FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION AND MULTIMEDIA STUDIES

**COM 4302 – INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNICATION RESEARCH**

**(03 CREDIT HOURS)**

PREREQUISITE: NONE

COREQUISITE: NONE

SPRING 2014

CLASSROOM: CU 128

DR. PATRICIA DARLINGTON

OFFICE: CU 225

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CLASS HOURS: M/W 9:00 A. M. - 10:20 A. M.

OFFICE HOURS: M 3:30 – 5:30 P.M. OR BY APPOINTMENT

REQUIREMENTS MET THROUGH COURSE COMPLETION: NONE

TEXT

Babbie, Earl (2014). *The Basics of Social Research*. Sixth Edition. Wadsworth Cengage Learning: Belmont, CA.

Selected readings posted on Blackboard.

**Course Description and Purpose**

Welcome to this course on Research Methods! Why do social scientists use scientific methods to research questions and issues about social life? What are those methods? In this course, you will learn the answers to these questions and receive “hands on” training to learn the fundamentals of doing research. You will also be introduced to tools that will allow you to become a critical consumer of research. Your full participation in lecture is essential to make this a dynamic and engaging course.

The goal of this course is to transform your outlook on research methods. I hope you will come to view it not as a “requirement”, but as one of the more useful courses you will take.

**Course Objectives**

By the end of the semester, you will be able to:

* Demonstrate knowledge of methods and specific techniques used by social scientists to conduct research;
* Construct a socially-relevant research question and develop an hypothesis;
* Analyze and interpret data that answer the research question and test the hypothesis;
* Evaluate the appropriateness of different research designs for particular research goals;
* Assess the advantages and disadvantages of several research methods used in social science research;
* Interpret research findings to assess the merit of socially-based hypotheses.

**IMPORTANT NOTICE:**

**Classroom Policies, Procedures, and Courtesies**

1. Plagiarism and/ or any other form of cheating **is unacceptable in this class and will be dealt with in the manner outlined in the University Guidelines concerning this matter.**
2. **Due to the subject matter of this course (portrayal of minority groups in the media) we will view films and have discussions that may be sensitive to some of you. Please take this caution seriously and use it to determine whether or not this course may be uncomfortable for you. If so, please consider withdrawing from the course at the earliest possible time in order to give others an opportunity to add the course if they may chose to do so.**
3. Late work will not be accepted unless specific arrangements are made in advance. If you will miss a class assignment because of a University-approved absence, you must inform the professor of that in advance, with proper documentation, and make arrangements for fulfilling your class obligations. Should an emergency arise, please email or telephone your teaching assistant regarding your status. Unless such arrangements are made, make-up work will not be accepted.
4. “Extra-credit” or bonus points are not available; you will be evaluated based upon the assignments specified in this syllabus.
5. Cell phones, pagers, etc., must all be turned off prior to class and may not be turned on again until class is over. This is in accordance with university. Laptop computers may be used for note-taking purposes, but online activity, unless specifically requested during a class session, is prohibited. Emailing and text messaging are prohibited. Class lectures and/or presentations may not be audio or video taped without specific permission in advance in each instance, and under no circumstances may tapes be made for anything other than explicitly pedagogical and educational purposes and uses.
6. Students are encouraged to make use of the University Center for Excellence in Writing. They can help with writing difficulties (or just polishing writing style) as well as with research and documentation questions. For more information, please consult: <http://www.fau.edu/UCEW/>

**FAU Policies, Procedures**

*In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), students who require special accommodations due to a disability to properly execute coursework must register with the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD) located in Boca Raton - SU 133 (561-297-3880), in Davie - MOD I (954-236-1222), in Jupiter - SR 117 (561-799-8585), or at the Treasure Coast - CO 128 (772-873-3305), and follow all OSD procedures.*

*Students at Florida Atlantic University are expected to maintain the highest ethical standards. Dishonesty is considered a serious breach of these ethical standards, because it interferes with the University mission to provide a high quality education in which no student enjoys an unfair advantage over any other. Dishonesty is also destructive of the University community, which is grounded in a system of mutual trust and places high value on personal integrity and individual responsibility. Please see the linked page for more information:*

[*http://www.fau.edu/ctl/AcademicIntegrity.php*](http://www.fau.edu/ctl/AcademicIntegrity.php)

**Research Project / Paper**

Students will begin preparing for the Final Research Project starting in week 3 (Jan 22nd). The research project will be discussed at length in class. Research projects will be due on week 16.

**Chapter Quizzes**

Each student is required to complete a quiz every week. Your exams (4) will be comprised of questions taken from your chapter quizzes.

**Grading**

Grades will be based on:

* FOUR (4) EXAMINATIONS
* Research Project / Paper
* Chapter Quizzes
* Attendance and participation

Students are expected to attend all class periods, on time, and are responsible for **all chapters assigned, regardless of whether chapters are covered in the in-class lectures.**  Students are allowed three (3) absences for the semester. Each absence beyond three will be subject to a five point deduction from the final point total. Students are responsible for keeping up with their absences.

Attendance is given more weight than some other classes because it would be impossible to make up the quizzes, and discussions.

Exams (4) – 400 points

Research Project/Paper 200 points

Chapter Quizzes (15) 150 points

Attendance/participation 150 points

TOTAL 900 POINTS

**Final grades will be assigned according to the following scale:**

93 - 100% A 80 - 82% B- 66-69% D+

90 - 92% A- 76 - 79% C+ 63 - 65% D

86 - 89% B+ 73 - 75% C 60 - 62% D-

83 - 85% B 70 - 72% C- BELOW 60% F

**Course outline**

**ALL ASSIGNMENTS MUST BE COMPLETED PRIOR TO THE SCHEDULED CLASS PERIOD.**

Week 1

Monday January 6 - Wednesday January 8

Introduction to course and review of syllabus,

Chapter 1: Human Inquiry and Science

Week 2 –

Monday January 13 - Wednesday January 15

Chapter 2: Paradigms, Theory and Research

Week 3

**NO CLASS MONDAY JANUARY 20th – MARTIN LUTHER KING BIRTHDAY**

Monday January 20 - Wednesday January 22

Chapter 3: The Ethics and Politics of Social Research

Week 4

Monday January 27 - Wednesday January 29

Chapter 4: Research Design

Week 5

Monday February 3- Wednesday February 5

**EXAM 1: Chapters 1 - 4**

Chapter 5: Conceptualization, Operationalization, and Measurement

Week 6

Monday February 10 - Wednesday February 12

Chapter 6: Indexes, Scales and Typologies

Week 7

Monday February 17-Wednesday February 19

Chapter 7: The Logic of Sampling

Week 8

Chapter 8: Experiments

**EXAM 2: Chapters 5 - 8**

Week 9

Monday March 3 - Sunday March 9

**SPRING BREAK – NO CLASSES**

Week 10

Monday March 10 - Wednesday March 12

Chapter 9: Survey Research

**Week 11**

Monday March 17 - Wednesday March 19

Chapter 10: Qualitative Field Research

Week 12

Monday March 24 - Wednesday March 26

Chapter 11: Unobtrusive Research

Week 13

Monday March 31 -Wednesday April 2

Chapter 12: Evaluation Research

**EXAM 3: Chapters 9 - 12**

Week 14

Monday April 7 - Wednesday April 9

Chapter 13: Qualitative Data Analysis

Week 15

Monday April 14 - Wednesday April 16

Chapter 14: Quantitative Data Analysis

Week 16

Chapter 15: Reading and Writing Social Research

**Final Project / Paper Due!**

FRIDAY APRIL 25 - 7:45 A.M. – 10:15 A.M – **FINAL EXAMINATION (EXAM 4)** – **CHAPTERS 13-15**