

PCM 315: RESEARCH TECHNIQUES
Farmingdale State College • Fall 2015 • CRN: 93698
Instructor: Professor Mark J. Grossman

Email: grossmmj@farmingdale.edu
Website: www.ProfessorGrossman.com
Office Hours: Upon request, as well as before and after class. (Mailbox in Knapp Hall, Room 18)
Days/Location: Tues/Thurs 10:50am – 12:05pm • Gleason 327

Course Description

This course will familiarize students with conducting research in the communications field. Students will learn the basic concepts and methods used in studying and evaluating communication processes including online platforms such as Wikipedia.

Students will also be introduced to information science and bibliographic practices appropriate to finding, evaluating, and incorporating data into documents. Working with the Wikipedia Education Program, students will also learn how to edit and/or create a Wikipedia article. In addition, students will apply these concepts to the production of a research based document.

Course Objectives

- Identify basic concepts in communication research
- Compare and evaluate research methods
- Formulate a research design to professional standards
- Collect and Interpret quantitative and qualitative data
- Present research results through multiple formats
- Working with the Wikipedia Education Program, students will also learn how to edit and create Wikipedia articles.

Required Texts and Materials

Introducing Communication Research: Paths of Inquiry
2nd Edition: Donald F. Treadwell – Westfield State University
SAGE Publications, Inc. • ISBN: 9781452217352

Students will be assigned materials to read in the form of handouts and links to resources that can be found on the Wikipedia Education Foundation page:
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Wiki_Education_Foundation_handouts.

Additional materials will also be made available periodically. Please make sure to review these before coming to class.

Class Policies

Plagiarism: Plagiarism in any form is prohibited. Plagiarism is intentionally or knowingly representing the words or ideas of another as one's own in any academic exercise and is grounds for suspension and/or failure in the course. Questionable material may be subject to third-party scrutiny. If you are unsure about using a resource, please feel free to confirm its validity with the instructor.

Accommodations: If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact the Office of Support Services for Students with Disabilities, Roosevelt Hall, Room 150/151, (631) 794-6174 as soon as possible.

Attendance: Attendance will be taken at the start of class. Students are allowed two unexcused absences for any reason. Additional unexcused absences will result in a 3-point reduction per absence in the final grade rubric. Valid written documentation is required for an absence to be excused (ie. a serious illness or injury, job interview, significant family event such as a funeral, sudden childcare need, officially sanctioned college activity, military obligation, etc.) Every third time late is considered the equivalent of one absence. Student arriving class to late must inform the instructor of their attendance at the end of class, otherwise the student may be counted as absent.

Make-Up Work: Whether absent or late, students are still required to make up all class content and homework by the subsequent class. All PowerPoint presentations, online resources, hand-outs, etc. will be available on the class home page at www.ProfessorGrossman.com.

Grading Rubric	
Attendance	10%
Participation	10%
Assignments (3 x 5% = 15%)	15%
Mid-Term	20%
Final	20%
Presentation	25%

Farmingdale State College Grading Scale			
93 - 100%	A	Excellent	4.00
90 - 92%	A-		3.67
87 - 89%	B+		3.33
83 - 86%	B	Good	3.00
80 - 82%	B-		2.67
77 - 79%	C+		2.33
73 - 76%	C	Satisfactory	2.00
70 - 72%	C-		1.67
67 - 69%	D+		1.33
60 - 66%	D	Minimum Passing	1.00
00 - 59%	F	Failure	0.00

Recommended Reading and Resources

Communication research frequently makes news headlines and often may be controversial, especially where some human ability or attribute is found to be predicted by gender, race, or socio-economic status. You should read news accounts of research findings critically to assess the research procedures behind them.

Similarly you should assess critically advertising that purports to base claims on research (ie. "Nine out of ten doctors prefer..."). Research methods and sampling can be hot issues as the media report the results of public opinion polls on a host of controversial issues such as political campaigns, U.S. foreign policy, global warming, or same-sex marriage.

The debates can be equally hot when news media report research findings on other public policy issues, such as reports that television viewing causes childhood obesity, or that video gaming causes a loss of social skills, or that viewing violent television content causes violent behavior.

...