**JMS 600B: Seminar in Research Methods for Mediated Communication**

**Seminar Hours:** Wednesday, 4:00 - 6:40  
**Instructor:** Dr. Valerie Barker  
**Office:** PSFA 350A  
**E-mail:** valeriebarker@valeriebarker.net  
**Phone:** Cell: 619-227-2049  
**Office Hours:** Mon & Wed, 1:00 - 2:30 p.m. and by appointment

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** This course introduces incoming JMS graduate students to the concepts, designs, procedures, and methods used in quantitative media research. The course provides students with an understanding of the assumptions underlying research methods as well as the requirements for rigorous, scholarly inquiry. The course utilizes Blackboard for announcements, document exchanges, and posting of information and grades.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**
- increase understanding of the social scientific method
- exposure to mass media research methods
- improve basic methodological competency via application
- develop a scholarly perspective
- develop scholarly writing proficiency

**Reading:** Available at the Aztec Shops Bookstore.


OBTAINING A 'B' GRADE OR HIGHER: Students must obtain a "B" average in both JMS 600A and 600B. If the average is lower than 3.0, students may petition to retake JMS 600A or 600B if they have a B (3.0) or better in one of the two. If grades are lower than 3.0 in both courses, no petition is allowed.

PLAGIARISM: Please review very carefully the information found at this link http://www1.chapman.edu/~Babbie/plag00.html

GRADING ASSESSMENTS: The final paper in this class takes the form of a Research Protocol. You will be provided considerable feedback so as to make your final draft of the Protocol an "A" paper. Final drafts that are not responsive to the feedback on the first draft may receive a lower grade than the first draft.

Your grade will be based on the following assessments:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>POINTS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Draft of Research Protocol</td>
<td>150</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Draft of Research Protocol</td>
<td>250</td>
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<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
<td><strong>400</strong></td>
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Select one (must be different from the method in your protocol):

| Methodology Paper #1: Experimental Design    | 200    |
| Methodology Paper #2: Survey Research        | 200    |
| Methodology Paper #3: Content Analysis       | 200    |
| **Subtotal**                                 | **200**|

| Exam #1 (Midterm)                            | 75     |
| Exam #2 (Final)                               | 100    |
| **Subtotal**                                  | **175**|

| Application Exercise #1: Reporting an Experiment | 50     |
| Application Exercise #2: Questionnaire Design   | 50     |
| Application Exercise #3: IRB Certification      | 50     |
| **Subtotal**                                    | **150**|

Class Participation

**Subtotal** 75

**TOTAL** 1000
The two exams consist of multiple choice and short essay questions that ask you to synthesize materials covered in the class, including guest lectures and reading materials.

The application exercises (reporting experiments, questionnaire design, and IRB Certification) involve examining and interpreting data generated by a small experiment, constructing a simple questionnaire, and taking the HRPP Initial Review Questionnaire: http://go.sdsu.edu/researchaffairs/hrpp.aspx. Information about the IRB-CITI Training requirement plus consent form templates can also be obtained at this link.

All students will write ONE methodology paper addressing a research methodology other than that used in the Research Protocol. Copies of these methodology papers will be made available to classmates. By the conclusion of the course, each student should have (# students in class) methodology papers on file. These methodology papers will provide outlines and constructive critiques of important/interesting studies in your field that utilize either experimental, survey methods or content analysis. This 'file' may be used for reference in other classes, or for the purposes of review prior to conducting empirical research. We will discuss these papers in Week_; therefore, it is important that you read them as they come to you. Reading all the papers at once will be an onerous task!

For explanation of the Research Protocol see the JMS 600B Assignments Packet

LETTER GRADES IN COURSE: The following provides a general frame for conversion of points (at the end of the semester) to letter grades: 920-1000, A range; 900-919, A- range; 880-899, B+ range; 800-879, B range; 780-799, B- range; 700-779, C range; 600-699; D range; below 600, F.

LATE PAPERS: All papers are due in class on the afternoons that they are due. Computer and printer breakdowns are not considered legitimate excuses for late papers. Late papers will be accepted up to seven days after the due date (i.e., in class the following week) but 20 points will be deducted from the final score on the paper. Papers later than seven days will not be evaluated.

COURSE AND CLASS DECORUM: Students are expected to treat others in a way that they would expect to be treated. Therefore, where applicable, active listening, thoughtful and informed commentary, and/or polite agreement/disagreement should be the order of the day. Silence cell phones BEFORE class.
### JMS 600B Assignments at a Glance

**Don't let this happen to you →**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 4:</strong> Research Protocol Abstract</td>
<td>September 21</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 5:</strong> Application Exercise 1 -- Experiment</td>
<td>September 28</td>
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<td><strong>Week 6:</strong> Methodology Paper 1 (Experimental)</td>
<td>October 5</td>
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<td><strong>Week 7:</strong> Midterm Exam</td>
<td>October 12</td>
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<td><strong>Week 8:</strong> Application Exercise 2 -- Survey</td>
<td>October 19</td>
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<td><strong>Week 9:</strong> Design Your Research Model</td>
<td>October 26</td>
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<td>Methodology Paper 2 (Survey)</td>
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<td><strong>Week 10:</strong> First Draft Research Protocol</td>
<td>November 2</td>
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<td><strong>Week 11:</strong> Methodology Paper Discussion and Critique</td>
<td>November 9</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Read Papers)</td>
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<td><strong>Week 12:</strong> Methodology Paper 3 (Content Analysis)</td>
<td>November 16</td>
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<td>Application Exercise 3 (HRPP Initial Review Questionnaire)</td>
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<td><strong>Week 14:</strong> Presentations. Research Protocol</td>
<td>November 30</td>
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<td><strong>Week 15:</strong> Final Exam</td>
<td>December 7</td>
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**Week 2 (Sept 7) The Nature of Inquiry**

Overview of the discipline -- quantitative and qualitative research paradigms. Understanding of presuppositions underlying research methods. Methods as tools. A summary of methodological approaches covered in the course. Using continua to organize our thinking about methods.

**Readings:**

**Babbie**, Human inquiry and science.

**JMS 600B Supplemental Readings:**


**Week 3 (Sept 14) Introduction to Methods**


**Readings:**

**Babbie**, Paradigms, theory, and social research.

**JMS 600B Supplemental Readings:**

Week 4 (Sept 21) The Nomothetic Model and Testing Cause-Effect Relationships

The probabilistic nature of “cause-and-effect” in the social/behavioral sciences. Isolating cause and effect through experimental designs (internal validity). The problems of external validity of experiments. **Review in class Application Exercise 1 -- Experimental Methodology.**

Readings:

**Babbie**, Research design, conceptualization, operationalization, and measurement, & experiments.

*Come to class prepared to make a brief oral presentation of your approach and progress to date on your Research Protocol. Turn in a one-page abstract that identifies the research problem, and research application.*

Week 5 (Sept 28) Conducting Research Involving Human Subjects

GUEST PRESENTER: Samir Hafez, Research Affairs Analyst/Educator, Division of Research Affairs, SDSU.

Readings:

**JMS 600B Supplemental Readings:**

Barker and Riley Research Protocols

*Application Exercise #1 (Experiment) Due in Class*
Week 6 (Oct 5) Generalizing Findings from Samples to Populations

Non-probability vs. probability sampling. The concept of statistical generalization from samples to populations. The questionnaire as the instrumentation in survey research. Cross-sectional designs. Longitudinal designs. Panel designs vs. trend studies. The mechanics of questionnaire construction. Closed-ended questions. Review of Application Exercise #2 — Questionnaire Design. Last half-hour dedicated to exam review.

Readings:

Babbie, The logic of sampling

JMS 600B Supplemental Readings:


Methodology Paper #1 (Experimental) Due in Class

Week 7 (Oct 12) Midterm Exam

NOTE: The exam is taken in class. Closed book. Covers readings, classroom discussions through Week 6. Bring a NCS PO99B scantron and several #2 pencils. Exam will consist of multiple choice and essay questions. Please organize your schedule to be in class to take the exam. No make-up exam. Consideration will be given for medical illness documented by a doctor.

Week 8 (Oct 19) Media Content Analysis

Content analysis as a research methodology that objectively and systematically identifies specified characteristics of media messages. Academic researchers describe amount and nature of content, test hypotheses about media content, and for comparison. How much, how many, what percentage, and sometimes what kind of content? The importance of content analysis as a precursor to other types of research.

Readings:

JMS 600B Supplemental Readings:


Application Exercise #2 (Survey) Due in Class
Week 9 (Oct 26) Building a Research Protocol - Designing a Model

This class meeting provides an opportunity for you to design and briefly discuss a model of your proposed research, to ask questions and offer comments. The goal of the meeting is to trouble-shoot in readiness for the first draft of the Research Protocol. Be prepared to 'roll up your sleeves' and invest some nervous energy. Make the best of this opportunity.

Methodology Paper #2 (Survey) Due in Class

Week 10 (Nov 2) Qualitative research – Critical, Cultural, Rhetorical

GUEST PRESENTER: Dr. George Dionisopoulos, School of Communication, SDSU

First Draft of Research Protocol Due in Class

Week 11 (Nov 9) Methodology Paper Discussion Session

All students will write ONE Methodology paper addressing a research methodology other than that used in the Research Protocol. Copies of these Methodology papers will be made available to classmates. By the conclusion of the course, each student should have (# students in class) Methodology papers on file. These Methodology papers will provide outlines and constructive critiques of important/interesting studies in your field that utilize either experimental, survey methods or content analysis. This 'file' may be used for reference in other classes, or for the purposes of review prior to conducting empirical research/and or comprehensive exams. By the time of this class meeting, you will be expected to have read all of these papers.

Please come prepared to make the following contributions during class:

1. Describe your methodology of choice and the context/area addressed by the studies
2. Why you chose the studies discussed in your paper
3. What you learned in examining these studies
4. Difficulties or ambiguities you encountered in examining the studies
5. With hindsight, what you might have done differently in discussing/critiquing the studies
6. Highlight any new knowledge obtained from other classmate papers. How might you use any of the information gleaned from these papers in current or future work?
Week 12 -- November 16 Multiple Methods

GUEST PRESENTER: Dr. David Dozier, School of Journalism & Media Studies, SDSU

Dr. Dozier will provide an introductory overview of Multi-Methods, using examples from his own and other research to illustrate the presuppositions, strengths, and weaknesses of these methodological approaches.

Readings:

JMS 600B Supplemental Readings


Methodology Paper 3 (Content Analysis)
Application Exercise 3 (HRPP Initial Review Questionnaire)

Week 13 (Nov 23) No Class

Week 14 (Nov 30) -- Research Protocol Presentations and Review for Final Exam

Final Draft of Research Protocol Due in Class. LATE PAPERS NOT ACCEPTED.

Week 15 (Dec 7) Final Exam

NOTE: The exam is taken in class. Closed book. Covers specific readings since Week 7 only, but involves concepts, methods etc. for the entire semester. Bring a NCS Answer Sheet and a #2 pencil. Exam will consist of multiple choice and essay questions. Please organize your schedule to take the exam. No make-up exam. The grade of “F” will be given for the final exam if you do not have a legitimate excuse.