MCMA 532
Quantitative Research Method
Spring 2016
Meeting Time: Tuesday 3-5:30 pm

Instructor:
Dr. Wenjing (Wendy) Xie
E-mail: wxie@siu.edu
Office: 1228 Communications Building
Office Hour: T/R 1:30 – 3pm or by appointment

Course Description:
This course will cover identification of research problems, formulation of concepts and research hypotheses in journalism and mass communication, sampling procedures, design of content analysis, survey and experimental research, descriptive data analysis and basic inferential statistics.

Course Readings

Required Textbooks:


Supplementary Readings:

Besides the textbooks, this course will have some supplementary readings, which are also required. These readings will be either distributed by the course instructor or available in the library.

Formal Course Assessment

Group Project

As a research method class, this course will require students to complete a research paper in the form of group project.

Students will be divided into small groups, with 2-3 people a group. Students will participate in the group project under the supervision of the course instructor. The outcome of the project will be a research paper that can be submitted to a major conference or a refereed journal. The group project will count for 35% of the final grade.
Class Presentation

Every student is also supposed to make three presentations of the readings through the semester. The 15-minute presentation should summarize the major content of the papers/chapters, propose 2 – 3 questions for discussion, and lead class discussion. It will be helpful if the presenter can either make a powerpoint presentation or distribute a brief outline of his/her presentation to the class. Class presentation will account for 30% of the final grade.

Final Exam:

There will be a final exam on May 12, 2:45-4:45pm. The final exam will be cumulative and cover the materials that we have learned throughout the semester. The final exam will account for 15% of the final grade.

Exercise:

There will be several exercises throughout the semester, which will be either in-class or take-home. The purpose of the exercises is to give students opportunities to understand and get some hands-on practice of the knowledge learned in class. Exercises will account for 10% of the final grade.

Attendance & Class Discussion

The course format will be graduate seminars, in which discussion is a vital component. Students are expected to finish all of the readings before class and participate in the discussion of the reading materials in class. Attendance and class discussion will account for 10% of the final grade.

Course Topics & Schedule (Subject to Change)

Date       Topic
Jan. 19    Introduction and course overview

No readings

Jan. 26    Conceptualization and measurement

1. W&D Ch.1: The research process
2. W&D Ch. 2: Elements of research
4. Secondary research. In Stempel et al. (ed.) *Mass Communication Research and Theory*
Feb. 2  Sampling & Survey I

5. W&D Ch. 4: Sampling

6. W&D Ch. 7: Survey research


*Topic of group project due*

Feb. 9  Tentative: *Morris Library Tutorial*

Feb. 16  Survey II


Feb. 23  Content analysis I


Mar. 1  Content analysis II


14. Riffe, Lacy, & Fico, Ch. 6 Reliability (need two people)
Mar. 8  Experiment

15. W&D Ch. 9: Experimental research


Mar. 15  Spring Break

Mar. 22  Descriptive statistics

17. HWJ Ch. 3: Describing distributions

18. HWJ Ch.4: The normal distribution

Research method due!

Mar. 29  Hypothesis testing & Introduction to SPSS

19. W&D Ch.11: Hypothesis testing

April 5  Inferential statistics: Test of means


21. HWJ Ch. 11: Two-sample case for the means

Apr. 12  Inferential statistics: Correlation and regression

22. HWJ Ch. 5: Correlation


24. HWJ Ch.18: Multiple linear regression

Apr. 19  Working on group project

Apr. 26  Ethics in communication research

25. W&D Ch. 3: Research ethics

May 3  Presentation of group project

May 12  Final exam! Good luck!!