MCOM-5310: Media Research Methods
Department of Mass Communication
Fall 2023 Online

Instructor: Dr. Ghanem Elhersh
Office Phone: 936.468.1265
Office: Boynton 302
Email: Ghanem.Elhersh@sfasu.edu

Office Hours:
Monday: 10:00 – 12:00 pm
Tue & Wed: 9:00 – 11:00 am
Others: By appointment

Course Description & Outcomes
This course is concerned with basic principles of scholarly research in media and mass communication. In this class, you will become familiar with general concepts and procedures employed in the main research methodologies of our field, and you will be responsible for conducting and reporting your own formal pilot research project. After completing this course, you will be able to: 1) define your scholarly research interests; 2) design and execute simple research projects; 3) understand the research approaches in the field of mass media; and 4) write properly conceived, suitably formatted, and stylistically appropriate research papers.

Course Activities
In class sessions, you will be expected to learn how to access and use research resources on campus, including those in Ralph W. Steen Library. Through readings and lectures, you will survey the elements of research methods and the writing of research papers. As a class member, you will develop a pilot research project in accordance with guidelines laid out in the course, and the final research paper will report findings of this project. Final papers will be presented online to the public (probably to other students and faculty), at the end of the quarter. There will be a final exam.

Required Textbook
(US). https://bookshelf.vitalsource.com/books/9781071817964

Supplementary content: Online content and videos
Grading
Each assignment has a score value corresponding to its percentage (e.g., 20% is a score value of 200 points), with a maximum of 1000 points for the entire course. You have access to your grading information on D2L.

The course outcomes will be assessed through the following mechanisms:

The final grade will be based on course assignments in this proportion: **Project proposal 10%**, **annotated bibliography 20%**, **discussion board 10%**, **final paper 30%**, **presentation 10%**, and **final examination 20%**.

Grading Scale:
- A (90-100)
- B (80-89)
- C (70-79)
- D (60-69)
- F (below 59)

Some other important points:

- I expect everyone to give this class their full attention and their full effort. And from my side, I will do everything I can to help you get the best from the class.

- All course material will be posted on D2L. Check it, use it. To be successful in this course, I recommend checking and participating in D2L daily.

- Check your SFA email account. All class correspondence will be sent to you via this account.

- Do NOT use ChatGPT and AI technologies.

Course policies

**Attendance Policy**
*This course is 100% online:* “A distance education course in which 100 percent of the instructional activity takes place when the student(s) and instructor(s) are in separate physical locations. Requirements for on-campus or in-person orientation, testing, academic support services, internships/fieldwork, or other non-instructional activities do not exclude a course from this category” (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board).

**Academic Integrity**

The Code of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity outlines the prohibited conduct by any student enrolled in a course at SFA. It is the responsibility of all members of all faculty, staff, and students to adhere to and uphold this policy.
Articles IV, VI, and VII of the new Code of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity outline the violations and procedures concerning academic conduct, including cheating, plagiarism, collusion, and misrepresentation. Cheating includes, but is not limited to: (1) Copying from the test paper (or other assignment) of another student, (2) Possession and/or use during a test of materials that are not authorized by the person giving the test, (3) Using, obtaining, or attempting to obtain by any means the whole or any part of a non-administered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program, or using a test that has been administered in prior classes or semesters without permission of the Faculty member, (4) Substituting for another person, or permitting another person to substitute for one’s self, to take a test, (5) Falsifying research data, laboratory reports, and/or other records or academic work offered for credit, (6) Using any sort of unauthorized resources or technology in completion of educational activities.

**Plagiarism** is the appropriation of material that is attributable in whole or in part to another source or the use of one's own previous work in another context without citing that it was used previously, without any indication of the original source, including words, ideas, illustrations, structure, computer code, and other expression or media, and presenting that material as one's own academic work being offered for credit or in conjunction with a program course or degree requirements.

**Collusion** is the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing academic assignments offered for credit or collaboration with another person to commit a violation of any provision of the rules on academic dishonesty, including disclosing and/or distributing the contents of an exam.

**Misrepresentation** is providing false grades or résumés; providing false or misleading information in an effort to receive a postponement or an extension on a test, quiz, or other assignment for the purpose of obtaining an academic or financial benefit for oneself or another individual or to injure another student academically or financially.

**Withheld Grades Semester Grades Policy (5.5)**

Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the coursework because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course to compute the grade point average. For additional information, go to [https://www.sfasu.edu/policies/course-grades-5.5.pdf](https://www.sfasu.edu/policies/course-grades-5.5.pdf).

**Students with Disabilities**

To obtain disability-related accommodations, alternate formats, and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services promptly may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to [http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/](http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/).

**Student Wellness and Well-Being**

SFA values students’ overall well-being, mental health and the role it plays in academic and overall student success. Students may experience stressors that can impact both their academic experience
and their personal well-being. These may include academic pressure and challenges associated with relationships, emotional well-being, alcohol and other drugs, identities, finances, etc.

If you are experiencing concerns, seeking help, SFA provides a variety of resources to support students’ mental health and wellness. Many of these resources are free, and all of them are confidential.

**Mental Health**

SFASU values students’ mental health and the role it plays in academic and overall student success. SFA provides a variety of resources to support student's mental health and wellness. Many of these resources are free, and all of them are confidential.

**On-campus Resources:**

**The Dean of Students Office** (Rusk Building, 3rd floor lobby)

[www.sfasu.edu/deanofstudents](http://www.sfasu.edu/deanofstudents)

936.468.7249

dos@sfasu.edu

**SFA Human Services Counseling Clinic** Human Services, Room 202

[www.sfasu.edu/humanservices/139.asp](http://www.sfasu.edu/humanservices/139.asp)

936.468.1041

**The Health and Wellness Hub** “The Hub”

Location: corner of E. College and Raguet St.

To support the health and well-being of every Lumberjack, the Health and Wellness Hub offers comprehensive services that treat the whole person – mind, body and spirit. Services include:

- Health Services
- Counseling Services
- Student Outreach and Support
- Food Pantry
- Wellness Coaching
- Alcohol and Other Drug Education

[www.sfasu.edu/thehub](http://www.sfasu.edu/thehub)

936.468.4008

thehub@sfasu.edu

**Crisis Resources:**

- Burke 24-hour crisis line: 1.800.392.8343
- National Suicide Crisis Prevention: 9-8-8
- Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1.800.273.TALK (8255)
- johonCrisis Text Line: Text HELLO to 741-741

**Late submission of assignments**

Due dates for class assignments are communicated in this syllabus and on D2L. **All assignments** **are due on Sunday by 11:59 pm via D2L.** For each partial or complete day, an assignment is late, the grade will be lowered by 10%.
At-A-Glance Course Schedule

Below is an approximate schedule of classes. The syllabus is **subject to change** based on the needs of the class, and events during the semester. You will be kept up to date about any changes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>August</th>
<th>Due: Sunday at midnight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Module 1 Intro + Syllabus and Course Overview</td>
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**September: Preliminary Considerations**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Module</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>05</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Introduction to Media Research Methods Research Topic Case Discussion #1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>The Selection of a Research Approach</td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Review of Literature Ralph W. Steen Library</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>APA Style</td>
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**October: DESIGNING RESEARCH**

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Date</th>
<th>Module</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>02</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>The Purpose Statement The Problem Statement Research Questions and Hypotheses Research Proposal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Quantitative Methods I</td>
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</table>

16 Annotated Bibliography

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Module</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Quantitative Methods II Case Discussion #2</td>
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<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Quantitative Methods III</td>
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**November**

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<tr>
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<th>Module</th>
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<tr>
<td>06</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Qualitative Methods I</td>
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<td>13</td>
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<td>Qualitative Methods II</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
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<td>Qualitative Methods III</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
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<td>Event</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Thanksgiving Break</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Module 13</td>
<td>Final Exam due on Friday, Dec 1 @ 11:59 PM</td>
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<td><em>December</em></td>
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<td>04</td>
<td>Module 14</td>
<td>Final Presentation Due by Monday, Dec 4th</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Final 11</td>
<td>Final Paper Due by Monday, Dec 11 @ 11:59 PM</td>
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