The syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the professor may be necessary. Class lectures are the property of the professor.

> **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course provides the knowledge and skills necessary to conduct empirical research, and data analysis, as well as to interpret research findings. The emphasis is on hands-on experience in the use of the statistical tools available in the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

> **TEXTS**

**Required:**
- Course pack for JMS 620 available in SDSU Bookstore (via Montezuma Printing)

**Recommended:**
- Online resources for class: [http://delicious.com/kaye.sweetser/JMS620](http://delicious.com/kaye.sweetser/JMS620)

> **MATERIALS**

Each student must have the following (there will be no exceptions!):
- SDSU computer account with SDSU email access (check it often)
- Access to SPSS either through a campus lab or on personal computer
- Use of a printer, as all products, unless otherwise noted, are required to be typed, printed and stapled
- Access to Blackboard for grades – reconcile all bonus and incorrect grades by April 28

> **OVERVIEW**

This class is designed to be a true laboratory for students to collect and analyze data projects in a rigorous, academic manner. Students will work in teams on projects and the expectation is that each will have a conference-ready paper for submission to a major mass communication academic conference.

> **LEARNING OUTCOMES**

- √ To increase conceptual understanding of experimental, survey, and content analysis research methods
- √ To develop competencies with SPSS
- √ To conduct statistical analyses of quantitative research data through hands-on exercises
- √ To conduct an original small-scale group research project
- √ To learn how report the research findings
> STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

If you are a student with a disability and believe you will need accommodations for this class, it is your responsibility to contact Student Disability Services at 619-594-6473. To avoid any delay in the receipt of your accommodations, you should contact Student Disability Services as soon as possible. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive, and that accommodations based upon disability cannot be provided until you have presented your instructor with an accommodation letter from Student Disability Services. Your cooperation is appreciated.

> ACADEMIC HONESTY

All academic work must meet the Standards for Student Conduct explained 41301 Title 5 California Code of Regulations. Students are responsible to inform themselves about SDSU standards before performing any academic work. Students who break the university’s honor code, are found to be cheating or fraudulently use another student’s ideas/work will fail this course. Find out more about student responsibilities at SDSU at http://studentaffairs.sdsu.edu/SRR/academics1.html. Students who are uncertain as to what constitutes academic dishonesty should consult the University’s Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities (www.sa.sdsu.edu/srr).

While students are encouraged to build their research program throughout their entire master’s study at SDSU, they are restricted from turning in work prepared for or submitted to any other class (either at this campus or another). All work must be original. Any form of plagiarism, including plagiarizing one’s self, will not be tolerated.

The best way to avoid academic honesty violations is to maintain integrity when preparing work to be turned in for the class and properly citing ideas and passages when appropriate. The fine for plagiarism in this course is, at minimum, a zero on the assignment at hand. The school or the university may determine the bigger-picture fine for additional repercussions. Just say no.

> ATTENDANCE POLICY

Students should arrive to class on time, prepared and ready to participate or work as required. There will be unannounced events in class that result in production. Students who miss class – for whatever reason – forfeit the right to make up graded elements that occur during class time.

> LATE WORK OR MAKEUPS

Students are not permitted to make up (either before or after) missed in-class graded assignments, exams or quizzes. Quizzes and exams must be started within 10 minutes of class start, and students arriving when a quiz, exam or homework assignment is being turned in will not be able to participate in that graded element. Online quizzes or exams must be completed and submitted prior to that graded element closing. Late assignments or work turned in any place other than when assignments are collected/due are never accepted. Ever. In the real world, late work can mean a missed public relations opportunity.

> GRADE

This class employs multiple forms of evaluation to maximize the learning and evaluation experience while allowing for differences among learning types for students. All work will be evaluated based on the ability to meet the assignment objectives, clarity, professionalism, technical skill and quality. The following breakdown explains how the grade is to be computed (note this class uses a weighed formula, not raw points):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graded Item</th>
<th>Due</th>
<th>% Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic paper (group project)</td>
<td>April 1</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final exam</td>
<td>May 5</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic paper presentation (group project)</td>
<td>April 28</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class contribution and peer evaluation</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

100%
All grades on assignments, projects and quizzes are based on the following +/- grading scale:

- 98 – 100% = A
- 93 – 97.99% = A-
- 88 – 92.99% = B+
- 85 – 87.99% = B
- 80 – 84.99% = B-
- 76 – 79.99% = C+
- 73 – 75.99% = C
- 70 – 72.99% = C-
- 66 – 69.99% = D+
- 63 – 65.99% = D
- 60 – 62.99% = D-
- below 59% = F

The professor does not round up (not even 0.1 pts). Graded items will not be dropped or weighted. Grades are based on the final product and the student’s ability to meet the requirements set by the professor.

Each product is graded against the same criteria and the student’s ability to show mastery of the objective. All graded materials must meet specific standards for professionalism and quality. Effort does not equal an “A.” Only those who show mastery of the graded material will earn such a grade for that item. No one is given grades; one earns the grade based on the quality of the product.

Students are to keep track of their own grades and progress in the course. Monitor Blackboard to compute grade.

Any student wishing to dispute a grade must have the graded material when pleading the case. Students have the right to dispute a grade within one week of the material being returned; after one week all grades are final.

The deadline to reconcile grades in Blackboard grades is April 28. Adjustments will not be made after this date so keep on top of your grade (i.e., monitor frequently).

Grades will not be discussed via email or the telephone. If a student has a question about a grade and would like to discuss it, then the student must meet with the professor in person. This policy protects the student.

> GRADED PRODUCTS

All out-of-class work must be typed and printed unless otherwise specified. Use Times New Roman font in size 12, 1-inch margins all around and double-space. Reports longer than one page should be stapled. All work must employ APA Style, proper grammar and punctuation. Failure to follow these directions enacts the F2FD rubric deduction. Unless otherwise specified, work is due the first 10 minutes of class and must be turned in during class.

RUBRIC: All written assignments are graded according to a grading rubric for technical skill, in addition to the style and content considerations. Students can rely on the following rubric throughout the semester:

- APA Style error – 5 points each time
- Misreported data – 10 points each time
- Misspelled word or name – 5 points each time
- Incorrect grammar – 5 points each time
- Fact error – 10 points each time
- Failure to follow directions – 15 points for assignment

ACADEMIC PAPER: Working in small teams (no more than 4 students), students will write an academic paper on an approved topic. Teams must collect original data and have Human Subjects Research approval. Papers are due by April 1, which allows teams the opportunity to simultaneously submit their papers to AEJMC. Teams must present their findings in an open-to-the-public class meeting on April 28. Peer evaluation will be solicited.

FINAL EXAM: A final exam will be administered via Blackboard and due by 11:59 p.m. on May 5. The exam will test each student’s individual ability to read SPSS output, interpret results and communicate findings in a scholarly way.

> COURSE POLICIES

BE PRESENT. Students are required to attend class on any presentation days. Students arriving late on presentation days, regardless of whether presenting, will not be able to join class. Entering class during a presentation is completely unacceptable and will greatly deplete participation points.

BE NICE. Disrespect in any form in the classroom is not permitted. If a student is deemed disrespectful by the professor, then the student may be asked to leave (and receive an absence). Disrespect is conveyed in many forms, both face to face and online. None will be tolerated. Respect your class members’ privacy and do not post comments, photos or other information online without permission.
COMMUNICATE PROFESSIONALLY. As this is a respected legacy school in public relations, the ability to communicate in a professional and courteous manner via email is important. Students are expected to display their top-level PR communication skills each time they send an email to the professor. Students who fail to use a professional greeting, sign one’s full name or use proper AP Style in an email will have one point deducted from the final (overall grade) for the course for each infraction. Ask the professor for examples of proper and improper email communication so as to not make this mistake.

KNOW WHEN YOU NEED HELP. The college experience is stressful. If a student feels the need for professional services to assist in coping with stress related to school or other life’s events, please contact the University’s Counseling and Psychological Services (www.sa.sdsu.edu/cps/index.html). The center is located at Room 4401 in the Calpulli Center, open Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Students who need assistance beyond their business hours should call the San Diego Access and Crisis 24-hour Hotline at 1-800-479-3339. Other campus emergency services include the Student Health Services Nurse Advisory Line at 1-888-594-5281 or University Police at 619-594-1991.

INCOMPLETES UNAVAILABLE. Incompletes will rarely, if ever, be given for this class. Only students who are already operating at a satisfactory level prior to a medical or other serious circumstance beyond one’s control will even be considered for an incomplete. Incompletes are not a way to skirt responsibility and work around lost opportunities in major course assignments.
# Tentative Reading Assignments and Schedule

This schedule is subject to change at professor's discretion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Items Due and Class Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 27</td>
<td>Intro to the course, levels of measurement</td>
<td>chapters 1-2, 4-5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 3</td>
<td>Descriptive statistics</td>
<td>chapters 14, 16</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb. 10</td>
<td>Inferential statistics</td>
<td>chapter 6, 16</td>
<td>IRB protocol submission deadline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 17</td>
<td>Project</td>
<td>chapters 7-10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 24</td>
<td>Project cont.</td>
<td>cont. chapters 8-10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 3</td>
<td>Presentation practice for IPRCC</td>
<td>chapter 17</td>
<td>Mandatory attendance for all students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 10</td>
<td>Project</td>
<td>chapter 3</td>
<td>IRB approval deadline for all groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 17</td>
<td>Project</td>
<td>chapter 11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 24</td>
<td>Project</td>
<td>chapter 12-13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 31</td>
<td>Spring break, no class</td>
<td></td>
<td>NOTE: Academic paper due April 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 7</td>
<td>Method review</td>
<td>cont. chapters 8-10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 14</td>
<td>Statistics review</td>
<td>cont. chapters 14-16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 21</td>
<td>Project presentation preparation</td>
<td>chapter 15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 28</td>
<td>Presentations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 5</td>
<td>Final exam via Blackboard</td>
<td></td>
<td>Complete exam by 11:59 p.m.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>