

My research code name: _____

COMM 460 Communication Research Methods Winter 2009

Professor

Dr. Andrew F. Hayes
3068 Derby
Ph: 688-3027
email: hayes.338@osu.edu
office hrs: TR 1:30 – 2:30
(or by appointment)

Graduate Teaching Assistants

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office hrs: tba	office hrs: tba	office hours: tba

Meeting Times and Locations

Lecture: TR 11:30-12:48, JR 360 (Journalism Building)
Recitations: (1) M 12:30-1:48; (2) W 12:30-1:48; (3) T 1:30 - 2:48; (4) M 2:30-3:48; (5) R 3:30-4:48
All recitations meet in JR342 except (5) which meets in HH0171A

Course Materials

Required

·Hocking, J. E., Stacks, D. W., & McDermott, S. T. (2003). *Communication Research* (3rd Ed.). Allyn Bacon

Optional but Recommended

·Foster, J. J. (2001). *Data Analysis Using SPSS for Windows*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
(or any other book you can find on using SPSS for Windows).

Course Description

This course introduces methods of research in the scientific study of communication, public opinion, and the mass media. Specific topics covered include the scientific process, the measurement of communication constructs, research design, experimentation, data collection and analysis, and research ethics

Objectives

- To develop an appreciation for how we do research in the field of communication and why it is important to understand research methods
- To develop an understanding of how abstract communication-related constructs are measured and studied
- To develop an understanding of the process of collecting data
- To develop the ability to distinguish between studies that allow for cause-effect inferences and those don't.
- To gain experience using computers as an aid to describing research findings
- To being to acquire the skills needed to successfully read and understand empirical research in communication

Evaluation

Your grade will be based on your performance on a variety of exams and assignments. Each will be weighted according to the schedule below to arrive at your final grade. If there is ever any question about your grade to date, please contact me and I will do the computations and let you know your grade.

Three exams

These exams will be entirely short answer in format (with an acceptable answer typically requiring a paragraph or so). The first two exams will cover material from the first and second thirds of the course, respectively. The 3rd exam is semi-comprehensive. It will be weighted in favor of material presented since the 2nd exam, but it will contain some questions from material presented throughout the quarter. **Because the exams will be based in part on material presented only during lectures, it is important for you to attend the lecture meetings consistently. The powerpoints slides will not by themselves be sufficient study aides.** There is no in-class final exam for this course. Instead of an in-class final exam, you will work on your research paper and turn it in on the date and time the university has scheduled the final exam for courses that meet TR at 11:30. This quarter that date and time is March 18th at 11:30AM.

Recitation participation and performance

You are expected to attend your recitation meeting and participate in all activities and small assignments handed out during a recitation meeting. The recitation component of your grade will be based on your attendance at recitations and performance on recitation assignments. Assignments will be distributed only during recitation. Assignments are marked + (well done), ✓ (satisfactory), or - (substantial room for improvement). Assignments not turned in or turned in more than 48 hours after the time they are due are given a zero. Your recitation grade will be based on the percent of points earned. There will be 18 points possible (3 for each assignment, and up to 3 for attendance). You are expected to turn in assignments that have been completed independently. That means that anything you submit should be your own work. Although you may work with other students on these assignments, you are expected to turn in work that was written by you and you alone. **Evidence of plagiarism or sharing of answers will be prosecuted as described in the section on Academic Misconduct below.**

Research project

The major assignment for this course is the completion of an original empirical research project and the presentation of that research in the form of an empirical research paper. The research project cannot be completed in just a few weeks—it is something you are expected to be thinking about and working on throughout the term, in close correspondence with your T.A. As discussed in the document describing this assignment, you may collaborate with another student or set of students enrolled in this class on the research project. However, each member of the team must turn in his or her own independently-written report of this research. Collaboration on the writing of the research report is a violation of the Code of Student Conduct and will be prosecuted via accepted University procedures. Regardless of whether or not you team up with another student in this class on this research project, your grade on the project will be based exclusively on your own independently-written research report. You will be graded on a point scale from 1 to 15, and your research project

grade derived as a percentage of total points earned out of 15. Details of the research project and how it is graded are detailed starting on page 9.

Extra Credit

Ohio State is a very active research university, and every now and then a researcher may request to use students in this class as participants in a research project. Participating in research is a good way to learn about the research process, and so I encourage you to participate in research projects being conducted by faculty and graduate students in the School. In exchange for your participation, you will receive 1% of extra credit added on to your final grade for every *one hour* of research participation in projects that I have approved in advance, up to a maximum of 3%. The only projects that I approve are those where the investigator has contacted me directly to ask permission to use my students and has recruited directly through the class. If you were not recruited to participate through this course, you cannot receive extra credit in this course for participating in the research. Research participants will be recruited through announcements made in class, through the course web page, or through sign up sheets distributed prior to lectures. The actual amount of extra credit available during the quarter depends on the research being conducted by faculty members and graduate students in the School. There is no guarantee that there will be enough demand for research participants during the quarter to attain the maximum 3% possible. If you are interested in extra credit but would prefer not to participate in research, an alternative extra credit assignment (typically a short paper about something related to research) can be used as a substitute. This brief assignment will be distributed on the last day of class with the same due date as the research paper.

Because many research projects require participation in groups of two or more, it is important that you show up promptly at the date and time you have scheduled. Research involving groups often must be cancelled if the required number of people do not appear as scheduled, creating tremendous inconvenience and frustration to the researcher and the participants who followed through with their commitment to participate. If you find yourself unable to make an appointment, you must give the researcher 12 hours advance notice. If you agree to participate in a study but fail to show up at the scheduled time without giving 12 hours notice, you will forfeit your right to receive any additional extra credit in the course from that day forward.

Derivation of Final Grade

My grading system is a percentage system: 92+ = A; 89-91 = A-; 86-88 = B+; 82-85 = B; 79-81 = B-; 76-78 = C+; 72-75 = C; 65-71 = C-; 60-64 = D+; 54-59 = D, <54 = E. I do not grade “on a curve.” You get the grade that you deserve based on your performance in the course relative to an absolute standard, not relative to how others in the course do. Keep in mind that if you are using this course to satisfy a COMM major requirement, a C- is required or the course must be retaken (or an equivalent substitute). The derivation of your final grade will be based on all components of the course described above, each weighted as such:

Core Grade

Best exam score: 20%

Second best exam score: 15%

Worst exam score: 5%

Recitation performance: 25%

Research paper: 35%

Bonus/Extra Credit

Lecture attendance: up to 2%

Research participation: up to 3%

After converting each component to a score between 0 and 100 reflecting the percent of points earned, the formula to compute your grade is

$$\text{GRADE} = 0.20(\text{Best Exam}) + 0.15(\text{Second Best Exam}) + 0.05(\text{Worse Exam}) + 0.25(\text{Recitation}) + 0.35(\text{Research paper})$$

Extra credit/bonus will then be added to derive your final grade.

Appeal of an Exam Mark

If you feel that a mark you received on an exam does not adequately reflect your performance on the exam, you may appeal that mark. To appeal a mark, submit to Dr. Hayes a written statement within 24 hours after the assignment or exam was first returned to the class that documents why you feel that the mark does not adequately reflect your performance. I will review your written statement and make decision as to whether to remark the exam. Explanations such as “I worked really hard” or “I need a better grade to keep up my GPA” are not satisfactory. If the exam is remarked, the entire exam will be remarked, not just the question or sections in dispute. Keep in mind that it is therefore possible for your mark to actually go down rather than up if mistakes in your favor are caught when the exam or assignment is remarked. The 24 hour time to appeal starts when the exam was returned to the class, not the time when you actually received it. **It is therefore important that you attend all lectures so that you will be there to pick up exams on the day that they are returned. If you are not in attendance when the exam is returned and 24 hours pass, you have forfeited your right to appeal the mark.**

Policies and Miscellaneous

Late or Absent Assignments and Missed Exams

Assignments are due by the beginning of your recitation one week after the assignment was distributed, unless you are told otherwise. For each day an assignment is late you are penalized with a reduction in your mark for that assignment. An assignment will not be accepted more than 48 hours after it is due. Assignments turned in later than 48 hours after the due date are given a zero.

Assignments should not be submitted electronically unless you have made an arrangement with your TA for such electronic submission. If you receive permission to submit an assignment electronically, it is your responsibility to make sure that the assignment was received. If it is not received, regardless of the reason, it will be treated as late or absent.

Exams are given only once at the time scheduled in the syllabus. No make up exams are given. Exams will not be given early or late. If you miss an exam, you receive a zero, regardless of the reason for your absence. Once an examination is underway, you may not leave the room until you are finished. If you leave the room, you must turn in your exam, and all unanswered questions will be graded as incorrect. If you talk during the exam with another student, I will assume that your discussion is about the exam itself, and this will be treated as a violation of the Code of Student Conduct. Other forms of academic misconduct will be prosecuted according to accepted University procedures (see below).

The only exceptions to these rules are tragic, extraordinary, and totally unforeseen personal circumstances that are convincingly documented to your TA or the Professor no later than 24 hours after the date the assignment is due or the exam is scheduled. Computer failures, printing problems,

buses not running on time, car problems, misbehaved pets, missed or cancelled airline flights, **job interviews**, attendance at family social functions, sporting events, and previously scheduled vacations are not valid excuses for turning in an assignment late or missing an exam. Make backup copies of your work, drive carefully, feed your dog regularly, and have a plan for last minute emergencies. ***Do not approach me or the TAs at the end of the quarter with a medical excuse for poor performance or missing exams or assignments earlier in the quarter. The time to talk to us is when the problem first arises. We follow this policy strictly, and documentation produced more than 48 hours after the exam or due date simply will not be accepted, regardless of how valid or compelling it seems to you.***

I understand that in some circumstances you will have an explanation that seems compelling to you for missing exam. I also understand that the difficulty of balancing work, social life, good health, athletics, and your other courses means that you will not always perform as well as you hope on an exam. For these reasons, your exam scores are weighted so that your worst exam performance (even if it is a zero because you didn't take the exam) will be given much less weight in the computation of the exam component of your grade compared to exams you do better on.

Attendance

You are expected to attend lectures regularly. Attendance at the lectures will be assessed on random days and consistent attendance will earn you bonus points that are used to increase your grade. There is no need to inform me or a TA if you can't make it to a lecture. Regardless of the reason, if attendance is taken and you aren't there, you are considered absent. I recognize that there are times you will have to miss a lecture. It is possible to get the full 2% of bonus points with only a *nearly* perfect attendance record. Much of the material on the exams is presented only during the lecture period of the class. **If you don't attend the lectures consistently, you will not do well in this course.**

Attendance at recitation meetings is mandatory. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of every recitation meeting. If you arrive after attendance is taken, you will be considered absent. Absence from recitations will affect the recitation component of your grade, as attendance counts as much as an assignment in the derivation of the recitation component of your grade.

Roles of the Graduate Teaching Assistants

Each recitation is run by a graduate teaching assistant (TA). The TA that leads your recitation should be your first point of contact regarding recitation assignments and other things involving the administration of the recitation you are in. However, you should feel free to contact any of the TAs or Professor Hayes regarding any matter pertaining to the course. Your TA will be fundamental in guiding you through the research project and helping you to excel in the course.

Although the TAs will do their best to respond to your concerns and questions in a timely fashion, keep in mind that they are also students at OSU and have their own demands and schedules that may not always mesh with yours. So please be patient if they are not available to respond to your needs immediately.

COMM 460 Online

This course has representation in the CARMEN system at <http://carmen.osu.edu>. Here you will find information about the course, documents in electronic form, occasional announcements that I may choose to make, copies of Power point slides, and other things pertinent to the course.

Academic Misconduct

All students at the Ohio State University are bound by the Code of Student Conduct (see http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/resource_csc.asp). Violations of this code in this class, especially pertaining to 3335-23-04 on Academic Misconduct will be aggressively prosecuted through the procedures the university has set up to deal with violations of the Code. You are responsible for being familiar with the Student Code, and ignorance of the Code is not an excuse for violating it. Examples of violation of the Code of Student Conduct include

- Giving or receiving unauthorized assistance to or from other students in the class on recitation assignments.
- Working together on recitation assignments unless permission to do so is granted by your teaching assistant.
- Collaborating with other students in the *writing* of your research paper (e.g., writing sections of the paper together, modifying electronic copies of another student's research paper or providing an electronic file of your paper to another student, letting a student see a printed version of your paper either whole in or part prior to the date and time the paper is due.)
- Submitting another student's work (either the research paper, recitation assignments, or exam answers), either whole or in part, as if it were your own work
- Copying information from a web page (such as Wikipedia), book, or other reference (such as an empirical journal article) and submitting it as your own words.
- Cheating on exams (e.g., such as using cheat sheets, providing answers to or receiving answers from another student, sending or receiving electronic communications pertaining to examinable material during the exam period).

If I believe you have violated the Code of Student Conduct, your case will be referred to the Committee on Academic Misconduct (see <http://oaa.osu.edu/coam/home.html>). Possible penalties for violating the Code of Student Conduct include failure in the course (the standard penalty) and even dismissal from the University (for especially egregious violations or repeat offenders). Make sure that you are familiar with the Code of Student Conduct, and familiarize yourself with "Ten Suggestions for Preserving Academic Integrity" available online at <http://oaa.osu.edu/coam/ten-suggestions.html> and on CARMEN. I am a member of the Committee on Academic Misconduct and have also sent many students to this committee, so I am well familiar with the procedures for investigating students suspected to be in violation of the Code of Student Conduct or the rules of the course described above. All students should sign and submit the "Statement of Understanding of the OSU and COMM 460 Academic Misconduct Policy" attached to this syllabus no later than the end of the second week of classes.

Cell Phones and General Politeness

A ringing cell phone during a lecture or discussion is annoying to the instructor and others in the room. Please be respectful of those around you by turning off your cell phone prior to the start of lecture and before you enter the recitation room. If you anticipate that you will need to leave the lecture hall before the end of a lecture, please select a seat near the edge of a row or in the back of the room to avoid disrupting others when you leave. To maintain an atmosphere conducive to learning, please be courteous to other members of the class and treat them with the dignity and respect that you expect from others. Students who do not abide by standards of basic human decency can expect to be escorted out of the room by the teaching staff or, in extreme circumstances, the University Police.

Professor and Teaching Assistants' Use of Electronic Mail

There may be occasions where I or one of your TAs will need to get in touch with you outside of regular class hours. Email will usually be the first means by which contact will be initiated. It is important that you check your OSU email account regularly, and make sure you purge your account of unneeded email so that new email can get through. If you do not use your OSU email address as your primary email account, please arrange through OIT to have your OSU email forwarded to your preferred account. For instructions on how to have your email forwarded, see http://8help.osu.edu/forms/mail_forwarding.html.

Emergencies

In the event of an emergency, please carefully follow the directions of the teaching staff or, if deemed prudent by your own judgment, contact 911 or the University Police at 292-2121.

Inclement Weather/"Absent Professor"

Unless the university is closed, you should always assume class will be held. But there may be times when I am not able to make it to a lecture as a result of some unforeseen circumstance, especially in the Winter quarter when the weather slows traffic. If I do not show up within **30** minutes after the scheduled start of the lecture, then consider the lecture cancelled.

Tentative Nature of this Syllabus

This syllabus represents a contract in the works. Events that transpire over the quarter may require me to modify the administration of the course and therefore the syllabus. In the event I need to modify the syllabus, I will announce the modification in class and on the course web page. Ultimately it is your responsibility to keep up with any such modifications and be aware of current policies, deadlines, etc.

Students with Special Needs

If you need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability, you should contact me to arrange an appointment as soon as possible. At the appointment we can discuss the course format, anticipate your needs, and explore potential accommodations. I rely on the Office of Disability Services for assistance in verifying the need for accommodation and developing accommodation strategies. If you have not previously contacted the Office for Disability Services, I encourage you to do so. The office can be contacted at 614-292-3307. The office is located in room 150 Pomerene Hall.

Schedule of Lectures, Recitations, and Readings

The lecture and recitation topics and relevant readings for each week are listed in the table below. I recommend that you do the reading for the day before the day's activity. HSM = Hocking, Stacks, & McDermott. Entries under "Reading/Notes" in bold can be found as PDF files on CARMEN. For some lectures and recitations, there is relevant material available on the world wide web that you are strongly encouraged to browse through. Hyperlinks to such material can be found on CARMEN.

Week	Date	Topic	Readings/Notes
1	1/6	Course overview	None
	1/8	Introduction to Communication Science	HSM Chapters 1 & 2
	Section	No section meetings	None
2	1/13	Operationalization and Measurement I	HSM Chapters 6 (pp. 123-129); Murray, Schwartz, and Lichter
	1/15	Measurement II	HSM Chapter 6 (pp. 129-147) and 7
	Section	Reading the literature	HSM Chapter 4; Valiela
3	1/20	Sampling and Generalization	HSM Chapter 10
	1/22	Survey Methodology	HSM Chapter 11
	Section	No section meetings (MLK holiday)	None
4	1/27	Exam #1	
	1/29	Estimation	Hayes #2
	Section	Using SPSS: Data Entry and Data Description	Hayes #1 (pp. 45-63)
5	2/3	Correlational Research I	Hayes #1 (pp. 64-76); HSM Ch14 (pp. 350-357); Liebert & Liebert
	2/5	Correlational Research II, Causality	None
	Section	Research project consultations (method)	None
6	2/10	Experimentation I	HSM Chapter 12
	2/12	Experimentation II	HSM Chapter 13 (to p. 309); Westly
	Section	Using SPSS: Correlation	None
7	2/17	Exam #2	
	2/19	Content Analysis	HSM Chapter 8; Dixon & Linz
	Section	Research project consultations	None
8	2/24	Statistical Inference I	Hayes #3
	2/26	Statistical Inference II	None
	Section	Using SPSS: Comparing Groups	Hayes #1 , p. 76-78.
9	3/3	Observational Measurement	Hawkins
	3/5	Qualitative Methods	HSM Chapter 9
	Section	Research project consultations and applied SPSS	None
10	3/10	Research Ethics (film and discussion)	HSM Chapter 3; Milgram; Baumrind
	3/12	Exam #3	
	Section	Writing the research paper	HSM Chapter 17
Exam Week	3/18	Research paper due by 11:30AM outside of Derby 3068	

Research Paper

Due date: March 18, 11:30AM, in Derby 3068

For this assignment, you are to produce an original empirical research paper. This paper must describe the methods you used to collect some data on a topic of interest to you, how you analyzed the data and the results of your analysis, and a discussion of the implications of your findings, shortcomings of your methodologies, and suggestions for future research. Your paper should also contain an introduction that cites a few relevant papers from empirical journals in the communication literature or some other social science discipline (e.g., psychology, sociology, political science, education, etc).

This assignment will require more than just library work and writing. You will have to collect some actual data and analyze those data in order to examine some research question or hypothesis you are testing. The length of the final paper will depend on the complexity of your methodology and analysis and how much space you devote to justifying the research in the introduction. There are no page maximums or minimums, although I doubt you will be able to do a satisfactory job in much fewer than 10 pages (double-spaced).

I am placing no constraints on the topic of your research paper. You may empirically study anything that you want, using any methodology that you desire, but you must collect some actual data. Your data may come from a content analysis, a survey/questionnaire that you develop, an observational measurement procedure, or some kind of experiment that you devise. The topic need not be related to communication or journalism. The most important thing is that you choose some topic that will engage you in the process of conducting empirical research and that will hold your interest for the length of the quarter, because you will be working on this project throughout the quarter. On the course web page you will find a few example research papers written by previous students in this class. All these papers received the maximum possible points.

One of your bigger challenges will be deciding just what you will empirically study. Perhaps you are interested in testing the validity of some belief about people that you have assumed to be true, such as the belief that “everyone is willing to help out a person in need,” or that “opposites attract.” Maybe you’ve wondered whether people who read more versus less of the news are more informed about the world, or maybe they have different political beliefs. Perhaps you are interested in describing how males versus females have coped with the events of September 11, 2001. Or can you predict whether a person is wearing his/her seatbelt from how expensive his/her car is? Virtually anything is possible. The only limit is your imagination or interests and, admittedly, the time you have to complete the project. Be realistic in determining your research project. Don’t do something overly complex or that would require more time that you have in your schedule. Simpler is generally better for this assignment. To give you a sense for some of the possibilities, at the end of this document you will find a list of some titles of papers that previous students have submitted to fulfill this course requirement.

Project teams

You may collaborate with other students on this project. Indeed, it would be to your advantage to work with one or more students in this class on this project and you are strongly encouraged to do so. **However, students who work in teams are expected to turn in their own, independently written report of the research.** You may not write the paper together, but you may work together devising the study, coming up with a methodology, collecting the data, and analyzing the data. Students who in violation of this policy will be referred to the University Committee on Academic Misconduct. For examples of behavior that would be in violation of the Academic Misconduct policy, see the course syllabus. If you chose to work as a team with other students, you must declare your team to your TA no later than January 25th and, if possible, make arrangements with the TAs by then to reschedule your section time so that you can all attend the same section (using the form in Appendix B of the syllabus). Some time in the sections will be used to work on this research project and consult with the TAs on your research project. If you choose to work with other students on this project, you are responsible for managing the politics and interpersonal dynamics of the team. Working with a group has obvious advantages, but it has some risks as well. For example, one of the team members may not accomplish a task delegated to him or her, or may do it poorly, and this could affect the quality of everyone's paper. Ultimately, you are responsible for your final report of the research, and it will be evaluated as yours and only yours. Do not count on others to write any part of the paper. Sharing any part of your paper with another student is considered a violation of the Code of Student Conduct.

Two Research Project Tracks

I am offering two different research project "tracks." Track A gives maximum flexibility, whereas Track B simplifies data collection but requires substantial organization and timeliness in preparing research materials.

Track A: Your choice of method and data collection

For this track, you choose to study whatever you want to study, using whatever method you decide, and you collect the data at your own pace when you are ready to do so. Although the greater flexibility in choice of topic and method makes this alternative attractive to many, it does require a lot more discipline and effort to collect the data in time to write the final paper.

Track B: In-class split-ballot survey

Research conducted on Track B must be a "split-ballot" survey. A split-ballot survey is simply a survey that exists in two forms, with the two forms differing from each other by the manipulation of the variable of interest to the researcher. The goal of research based on a split-ballot method is to determine how that manipulation causally affects responses to the question or questions. Several examples of published split-ballot experiments can be found on CARMEN as can examples submitted from students who have taken this class in the past.

The major advantage of choosing this track is ease of data collection. Students in the class will be participants in the study. Thus, you don't need to seek out your own research participants, as in track A. At the end of the second exam (scheduled for February 17), each student in the class will be asked to take home a package of questionnaires containing the surveys from students and research groups who have chosen track B. Filling out these surveys will yield extra course credit for students who

choose to participate. These must be promptly returned by the next lecture meeting so that they can be redistributed to the students and research groups conducting the study.

The major disadvantages of this track are:

- (a) Students and research groups must have the questionnaire prepared in time for distribution at the end of the second exam. Because there is considerable clerical work involved in producing this take-home document, students and teams choosing track B must turn in 120 copies of the survey they plan on using (60 of each form) to a course TA to professor Hayes ***no later than noon on February 13th***. No extensions beyond this time will be given. Thus, you don't have that much time to finalize the design of the study you want to conduct and get the research instrument ready for distribution.
- (b) The survey must be limited in length to two sides of one page, set in a font size no smaller than 10 point, and you may not ask more than 20 questions on the survey. No exceptions to this length will be granted. This limit is imposed in order to minimize the length of the package distributed at the end of the second exam, so that students can be expected to complete the package at home in no more than a couple of hours.

You must create at least two forms of the survey in which you manipulate only what you intend to be manipulating. Example manipulations might include the response option format, question order, variations in a hypothetical scenario, or two different versions of a visual image that participants are asked to respond to. Surveys that are submitted by February 13th but that do not include an imbedded manipulation will not be included in the package sent out at the end of the second exam. It is important you consult closely with your TA in the design of your split-ballot survey so that you satisfy this requirement.

Format of the paper

Your research paper should contain 7 basic components in the following order:

Title page with Abstract. Indicate the title of your paper, your name, and write a brief 100 to 200 word abstract that summarizes your paper, including your findings. See the example research papers on the web page of any of the articles in the course pack for example abstracts.

Introduction. In this section, you should justify why you are doing the study you are doing, and you should link it to some existing literature published in the communication journals or some other discipline. If you are advancing specific hypotheses, you should describe them here and justify them. If you are just proposing some kind of research question, state it explicitly here. You don't need to do a full literature review, but you should mention at least some of the published scientific literature relevant to your project. **You must cite at least two empirical articles in your introduction that are relevant to your study. If you aren't clear whether something you want to cite counts as an empirical article, consult with your TA or Professor Hayes.**

Method. In this section, you are to describe in detail what you did and how you did it. The section of the paper is one of the more challenging sections. You need to describe how you conducted the study in sufficient detail that someone who read your paper could replicate your study. This section can be broken into several subsections if desired, describing where you obtained your data, the sampling procedures you used, the measurement instruments you used, and how you obtained the data itself

(sometimes called the “procedure” section). If you used human subjects, you need to talk about how you obtained your participants, how many were used, and give some basic demographic information (like Mean Age, % male/female, etc.)

Results. In this section you describe what you did with the data---how you analyzed your data to answer the question(s) and/or test the hypotheses that you described in the introduction. If you conducted inferential statistical tests, state the results of those tests here. You should comment on the reliability and validity of your data, if relevant in your study. If you need to use a table to display your results, you may add them to the end of the paper before any appendices you have (if any). Do not substitute a table for a written description of the results. Instead, use tables to supplement your written discussion of the results. *You are not required to do any inferential statistical tests in your paper, but if you feel comfortable doing so, please feel free to include such tests.*

Discussion. Here you tie everything up and discuss not only what you found but what the implications are for the hypothesis/theory/research question being examined. Discuss limitations of the study (such as flaws in the design or constraints on generalization/external validity) and suggestions for future research.

References. Here, provide a bibliography of anything you cite in the paper. Do not include anything in this section that you did not cite in the paper itself.

Appendices. Here, provide a copy of any measurement instruments you used (e.g., a questionnaire you developed, or an observational coding sheet you used). You must also include a print copy of your data. SPSS data files can be printed. For instructions on how to print the data file, see your TA.

Writing a scientific report is one of the more challenging writing exercises you are likely to experience. Use the examples on the web page to get a sense for what is expected of you. Journal articles are also a good source of inspiration and example for how to write scientifically. You may find it helpful to find an interesting article in one of the communication journals and use it as a model for how to put together your paper. Two articles uploaded to CARMEN (Southwell, and Dutta-Bergman) are also good models for follow for this project.

Use of Human Participants

The university requires that *some* research involving human participants must be submitted to and reviewed by the university’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) before data collection starts. For most research projects in the class, no review will be required. Generally speaking, questionnaire studies that don’t ask sensitive questions and don’t involve any risk of harm to the participants are granted an exemption from full review or need not be reviewed at all, as do observational studies of people engaging in day to day activities. If the study is of small scale, does not include asking respondents sensitive or potentially offensive questions, and is not likely to become a full-fledged research project of the variety you see in the published journals, you need not submit anything to the IRB. Research that uses archival data (e.g., publicly available data) does not need to be reviewed and no paperwork needs to be submitted. However, studies involving human participants younger than 18 years old should not be conducted without first consulting with your TA or Professor Hayes.

It is important that you do everything in your effort to maintain the confidentiality of the data, to respect the privacy of people providing data to you and, when possible, seek to maximize the

anonymity of your research participants. If you plan on collecting data at a business or on private property, making sure you contact the owner for permission prior to beginning your study.

Planning your project

The quarter will be over quickly, so it is important that you get started early on your research project. Set a schedule for accomplishing the major aspects of the project and try to stick to it. Below is a suggested schedule, which you may modify or ignore depending on your work style.

Weeks 1-3. Decide what topic you'd like to study. Devise a research question or hypothesis and begin to seriously think about how you will collect the relevant data. Assemble your research team early if you choose to work with others. Meet once or twice to brainstorm possible topics and approaches you might take to answering your research questions or testing your hypotheses. Consult with your TA for ideas or additional guidance.

Week 4-5. Make final decisions on how you are going to conduct your study, and examine the scientific literature for studies that might be relevant to your project. If you plan on using human participants (in an experiment or questionnaire study), consult with your TA to determine if your study requires that you submit your research proposal to the OSU Institutional Review Board. Continue consultations with TA. Students doing research in Track B must submit final copies of the survey no later than noon on February 13th.

Week 6-7. Collect data. Continue consultations with TA. Research track B packages distributed and returned.

Week 8-9. Analyze data and start writing research report. Continue consultations with TA.

Week 10. Finish writing research report.

Grading Criteria

The paper will be graded on a scale from 0 to 15, with the number of points being determined by how well you meet certain objectives in different sections of the paper, as well as your apparent mastery of the scientific method as applied in your research project, and your writing ability. The criteria being used for allocating points are as follows:

(a) Abstract

Does the paper contain a reasonable abstract of between 100 and 200 words summarizing what was done and what was found? Does the abstract contain enough information for the reader to determine what the paper is about before reading the entire paper?

0 = no abstract

1 = abstract present, but rambling, disorganized, or gives no information about what was done and/or what was found

2= abstract present, largely focused and informative.

(b) Introduction

*WHY the study was done? There should be some indication in the introduction that this study was done for a clear purpose and that it was motivated by previous research. **At least three** relevant prior studies should be cited from one or more empirical journals, and it should be clear how that past literature is relevant.*

0 = Little sense for what motivated the study

1 = Some discussion of the motivation for the study, but no mention of previous research

2 = Decent description of why the study was done and describes some previous research, at least in the form of two citations of empirical research articles.

(c) Method

In this section the goal is to describe how the study was conducted. The important thing is whether or not the reader can get a good sense for how the study proceeded, in a general sense, and whether there is sufficient detail provided so that someone could attempt a replication if desired.

0 = No sense for what was done in this study, other than in a very basic form (e.g., questionnaires were distributed, an experiment was conducted, etc.) or section completely absent.

1 = Some sense for how the study was conducted, including basic design as well as who the participants were or where the data come from. But would be tough to attempt to replicate based on the information provided. Track B research project with manipulation that is confounded with something other than the intended manipulation.

2 = Good sense for how the study was conducted, including the design of the study, who the participants were, distinctions between conditions made (if an experiment was conducted), etc. Enough information provided to allow for a reasonable attempt at conceptual if not exact replication

(d) Results

Here the results of the study should be described. There should be a description of how the data were analyzed and what was found.

0 = No real sense for what the findings were, or section completely absent.

1 = Some description of the results, but they are difficult to understand. Not easy to tell how they data were analyzed, what statistical indices and/or procedures were used, etc.

2 = Good presentation of the findings. Results are described well, statistical procedures used are relatively clear

(e) Discussion

Here the results should be tied back to the original research question or hypotheses, and there should be some attempt for the author of the paper to be critical of his or her own work, describing, for example, the limitations of the study and/or how it could have been improved.

0 = Student hasn't given much information about how the findings link back to the original purpose of the study. Little to no discussion of limitations, ways study could be improved, etc.

1 = Discussion describes the findings with respect to the original motivations for the study and discusses to a limited extent the problems with the study, limitations, etc.

2 = Discussion clearly written with the research purpose in mind. Clear statements about the potential weaknesses and limitations of the findings and/or ways the study could be improved and/or future research directions.

(f) References

A bibliography should be provided, either in the form of footnotes or a formal reference section.

0 = no references or footnotes providing bibliographic details of papers cited.

1 = references provided in some form

(g) Writing

0 = Very poor writing. Many grammatical problems, misspellings, incomplete or unintelligible sentences. Overall, difficult to read and understand.

1 = Adequate writing, but considerable room for improvement. (e.g., occasional grammar and/or spelling problems.) Writing needs some work, but isn't bad.

2 = Very good presentation. Maybe a few grammar and/or spelling errors, but generally quite readable.

(h) Evidence of Understanding of Science

Does the paper read like a decent attempt by a student enrolled in a research methods class to discuss a research study in the spirit of the scientific method.

0 = from this paper, you'd hardly even be able to tell the student has just completed a research methods class.

1 = the student seems to have taken away something from this class. The paper reads as if the student has learned something about the scientific method. But the person would require considerable coaching in order for you to trust his or her ability to carry out independent research

2 = the student clearly has a good grasp of the science and the communication of scientific investigation. The student could probably put together a decent honors thesis, and has strong potential perhaps as graduate student some day soon.

Titles of some of the papers submitted by students in previous COMM 460 classes

Age and the Selection of Media Outlets

Internet Use and its Relation to Emotional Detachment and Social Involvement in College Students

Differing Beliefs About Races and Cultures: How a Person's Background and Age May Influence Those Beliefs

Gender Differences in Food Cravings: Do Men & Women Differ in Their Cravings for Food When Feeling Depressed or Happy?

The Effect of Writing "Thank You" on a Server's Tip Percentage

Sales Approaches: Success Level of More Aggressive Salespeople vs. Salespeople who are Less Aggressive

The Difference in Workout Completion Between Participants With and Without a Set Workout Schedule

The Lantern Readership Study: Factors Affecting Readership and the Question of Charging Students for Each Publication

The Media's Influence on How Women Perceive Their Body Image

Love Languages: The Expressed Love Languages Between Genders

Music Downloading and the Habits of File-Sharers

A Matter of Attraction: A Study of the Importance Placed on Looks by Gender

Gender Differences in Reactions to Politeness in a College Setting

Name Familiarity in Political Advertisements and Its Impact on Election Results

Self-Image: Effects of Magazines on College Women

How do Black and White Women Differ in Their Perceptions of Body Images Found in the Media?

Advertising Slogans: How Does Price Affect a Slogan's Effectiveness?

Genetic Manipulation: Attitudes on Practice and Personal Utilization

Appendix A

Frequently Asked Questions About Obtaining SPSS

Where is SPSS located on campus?

SPSS is installed at Office of Information Technology (OIT) computer labs throughout campus. When last checked, SPSS was installed in the following student computer centers: Agricultural Administration 5; Brown Hall 145; Howlett Hall 272; Journalism 220; 209 W. 18th Avenue 265, 275, 285, 295; Baker Systems 590; Campbell Hall 119; Hagerty Hall 171; Hopkins Hall 171 and 354; Mathematics 52; Science and Engineering Library 120; Stillman Hall 235; Sullivant Hall 210 and 266. **Note: Journalism 342, where your recitation meetings are held, is not a public lab and will not be available for you to work on your recitation assignments.** Contact the IT service desk for the most recent list of locations.

Can I get SPSS installed on my personal computer?

SPSS for Windows can be obtained for personal installation through the IT Service Center at 025 Central Classrooms Building. There are two steps required:

(1) Download the software from the OIT software download web page. See

<http://osusls.osu.edu/upgrades/stg2wnx.html>

This is a large file and is best downloaded with a fast internet connection.

(2) After the file is downloaded, you need to go to 025 Central Classrooms Building to get a license code. Bring a valid university ID. The license code you are given must be typed into the SPSS installation box during installation in order for the software to install correctly on your machine.

Is there a Macintosh version of SPSS?

A Macintosh version of SPSS does exist, but access is sporadic from year to year. See the IT Service Center for details and current policies.

How can I purchase SPSS?

SPSS is a very expensive program, and with the OSU site license, there is little reason for a student to purchase it. If you are interested in doing so anyway, contact the SPSS sales office at www.spss.com

Appendix B

Use this form to switch your recitation assignment so that you may attend the same recitation as your research team member(s). Please return this form to one of the COMM 460 TAs or to Dr. Hayes no later than the end of the 3rd full week of classes. Once you submit this form, you are required to attend the recitation you have requested to be assigned to, and you will be considered absent if you do not attend that recitation. Switching recitation assignments is not required if you plan on working with a team on the project, although doing so will facilitate group work.

You do NOT need to notify the registrar of your new section assignment.

Name _____

Current recitation (circle):

M 12:30
W 12:30
T 1:30
M 2:30
R 3:30

I will be attending the following recitation instead (circle):

M 12:30
W 12:30
T 1:30
M 2:30
R 3:30

Name(s) of research team member(s):

Appendix C

All students enrolled in COMM 460 must sign this document and submit it to a teaching assistant before the end of the second week of classes.

Statement of Understanding of the OSU and COMM 460 Academic Misconduct Policy

I, _____ (print your name), have read the section of the course syllabus describing the academic misconduct policies for OSU and COMM 460 and understand the example forms of violation of the policies and the potential consequences of violating them. I understand that a lack of familiarity with the academic misconduct policies as spelled out in the section of the COMM 460 syllabus on academic misconduct and the Ohio State University Code of Student Conduct is not a valid excuse for violating these policies.

Signed _____ (your signature)

Date: _____

