>Reading:</u>
<b>Week Four: Measurement</b>		
9/18	measurement reliability and validity	<u>Reading:</u> Ch. 3
<b>Week Five: variable</b>		
9/25	type of variables and scales relations between variables	<u>Reading:</u> Ch. 16, 18 Wu and Zumbo, 2008

Week Six: sampling		
10/2	Sampling	<u>Reading: Ch. 12 (P.221-239)</u> <u>Student presentation</u>
Week Seven: Mid-term		
10/9	Group presentation	<u>Take-home exam Submission (10/13)</u>
Week Eight: survey		
10/16	<u>Survey design and result analysis (Correlation &amp; Regression)</u>	<u>Reading: Ch.10, Ch. 12</u> <u>Student presentation</u>
Week Nine: experiment		
10/23	<u>experiment design and result analysis (t-test, ANOVA)</u>	Reading: Ch.5,6,9 <u>Student presentation</u>
Week Ten: content analysis		
10/30	<u>content analysis and result analysis (Factor analysis)</u>	<u>Reading: Ch. 14</u> <u>Student presentation</u>
Week Eleven: qualitative methods		
11/6	Focus group and interview	<u>Reading: Ch.15</u> Then & Ali, 2014 <u>Student presentation</u>
Week Twelve: Other methods		
11/13	Meta-analysis; Guest speech: media psychophysiology	<u>Reading: Ch.20</u> <u>Student presentation</u>
Week Thirteen: Mixed method		



11/20	<u>Mixed method</u>	<u>Reading:</u> Johnson et al., 2007 <u>Student presentation</u>
<b>Week Fourteen: Thanksgiving</b>		
<b>Thanksgiving break – No class meetings Monday, 11/25 – Friday 11/29</b>		
<b>Week Fifteen: Group presentation</b>		
12/4	<u>Group presentation: research proposal</u>	Submission: proposal (12/6)
<b>Week Sixteen: final</b>		
No class meeting		Take-home final-exam (12/13)

**NOTE:** The instructor reserves the right to adjust the syllabus according to the needs of the class.

**Student Resources:**

*Faculty can update student resources to provide additional supports appropriate for each course.*

**Resources to assist you in the course**

- [UT Tyler Student Accessibility and Resource \(SAR\) Office](#) (provides needed accommodations to students with document needs related to access and learning)
- [UT Tyler Writing Center](#)
- [The Mathematics Learning Center](#)
- [UT Tyler PASS Tutoring Center](#)
- [UT Tyler Supplemental Instruction](#)
- [Upswing \(24/7 online tutoring\) - covers nearly all undergraduate course areas](#)
- [Robert Muntz Library](#) and [Library Liaison](#)
- [Canvas 101](#) (learn to use Canvas, proctoring, Unicheck, and other software)
- Digital Support Toolkit (for supported courses only. Students are automatically enrolled in the toolkit for supported courses)
- LIB 422 -- Computer Lab where students can take a proctored exam

- [The Career Success Center](#)
- [UT Tyler Testing Center](#)
- [Office of Research & Scholarship Design and Data Analysis Lab](#)

### Resources available to UT Tyler Students

- [UT Tyler Counseling Center](#) (available to all students)
- [MySSP App](#) (24/7 access to Student Support Program counseling through phone or chat and online wellness resources available in a variety of languages)
- [Student Assistance and Advocacy Center](#)
- [Military and Veterans Success Center](#) (supports for our military-affiliated students)
- [UT Tyler Patriot Food Pantry](#)
- [UT Tyler Financial Aid and Scholarships](#)
- [UT Tyler Student Business Services](#) (pay or set up payment plans, etc.)
- [UT Tyler Registrar's Office](#)
- [Office of International Programs](#)
- [Title IX Reporting](#)
- [Patriots Engage](#) (available to all students. Get engaged at UT Tyler.)

### **University Policies and Information**

#### Withdrawing from Class

Students may [withdraw](#) (drop) from this course using the [Withdrawal Portal](#). Withdrawing (dropping) this course can impact your Financial Aid, Scholarships, Veteran Benefits, Exemptions, Waivers, International Student Status, housing, and degree progress. Please speak with your instructors, consider your options, speak with your advisor, and visit the One-Stop Service Center (STE 230) or email [enroll@uttyler.edu](mailto:enroll@uttyler.edu) to get a complete review of your student account and the possible impacts to withdrawing. We want you to make an informed decision. UT Tyler faculty and staff are here for you and often can provide additional support options or assistance. Make sure to carefully [read the implications for withdrawing from a course and the instructions](#) on using the [Withdrawal portal](#).

Texas law prohibits students from dropping more than six courses during their entire undergraduate career\*. The six courses dropped includes those from other 2-year or 4-year Texas public colleges and universities. Consider the impact withdrawing from this class has on your academic progress and other areas, such as financial implications. We encourage you to consult your advisor(s) and Enrollment Services for additional guidance. **CAUTION #1:** Withdrawing before census day does not mean you get a full refund. Please see the [Tuition and Fee Refund Schedule](#). **CAUTION #2:** All international students must check with the [Office of International Programs](#) before withdrawing. All international students are required to enroll full-time for fall and spring terms. **CAUTION #3:** All UT Tyler Athletes must check with the Athletic Academic

Coordinator before withdrawing from a course. CAUTION #4: All veterans or military-affiliated students should consult with the [Military and Veterans Success Center](#).

\* Students who began college for the first time before 2007 are exempt from this law.

### **Disability/Accessibility Services**

In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA), the University of Texas at Tyler offers accommodations to students with learning, physical, and/or psychological disabilities. If you have a disability, including a non-visible diagnosis such as a learning disorder, chronic illness, TBI, PTSD, ADHD, or a history of modifications or accommodations in a previous educational environment, you are encouraged to visit <https://hood.accessiblelearning.com/UTTyler/> and fill out the New Student application. The Student Accessibility and Resources (SAR) office will contact you when your application has been submitted and an appointment with the Assistant Director Student Accessibility and Resources/ADA Coordinator. For more information, including filling out an application for services, please visit the SAR webpage at <https://www.uttyler.edu/disability-services>, the SAR office located in the Robert Muntz Library, LIB 460, email [saroffice@uttyler.edu](mailto:saroffice@uttyler.edu), or call 903.566.7079."

### **Military Affiliated Students**

UT Tyler honors the service and sacrifices of our military-affiliated students. If you are a student who is a veteran, on active duty, in the reserves or National Guard, or a military spouse or dependent, please stay in contact with your faculty member if any aspect of your present or prior service or family situation makes it difficult for you to fulfill the requirements of a course or creates disruption in your academic progress. It is important to make your faculty member aware of any complications as far in advance as possible. Your faculty member is willing to work with you and, if needed, put you in contact with university staff who are trained to assist you. The [Military and Veterans Success Center \(MVSC\)](#) has campus resources for military-affiliated students. The MVSC can be reached at [MVSC@uttyler.edu](mailto:MVSC@uttyler.edu) or via phone at 903.565.5972.

### **Academic Honesty and Academic Misconduct**

The UT Tyler community comes together to pledge that "Honor and integrity will not allow me to lie, cheat, or steal, nor to accept the actions of those who do." Therefore, we enforce the [Student Conduct and Discipline policy](#) in the Student Manual Of Operating Procedures (Section 8).

### **FERPA**

UT Tyler follows the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) as noted in [University Policy 5.2.3](#). The course instructor will follow all requirements to protect your confidential information.

### **Absence for Official University Events or Activities**

This course follows the practices related to [Excused Absences for University Events or Activities](#) as noted in the Catalog.

### **Absence for Religious Holidays**

This course follows the practices related to [Excused Absences for Religious Holy Days as noted in the Catalog](#).

### **Absence for Pregnant Students**

This course follows the requirements of Texas Laws SB 412, SB 459, SB 597/HB 1361 to meet the needs of pregnant and parenting students. Part of the supports afforded pregnant students includes excused absences. Faculty who are informed by a student of needing this support should make a referral to the Parenting Student Liaison. NOTE: Students must work with the Parenting Student Liaison in order to receive these supports. Students should reach out to the Parenting Student Liaison at [parents@uttyler.edu](mailto:parents@uttyler.edu) and also complete the [Pregnant and Parenting Self-Reporting Form](#).

### **Campus Carry**

We respect the right and privacy of students who are duly licensed to carry concealed weapons in this class. License holders are expected to behave responsibly and keep a handgun secure and concealed. More information is available at <http://www.uttyler.edu/about/campus-carry/index.php>.