

**MODEL SYLLABUS**  
**QUALITATIVE RESEARCH IN COMMUNICATION STUDIES:**  
**COMMUNICATION PRACTICE, DESIGN, AND POLICY LAB**

**CLASS FORMAT AND SCHEDULING:**

Laboratory and discussion, with 2 - 2 hour sessions per week, or 1 - 4 hour session per week.

**CATALOGUE DESCRIPTION:**

Qualitative communication research laboratory in which students working in teams conduct a study focusing on a question relating to communication practice, design, or policy.

**CREDIT HOURS:**

5 credits

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

The purpose of the class is to apply conceptually-guided qualitative research approaches to the study of specific communication practice, design, or policy questions. The specific question to be studied in a given quarter will be selected by students in cooperation with the course instructor. Students will then work in teams conducting the research and simultaneously evaluating its progress.

**DEVELOPED IN 1996 BY:**

Brenda Dervin, Ph.D., Professor (Communication), 3016 Derby Hall, 154 N. Oval Mall., Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio 43210, USA [dervin.1@osu.edu](mailto:dervin.1@osu.edu). Note: This syllabus was developed for curriculum committee review purposes and as a model for alternative instructors. The readings come solely or primarily from authors writing in the various communication fields. Actual presentations of the class will vary and most versions will rely 30-50% on works from sources in other fields.

**ATTENDANCE POLICY:**

While attendance is not a formal course requirement, there are two ways in which missing class can hurt you. One is in your participation grade for which attendance is a necessary pre-requisite. The second is in your peer-evaluation grade which will depend, of course, on the extent to which you have been present and participating. The third will be in the resources you will be able to bring to bear on your class paper because class sessions will be in part orient toward assisting students in developing useful approaches. If you miss a class you must acquire the missing notes from another student and not from the instructor.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

For both undergraduate and graduate students, class grades will be calculated based on:

Class participation    40%

Class paper 60%

Because the class involves the conduct of a study, it is impossible to detail in advance what activities will be pursued when. Students will be expected to execute and hand in study components as the class project proceeds so that efforts of the student team can be combined into the whole. The size of each component will be agreed on between students and instructor.

At the end of the quarter, each student is expected to hand in a final paper which is in effect that student's version of a research report on the class study. This report should be prepared as if it were to be submitted to a journal of the student's selection. In addition to handing in their assigned components of the collective work as required, students are encouraged to hand in portions of their final paper as these are developed. The instructor will provide feedback, usually within one week. The final paper should be about 25 pages in length.

Graduate students will be expected to do graduate level work including covering the extra readings assigned to them as well as preparing a class paper of quality suitable for submission for convention or journal referee.

#### **CLASS READINGS:**

Class members will be expected to do a reasonably comprehensive literature review relating to their selected research question. In addition in response to class choices, the instructor will recommend selected readings from the [Master Bibliography for Model Syllabi Qualitative Research in Communication Studies](#). All items on this list will be on reserve at the library. In addition, the bookstores will be alerted to have on hand a supply of "basic texts" for those students who wish to purchase them. The basic texts are as those listed with the following item #s on the reading list: #3, #7, #26, #79, #121, #123, #129, #137, #139, #167, #198, #210.

#### **COURSE SCHEDULE**

##### **Wk FOCUS, POSSIBLE ASSIGNMENTS**

##### **1 INTRODUCTION & TEAM BUILDING**

Expected assignment for next week:  
a commentary on the possible question options

##### **2 QUESTION SELECTION & LITERATURE REVIEW**

Expected assignment for next week:  
the student's share of the literature review

##### **3 REFINING THE QUESTION & SELECTING AN APPROACH**

Expected assignment for next week:  
working in groups to design approach

##### **4 PREPARING A TEST LAUNCH**

Expected assignment for next week:

collecting data and preparing reports on data collection

**5 REFINING THE APPROACH & SELECTING REPORTING FORMATS**

Expected assignment for next week:

collecting data and preparing reports on data collection

**6 DATA COLLECTION**

Expected assignment for next week:

collecting data and preparing reports on data collection

**7 DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS**

Expected assignment for next week:

collecting data and preparing reports on data collection

**8 ANALYSIS**

Expected assignment for next week:

a preliminary analysis

**9 ANALYSIS AND WRITING**

Expected assignment for next week:

an analysis revised and expanded

**10 ANALYSIS AND WRITING**

Expected assignment for next week:

an analysis revised and expanded

**EX**

**\*\*\* FINAL CLASS PAPER DUE AT THE END OF REGULARLY SCHEDULED EXAM PERIOD FOR THIS CLASS**

**This syllabus is available in alternative formats upon request. Students with disabilities are responsible for making their needs known to the instructor and for seeking available assistance in a timely manner.**

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