

**COURSE SYLLABUS—Fall 2009**  
**Mass Communication 330.05: INFORMATION ANALYSIS**

CLASS MEETINGS: MW 3-4:20 p.m., Dan Rather Bldg., Room 205

Patsy K. Ziegler, M.A.  
Mass Communications Lecturer  
Phone: 936/294-1499  
[scm\\_pkz@shsu.edu](mailto:scm_pkz@shsu.edu)

Office: Room 208, DR Bldg  
Office Hours: MWF 8-9, 10-11 a.m.;  
TTh 10-11 a.m., or by  
appointment

**REQUIRED MATERIALS**

Jan Johnson Yopp, Katherine C. McAdams, Ryan M. Thornburg, *Reaching Audiences: A Guide to Media Writing, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition.*  
Bonnie L. Tensen, *Research Strategies for a Digital Age, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition.*

**CATALOGUE DESCRIPTION**

This course provides a comparative survey of communication investigation, including practical training in ethical gathering, interpretation and presentation of data. Students will be introduced to information-gathering methods, including direct interviewing, question techniques, electronic document retrieval and manipulation, database management and interest skills.

PREREQUISITE: MCM 132      CREDIT: 3

**PURPOSE**

This course introduces students to skills and processes necessary to successfully complete advanced communication courses. Students will become competent in discerning methods of research gathering, problem solving and critical thinking necessary for the successful manipulation of data in the mass media. The goal is to give students a solid foundation in analysis, problem solving and data gathering necessary for successful employment in mass media.

**CLASS STRUCTURE**

This course will be a combination of lecture, discussion and in-class lab time, plus library, interview and internet research time.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

At the completion of this course, students will have the skills to:

1. Compare and contrast primary and secondary collection methods;
2. Design a variety of data collection methods;
3. Prepare and validate data for various distribution venues;
4. Analyze a communication scenario to determine the most effective strategy to frame the problem, and
5. Understand the roles of law and ethics on data gathering

## **GRADING**

Course grades will be based on a 500-point scale, which will include quizzes, research and writing projects and a final examination.

1. 5 quizzes/participation exercises @ 25 pts each: 125 possible points
2. 4 individual projects @ 75 pts each: 300 possible points
3. Final group project @ 75 pts per person: 75 possible points

Ultimately, letter grades must be assigned to evaluations of course work. Under the definitions established by Sam Houston State University, students who receive the following letter grades are considered to have reached the level of attainment defining that letter. Thus, letter grades received for mass communication courses may be interpreted this way:

<b>A=excellent</b>	<b>D=barely passing</b>
<b>B =well above average</b>	<b>F=failure</b>
<b>C=average</b>	

Grading throughout the semester; however, is conducted on a point scale. The combined value of all assignments is 500 points. Points are added or subtracted from that according to standards described in this analysis

500 – 450 pts = A  
449 – 400 pts = B  
399 – 350 pts = C  
349 – 300 pts = D  
< 300 pts = F

## **ATTENDANCE**

A commitment of your time to this course is essential. Regular attendance is expected and will be necessary for successful completion of the course. You are responsible for any assignment made during class in your presence or absence. Save your late approvals for when you are ill or have an emergency. Otherwise, NO late work will be accepted and you will lose the points allotted for that assignment. It will not be possible to make up missed class sessions. Deadline, for class purposes, is the minute the class begins the day work is due, unless otherwise designated.

Do not come late to class. Follow professional procedures as you would a job. Punctuality is essential; class attendance is expected and will be recorded. After two (2) absences/tardies. 5 points will be deducted for each absence; 5 points will be given at the end of the semester to those having no more than one (1) absence/tardy.

## **TIME REQUIREMENTS**

You may wish to purchase a portable storage device to use for back up storage.

## **CLASSROOM POLICIES**

### **ETHICS**

Ethical behavior is the cornerstone of responsible journalism. Honesty is expected—and demanded—of all students. Violations of professional ethical standards will lead to an automatic “F” in the course.

### **ACADEMIC DISHONESTY**

Students are expected to maintain honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. See Student Guidelines.

### **CLASSROOM RULES OF CONDUCT**

Students are expected to assist in maintaining a classroom environment that is conducive to learning. Students are to treat faculty and students with respect. Students are to turn off all cell phones while in the classroom. Under NO circumstances are cell phones or any electronic devices to be used or seen during times of examination. Students may tape record lectures provided they do not disturb other students in the process.

### **ABSENCES ON RELIGIOUS HOLY DAYS**

Students are allowed to miss class and other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. Students remain responsible for all work. See student Syllabus Guidelines.

### **STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance should visit with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Counseling Center. See student Syllabus Guidelines

### **VISITORS IN THE CLASSROOM**

Only registered students may attend class. Expectations can be made on a case-by-case basis by the professor. In all classes, visitors must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance. Students wishing to audit a class must apply to do so through the Registrar’s Office.

Absolutely NO smoking. No food or beverages are permitted in the classroom.

## **FREEDOM OF SPEECH**

The students right to speak on the topics of their choice will be upheld in the class. Choice of topic, values and beliefs will not be judged. Audience members are expected to respect the views of their classmates.

## **BE AWARE OF THE Q-DROP POLICY**

Students will be allowed no more than five (5) Q-drops during their academic career at SHSU. You must petition your dean for a Q-drop if you've used your five Q-drops already and stay in the class, if your dean denies your request.

## **ASSIGNMENTS FOR MCM 330.05**

### **FALL 2009**

#### **Week 1—Aug. 24-26**

Class Overview and Orientation

Introductory discussion to gathering information

Read Ch. 1 in *Research Strategies* . . .

#### **Week 2—Aug. 31, Sept. 2**

Writing and implementing a research plan on favorite company

Assign Project!

Primary and secondary sources, literature review and reference citations

#### **Week 3—Sept. 9 (Labor Day holiday, Sept. 7)**

Ethics of information gathering and manipulation

**Outline on 1st Project: Favorite Company, (minimum of five (5) sources)**

#### **Week 4—Sept. 14-16**

Validating data, qualitative and quantitative

Rough draft

#### **Week 5—Sept. 21-23 Turn in first paper (favorite company)**

TURN IN: Revised rough draft, references

BEGIN: Dress for Success (2-week project)

#### **Week 6—Sept. 28-30 -- Presentation techniques**

**Week 7—Oct. 5-7 Turn in paper on Dress for Success**

**In-depth interviewing – guest interviewee**

Context of the message examined. Online formats, layering information

**Week 10—Oct. 12-14—Creating graphs from newspaper articles**

Public Information requests

Using statistics and surveys

**Week 11—Oct. 19-21—Project 3: Building group presentations on health issues**

Divide into groups; choose subject per team.

**Week 12—Oct. 26-28—Turn in rough draft with title, outline, references (at least 5 each)**

**Week 13—Nov. 2-4 --- Create power point presentation for showing during group showing;  
Begin presentations.**

**Week 14---Nov. 9-11—Complete presentations. PROJECT 4: a Trend of your Choice:  
Past, Present, Future**

**Week 15—Nov. 19 (Nov. 21 Thanksgiving holiday)**

Creating slide packages as part of group “Choices” project

**Week 16—Nov. 26-28**

Presenting as group for persuasive impact

**Week 17—Dec. 3-5**

Group presentations

**FINAL EXAMINATION—Dec. 16 5-7 p. m.**