Applied Communication Research Methods: Getting Started as a Researcher

Instructor Syllabus Guide

Syllabus Recommendations

The following calendar outlines a basic schedule for a 15-week course using the textbook, meeting twice a week, and offering three exams. Instructors may assign any or all of the activities associated with a unit as either homework or in-class activities. After the basic calendar, we outline options for a semester-long research project structured by combining multiple activities. Potential due dates for activities and a culminating research paper are offered.

Additional or alternative graded elements are possible. We have had success with weekly quizzes on the assigned unit(s), presented as open-book activities to be completed before class. This allows the instructor to evaluate understanding and focus on those terms that most challenged students. We also encourage instructors to assign research articles as supplemental readings; potential exemplar articles can be found in the textbook references at the end of each unit.

Basic Schedule for 15-week Course

Date	Topic	Readings
Wk1 D1	Introduction to the course	Unit 1
Wk1 D2	Basic principles of research	
Wk2 D1	Core concepts	Unit 2
Wk2 D2	Theory	
Wk3 D1	Knowledge	Unit 3
Wk3 D2	Reading scholarly research	
Wk4 D1	The ethics of research I	Unit 4
Wk4 D2	Concept explication & measurement I	Unit 5
Wk5 D1	Concept explication & measurement II	
Wk5 D2	*Test #1 (Units 1–5)*	
Wk6 D1	Assessing reliability and validity I	Unit 6
Wk6 D2	Assessing reliability and validity II	
Wk7 D1	Effective measurement I	Unit 7
Wk7 D2	Effective measurement II	
Wk8 D1	Sampling procedures I	Unit 8
Wk8 D2	Sampling procedures II	
Wk9 D1	Experiments I	Unit 9
Wk9 D2	Experiments II	
Wk10 D1	Surveys I	Unit 10
Wk10 D2	Surveys II	
Wk11 D1	Content analysis	Unit 11
Wk11 D2	*Test #2 (Units 6–11)*	
Wk12 D1	Qualitative research	Unit 12
Wk12 D2	Qualitative data analysis	Unit 13
Wk13 D1	Descriptive statistics I	Unit 14
Wk13 D2	Descriptive statistics II	
Wk14 D1	Inference & bivariate analysis I	Unit 15
Wk14 D2	Inference & bivariate analysis II	
Wk15 D1	Multivariate analysis	Unit 16
Wk15 D2	Final project work day/exam review	
Finals Week	*Final exam (Units 12–16 or cumulative)*	

Semester Research Project

Several of the unit activities are designed so that, with minor modifications, they can be used to help students work through the steps of designing and carrying out original research. The following outline suggests how these assignments might be brought together to get students to where they have the necessary materials to give a final presentation or turn in a completed research paper. Such a process could be done as a group or individual activity. The activity guide indicates how to effectively modify the listed assignments for this process.

For this guide, we assume that students will choose from among multiple methods for their study. Instructors may prefer to limit students to a particular method, or require a multi-method study. In that case, we recommend that instructors arrange the calendar so that the preferred method is addressed immediately after Unit 8 instead of in numerical order. If students do have a choice of methods, this is reflected in the outline by indicating the options for activities they would choose from based on the selected method.

Weekly Activity Schedule for Semester Project

Date	Topic	Activity
Wk1 D1	Introduction to the course	
Wk1 D2	Basic principles of research	
Wk2 D1	Core concepts	
Wk2 D2	Theory	
Wk3 D1	Knowledge	3A
Wk3 D2	Reading scholarly research	3B
Wk4 D1	The ethics of research I	4A
Wk4 D2	Concept explication & measurement I	
Wk5 D1	Concept explication & measurement II	5A
Wk5 D2	*Test #1 (Units 1–5)*	
Wk6 D1	Assessing reliability and validity I	
Wk6 D2	Assessing reliability and validity II	*Suggested deadline for draft literature review*
Wk7 D1	Effective measurement I	7A
Wk7 D2	Effective measurement II	
Wk8 D1	Sampling procedures I	
Wk8 D2	Sampling procedures II	
Wk9 D1	Experiments I	9A (option)*
Wk9 D2	Experiments II	
Wk10 D1	Surveys I	10A (option)*
Wk10 D2	Surveys II	
Wk11 D1	Content analysis	11A (option)*
Wk11 D2	*Test #2 (Units 6–11)*	
Wk12 D1	Qualitative research	12A (option)*
Wk12 D2	Qualitative data analysis	
Wk13 D1	Descriptive statistics I	
Wk13 D2	Descriptive statistics II	*Suggested deadline for data collection*
Wk14 D1	Inference & bivariate analysis I	15A
Wk14 D2	Inference & bivariate analysis II	
Wk15 D1	Multivariate analysis	16A
Wk15 D2	Final project work day/exam review	
Finals Week	*Final exam (Units 12–16 or cumulative)*	*Deadline for paper or presentation*

*Depending on the methodology chosen, students will design one (or more) of the specific study types. After instructor approval, they should then collect data, following instructor guidelines for sampling as applicable.