



## American University of Ras Al Khaimah

### AURAK Syllabus

#### Course & Instructor Information

**Course Title:** Communication Research Methodology

**Course Code:** COMM 491

**Credit Hours:** 2.0

**Semester and Academic Year:** Spring 2021, AY2020-2021

**Class Timing(s):** 7:30PM-8:45PM (Sun, Tue)

**Methods of Instruction** *(See Syllabus Guide for additional information that should be added here):*

This course is designed to be delivered face-to-face but due to COVID-19 is currently being taught using online instruction; including lecture and small group discussion.

#### Prerequisite course(s) and/or co-requisite courses, if applicable:

COMM 492

**Faculty Name:** Suzana Djamtoska Zdravkovska

#### Contact Information and Office Hours:

suzana.zdravkovska@aurak.ac.ae /phone 050 630 9923/ Online, Microsoft Teams, UT 06:00pm-7:30pm

#### Course Description:

This course provides an introduction to research methods and the philosophical underpinnings of research inquiry in the field of communication. It includes the topic adherence, overviews of quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-method research methodologies, a range of alternative research methods, including observation, archival research, questionnaire surveys, case studies, and experimentation, research design, data collection, and data analysis, the ethical implications of research with human and non-human subjects, and appropriate connections between research questions and methodologies.

#### Additional Information about the course:

This course is not an online course. The course is designed to introduce students to the social scientific research methods in the Communication discipline. Students will learn about the different principles and techniques of research methods.

**Course Textbooks and Materials:**

\* Keyton, J., Communication Research, Asking questions, Finding answers, Third edition, North Carolina State University, 2011, McGraw-Hill

\* Marczyk, G., DeMatteo, D. & Festinger, D., Essentials of Research Design and Methodology. 2005 by John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

\* Croucher, S. M., & Cronn-Mills, D., Understanding Communication

Research Methods - A Theoretical and Practical Approach, 2015, Routledge. ISBN: 978-0-415-83310-3 (hbk)

**Other Resources:**

\*MacDonald, S. & Headlam, N., *Research Methods Handbook Introductory guide to research methods for social research*, Centre for Local Economic Strategies. ISBN: 1870053656 (Available at: <https://www.cles.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/Research-Methods-Handbook.pdf>)

\*Creswell, J. W., Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Method Approaches (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Pub, 2011) or latest edition. ISBN-13: 978-1412965576

\*Denscombe, M., (2019), Research Proposals, A practical guide, 2nd edition, Open University Press, United Kingdom

\*A Guide to APA Referencing Style: 6th Edition, Available Online: [https://www.phdfood2019.it/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/APA\\_Guide\\_2017.pdf](https://www.phdfood2019.it/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/APA_Guide_2017.pdf)

\*APA Matching Activity: <https://library.georgiancollege.ca/citing/exercises>

\*Checklist for Elements of a Research Proposal | Online Resources (sagepub.com) <https://study.sagepub.com/oleary3e/student-resources/developing-research-proposals/checklist-for-elements-of-a-research>

**Web Resources:**

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**Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)**

<b>Course Learning Outcomes</b> <b>At the end of this course, students should be able to:</b>	
CLO 1	Assess the purpose of a study, research methodology, and data collection methods
CLO 2	Compare and contrast the characteristics of different research questions and possible methodologies
CLO 3	Apply ethical decision making related to cultural diversity in participant selection and recruiting, data collection, and analysis
CLO 4	Given the research question, examine and analyze strengths and limitations of multiple methodologies to select the most appropriate research design
CLO 5	Draft a method section appropriate to research question(s).

## **Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) and Mapping Course to Program Outcomes**

Please see the APPENDIX for the Course to Program Learning Outcomes Mapping.

## Assessment Activities

The dates for quizzes, exams, and submission of assignments are specified in the schedule. You will be graded in this class based on the number of points you earn for quizzes, exams written assignments, or other activities, including your class participation. Keep track of your scores in Blackboard.

<b>Assessment Activities and Grading Weight</b>	<b>Class activity 10%</b>	<b>Mid-term Exam 20%</b>	<b>Assignments 10 %</b>	<b>Quizzes 20 %</b>	<b>Draft Proposal 10 %</b>	<b>Final Project: 30%</b>
CLO 1	X	X	X	X	X	X
CLO 2	X	X	X		X	X
CLO 3	X	X	X	X	X	X
CLO 4	X	X		X	X	X
CLO 5	X		X		X	X

## Grading Scale

The grading system and scale for AURAK, as established by the Board of Trustees, is as follows:

<b>AURAK Grading System and Scale</b>		
<b>Grade</b>	<b>Percentage Scores</b>	<b>Grade Points</b>
A	95-100	4.00
A-	90-94	3.70
B+	86-89	3.30
B	83-85	3.00
B-	80-82	2.70
C+	76-79	2.30
C	73-75	2.00
C-	70-72	1.70

D+	66-69	1.30
D	60-65	1.00
F	0-59	0.00

An "S" grade reflects satisfactory, or passing, work in a course (i.e., equivalent to grade of D or higher for undergraduate students. A "U" grade reflects unsatisfactory, or failing, work in a course. S/U will have no effect on the GPA.

## Weekly Course Information

Schedule of Course Topics, Required Reading, and Assignments and Assessments				
(Including scheduling of laboratory, studio, external visit, and other non-classroom meeting sessions, as appropriate)				
Week	Topic	Required Readings	Assignment, Assessment (with grade weighting) & Due Date	Mapping of CLO's to Assessments
Week 1 10 Jan	Introduction to Research Methods	...	Note: In class activities will account for 10% of the course grade.	...
12 Jan	Syllabus			
Week 2 17 Jan	What is Research?	Keyton Ch1; Marczyk, DeMatteo, Festinger, Ch2	...	1,3
19 Jan	Scholarly Research	Keyton Ch1; Marczyk, DeMatteo, Festinger, Ch1	<i>Assignment 1</i> <i>24 Jan</i> <i>Survivor - Survey</i>  (5 % Total) Submit on Blackboard	1
Week 3 24 Jan	Communication as a Social Science	Keyton Ch1	...	1,3,4
26 Jan	The Nature of the Questions	Keyton Ch1		1
Week 4 31 Jan	The Research Process Model	Keyton Ch1; Marczyk, DeMatteo, Festinger, Ch2		1,2,3,4

2 Feb	Identifying the Research Problem	Keyton Ch1; Marczyk, DeMatteo, Festinger, Ch2		1,4
Week 5 7 Feb	Formulating Research Ideas & Turning Topics into Preliminary Questions	Keyton Ch1; Marczyk, DeMatteo, Festinger, Ch2		1,2,4
9 Feb	Choosing a topic for a research proposal  Students are given a list of topics to choose from. The students themselves also give suggestions for topics			1,4
Week 6 14 Feb	Elements of a Research proposal	Denscombe, Ch2		1,2,4,5
16 Feb	Planning and Designing a Research Study / <b>Literature review</b>	Marczyk, DeMatteo, Festinger, Ch2		1,2,4,5
Week 7 21 Feb	Planning and Designing a Research Study / Research question	Marczyk, DeMatteo, Festinger, Ch2		1,2,4,5
23 Feb	Research proposal discussion  Questions for Consideration			1,2,4,5
Week 8 28 Feb	Quiz 1	All reading to date	Quiz 1 9 March (10% Total)  Online interactive quiz through Socrative	1,2,4
	Midterm	Selected Research paper	Midterm 2 March	1,2,3,4

2 March	Research paper presentation		(20% Total)	
Week 9  7 March	Research methods	MacDonald & Headlam; Marczyk, DeMatteo, Festinger, Ch5		1,2,4
9 March	Quantitative Research Methods	MacDonald & Headlam, Ch1; Marczyk, DeMatteo, Festinger, Ch5		1,2,4
Week 10  14 March	Qualitative Research Methods	MacDonald & Headlam, Ch2; Marczyk, DeMatteo, Festinger, Ch5		1,2,4
16 March	Testing a Questionnaire In-class activity		<i>Assignment 2:</i> Research questionnaire  <i>23 March</i>  (5 % Total)  Submit on Blackboard	1,2,3,4
Week 11  21	Testing a Questionnaire In-class activity			1,2,3,4



March				
23 March	Writing ? Participation Invitation Letter / Consent Cover Letter for Survey Research  In-class activity			1,3
23 March	First Draft Research Proposal presentation		Draft Research Proposal  25 March <b>(10 % Total)</b> Submit on Blackboard	1,2,3,4,5
Week 12  11 April	Research Issues	Marczyk,  DeMatteo, Festinger, Ch8; MacDonald & Headlam, Ch3		1,2,3,4
13 April	Quiz 2	Research Methods	Quiz 2  13 April  (5% Total)  Online interactive quiz through Socrative	1,2,4
Week 13  18 April	<a href="#">APA Referencing Style Guide</a>	<a href="https://library.georgiancollege.ca/citing/exercises">https://library.georgiancollege.ca/citing/exercises</a>		1,4
20 April	APA Matching Activity	<a href="https://library.georgiancollege.ca/citing/exercises">https://library.georgiancollege.ca/citing/exercises</a>		1,4
Week 14  25 April	Disseminating Research Results	Marczyk,  DeMatteo, Festinger, Ch8		1,3,4

27 April	Quiz 3	APA Referencing Style Guide	Quiz 3 27 April (5% Total)  Online interactive quiz through Socrative	1,4
Week 15  2 May	Review of the material			1,2,3,4,5
4 May	Checklist for Elements of a Research Proposal	<a href="https://study.sagepub.com/oleary3e/student-resources/developing-research-proposals/checklist-for-elements-of-a-research">https://study.sagepub.com/oleary3e/student-resources/developing-research-proposals/checklist-for-elements-of-a-research</a>		1,2,3,4,5
Week 16	Final project:  Research Proposal  Examination Period  10 – 12 May & 16-26 May  To update once published  Final Exams	...	Research Proposal submission  10 May (Submit on Blackboard)  Research proposal presentation  <i>To update once published Final Exams</i>  (30% Total)	1,2,3,4,5

### Attendance Policy

University policy is that students are to attend all classes and to arrive on time. Students are required to:

- Attend all learning and teaching sessions associated with their program of study.

- Notify their course instructors in advance (in person, by phone or e-mail) that they will be absent from time-tabled class sessions.
- Obtain prior permission from their instructor or course manager, for planned absences of two or more consecutive class sessions during the semester.
- Provide a medical certificate or other corroborating evidence to explain their absence, if required by the University.

Unsatisfactory student attendance includes failure to regularly attend learning and teaching sessions without providing a satisfactory reason to instructors for absence and/or persistent late arrival at, or early departure from, learning and teaching sessions. Where a student fails to attend classes for **four or more weeks cumulatively**, or where a recurring pattern of non-attendance is observed over the course of the semester, the instructor has the option of deeming that the student has failed the course, in which case that student may receive an "F (Fail)" or "U (Unsatisfactory)" grade, as appropriate. At this point, and at the instructor's recommendation, the dean also has the authority to instruct the registrar to remove or withdraw the student from the course.

## **Disability Accommodations**

Students with disabilities may find they require additional support, services, or considerations. AURAK will endeavor to support students with disabilities or special needs where resources are available. Accommodations will be provided, for students with verified needs, allowing equal access to educational facilities, programs, services, and activities at AURAK. Disability Accommodations are never applied retroactively – only students who have previously requested and have been approved for supporting accommodations can have them apply to a given academic semester/course. Students needing support must make the request from the Department of Counseling, Testing, and Disability Services located in Building H.

## **Other Relevant Policies**

### **A. Academic Integrity**

#### The Honor Code

The American University of Ras Al Khaimah strongly supports the concept of academic integrity and expects students and all other members of the AURAK community to be honest in all academic endeavors. The AURAK Honor Code can be found in the AURAK Student Handbook.

The role of the Honor Code and associated Academic Integrity Policy is to protect the academic integrity of the university, encourage consistent ethical behavior among students, and foster a climate of honorable academic achievement. The Honor Code is an integral part of university life and students are responsible, therefore, for

understanding and abiding by the code's provisions. While a student's commitment to honesty and personal integrity is assumed and expected, this Code and associated policy and procedures provides clarity of expectations.

### Expectations

Cheating, plagiarism, and all other forms of academic fraud are unacceptable; they are serious violations of university policy. AURAK expects all students to be familiar with university policies on academic integrity. The university will not accept a claim of ignorance – either of the policy itself or of what constitutes academic fraud – as a valid defense against such a charge.

### Violations of Academic Integrity

Violations of academic integrity constitute academic fraud. Academic fraud consists of any actions that serves to undermine the integrity of the academic process or that gives the student an unfair advantage, including:

- Inspecting, duplicating or distributing test materials without authorization.
- Cheating, attempting to cheat, or assisting others to cheat – relevant here is the prohibition on being in possession of a mobile telephone or similar electronic device during a test or examination. In case such devices are found with a student, the student will be deemed to have attempted to cheat and will be subject to disciplinary action under the Student Academic Integrity Policy.
- Altering work after it has been submitted for a grade.
- Plagiarizing.
- Using or attempting to use anything that constitutes unauthorized assistance.
- Fabricating, falsifying, distorting, or inventing any information, documentation, or citation.

### Plagiarism

One of the most common violations of academic integrity is plagiarism. Plagiarism can be intentional or unintentional. However, since each student is responsible for knowing what constitutes plagiarism, unintentional plagiarism is as unacceptable as intentional plagiarism and thus will bring the same penalties.

Plagiarism – submitting the work of others as one's own - is a serious offense. In the academic world, plagiarism is theft. Information from sources – whether quoted, paraphrased, or summarized – must be given credit through specific citations. When a student paraphrases a work, it is still necessary to cite the original source. Merely rearranging a sentence or changing a few words is not sufficient. The citation style should be appropriate for the

discipline and should clearly indicate the beginning and ending of the referenced material. All sources used in the preparation of an academic paper must also be listed with full bibliographic details at the end of the paper, as appropriate in the discipline.

### Faculty and Student Expectations

- Every student, faculty member, and administrator is responsible for upholding the highest standards of academic integrity. Every member of the AURAK community shall honor the spirit of this policy by refusing to tolerate academic fraud.
- It is the responsibility of the instructor to provide students with additional guidelines for what constitutes “authorized” and “unauthorized” assistance.
- It is the responsibility of every student to see clarification if in doubt about what constitutes “authorized” and “unauthorized” assistance. In cases involving collaborative work, all students within the collaborative group may be help responsible for violating the code if any member of the group receives, accepts, or utilizes "unauthorized" assistance.
- Students are required to obtain permission prior to submitting work, any part of which was previously or will be submitted in another course. The instructor has the option of accepting, rejecting, or requiring modification of the content of previously or simultaneously submitted work.

A student who suspects that a violation of academic integrity has occurred should report the violation to the dean or to the Office of the Provost. In this report, the student should describe any action taken, such as talking with the person involved or with a faculty or staff member. Every effort will be made to preserve the anonymity of the student reporting the incident;

Possible penalties for academic fraud include: Formal warning, Reduction in grade for the assignment, Reduction in the grade for the course, A failing grade for the assignment, A failing grade (F) in the course, and/or Dismissal or Expulsion from the University.

Please refer to the relevant section in the *Student Handbook* and ensure a clear understanding of the provisions of the University Honor Code and the Student Academic Integrity Policy.

### **B. Concerns about grades or other course matters.**

Students are responsible for their learning experiences. If you are concerned about a class matter, first discuss it with the instructor. If the matter is not resolved, the next step is to meet with the Chair of the department in which the course is taught. If you still have a concern, meet with the Dean of the school in which the course is taught. The matter is likely to be resolved before it reaches that point, but if it is not, then visit the Associate Provost for Academic and Student Affairs. Students who decide to “jump to the top” will be referred “back” to the appropriate next step.

### **C. Assignments**

University policy is that assignments are due on the date assigned. Instructors may refuse to accept late assignments or lower the grade that would be otherwise given.

### **D. Mobile Phones**

All mobile phones, pagers and/or other communication devices should be turned off before entering the classroom. Students may NOT have mobile telephone or other electronic devices in their possession while completing examinations. Any violation will be deemed as having attempted to cheat.

### **E. Diversity and the Use of English**

English is the common language of the AURAK campus for everyone. It is the only language to be used in the classroom. AURAK brings together students and faculty from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, which is one of the strengths of the university. This diversity provides an opportunity to share our different experiences and enlarge our understanding of the world.

## APPENDIX

### Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) : BA In Mass Communication

<b>Program Learning Outcomes</b> At the completion of the program, students should be able to:	
PLO 1	01. explain communication theory and demonstrate applications of relevant theoretical concepts for different mass communication fields.
PLO 2	02. recognize key skills and employ contemporary tools for communicating effectively in realistic media environments.
PLO 3	03. utilize appropriate messages and techniques for communicating effectively.
PLO 4	04. apply research methodologies and models and implement these in communication work.
PLO 5	05. identify factors characterizing the global nature of modern media systems
PLO 6	06. distinguish cultural issues in planning various forms of communication.
PLO 7	07. analyze principles of ethics, fairness, and regulation as they relate to media practices.
PLO 8	08. discuss the characteristics of unique publics and design strategies to best establish symmetrical relationships with them.(public relations)
PLO 9	09. summarize modern principles of public relations practices and analyse how these can be used in the UAE and globally.(public relations)
PLO 10	10. employ convergent technologies for production and expression of communication pieces for news, documentary, entertainment, and persuasive communication.(digital media)
PLO 11	11. apply latest trends in multimedia practices and uses for professional digital communication to a local or international context. (digital media)

### Mapping Course to Program Learning Outcomes : BA In Mass Communication

<b>The learning outcomes of this course contribute to meeting one or more of the program learning outcomes as shown below, with the contribution designated as “high”, “medium”, or “low”:</b>											
	PLO 1	PLO 2	PLO 3	PLO 4	PLO 5	PLO 6	PLO 7	PLO 8	PLO 9	PLO 10	PLO 11
<b>CLO 1</b>	<i>medium</i>	<i>low</i>		<i>high</i>	<i>medium</i>	<i>high</i>	<i>medium</i>				
<b>CLO 2</b>	<i>medium</i>	<i>low</i>	<i>low</i>	<i>high</i>	<i>low</i>	<i>medium</i>	<i>medium</i>				
<b>CLO 3</b>	<i>low</i>	<i>medium</i>	<i>medium</i>	<i>high</i>	<i>medium</i>	<i>high</i>	<i>high</i>				

<b>CLO 4</b>		<i>medium</i>		<i>high</i>		<i>high</i>	<i>high</i>				
<b>CLO 5</b>	<i>low</i>	<i>low</i>	<i>medium</i>	<i>high</i>	<i>low</i>	<i>high</i>	<i>high</i>				