COM 401 Research Methods

Spring 2007 Syllabus

Instructor: Marc A. Le Pape
Email: lepape@hawaii.edu
Office hours: 6:00 to 7:00 on T & R in Crawford Hall 311
Homepage: http://www2.hawaii.edu/~lepape/com_401

Course Catalog Description
COM 401 Communication Research Methods (3)
Exploration of quantitative and qualitative research methods commonly used in communication studies.
Pre: 201 or consent.

Class Schedule
The class meets on Tuesday and Thursday, from 4:30 p.m. to 5:45 p.m. in BUSAD D106.

Office Hours
Office hours are on Tuesday and Thursday right after class from 6 pm to 7 pm. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you are having any difficulties whatsoever with the course material or structure. Meetings with the instructor during office hours to discuss any matter of concern is strongly encouraged. Students with personal questions or concerns may also contact me via email. I try to answer all email within 24 hours.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:
This is an introductory course on research methods. The objectives of the course is to enable students to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the formulation and development of a research question;
- Demonstrate an understanding of the principles and processes involved in addressing a specific research question;
- Demonstrate an understanding of the quantitative and qualitative research methods commonly used in communication studies;
- Demonstrate an appreciation of the research methods relevant to satisfactorily address a particular research question;
- Attain basic competencies and knowledge essential for conducting a research project.

REQUIRED TEXT
There is one required textbook for this class:

Research Methods in Social Relations
By: Rick H. Hoyle, Monica J. Harris, Charles M. Judd
Publisher: Wadsworth Publishing; 7th Edition
ISBN: 0155061399
ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION

- Attendance to each and every lecture is mandatory.

- Regular participation in the form of questions is very important and strongly encouraged. Participation will at all times emphasize critical thinking and should always reflect a student’s objective factual knowledge of the topic at hand, general curiosity with regard to the subject matter, or specific inquiry regarding research methods concepts. As such, participation will be evaluated in terms of the quality of a student contribution to discussions and not in terms of its quantity.

EXAMINATIONS

- **Midterms** There will be 2 midterms exams in this class. Both midterms will be in-class, closed books, closed notes multiple-choice exams. Exams questions are likely to reach deep into the course material, so you cannot hope to do well on them unless you keep up with all readings and assignments from the very beginning of the course. There will be no make up exams except under extenuating circumstances such as documented medical or family emergencies.

- **Final Exam** There will be a final exam to make up and substitute for poor midterms scores. The final will be taken in class as a comprehensive, closed book, closed notes essay exam. Specifically, the final will be in the form of a well-organized written essay, answering in depth two out of three substantial questions covering general issues germane to research methods.

GRADES ALLOCATION

- **Grading** The instructor believes that assigning grades should be done as objectively as possible and that grades should measure a student's performance in a class, nothing more, and nothing less. To help make letter grades as objective as possible, the instructor does not grade on a curve. A curve implements a relative grading system. When a curve is used, there is no fixed score that earns an "A", "B", etc. Instead, the letter grade becomes an expression of how well any one student performs relative to the rest of the class. In assigning grades for the class the instructor uses fixed scores exclusively.

Your final letter grade is based on a cumulative score computed from a weighted average of your attendance, your homework, your participation, and your exams. Please realize that you determine your own grade, not the instructor.

- **Grades Allocation** Your score on the following items will determine your final grade based on a maximum possible score of 100 Points:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graded Items</th>
<th>Points Allocation</th>
<th>Grade Distribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td>10 Points</td>
<td>10% of Total Grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homework</td>
<td>30 Points</td>
<td>30% of Total Grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>10 Points</td>
<td>10% of Total Grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Midterm Exams</td>
<td>50 Points (25 points each * 2)</td>
<td>50% of Total Grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100 Points</td>
<td>100% of Total Grade</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Letter Grade Meaning
The final letter grade is a measure of how well a student meets the objectives of a particular class taught during a particular academic term and reflects the following academic achievements standards:

- A: Excellent
- B: Superior
- C: Average
- D: Inferior
- F: Failure

As recommended by the University of Hawaii at Manoa the +/- grading scale will be used. Specifically, the grades will be allocated as follow:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Grade Point</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>98-100</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94-97</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-93</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-86</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-76</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72</td>
<td>1.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67-69</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>60-62</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0-59</td>
<td>0</td>
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</table>

Miscellaneous

Incomplete
Students requesting an incomplete must meet two criteria:

- They must at the time of the request be passing the course with a grade of B or better.
- They must provide the instructor with compelling proof of either a legal, medical, or family obligation of an emergency nature as objective and legitimate grounds for the request.

Withdraw
It is your responsibility to know all deadlines and modalities for withdrawal from the class with or without a “W” on your transcripts. An academic officer must approve requests for course withdrawal made after the drop deadlines. Please check with your advisor for more information.

Academic Honesty
The instructor strictly enforces the policies of the University of Hawaii regarding academic dishonesty. There is zero tolerance for plagiarism and cheating. Cheating or plagiarism on any assignment or exam will result in a grade of F for the assignment or the exam and the offense will be documented in your student file. Second instance will result in a grade of F for the class and immediate referral to the Dean of the College of Social Sciences. Don’t do it.

Disclaimer
The instructor reserves the right to change any part of this syllabus at anytime.