COMM 3163
Communication Industry Research Methods

SPRING 2024
Class Number 18309

Faculty Instructor:

Dr. Rob Potter [pronouns: he/him/his]

- Online lectures: available via CarmenCanvas
- Office hours: Via Microsoft Teams, by appointment. Click here to make one.
- potter.477@osu.edu

Graduate Student Instructors:

Annie Dooley [pronouns: she/her/hers]

- In-person labs: Mondays, 12:10 - 2:00pm in Journalism Bldg 224
- In-person labs: Mondays, 4:20 – 6:10 pm in Derby Hall 3176
- Office hours: Via Zoom, by appointment. Click here for the Zoom link.
- dooley.129@buckeymail.osu.edu

Samantha Flanagan [pronouns: she/her/hers]

- In-person labs: Mondays, 8:00 – 9:50am in Derby Hall 3176
- In-person labs: Mondays, 10:05 –11:55am in Derby Hall 3176
- Office hours: Via Zoom, by appointment. Click here for the Zoom link.
- flanagan.229@osu.edu

William Gee [pronouns: he/him/his]

- In-person labs: Mondays, 12:10 –2:00pm in Derby Hall 3176
- In-person labs: Mondays, 2:15 – 4:05pm in Derby Hall 3176
- Office hours: Via Zoom, by appointment.
- gee.127@osu.edu

Mode of delivery/Lab meeting times:

The lecture component of the course is delivered asynchronously on CarmenCanvas. The lab component of the course is delivered in-person on campus.

- Each week, a new module will become available on the course's CarmenCanvas site. The module will contain all the online requirements associated with that week. Each module will include a series of lecture videos pertaining to key course concepts, as well as instructions for completing the weekly readings and activities due that week.

- On Monday, you will participate in an in-person lab session taught by your

graduate student instructor. You may only attend the lab session for which you are officially registered. These sessions are designed to review key course concepts through mini-lectures, provide guidance on course assignments, and allow time to conduct data analyses using appropriate software.

- All quizzes are due 11:59pm on Sundays.
- All other assignments are due 11:59pm on Wednesdays.

Course description

This course (1) introduces students to traditional and state-of-the-art methods in the communication industry and (2) describes how these methods can be used to answer important questions for industry professionals (e.g., Did the marketing campaign *cause* an increase in sales? How do we design surveys such that employees or consumers will tell us the *truth* when they fill them out? If a product is well received by consumers in the United States, will it be well received in other countries?).

Below are examples of traditional and emerging methods that you will learn in the course:

- **Surveys**: You will learn how to effectively design survey questions so important respondents (e.g., current consumers, potential customers, employees) will understand them and provide useful responses.
- **Experiments**: You will learn how to design experiments and quasi-experiments to answer causal questions (e.g., Did the marketing campaign cause an increase in sales?).
- **Biometric measures**: You will learn how measures taken of bodily responses (e.g., eye-tracking, heart rate, skin conductance, facial muscle activity) during media consumption can answer industry questions (e.g., Is advertisement A more likely to attract attention than advertisement B? Did the PR announcement from the CEO induce positive emotion? What features on a social media site tend to attract attention?).

You will also learn to use simple and easy-to-understand statistical techniques. We live in an increasingly data-driven world. “Big data” and data analytics have drastically changed the landscape for businesses. Possessing a degree of statistical competence will allow you to better navigate this new information environment.

Plus, this course will also teach you to think like a social scientist. Social scientists often use rigorous methods and logics for generating substantive conclusions (e.g., X caused Y.) It will benefit you to apply this rigorous and logical way of thinking to industry, since not everyone in industry will have this training.

In summary, this course will help to sharpen analytical skills, which will serve anyone intending to work in industry, attend law school, business school, or graduate school.

Course learning goals and outcomes

In this course you will work toward accomplishing the following goals and outcomes:

- learning traditional and state-of-the-art research methods and how they can be used to answer questions in the communication industries,
- understanding the benefits and drawbacks of each method, and when to employ one rather than another,
- understanding the nature of deductive reasoning and its general applicability to modern questions,
- learning the precise meaning of causality and the obstacles to identifying true cause and effect relationships,
- learning basic statistical techniques and how to draw conclusions from results,
- writing understandable summaries of quantitative research and the conclusions drawn from it.

Required materials

- **The textbook associated with the course is:**

  Boyle, M. & Schmierbach, M. (2019). *Applied Communication Research Methods: Getting Started as a Researcher* (2nd Edition). New York: Routledge.

  - You can access the textbook online for **FREE** via the OSU library:
    - [Library Link]
  - If you want to own/rent a copy of this book for use in this course, you may be able to find 1st, 2nd, or the latest edition of via the following:
    - [Publisher Link] [Amazon]
  - If you use a version of the book other than the 2019 edition, make sure the topics listed on the syllabus match what you are reading. The syllabus used the 2019, 2nd edition page numbers.

- Other readings will be assigned to provide examples of specific research methods being used in the industry. These will be posted on CarmenCanvas.

- Access to a computer/laptop, a high-speed Internet connection, current web browser with video-related plugins, speakers/headphones,

- Access to Microsoft Excel for lab assignments. All written assignments must be submitted in Word or PDF format. Therefore, access to Microsoft Office is highly recommended. OSU students can find that for free here.

Points

This class has 100 possible points, which are distributed as follows:

Checkpoints (x5)	10 points
Online Quizzes (x5)	50 points
Lab Proposals (x3)	15 points
Data Analyses (x3)	15 points
Lab Participation	10 points

Assignments

- **Checkpoints (2pts x 5).** Periodic "checkpoints" serve to allow you to communicate to Dr. Potter and/or assess your understanding of key course concepts. Each checkpoint consists of open-ended questions on CarmenCanvas. You will receive feedback on these assignments. There are five checkpoints in total, and they are graded out of two points for thoroughness and completion (2 = satisfactory, 1 = needs improvement, 0 = incomplete).

- **Online Quizzes (10pts x 5).** Students can take six quizzes during the semester. The lowest score will be dropped. Quizzes will assess your knowledge and understanding related to (1) lecture video material and (2) course readings.

    - Each quiz is worth 10 points and has 10 questions. The quizzes will rigorously test your knowledge about the topics covered only in the previous two weekly modules (i.e., they are not cumulative).

    - Even though the quizzes are online and open book, they are timed and not easy. You should plan your weeks so you can do all the reading and watch all the lecture segments in time to ask Dr. Potter any clarifying questions before beginning the quiz.

    - Students will only have one 30-minute attempt to complete each quiz.

    - Quizzes should be done individually. Completing a quiz with another student constitutes academic misconduct.

    - Please do not wait until the last minute to start a quiz, as technological issues can occur (see technology policy below for more details).

    - CarmenCanvas will automatically open the quiz at 12:01am EST on Monday of a quiz week. Students should submit the quiz by 11:59pm EST on Sunday. Lateness penalties apply to quizzes. This means that you can take quizzes after the deadline, but you will suffer a point penalty.

- **Lab Proposals (3 @ 5pts each).** You will write three research proposals focused on research methods taught in lecture and lab. **It should answer a question in communication industry, and you are encouraged to be creative and to come up with your own topic**. Lab instructors will provide more details and guidelines about these proposals.

- **Data Analyses (3 @ 5pts each).** You will complete three sets of statistical analyses that employ skills using Microsoft Excel and SPSS. These programs and procedures will be modeled during lecture and lab. Lab instructors will provide more details and guidelines about these analyses.

- **Lab Participation (10pts).** There are twelve lab sessions where participation will be graded; these are clearly marked on the syllabus. Lab instructors will assign points on those days using the following scale: 1 = attending and engaged in course tasks, 0.5 = attending but not engaged, 0 = absent. There are many ways of demonstrating engagement with the content of the period. You may miss a maximum of two labs without it affecting your grade. There are no "excused absences" for labs, so bank your absences for when you need them (e.g. illness, appointments).

Late assignments and make-ups

All deadlines are in Eastern Standard Time (EST). Students may submit all assessments late with a penalty. Penalties for late work increase cumulatively. Submitting work one second after the deadline yields a 20% penalty for the submission for the first week following the due date. After this first week, students may receive at most 50% for any submitted late work.

Assignment make-ups will be given for university-excused excursions or for unavoidable circumstances only (e.g., deaths, family emergencies, interviews for jobs or internships) at the discretion of Dr. Potter. This may require the student to meet during CarmenZoom office hours, or at a separate arranged time, to discuss the situation.

Extra Credit

Conducting scientific research is central to the mission of the School of Communication at The Ohio State University. Students can earn up to 2 points of extra credit by agreeing to be a research participant. For each hour of participation in a School of Communication research study, students receive 1 point of extra credit.

Students must sign up for studies at https://osucomm.sona-systems.com. Be sure to read the instructions on the SONA site closely. Missing a research appointment or providing researchers inaccurate responses (i.e., quickly clicking through questionnaires just to 'get it done.') will not result in earning extra credit.

Grading scale

Please note that CarmenCanvas, OSU's grading and class management software, does not round fractions up. Please take that into account in computing grades. The official grading scale is as follows:

93 – 100:	**A**
90 – 92.9:	**A-**
87 – 89.9:	**B+**
83 – 86.9:	**B**
80 – 82.9:	**B-**
77 – 79.9:	**C+**
73 – 76.9:	**C**
70 – 72.9:	**C-**
67 – 69.9:	**D+**
60 – 66.9:	**D**
Below 60:	**E**

Credit hour and work expectation

This course is worth 4 credits. Direct instruction will occur in both the lectures and the labs. According to Ohio State policy, students should expect around 3 hours per week of time spent on direct instruction (instructor content and CarmenCanvas activities, for example) in addition to 6 hours of homework (reading and assignment preparation, for example) to receive a grade of (C) average.

Communicating with Dr. Potter and expected response times

The following list provides Dr. Potter's intended availability throughout the course. (Remember that you can call **614-688-HELP** at any time if you have a technical problem.)

- **Grading and assignment feedback.** For large weekly assignments you can expect feedback within 14 days. This will come in the form of grades and comments provided directly on the assignment submission in CarmenCanvas.
- **Email.** Dr. Potter will typically reply within 48 hours. It is recommended that you send email from your OSU account and have the subject line read 'Comm 3163 student question.'
- **CarmenCanvas communication tools.** You should not use CarmenCanvas mail or CarmenCanvas assignment submission comments as ways of communicating with Dr. Potter.

University Policies

Student Academic Services

The Arts and Sciences Advising and Academic Services website provides support for student academic success. Information on advising issues such as tutoring, transfer credits, academic standing, and contact information for Arts and Sciences advisors can be obtained through this website. The site is: http://advising.osu.edu/welcome.shtml

Student Services

Buckeye Link assists with financial aid matters, tuition and fee payments. Please see the site at: https://buckeyelink.osu.edu/

Copyright Disclaimer

The materials used in connection with this course may be subject to copyright protection and are only for the use of students officially enrolled in the course for the educational purposes associated with the course. Copyright law must be considered before copying, retaining, or disseminating materials outside of the course.

Title IX

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories (e.g., race). If you or someone you know has been sexually harassed or assaulted, you may find the appropriate resources at http://titleix.osu.edu or by contacting the Interim Ohio State Title IX Coordinator, Melissa Mayhan: titleIX@osu.edu or 614- 247-5838.

Religious Accommodations

It is Ohio State's policy to reasonably accommodate the sincerely held religious beliefs and practices of all students. The policy permits a student to be absent for up to three days each academic semester for reasons of faith or religious or spiritual belief.

Students planning to use religious beliefs or practices accommodations in this course must inform Dr. Potter in writing no later than 14 days after the course begins. Dr. Potter will then schedule an alternative due date for the course requirement, which may be before or after the original time and date of the course requirement. These alternative accommodations will remain confidential. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that all course assignments are completed.

Weather or other short-term closing

Should in-person lab classes be canceled, we will meet virtually via CarmenZoom during our regularly scheduled time. Your lab instructor will share any updates via CarmenCanvas.

Mental Health

Students may experience a range of mental health issues over the course of a term that can cause barriers to learning. These can include strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating, and/or a lack of motivation. This may lead to diminished academic performance or even reduce your ability to participate in daily activities unrelated to class.

The Ohio State University offers services to assist you with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing. If you or someone you know is experiencing mental health issues, you can learn more about the broad range of confidential services available on campus via the Office of Student Life's Counseling and Consultation Service (CCS) or calling 614-292-5766.

CCS is located on the 4th Floor of the Younkin Success Center and 10th Floor of Lincoln Tower.

You can reach an on-call counselor when CCS is closed at 614-292-5766.

If you are thinking of harming yourself, need a safe, non-judgmental place to talk, or if you are worried about someone else and need advice about what to do, 24-hour emergency help is also available through the Suicide Prevention Hotline (Columbus: 614-221-5445).

Academic Integrity Policy

Policies for this course:

- **Code of Student Conduct:** Students are expected to understand and abide by The Ohio State University Code of Student Conduct.
- **Written assignments**: All written assignments, communications, and posts should be the student's original work. Formal assignments should follow **APA** style to cite the ideas and words of research sources. Students are encouraged to ask a trusted person to proofread their assignments before turning them in – but only the submitting student should revise or rewrite the work.
- **Reusing past work**: In general, students are prohibited in university courses from turning in work from a past class to a current class, even if the work is modified. Students who want to build on past research or revisit a topic explored in previous courses should first discuss the situation with Dr. Potter in office hours.
- **Falsifying research or results**: All work in this course is intended to be a learning experience; students should never feel tempted to make data or results look more successful than they were.
- **Use of Generative AI**: Except for spelling and grammar checkers, students may not use Chat-GPT or other forms of generative AI-software to prepare their assignments.

Procedures for Suspected Academic Misconduct

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct (COAM) to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term "academic misconduct" includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations.

Dr. Potter is required to report suspected cases of academic misconduct to COAM. It is COAM's responsibility to assess whether plagiarism occurred.

Plagiarism as defined by the university's code of conduct is, "the representation of another's work or ideas as one's own; it includes the unacknowledged word-for-word use and/or paraphrasing of another person's work, and/or the inappropriate unacknowledged use of another person's ideas; submitting substantially the same work to satisfy requirements for one course or academic requirement that has been submitted in satisfaction of requirements for another course or academic requirement, without permission of the instructor of the course for which the work is being submitted or supervising authority for the academic requirement." Here is a good resource on plagiarism from the OSU Writing Center.

You are encouraged to plan enough time to prepare your assignment submissions so that any questions you have about possible academic misconduct can be brought to the instructors before the submission deadline.

Accessibility accommodations

Students with physical or mental conditions (chronic or temporary) that may impair learning should contact the Office of Student Life SLDS office in 098 Baker Hall.
Find a list of SLDS services here.

Students certified for accommodations by SLDS should inform Dr. Potter of their needs as soon as possible.

An environment free from harassment and discrimination

The Ohio State University and Dr. Potter are committed to building and maintaining a community to reflect diversity and to improve opportunities for all. Students have the right to be free from harassment, discrimination, and sexual misconduct.

To report such behavior and/or to seek confidential and non-confidential resources and support, contact the Office of Institutional Equity.

Tentative nature of this syllabus. Events that transpire over the semester may require the modification of this syllabus and/or schedule. Modifications will be announced via CarmenCanvas. It is the student's responsibility to remain up to date on modifications and be aware of current policies, deadlines, etc.

By staying enrolled in this class, the student agrees to abide by the policies described in the syllabus.

Tentative schedule

Modules [Start] [End]	**Topics**	**Assignments**

Week 1
Aug 20
Aug 25
	Introduction to Logical and Systematic Thinking
	• It's still summer: No Lab Monday
	• Textbook Readings
	  ○ Ch. 1: Principles of Research (pg. 3-11)
	  ○ Ch. 2: Concepts of Research (pg. 12-35)
	  ○ Ch. 3: Scholarly Research (pg. 40-72)
	• Lecture Videos
	  ○ Intro to Course & Syllabus
	  ○ How do We Know Things?
	  ○ Attributes of Science
	  ○ Theories, Hypotheses, and Variables
	  ○ The Academic Research Process
		Checkpoint #1
		-due 8/21
		@ 11:59 pm

Week 2
Aug 26
Sept 1
	Introduction to Survey Design and the Importance of Clarifying Concepts and Using Valid Measures
	• Monday Lab (Participation)
	  ○ Introductions
	  ○ Looking forward to Lab Proposal #1
	• Textbook Readings
	  ○ Ch. 5: Concept Explication (pg. 101-115)
	  ○ Ch. 6: Reliability & Validity (pg. 123-145)
	• Lecture Videos
	  ○ Two Types of Definitions
	  ○ Validity & Reliability in Measurement
	  ○ Levels of Measurement
		Quiz #1
		-due 9/1
		@ 11:59 pm

Week 3
Sept. 2
Sept. 8
	Importance of Sampling and Generalizability to Communication Industry
	• Labor Day: No Lab Meeting
	• Textbook Readings
	  ○ Ch. 8: Sampling (pg. 187-215)
	• Lecture Videos
	  ○ Introduction to Sampling
	  ○ Types of Sampling
		Lab Proposal #1
		- due 9/4
		@ 11:59 pm

Week 4
Sept. 9
Sept. 15
	Introduction to Statistical Analysis
	• Monday Lab (Participation)
	  ○ Developing Conceptual Definitions
	  ○ Looking forward to Lab Analysis #1
	  ○ Checkpoint #2 workshop
	• Textbook Readings
	  ○ Ch. 14: Descriptive Statistics (pg. 359-379)
	• Lecture Videos
	  ○ From Survey to Data
	  ○ Data Reduction
	  ○ Descriptive Statistics
	  ○ Calculating Descriptive Statistics
		Checkpoint #2
		- due 9/11
		@ 11:59 pm
		
		Quiz #2
		-due 9/15
		@ 11:59 pm

Week 5
Sept. 16
Sept. 22
	Designing Effective Surveys
	• Monday Lab (Participation)
	  ○ Lab Analysis #1 Workshop
	• Textbook Readings
	  ○ Ch. 7: Effective Measurement (pg. 153-179)
	• Lecture Videos
	  ○ Survey Construction
	  ○ Survey Recommendations
		Lab Analysis #1
		- due 9/18
		@ 11:59pm

Week 6
Sept. 23
Sept. 29
	Conducting Surveys in the Modern World
	• Monday Lab (Participation)
	  ○ Checkpoint #3 Workshop
	• Textbook Readings
	  ○ Ch. 10: Survey Research (pg. 261-279)
	• Lecture Videos
	  ○ Real-World Surveys
	  ○ The Many Names of Mobile Surveys
	  ○ Starting an Experience Sampling Study
		Checkpoint #3
		- due 9/25
		@ 11:59 pm
		
		Quiz #3
		-due 9/29
		@ 11:59 pm

Week 7
Sept. 30
Oct. 6
	Statistical Analysis of Survey Data
	• Monday Lab (Participation)
	  ○ Catchup Day
	  ○ Look forward to Lab Analysis #2
	  ○ Complete Midterm Feedback for Dr. Potter
	• Textbook Readings
	  ○ Ch. 15: Inferential Statistics (pg. 387-417)
	• Lecture Videos
	  ○ Correlations
	  ○ Conducting a Correlation Test
	  ○ NHST
	  ○ Mean Differences
		Mid-term feedback
		- due 10/2
		@ 11:59 pm

Week 8
Oct. 7
Oct. 13
	Interpretation of Survey Data
	• Monday Lab (Participation)
	  ○ Lab Analysis #2 Workshop
	• Textbook Readings
	  ○ None (hooray)
	• Lecture Videos
	  ○ Interpreting Survey Results
	  ○ Effect Sizes
		Lab Analysis #2
		- due 10/9
		@ 11:59 pm

Week 9
Oct. 14
Oct. 20
	Causation, Random Assignment, and Experiments
	• Monday Lab (Participation)
	  ○ Correlation versus causation
	  ○ Looking forward to Lab Proposal #2
	• Textbook Readings
	  ○ Ch. 9: Experiments (pg. 223-252)
	• Lecture Videos
	  ○ Lab Experiments
	  ○ Between vs. Within-Subjects Designs
	  ○ Limitations to Lab Experiments
		Quiz #4
		-due 10/20
		@ 11:59 pm

Week 10
Oct. 21
Oct. 27
	Biometric Measures as Dependent Variables
	• Monday Lab (Participation)
	  ○ Lab Proposal #2 Workshop
	• Article Reading
	  ○ Read the Bellman & Varan (2020) chapter from the CarmenCanvas course site
	• Lecture Videos
	  ○ Assumptions of psychophysiology
	  ○ ECG as a measure of attention
	  ○ EDA and EMG as a measure of emotion
	  ○ Searching for peer-reviewed research
		Lab Proposal #2
		- due 10/23
		@ 11:59 pm

Week 11
Oct. 28
Nov. 3
	Eye Tracking as a Dependent Variable
	• Monday Lab (Participation)
	  ○ Catchup Day
	  ○ Look forward to Lab Analysis #3
	• Article Reading
	  ○ Read the Wedel & Pieters (2008) chapter from the CarmenCanvas course site
	• Lecture Videos
	  ○ Eye tracking as a measure of visual attention
		Quiz #5
		-due 11/3
		@ 11:59 pm

Week 12
Nov. 4
Nov. 10
	Statistical Analysis of Experimental Data
	• Monday Lab (Participation)
	  ○ Lab Analysis #3 Workshop
	• Textbook Readings
	  ○ Ch. 16: Multivariate Inferential Statistics (pg. 427 - 439)
	• Lecture Videos
	  ○ Selecting Analyses for Experiments
	  ○ Interpreting Experimental Results
	  ○ Conducting an Independent T-Test
	  ○ Conducting an ANOVA
		Checkpoint #4
		- due 11/6
		@ 11:59 pm

Week 13
Nov. 11
Nov. 17
	Other Common Dependent Variables in Industry
	• Monday Lab
	  ○ No lab meeting (Veterans Day)
	• Article Reading
	  ○ Read the Yegiyan (2017) chapter from the CarmenCanvas course site
	  ○ Read the Seiffert-Brockmann & Jarolimek (2017) chapter from the CarmenCanvas course site
	• Lecture Videos
	  ○ Memory measures in industry research
	  ○ CRM/RTR measures in industry research
		Lab
		Analysis #3
		- due 11/13
		@ 11:59 pm

Week 14
Nov. 18
Nov. 24
	Field Experiments in Consumer Research; the Ethical Considerations in Research
	• Monday Lab (Participation)
	  ○ Lab Proposal #3 Workshop
	• Article Readings
	  ○ Read the Prew & Lin (2019) article from the CarmenCanvas course site
	• Textbook Readings
	  ○ Ch. 4: Ethical Research (pg. 81-94)
	• Lecture Videos
	  ○ Field Experiments
	  ○ Ethical Considerations in Research
		Lab
		Proposal #3
		- due 11/20
		@ 11:59 pm
		
		Quiz #6
		-due 11/24
		@ 11:59 pm

Week 15 Nov. 25 Dec. 1	• Thanksgiving Break	Nothing due

Week 16
Dec. 2
Dec. 8
	Conclusions and Takeaways
	• Monday Lab (Participation)
	  ○ Checkpoint #5 workshop
	• No Textbook Readings
	• Lecture Videos
	  ○ Conclusions, Takeaways, and Review
		Checkpoint #5 - due 12/4 @ 11:59 pm