Course Syllabus

> **Course Description:** Students will perform scientific research in a chosen area of personal interest in communication. Typically, students conduct a replication study of published communication research. At the end of the course, students will submit their research to an academic conference.

The syllabus for this course is subject to change at any time. This includes, but is not limited to, such elements as required assignments, grading requirements/scales and the course calendar. Updates will be communicated to students directly through email.

Meeting Information

Students need to plan for regular one-on-one meetings on a weekly basis. These meetings are independently scheduled in collaboration with the instructor and occur over Zoom. The initial meeting usually lasts an hour with subsequent meetings averaging approximately 30 minutes, though a few may go longer depending on the student project and their needs.

Instructor Information

Kurtis D. Miller, PhD.

- Office: Garland Library, Room 126
- Office Phone: 423-636-7300 Ext. 5783
- Email: **kdmiller@tusculum.edu** **(mailto:kdmiller@tusculum.edu)**
- Online: **kurtisdmiller.com** **(https://kurtisdmiller.com)**
- Zoom link: **https://tusculum.zoom.us/j/95312191625** **(https://tusculum.zoom.us/j/95312191625)**

I typically check email once daily during business hours Monday to Thursday. Additional information is available below in my **email policy**.

Office Hours

Office hours are reserved specifically for meetings with students in my classes. Contact me by email to set up an appointment. Please include multiple times that work for you in your email to speed up scheduling. Use the same Zoom link you use for class meetings. My availability this semester is:

- Mondays from 10:00 am to 11:00 am, US Eastern Time
- Mondays from 2:30 am to 3:30 pm, US Eastern Time
- Wednesdays from 10:00 am to 11:00 am, US Eastern Time
- Other times may also be available, so please ask

I also hold drop-in office hours on Wednesdays from 2:30 pm to 4:30 pm, US Eastern Time. To preserve bandwidth on Campus, I do not keep Zoom active when I do not have an appointment, so please call my office phone line.

Required Texts and Materials

There is no textbook for this course. Readings are assigned independently in collaboration with the student based on the individual student research project.

Program Learning Outcomes

1. Describe the communication discipline and its central questions.
2. Employ communication theories, perspectives, principles, and concepts.
3. Engage in communication inquiry.

Course Assignments and Grade Determination

This course is designed to build off of work that you have already started and prepare you for Senior Seminar. There are four major components of your grade in this class:

- **Securing IRB Approval for Research** (15%)

  - 5% **Complete IRB training**
  - 10% **Get IRB approval for the study**

- **Collecting and Analyzing Data** (35%)

  - 10% **Create measures**
  - 10% **Recruit participants and collect data**
  - 15% **Analyze the data**

- **Writing Draft Sections of a Research Paper** (35%)

  - 5% **Write drafts of the literature review section**
  - 15% **Write drafts of the methods section**
  - 15% **Write drafts of the results section**

- **Participation and Professionalism** (15%)

  - Weekly Meetings

Securing IRB Approval for Research

Securing Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval contributes 15% of your final grade. You will need to complete a university-approved IRB training program and provide documentation of successful

completion to your instructor. You will also need to prepare an IRB application for your research study and submit it to the university IRB. **This process can take a long time and repeated submissions, so DO NOT PUT THIS OFF. You will not be able to collect or analyze data without IRB approval.** Consult with your instructor on the IRB application before submitting it.

Collecting and Analyzing Data

Collecting and analyzing data contributes 35% of your final grade. You will need to create the measures (questionnaires, interview protocols, etc.) that you will use to collect data. These measures are provided to the IRB as part of your application. After receiving approval from IRB to conduct the research, you will need to recruit enough participants to support your research. The exact number of participants needed varies depending on the objectives and style of research, so consult with your instructor. Finally, you will need to analyze the data you collect.

Writing Draft Sections of a Research Paper

Writing draft sections of your research paper contributes 35% of your final grade. You will need to work on your literature review section, methods section, and results section. It is acceptable (and even recommended) to revise a paper from a previous class as the basis for your literature review section. At the end of this course, you should have satisfactory working drafts of all of the major sections of a standard research paper written, except for the abstract, discussion, and conclusion sections.

Participation and Professionalism

Participation and Professionalism contributes 15% of your final grade. Displaying basic professionalism is an expectation in this class and one of the most useful skills to have when you graduate. Meetings are designed to help you understand the class content and to help you develop your research paper. Your participation and professionalism will be evaluated for each planned meeting. Examples of actions that may result in penalties to the participation and professionalism score include missing planned meetings, not completing planned tasks prior to a meeting, etc.[1]

Students who require an alternate deadline for any work should see the section on **Alternate Deadlines**.

Extra Credit

No extra credit is available in this class.

Final Exam Policy

There is no final exam for this class. The final assessment for the course is the final paper.

Grading Scale

Final grades are allocated according to the official University grading scale for undergraduate courses:

- 98-100% = A+
- 93-97% = A
- 90-92% = A-
- 87-89% = B+
- 83-86% = B
- 80-82% = B-
- 77-79% = C+
- 73-76% = C
- 70-72% = C-
- 67-69% = D+
- 63-66% = D
- 0-62% = F

Course Policies

Please review the **Tusculum University Support Systems and Institutional Policies**. These support systems and policies apply to all courses at Tusculum University.

Appropriate Behavior Policy

We are a community of learners, so please display the appropriate professional courtesies. Each student is required to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner at all times. Complete your assigned work on time. Be ready for meetings. Ask questions. Reach out early if you are having problems. Racist, sexist, or other offensive or discriminatory language will not be tolerated. Unprofessional behavior will result in penalties to your **Participation and Professionalism** grade.

Email Policy

I check and respond to my email once daily during business hours, however I dedicate my Fridays to research and larger projects. I typically do not see emails sent late on Thursday or during the day Friday until Monday the next week.

Engaging in professional communication with your professors and the university staff is important. I am unlikely to respond to emails that do not contain any questions. Brief emails asking questions which are already answered in course documents (syllabus, calendar, assignment descriptions, etc.) will typically receive brief replies referring to course documents.

Some students benefit from the below email template, which comes from a post I wrote to help students with **writing professional emails** (https://kurtisdmiller.com/post/writing-professional-emails/). Whether you are in my class or any other class at the university, this template should work well. Just replace the information in brackets as needed:

> Subject: [class number and section]: [your issue]
>
> Dear [Title Last Name – if you can't find out, use "Professor" to be safe],
>
> I am in your [time] [class name] class on [days class meets]. I have checked the [syllabus/assignment instructions/rubric/textbook/class resources] for an answer, but it does not adequately answer my question. I need some additional help with [your issue].
>
> [Second paragraph explaining your question. Describe where you looked for answers, what you found, and how that information is not enough for you to have a clear answer to your question. You may also include other relevant aspects of your situation.]
>
> [OPTIONAL third paragraph where you propose answers or next steps.]
>
> Thank you,
>
> [Your First and Last Name]

Grade Challenge Policy

If you believe that you have been graded unfairly, wait 24 hours after receiving the grade, review the rubric, and schedule a meeting to discuss it with me. Come to this meeting prepared to provide evidence supporting the need for a grade change. Grades are considered final one week after they are returned. The privacy of student educational records is protected by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). I will not respond to any communication about a student which does not come from an official school email address, and I will not discuss your grades publicly.

Late Work Policy

Late work may be turned in up to 1 calendar day after the deadline. Late work will lose 10% of the available points, and will not receive feedback. Presentation preparation materials that are turned in after the presentation is delivered receive an automatic zero. No late work is accepted after the last class due date.

Technology Problems

Using technology is a basic expectation of students at this level of study. You are responsible for the functionality of any and all personal or third-party devices and software you use. Issues with these are

not an excuse for late or missing work. If you encounter a problem with technology owned or operated by the university, **report the problem to information services** **(https://web.tusculum.edu /forms/is/isrequests.php)** . After the issue is resolved, include a copy of your messages with information services along with any requests for alternate deadlines to my email address.

Alternate Deadlines

In some cases an emergency may require you to turn in work after the assigned due date. These situations are handled on a case-by-case basis and, depending on the situation and documentation, this work may be assigned an alternate deadline. Coursework assigned an alternate deadline is graded for full credit, but will not receive feedback.

Alternate deadlines will not be assigned for events that can be planned for – this includes school-sponsored events, such as athletics.

Footnotes

1. Keaton, A. F. (2015). Teaching students the importance of professionalism. *Teaching Professor, 29*(6). https://www.magnapubs.com/newsletter/the-teaching-professor/114/Teaching-Students-the-Importance-of-Professionalism-13541-1.html↩