

**Mass Communication 4383 (Section 1, 3 credits)**  
**Audience Research & Analysis**  
**Fall 2017**

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Classroom: 319 Dan Rather Building

Instructor: Dr. Kiwon Seo

Office: 308B Dan Rather Building

Office Hours: Tue 1 ~ 3 p.m./Wed 10 a.m. ~ 12 p.m. or by appointment

Time: MW 2:00 ~ 3:20

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**Email & Blackboard**

Please be sure to check your SHSU email and our Blackboard website frequently and regularly for information and instructions that will be distributed to you. Note, I answer emails M ~ F, 9AM to 5PM, so that do not expect email responses during evening and weekends. Also if you do not receive my response within 24 hours, please let me know in the class or send the email again.

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**Course Description**

This course covers basic concepts and issues of research methods in mass communication. We will learn how communication researchers conduct and evaluate research from two broad traditions; quantitative and qualitative. By the end of the course, you will possess the knowledge necessary to understand and evaluate arguments utilizing research to persuade, as well as, to conduct simple, yet, sound research on your own. A primary goal of the course is to enable you to become a critical consumer and producer of information that defines the world around you. The course will educate you on the proper terminology and concepts used in research methods. The end result of the course should be a fundamental understanding of how to critique and to conduct research in the field of mass communication.

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**Course Objectives**

The specific objectives of this course are:

1. To become familiar with the appropriate language or terminology of research methods.
2. To be able to articulate the similarities and differences in the different types of research methods.
3. To develop the skills necessary to critically evaluate the methods used in various types of research.
4. To be able to construct a valid argument utilizing appropriate research methods.
5. To learn how to design and conduct audience/mass communication research.
6. To learn how to interpret the meaning of numerical results.

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**Required Text**

- Wimmer, R. D. & Dominick, J. R. (2013). *Mass Media Research: An Introduction* (10<sup>th</sup> Edition). Boston: Wadsworth.

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**Exams**

There will be three in-class exams (the third, final exam will be cumulative). The dates and times for all exams are nonnegotiable. Makeup exams will be allowed only in the case of university-stipulated excused absences. Absence from any exams must be approved by the instructor before

the exam dates and written documentation must be submitted. If adequate notification is not done prior to the exam date, a penalty of one full letter grade is applied to the subsequent makeup exam.

### Quizzes

Students are required to complete four Internet-based Quizzes about class materials. Students can take them at their convenience until the deadline. Students can also freely refer to the class notes and textbook. The only restriction for this assignment is that students must take the Quizzes individually, not with other students. If it turns out that a student collaborated with other students on this assignment, all of the students will lose one final letter grade (e.g., a final grade of B will be down to C, regardless of the points earned from other assignments).

### Research Group Project

The research groups will work together to develop research questions, understand existing research, and design and execute research plans. The research report will be divided into three parts: Progress Report 1, Progress Report 2, and Final Research Report. Also, at the end of this semester, you are required to present your group's research report to the class. While developing this project, you are expected to learn how to cooperate with your colleagues and present your plans effectively and professionally. Please do your best to strengthen your group project's quality. Your group members will determine 50 points of your final grade based on their evaluations of your contributions to the group project. Following the planned schedule on the syllabus, more detailed information will be provided. Please do respect and follow the guidelines to successfully complete your group project.

### IRB Certification

To conduct the Research Group Project, students must complete Human Subject Training. We will learn ethical issues and human protections in this class, and this IRB training will extend your understanding about these research ethics. Please complete the IRB training via <https://www.citiprogram.org> and submit your printed certification to your instructor before the specified deadline. Submitting IRB certification is mandatory, not optional.

### Grading

Criteria	Points	Your Score	Grade	Scale
Exam 1	180		A	900 to 1000
Exam 2	200		B	800 to 899.9
Exam 3 (cumulative)	250		C	700 to 799.9
Quiz (4 times)	60		D	600 to 699.9
Group Project	260		F	599 and below
Progress Report 1	40			
Progress Report 2	60			
Presentation	50			
Final Report	60			
Peer Evaluation	50			
Class Participation	50			
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1000</b>			

*Note: Class Participation includes both attendance and contributions to class discussion.*

## Course Policies and Expectations

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**Meet your deadlines:** All assignments must be submitted in the class on the established due date. Late papers will be marked down one letter grade per day, after they have been graded. That is, a “C” paper that is two days late will receive an “F.” NO paper will be accepted late unless you have notified me *in advance* with a proper, reasonable explanation. No paper will be accepted more than three weekdays after it's due.

**Attendance and Tardiness:** Every student enrolled in this class is expected to attend to all scheduled class meetings. The Student Handbook states that regular and punctual class attendance is expected of each student at SHSU and that it is expected that each faculty member will keep a record of student attendance. Class attendance will be critical, because it is the only source for obtaining materials covered in the lectures. Excused absences are permitted, but it is the student's responsibility to provide the instructor with appropriate documentation. Such excuses as, “I wasn't feeling well,” “I had a big test in another course,” “I had to rush home for a family emergency,” and the like, are not considered appropriate reasons of absence. An incomplete assignment or exam resulting from an unexcused absence will automatically result in a grade of F for the assignment or exam. Because emergencies sometimes arise that make attendance in class impossible, a maximum of three absences is permitted without penalty. After three absences, 25 points for each additional absence will be reduced from your final grade total. Continued absences will affect a student's grade independently of other course work. Excessive absence may result in automatic failure of the course (e.g., more than ten absences will be automatically failure in the class), regardless of grades received on class assignments. If a student is more than 5 minutes late after class starts, this will be marked as a tardy. Three tardies will count as one absence. This policy also applies to students leaving before the end of class without the instructor's permission.

**Email Etiquette:** When you send me an email, please follow the guidelines for acceptable email etiquette. Emails that are not written as in the guideline will not be replied.

- Use a proper subject line that summarizes the subject of your message, such as “Final paper” or “Appointment request.”
- Start the body of your email off with a proper greeting, such as “Hello Dr. Seo,” or something similar.
- Follow your greeting with at least one blank line.
- Compose your email in paragraph form (use a line of whitespace between paragraphs). Make sure you adhere to proper sentence structure.
- Capitalize the first letter in each sentence.
- Finally, use a proper closing (doesn't have to be too formal—save “Sincerely” or “Yours truly” for contacting someone for the first time), and then finish with your first name.

**Proper Classroom Demeanor/Rules of Conduct:** Students will refrain from behavior in the classroom that disrupts the learning process and, thus, impedes the mission of the university. I expect each class member to be respectful of others. Disrespecting your fellow classmates or your instructor will not be tolerated. If you need to leave early due to reasonable excuses, please notify me in advance. You may take notes on and work on a computer unless—based on the instructor's evaluation—the computer becomes a distraction during class. Additionally, please do not surf the web, or check your social networks (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, etc.) and various e-mails accounts during the class period. I expect you to be respectful of our learning environment by being

attentive and engaged, and not selfish. Please turn off or mute your cellular phone before class begins. Please do not take photos of class content, including PowerPoint slides. Students are prohibited from eating in class, using tobacco products, making offensive remarks, reading newspapers, sleeping, talking with each other at inappropriate times, wearing inappropriate clothing, or engaging in any other form of distraction. Inappropriate behavior in the classroom shall result in, minimally, a directive to leave class or being reported to the Dean of Students for disciplinary action in accordance with University policy.

### **University Policies Regarding Academic Classes**

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**Support for Students with Disabilities:** It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance should register with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Lee Drain Annex (telephone 936-294-3512, TDD 936-294-3786, and e-mail [disability@shsu.edu](mailto:disability@shsu.edu)). They should then make arrangements with their individual instructors so that appropriate strategies can be considered and helpful procedures can be developed to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired.

SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If you have a disability that may affect adversely your work in this class, then I encourage you to register with the SHSU Services for Students with Disabilities and to talk with me about how I can best help you. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential.

*NOTE:* No accommodation can be made until you register with the Services for Students with Disabilities. For a complete listing of the university policy, see:  
<http://www.shsu.edu/dept/academic-affairs/documents/aps/students/811006.pdf>

**Academic Dishonesty:** Plagiarism, cheating, or any form of academic misconduct will not be tolerated in this course. All students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach and to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. The University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work which is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials. Students are encouraged to review the university's policy on academic dishonesty and plagiarism.

Plagiarized assignments will not be accepted. For the sake of clarity, the definition of plagiarism is followed: Plagiarism occurs when one person claims credit for another person's work. It is a form of intellectual dishonesty that is treated with great severity by professionals and by the university. Students should be certain they understand the manner of plagiarism: (1) A paper using quotes without quotation marks and attribution is plagiarized. But plagiarism is more than unrecognized quotes; (2) Conclusions that are not the student's own conclusion, information that is not common knowledge and specific facts must be attributed: Tell who said it and cite or footnote it, even if this information is not a direct quote.

**Student Absences on Religious Holy Days Policy:** Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education

Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. Section 51.911 (a) (2) defines a religious holy day as: “a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20....” A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence.

University policy 861001 provides the procedures to be followed by the student and instructor. A student desiring to absent himself/herself from a scheduled class in order to observe (a) religious holy day(s) shall present to each instructor involved a written statement concerning the religious holy day(s). The instructor will complete a form notifying the student of a reasonable timeframe in which the missed assignments and/or examinations are to be completed.

**Visitors in the Classroom:** Only registered students may attend class. Exceptions can be made on a case-by-case basis by the professor. In all cases, visitors must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance. Students wishing to audit a class must apply to do so through the Registrar's Office.

### MCOM 4383 – Class Schedule

**NOTE: TOPICS TO BE FOLLOWED, SOME ANNOUNCED CHANGES MAY OCCUR THROUGHOUT SEMESTER; AND YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL ANNOUNCED CHANGES!**

Week	Date	Lecture Content	Reading and Work Due
1	8/23	Introduction to Course	
2	8/28	What is Research	Wimmer & Dominick CH. 1
2	8/30	Research Procedure	Wimmer & Dominick CH. 1
3	9/4	<b>Labor Day—No Class</b>	
3	9/6	Research Ethics	Wimmer & Dominick CH. 3
4	9/11	Qualitative & Quantitative Research Methods	Wimmer & Dominick CH. 2
4	9/13	Focus Groups, Intensive Interviews, & Field Observation	Wimmer & Dominick CH. 5
5	9/18	Conceptualization	Wimmer & Dominick CH. 2
5	9/20	Measurement 1	Wimmer & Dominick CH. 2 <b>IRB Certification Due</b>

6	9/25	Measurement 2	Wimmer & Dominick CH. 2
6	9/27	Exam 1 Review	
7	10/2	<b>Exam 1</b>	
7	10/4	Sampling	Wimmer & Dominick CH. 4
8	10/9	Survey 1	Wimmer & Dominick CH. 7 <b>Progress Report 1 Due</b>
8	10/11	Survey 2	Wimmer & Dominick CH. 7
9	10/16	<b>Individual Group Meeting</b>	
9	10/18	Experiment 1	Wimmer & Dominick CH. 9
10	10/23	Experiment 2	Wimmer & Dominick CH. 9
10	10/25	Content Analysis	Wimmer & Dominick CH. 6
11	10/30	Exam 2 Review	
11	11/1	<b>Exam 2</b>	
12	11/6	Descriptive Statistics 1	Wimmer & Dominick CH. 10 <b>Progress Report 2 Due</b>
12	11/8	Descriptive Statistics 2	Wimmer & Dominick CH. 10
13	11/13	Statistical Procedures	Wimmer & Dominick CH. 12
13	11/15	Hypothesis Testing 1	Wimmer & Dominick CH. 11
14	11/20	Hypothesis Testing 2	Wimmer & Dominick CH. 11
14	11/22	<b>Thanksgiving Break—No Class</b>	
15	11/27	<b>Group Project Presentation</b>	<b>Project Report Due</b>
15	11/29	<b>Group Project Presentation</b>	
16	<b>12/6</b>	<b>Final Exam (3:30 ~ 5:30 p.m.)</b>	