

**JOUR 5250-001 (28735)**  
Fall 2011

**Research Methods I (Quantitative)**  
Room 337, General Academic Building  
Tuesday, 6:30–9:20 p.m.

Instructor: Koji Fuse, Ph.D.  
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Office phone: 940-369-8083  
Email: [kfuse@unt.edu](mailto:kfuse@unt.edu) (Always use Blackboard email for this class.)  
Office hours: Monday, 3:30–5 p.m.; Tuesday, 3:30–6 p.m.; or by appointment  
Website: Blackboard for JOUR 5250-001

### **Overview:**

Scientific investigation is an indispensable part of mass communication research. As management demands “hard” evidence that justifies its investment in communication activities, those who (plan to) work in any mass communication field (e.g., public relations, advertising, journalism, media) must get accustomed to the terminology, process, application and evaluation of mass communication research. This course is designed to introduce graduate students to basic quantitative research methods, statistical thinking and data analysis used in mass communications. Students will learn fundamentals of scientific research and statistical reasoning through continuous reading, proactive learning, exercises and data analyses. In the applied part of the course, each student will conduct original quantitative research and write a final paper.

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

1. Understand the structure of the scientific research process;
2. Describe major quantitative methods used in mass communications;
3. Use the basic vocabulary of scientific methods and statistics;
4. Comprehend statistical reasoning and data-analysis techniques;
5. Discern high-quality from low-quality research papers; and
6. Plan and conduct systematic quantitative research.

### **Prerequisites:**

Graduate standing.

### **Course Structure:**

This course consists of lectures, discussions, in-class/take-home exercises and data analyses. You must keep up with readings, turn in all assignments on time and actively participate in class. Attend class regularly, visit Blackboard frequently and participate in Blackboard discussions before every class. **To create an active learning environment, I assume that you have read the assigned materials before coming to class. When I ask you a specific question, you should be able to answer it or at least articulate precisely what you do not comprehend.** Active participation will help you understand the class better and improve your grades. Bring a scientific calculator to class when we discuss mathematics and statistics. You will have (1) one exam, (2) two written assignments, (3) client research project or critique of applied research, (4) in-class/take-home exercises and (5) final project. Your final grade is based on your total score, with 1,000 points possible. The breakdown of the total possible score is as follows:

Midterm exam (200 points)

Written assignments (200 points)

Article critique 1: 100 points

Article critique 2: 100 points

Track A or Track B — depending on the semester (300 points)

Track A

Client research: 200 points

In-class/take-home exercises: 100 points

Track B

Applied-research critique: 100 points

In-class/take-home exercises: 200 points

Final project (200 points)

Preparation and participation (100 points)

**Readings:**

(Required) Wimmer, Roger D., and Joseph R. Dominick. *Mass Media Research: An Introduction*. 9th ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2011. (Abbr. WD)

(Required) Salkind, Neil J. *Statistics for People Who (Think They) Hate Statistics with SPSS Student Version 15*. 4th ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2011. (Abbr. SA)

(Required) American Psychological Association. *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. 6th ed. Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association, 2010.

Note: Additional readings will be assigned. The Mayborn School of Journalism does not require students to purchase textbooks from the University Bookstore. Many are available through other bookstores or online.

**Course Schedule (subject to change at the instructor's discretion):**

**Aug. 30** (Module 01) Introduction to Class; Quantitative versus Qualitative Research (WD Chapter 5).

***Personal Information Sheet due.***

**Sept. 6** (Module 02) Scientific Research (WD Chapter 1); Types of Research Design; Reliability and Validity (Pages 26–32 of WD Chapter 1; Pages 57–62 of WD Chapter 2); Writing a Quantitative Research Paper.

Additional Readings: (Blackboard) “Writing Reports” and “Reliability and Validity.”

***Blackboard Self-Introduction due.***

**Sept. 13** (Module 03) Research Concepts and Levels of Measurement (Pages 42–57 of WD Chapter 2); Ethical Issues in Research (WD Chapter 3).

Additional Readings: (EBSCOhost) Banning, Stephen A. “Third-Person Effects on Political Participation.” *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly* 83 (Winter 2006): 785–800.

- Sept. 20** (Module 04) Types of Sampling (WD Chapter 4); Math Review; Descriptive Statistics (WD Chapter 10; SA Chapters 1–3).  
Additional Readings: (Blackboard) “Math Review 1,” “Math Review 2,” and “Statistics 1 (A–D)”;  
(for your final project research plan) one of the major-method chapters you will use for your final project — Chapters 6 (content analysis), 7 (survey research) or 9 (experimental research).  
**Assignment: Final Project Research Plan due.**
- Sept. 27** (Module 05) Descriptive Statistics, *continued* (SA Chapters 4–6); Population, Sample and Sampling Distributions (WD Chapters 4 and 10); SPSS (SA Appendix A).  
Additional Readings: (Blackboard) “Statistics 1” and “Statistics 2.”
- Oct. 4** (Module 06) Statistical Inferences and Hypothesis Testing (WD Chapter 11; SA Chapters 7–9).  
**Assignment: Applied Research Critique due.**
- Oct. 11** (Module 07) Content Analysis (WD Chapter 6); Brief Review for the Midterm Exam.  
Additional Reading: (EBSCOhost) Wood, Michelle L. M., Michelle R. Nelson, Jaeho Cho, and Ronald A. Yaros. “Tonight’s Top Story: Commercial Content in Television News.” *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly* 81 (Winter 2004): 807–22.
- Oct. 18** (Module 08) **Midterm Exam.**
- Oct. 25** (Module 09) Survey Research (WD Chapter 7).  
Additional Readings (again): (EBSCOhost) Banning, Stephen A. “Third-Person Effects on Political Participation.” *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly* 83 (Winter 2006): 785–800.
- Nov. 1** (Module 10) Survey Research (WD Chapter 7), *continued*.  
**Assignment: Article Critique 1 due.**
- Nov. 8** (Module 11) Longitudinal Research (WD Chapter 8); Experimental Research (WD Chapter 9).  
Additional Reading: (EBSCOhost) Sallot, Lynne M. “What the Public Thinks about Public Relations: An Impression Management Experiment.” *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly* 79 (Spring 2002): 150–71.
- Nov. 15** (Module 12) Inferential Statistics: t-tests and ANOVA (WD Chapter 12; SA Chapters 10–13); SPSS.  
**Assignment: Final Project Progress Report due.**
- Nov. 22** (Module 13) Inferential Statistics, *continued*: correlation, regression, crosstabs and multivariate statistics (WD Chapter 12; SA Chapters 14–17); SPSS.  
**Assignment: Article Critique 2 due.**
- Nov. 29** (Module 14) Data Analysis; SPSS.
- Dec. 6** (Module 15) Data Analysis, *continued*; SPSS; Summary of Semester.
- Dec. 13** (Module 16) **Final Project due at 6:30 p.m. More details later.**

### **Attendance, Preparation and Participation:**

I will take attendance twice each class day for two 1.5-hour sessions. You cannot have more than three inadmissible absences (i.e., three 1.5-hour sessions) without penalty toward your final grade. Each additional invalid absence of a half class will cost you 10 points. You must sign the attendance sheet yourself and use the same signature throughout the semester; having someone sign your name is a form of academic dishonesty. In addition, three incidents of showing up late or disappearing early constitute one absence. **Only “unforeseeable” circumstances (e.g., serious illness, family emergency) or valid time conflicts (e.g., an academic conference, religious observance) substantiated by third-party documentation will be accepted. Submit documentation within a week after an absence occurs.** Printer malfunctions, arrests for traffic warrants, difficulties in finding library materials, etc. are not “unforeseeable.” You also must prepare well for class and participate in Blackboard discussions before class. Remember the following: First, the more classes you skip, the less education you receive and the lower grade you earn; second, if you miss a class, you still must turn in an assignment on or before its due date; and third, avoid “passive learning” — sleeping comfortably, sitting leisurely at the back, text-messaging or having chitchat. I retain my right to evaluate your class participation.

### **Exam:**

The midterm is a closed-book, closed-notes exam, which covers the textbooks as well as everything discussed in class. It has 80 multiple-choice and true-false and two essay questions.

Once the exam starts, no one can leave the room without finishing it. Latecomers cannot take the exam after the first person finishes it and exits the room. Except for valid excuses specified in the “Attendance, Preparation and Participation” section, you should assume no make-up is available. Also, if you have a valid time conflict, you must make an advance arrangement to take the exam before the scheduled exam time. Bring a few pencils, an eraser and a calculator to the exam. Do not sit next to each other. Put everything in your bag under the table before the exam starts.

### **Written Assignments:**

For all assignments, apply 12-point Times New Roman and double-spacing unless otherwise specified. When you finish your assignment, first print out your complete paper to submit it in class; then eliminate all self-identifying information and save the file to upload it to Blackboard Turnitin by the beginning of class on the due date. No email submission or handwritten materials will be accepted. Late assignments, whether no submission of a hard copy in class or a Word file through Blackboard Turnitin, will drop one letter grade for each day. Exceptions are the same as specified in the “Attendance, Preparation and Participation” section. **You must exactly follow the APA style. Attach to your paper a hard copy of an article you have chosen to critique. Extensive Internet research is strongly discouraged for this class; library searches and academic journal/book reading are expected.** Ask a librarian about how to use electronic databases (e.g., EBSCOhost, JSTOR). For each paper, make sure to refer to Wimmer and Dominick (2011) as well as at least two additional scholarly articles and books relevant to the paper. Do not make superficial references (e.g., definition of content analysis); you must discuss substantive, content-related issues. **Attach the cover, reference and appendix pages, and staple your paper. Remember that incomplete citations or references will cost you one letter grade. The minimum page number of each project excludes the cover, reference and appendix pages. All page requirements refer to “full pages.”** Too many grammatical and

stylistic errors will lower your grade. For more detail of each project, go to Blackboard. Save your work on your computer in case it gets lost. Talk to me within a week of receiving your graded paper if you have questions. No consideration will be given beyond one week.

Article critique will familiarize you with research processes and academic writing. Select a quantitative research article from a recent (within the past 5 years) issue of an academic journal, not a conference paper, in any area of journalism and mass communication. The article must contain (1) clear hypotheses or research questions and (2) statistical analyses (i.e., inferential statistics, statistical significance). Examples of journals include *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, *Newspaper Research Journal*, *Public Opinion Quarterly*, *Human Communication Research*, *Journal of Public Relations Research*, and *Journal of Advertising Research*. Divide your paper into the following eight sections and clearly label them:

1. A full bibliographic citation: Give the citation of the article you have chosen to critique.
2. An abstract: This is a brief summary of an article (100 words or so). Most journal articles have their abstracts at the beginning, but you must write an abstract in your own words.
3. Theoretical justification: Explain the unique (theoretical) contribution your chosen research article attempts to make to the body of knowledge in its research area. Read closely the literature review done by the article author(s).
4. Hypotheses or research questions: If the article addresses more than two hypotheses or research questions, select and write verbatim the two that you think are most theoretically important and relevant to the research. Explicate, for each hypothesis, the independent and dependent variables, and the constitutive and operational definitions of each variable.
5. Method: Identify and discuss the research method, design and procedures, other than anything related to the constitutive and operational definitions of each independent or dependent variable dealt with in hypotheses or research questions.
6. Target population and sample: Explain the target population, the population studied and the sampling methods used for the study.
7. Summary of the results, general discussion and conclusion: This section should correspond to the hypotheses you have chosen to discuss at the earlier stage. What results did the research obtain? What generalizations and conclusions did the author(s) make?
8. Critique of the study: Constructively critique the research article you read. In other words, offer your own conclusion about whether the research was good, useful, methodologically sound or informative, and why. You must do an additional literature search and review of other research articles that are methodologically and theoretically relevant to the article you have chosen. For example, if you select a research article that focuses on one aspect of agenda-setting theory, incorporate in your critique other research articles that test the specific aspect of the theory. Also use other research textbooks that discuss the same method of the article you are critiquing. Your extra effort will be taken into consideration. In other words, the more outside literature you review and incorporate in your critique, the better grade you are likely to receive.

**1. Article critique 1 (six full pages, excluding the cover and reference pages)**

Choose and critique one scholarly content-analysis article.

**2. Article critique 2 (six full pages, excluding the cover and reference pages)**

Choose and critique one scholarly survey-research article.

**Client Research (Track A):**

In the past, JOUR 5250 (Research Methods I: Quantitative) and JOUR 5260 (Research Methods II: Qualitative) sometimes collaborated to conduct research for a client. Everyone must make a significant contribution to completing a project and writing a report for a client. The real world of research is unpredictable because of the client's demands, technical glitches, unexpected low-response rates, etc. You must be flexible in adjusting your schedule to complete your tasks.

**Critique of Applied Research (Track B):**

Find a recent (within the past five years) "comprehensive" applied quantitative research report in journalism or strategic communications and write an insightful, constructive critique of the research, including new angles or discoveries. You must not choose any "hard science" research, such as econometric models, clinical trials, environmental assessments and physics. Look for research related to content analysis, survey, experiment, or computer-assisted reporting. Read the first paragraph of the "Written Assignments" section for specific requirements. You may have to contact the organization(s) to obtain more information. Discuss the following in your paper: goals and activities of the organization that commissioned the research, reputation of the organization that actually conducted research, problems or issues investigated, method(s) and procedures used, findings, the ways the information was used, missing methodological information, and the quality of the research. Your paper must have eight full pages, excluding the cover, reference and appendix pages.

**In-Class/Take-Home Exercises:**

We will do some quantitative exercises and deal with some datasets for statistical analyses.

**Final Project:**

Using at least one of the quantitative research methods you learn in class, conduct your original research on any phenomenon related to mass communication. You must actually gather data. However, do not conduct research on minors. You can choose to work alone or collaborate with one of your classmates. Remember that scholarly articles you read provide the best model for your research. During the semester, you must write (1) a research plan and (2) a progress report and discuss it in class. You also must obtain my approval on your questionnaire or coding sheet before collecting data. Please do not ask me during class a question about your final project without first telling me what you think is the right way of conducting your research. "How should I do that for my final project?" takes too much time away from class discussion. Think first for yourself and then ask me questions during my office hours or a break. If your question is useful and relevant to everyone, I will discuss it in class later.

You must exactly follow the APA style. The minimum page number of your final paper is 20, excluding the cover page, abstract, reference page, illustrations, charts, graphs and tables. Your paper must have the following sections: (1) a cover page, (2) abstract, (3) introduction, (4) literature review (at least 10 quantitative scholarly articles published in academic journals, not presented in academic conferences), (5) research questions and hypotheses, (6) method, (7) results (including inferential statistics), (8) conclusion, and (9) appendices (i.e., questionnaire, tables). The minimum sample size is 150, 120 and 100 for a content analysis, a survey and an experiment.

### Grading:

90 percent or higher of total possible points:	A
80 percent–lower than 90 percent:	B
70 percent–lower than 80 percent:	C
60 percent–lower than 70 percent:	D
Lower than 60 percent:	F

### Basic Course Policy:

This is a research course that requires you to constantly work hard by attentive listening, meticulous note-taking, active class participation and timely submission of assignments. **Keep in mind that no study guide is available.** Assume that you will be learning a “foreign language.” However, never forget Albert Einstein’s statement: “The whole of science is nothing more than a refinement of everyday thinking.” Anyone can master science and statistics. Feel free to stop by my office whenever you have questions.

When you submit work for this class, that is the same as making a statement that you have produced the work yourself in its entirety and you have not previously produced this work for submission in another course or any other outlet. Plagiarism, fabrication, copyright infringement, and similar uses of other people’s work are unacceptable. Read through the “Categories of Academic Dishonesty” on Pages 3–4 of UNT Policy No. 18.1.16 (Student Standards of Academic Integrity).<sup>1</sup> Saying “I didn’t know that,” “He copied my work,” or “Others also plagiarized” will not save you, and the consequences of academic misconduct will be grave. Plagiarism, in a nutshell, is using other people’s written words as your own. Some people consider the use of 7–10 words in a row, copied from another source, as plagiarism. Be sure to include citations when using other people’s writing, because plagiarism is a serious offense in any discipline, especially in journalism. It is a firing offense in the professional world. Any situations involving potential academic dishonesty will be handled through procedures established by the UNT Office of Academic Integrity. The process also includes the opportunity for students to appeal the outcome. Read specific procedures at <http://vpaa.unt.edu/academic-integrity.htm>. In this course, if you use a string of seven consecutive words, you must use quotation marks and refer to the original source. You must also avoid using an extensive quote or too many quotes. Present your original work.

In addition, you are not the only person enrolled in this class. Even small noises you make will negatively affect the learning environment. **Furthermore, you are not allowed to bring your laptop to class for purposes other than note-taking; surfing the Internet or checking your email during class is reprehensible.** I expect you to behave as a responsible adult in class. Therefore, if you continually cause distractions (e.g., no participation, chitchat, frequently leaving the room or disappearing during class, disturbances such as cell phones, beepers and computers), I will remove you from class. **I make no exception for this.**

Finally, consider various commute options discussed at <http://www.unt.edu/transit/> to save on fuel costs.

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<sup>1</sup> UNT Policy Manual, Volume III, [http://policy.unt.edu/sites/default/files/untpolicy/pdf/7-Student\\_Affairs-Academic\\_Integrity.pdf](http://policy.unt.edu/sites/default/files/untpolicy/pdf/7-Student_Affairs-Academic_Integrity.pdf)

**Re-taking Failed Courses:**

Students will not be allowed to take automatically a failed journalism course more than two times. Once you have failed a journalism course twice, you will not be allowed to enroll in that course for 12 months. Once you have waited 12 months after failing a course twice, you may make an appeal to the professor teaching the course to be allowed to enroll a third time.

**Disability Accommodation:**

The School of Journalism cooperates with the Office of Disability Accommodations to make reasonable accommodations for qualified students. If you have not registered with ODA, please do so and present your written accommodation request to me by the 12th day of school.

**SETE:**

The Student Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness (SETE) is a university-wide online evaluation and a requirement for all UNT classes. The School of Journalism needs your input to improve our teaching and curriculum. This short survey will be available at the end of the semester, providing you a chance to comment on how this class is taught. Prompt completion of the SETE will mean earlier access to final semester grades. You are a critical part of our growth and success. We look forward to your input through SETE.

**Mayborn School of Journalism Academic Integrity Policy**

The codes of ethics from the Society of Professional Journalists, American Advertising Federation and Public Relations Society of America address truth and honesty. The Mayborn School of Journalism embraces these tenets and believes that academic dishonesty of any kind — including plagiarism and fabrication — is incongruent with all areas of journalism. The school's policy aligns with UNT Policy 18.1.16 and requires reporting any act of academic dishonesty to the Office for Academic Integrity for investigation. If the student has a previous confirmed offense (whether the first offense was in the journalism school or another university department) and the student is found to have committed another offense, the department will request the additional sanction of removing the student from the Mayborn School of Journalism. The student may appeal to the Office for Academic Integrity, which ensures due process and allows the student to remain in class pending the appeal.

## Statement of Student Learning Outcomes, UNT Journalism

Since 1969, the UNT department of journalism, which is now the Frank W. and Sue Mayborn School of Journalism (effective Sept. 1, 2009), has been accredited by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. This national accreditation also extends to the Frank W. Mayborn Graduate Institute of Journalism, the only accredited professional master's program in Texas. About one-fourth of all journalism and mass communication programs in the United States are accredited by ACEJMC. National accreditation enhances your education here because it certifies that the school and the graduate institute adhere to many standards established by the council. Among these standards are student learning outcomes, covered by journalism courses in all sequences.

This course, JOUR 5250, will help to meet the student learning outcomes that have been checked by your professor, Dr. Koji Fuse.

Each graduate must:

- Understand and apply First Amendment principles and the law appropriate to professional practices.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of groups in a global society in relationship to communications.
- Understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information.
- Work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity.
- Think critically, creatively and independently.
- Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work.
- Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve.
- Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness.
- Apply basic numerical and statistical concepts.
- Apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.

Sept. 1, 2009