

**JOUR 460 (#61134):
Research Methods in Strategic Communication**

**Spring 2016: T/Th: 11:00 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.
100 Stauffer-Flint Hall**

Instructor:
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Office hours:
-Tuesdays: 9:30–10:30 a.m.
-Thursdays: 4:00–5:00 p.m.
-By appointment

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Greetings:

Welcome to Research Methods! This course is designed to introduce you to strategic communication research methods and enable you to develop your own research and data interpretation skills. We will discuss the main research methods used in our field and how they apply to various strategic communication questions. You should find this course challenging *and* fun.

Course description from the KU catalog:

“Students conduct, analyze and apply research to develop strategy and guide decisions related to communication campaigns. In addition to studying qualitative and quantitative research methods as well as basic statistics, students develop critical thinking skills by defining research problems and producing insightful solutions. Prerequisite: Admission to the School of Journalism and JOUR 433 for students who started at KU prior to Fall 2012. For students starting Fall 2012 and after, prerequisite is admission to the School of Journalism and JOUR 320.”

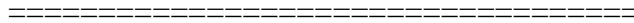
Learning Objectives:

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

- Understand the relationship between research methods and strategic communication questions
- Understand data collection and analysis procedures
- Explain the difference between quantitative and qualitative research methods
- Develop a research design and research instruments based on a specific question
- Conduct primary research using a specific research method
- Write a research report with recommendations grounded in your own research

Reading:

The required textbook for this course is *Marketing Research* (9th Ed.), by Carl McDaniel and Roger Gates. Additional reading materials will be posted on our Blackboard site. I expect you to have read all the assigned material before class. This will help you better understand the day’s topic and will facilitate our discussions.



Attendance & Expectations:

You are expected to attend all class sessions. Some absences are excused, such as illnesses accompanied by a doctor’s note, family emergencies, athletic commitments, religious holidays and other similar reasons but please let me know in advance when possible so we can make arrangements to make up the missed classes.

More than two unexcused absences will affect your final grade. Each additional absence will take away three points from your final grade. For instance, if you have three unexcused absences and your final calculated grade is 92, you will receive an 89 for the class. If you have four unexcused absences, I will deduct six points from your final calculated grade. Late arrivals (10 minutes) will also negatively affect your grade. Two late arrivals equal one absence. If you have more than four unexcused absences, you are eligible to be dropped from the course.

Participation is an important element of this course. An engaging conversation will enhance your understanding of certain concepts as well as create a healthy learning environment. Therefore, you are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the assigned readings.

During our discussions, please respect the ideas of your peers. You are encouraged to challenge someone’s particular reasoning as long as you stay courteous. You will not be judged on your personal opinions. However, I expect you to frame your arguments using the research methods concepts we will have addressed and clearly articulate the steps of your reasoning.

You are allowed to bring laptops to class as long as you use them responsibly. However, I will ask you to close your laptops during our in-class exercises and parts of our workshops. If your laptops are distracting the class, that is, if your peers are paying more attention to your computer screen than to our class, I will ban laptop use in class for everyone. As for cell phones, please put them on silent mode. If you are expecting an important call, please let me know at the beginning of class and sit next to the classroom door.

You are responsible for completing all assignments on time. Assignments are due by the start of the class session on the date indicated unless otherwise specified on our schedule. All assignments must be typed in size 12 font, double-spaced, and sent via email to erba.projects@gmail.com. You do not need to turn in a hard copy. If you are absent, you must email your assignment by 11:00 a.m. on the due date. I will mark down late assignments (after 11:10 a.m. on the due date) by three points for each late day. Extensions may be granted only as circumstances warrant. If you do not submit an assignment within one week of its due date, you will automatically lose the points for that assignment.

Clear writing, free of spelling and grammatical errors is expected. The quality of your writing will affect your grade on written assignments: poor writing will result in poor grades (see grading rubric on Blackboard).

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Assignments:

You will complete the following assignments for your final grade:

- Class Participation: 7%
- Research Participation Pool: 3%
- Midterm: 20%
- Client Research: 50%
- Final: 20%

Class Participation: 7%

As mentioned above, your participation will impact the quality of this course. We will be addressing various aspects of strategic communication research, so regardless of your specific interests, you are expected to take advantage of our discussions to express how you feel about certain matters related to such an important aspect of your future career.

While I understand that not everybody might feel comfortable speaking in public, you should use this course as an opportunity to enhance your level of comfort and hone your public speaking skills.

Participation includes comments and involvement in our in-class discussions, group exercises and workshops; comments or links relevant to the class posted on our Blackboard discussion board; as well as other material you will share with our class.

Class participation is required to receive full participation credit. However, you do not have to be actively involved in all aspects of participation. Occasionally, our class exercises will be collected and may be graded as part of your participation.

Research Participation Pool: 3%

This course is part of the research participant pool for the School of Journalism and Mass Communications, which means that you are expected to participate in research studies in our field as part of your overall grade. You are each expected to take part in three studies this semester, worth 3% of your final grade (1% per completed study). Researchers will contact you directly during the semester with specific details about their study. If you do not wish to participate in a study, you will have the option to write a summary of a peer-reviewed research article instead (please see guidelines on Blackboard). If you do not wish to participate in any study, you will have to write three research summaries in order to obtain full credit. Please note that you are each responsible for either participating in the studies or writing the research summaries. The latter are due to the researchers by Friday April 29, 5:00 p.m. Deadlines to participate in the studies will be set by the researchers.

Midterm & Final: 20% each, 40% total

The midterm and final exams will consist of a series of multiple choice questions. Multiple-choice questions will be answered on a scantron, which I will provide. Our final exam may also include short open-ended questions.

You will be allowed to bring one 4x6 index card containing notes (recto verso) from our classes to help you with the exam. However, all information on the index card must be hand-written. I will collect all index cards after the midterm and final to make sure you used them appropriately.

Please note that fitting as much content as possible on your index card will not guarantee a high grade on the exam. You need to be familiar with the material so you do not waste too much time looking for answers on your index card, which should represent your emergency solution in case your mind goes blank on a particular concept.

Make-up exams will not be given unless they are the result of an excused absence. If you foresee a scheduling conflict, let me know as soon as possible so that we can make appropriate alternative arrangements.

Client Research: 50%

Our class is partnering with Visit KC to conduct a pilot research project pertaining to millennials and travel. Our research project will explore (1) what millennials look for in a vacation, (2) how millennials make travel and tourism decisions, (3) what millennials are attracted to when visiting a city, (4) how millennials perceive Kansas City, (5) how millennials perceive other mid-western cities, and (6) how millennials respond to current Visit KC promotional materials.

To this end, you will evaluate our client’s current communication strategy, and conduct secondary research, a focus group and a survey to answer the main research questions. Based on your findings, you will write two research reports with strategic communication implications.

Your grade for our client project will be calculated as follows: Secondary Research (15%); Individual Moderator Guide (5%); Team Moderator Guide (5%); Survey Questionnaire (individual) (10%); Individual Focus Group Coding (10%); Team Focus Group Code Table (5%); Focus Group Preliminary Findings Report (15%); Survey Data Collection (individual) (5%); Survey Preliminary Findings Report (15%); Client Research Reports (15%).

We will discuss each assignment in more detail during the semester.

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Grades:

To calculate your final grade, I will use the following scale:

A = 93-100%	C = 73-76%
A- = 90-92%	C- = 70-72%
B+ = 87-89%	D+ = 67-69%
B = 83-86%	D = 63-66%
B- = 80-82%	D- = 60-62%
C+ = 77-79%	F = 59% or below

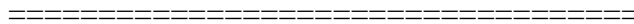
I will only round grades up at the 0.8 level. Therefore, your grade must reach 0.8 for me to round it up. For example, if your final grade is 89.80, I will round it up to 90.00. On the other hand, if your grade is 89.79, it will stay as it is.

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Service Learning:

Service learning is one method of experiential learning that is widely considered to be a high impact practice. Not only do students benefit from applying what they are learning, but they are connecting their learning to improving their communities. Service learning is a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful service for the public interest with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities.

Because our class is partnering with a campus ‘client,’ it is a designated service-learning course and can count towards completion of the certification in service learning. In addition to conducting research for our client, you have the option to write a reflection essay about your experience in order to fulfill one of the components of the certificate in service learning. If you are interested in this certification, please contact me to discuss the details of the reflection essay.



Academic Integrity:

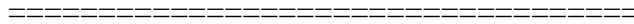
The William Allen White School of Journalism and Mass Communications does not tolerate plagiarism, fabrication of evidence and falsification of evidence. Penalties for plagiarism, fabrication or falsification can include a failing grade for this course and expulsion from the School of Journalism and Mass Communications. If you have any questions about what constitutes original work, plagiarism, fabrication or falsification, please consult the professor(s) of this course.

Original work: The expectation when you come to this class is that you’ve come to learn, to be creative, to stretch your imagination, and expand your skills. Therefore, all the work you do in this class must be original. That means no ‘recycling’ of assignments or papers from other classes, in the J-School or outside the J-School. Don’t recycle research papers, news stories, marketing plans, etc. If you conducted a study or a research paper on any aspect of strategic communication research for another class, you cannot modify it for this class. Any efforts to recycle material will be regarded as academic dishonesty.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is stealing. You take someone else’s ideas, thoughts, or words, and you present them as your own original work. This includes taking ideas from written sources, such as books, as well as materials on the Internet. Cutting and pasting materials from the Internet and presenting that work as if it were your own is plagiarism. There may be times when you want to incorporate another person’s ideas, opinions, and words into the papers you write, to make a point or to provide background. If you do, it is essential that you attribute that information—that you

explain where the information came from and give credit where credit is due. “Recycling” past interviews or research from previous J460 students and presenting it as your own falls into the category of plagiarism.

Fabrication and Falsification: Fabrication and falsification mean that you made it up. This can include making up an entire interview or embellishing a fact, quote, or statistic to make it sound better. Don’t do it.



Journalism School Policy on Classroom Attendance:

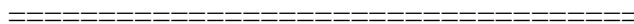
“No student may add a journalism class after the 20th day of a semester.”

“Students must attend their classes and laboratory periods. Instructors may take attendance into account in assessing a student's performance and may require a certain level of attendance for passing a course. Instructors may choose to drop students from a course, based on attendance, without consent.”

“The School of Journalism reserves the right to cancel the enrollment of students who fail to attend the first class or laboratory meeting.”

“The KU Office of Student Financial Aid is required by federal law to determine whether students who receive aid are attending each class in which they are enrolled. Instructors are required to report to that office absences of students who have stopped attending and names of those who have enrolled but never have attended. Students who do not attend classes may be required to repay federal and/or state financial aid.”

“Students who receive any form of financial aid should learn all requirements including minimum hours of enrollment and grades to qualify for and retain that aid.”



Seeking Assistance:

You are urged to attend office hours or meet with me by appointment to discuss any questions pertaining to the course, the readings, exams and assignments, or career prospects and opportunities. You should not hesitate to seek continuing assistance throughout the semester.

The University of Kansas is committed to helping all students learn. If you have a special need that may affect your learning, please contact me as soon as possible. Please be aware that the KU Office of Student Access Services coordinates accommodations for all students who are eligible. If you have a disability for which you wish to request accommodations and have not contacted this office, please do so as soon as possible. Information about services can be found at <https://disability.ku.edu/>. Or you can visit the office on the first floor of Strong Hall. The phone number is: 785-864-4064. The email is: achieve@ku.edu. Please contact me privately regarding your needs in this course.

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Copying or Recording of Classroom Lectures:

Course materials prepared by the instructor, as well as content of all lectures presented by the instructor in class and on Blackboard, are the instructor's property. Video and audio recording of lectures without instructor consent is prohibited. On request, the instructor will usually permit students to audio tape lectures, on the condition that these audio tapes are only used as a study aid by the individual making the recording. Unless the instructor gives explicit permission, recordings of lectures may not be modified and must not be transferred or transmitted to any other person, whether or not that individual is enrolled in the course. This also applies to any lecture notes and other content prepared by the instructor on Blackboard.

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Commercial Note-Taking:

Pursuant to the University of Kansas' [Policy on Commercial Note-Taking Ventures](#), commercial note-taking is not permitted in this course. Lecture notes and course materials may be taken for personal use, for the purpose of mastering the course material, and may not be sold to any person or entity in any form. Any student engaged in or contributing to the commercial exchange of notes or course materials will be subject to discipline, including academic misconduct charges, in accordance with University policy. **Please note:** note-taking provided by a student volunteer for a

student with a disability, as a reasonable accommodation under the ADA, is **not the same** as commercial note-taking and is **not** covered under this policy.

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Inclement Weather:

In the event of inclement weather, the decision to cancel classes is made by KU officials. To determine whether snow or icy conditions have canceled classes, call 864-7669 (864-SNOW).

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Note:

The schedule below may be modified and any potential changes will be announced in advance.

	Subject	Required readings	Due dates
Week I			
T. Jan. 19	Introductions and getting to know each other	Syllabus	
Th. Jan. 21	Mock Research Project		
Week II			
T. Jan. 26	Research Basics & Client Research	Chapter 1	BB post: client's website: 10am
Th. Jan. 28	Client Visit		
Week III			
T. Feb. 2	Research Basics (cont.) & Ethics	Chapter 2	
Th. Feb.4	The Research Process	Chapter 3	Focus Group Days/Times
Week IV			
T. Feb. 9	Qualitative Research (Part I)	Chapter 5	BB Post: Millennials by 10am
Th. Feb. 11	Workshop: Secondary Research		Secondary Research: M. 2/15: 5pm

Week V

T. Feb. 16	Workshop: Moderator Guide	Moderator Role (BB)	Individual moderator guide: 5pm Team moderator guide: W. 2/17: 5pm
Th. Feb. 18	Workshop: Conducting a focus group (1/2 of class)	Conducting Focus Groups (BB)	

Week VI

T. Feb. 23	Workshop: Conducting a focus group (1/2 of class)	Conducting Focus Groups (BB)	
Th. Feb. 25	Workshop: Types of scales	-Chapter 10: 277-283 -Chapter 11 -Video (BB)	

Week VI

T. March 1	Workshop: Developing survey questions (1/2 of class)	Chapter 12	
Th. March 3	Workshop: Developing survey questions (1/2 of class)	Chapter 12	

Week VIII

T. March 8	Qualitative Research (part II) Midterm Review		Survey Questionnaire (individual) Midterm Qs:5pm <i>In-class evaluation</i>
Th. March 10	Midterm		

Week IX

T. March 15	Spring Break		
Th. March 17	Spring Break		

Week X

T. March 22	Workshop: Analyzing qualitative data	Focus Group Analysis (two documents on BB)	Focus Group Transcription
Th. March 24	Workshop: Analyzing qualitative data (cont.)		Individual Focus Group Coding: F. 3/25: 5pm

Week XI

T. March 29	Workshop: Writing Qualitative Findings		Team Focus Group Code Table
Th. March 31	Workshop: Focus Group Report		Survey Data Collection Ends: 11:59pm

Week XII

T. April 5	Install SPSS on laptops		Focus Group Report
Th. April 7	Workshop: Analyzing quantitative data	Chapter 15: pp. 446-469	

Week XIII

T. April 12	Workshop: Analyzing quantitative data (cont.)		
Th. April 14	Workshop: Writing quantitative results		

Week XIV

T. April 19	Workshop: Survey Report		Survey Report: W. 4/20: 5pm
Th. April 21	Experimental research	Chapter 9	

Week XV

T. April 26	Workshop: Creating an experiment	Video (BB)	
Th. April 28	Heather Lawrenz, Digital Media Specialist, Data Visualization		

Week XVI

T. May 3	Workshop: Client Research Report	Chapter 19	
Th. May 5	Workshop: Client Research Report (cont.) & Concluding thoughts		Client Research Reports: 11:59pm Final Qs: Friday: 5pm

Final Exam

Thursday May 12: 10:30a.m. – 1:00 p.m.	Bring index card
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