# BCA 604: Quantitative Mass Communication Research Methods
## Spring 2020
## Course Syllabus

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| **Instructor:** | Dr. Trevor Diehl |
| **Office:** | Moore 313 |
| **Office Hours:** | T/TH 11:00-12:00; W 1:00-2:00 and by appointment |
| **Office Phone:** | (989)-774-3973 |
| **Email:** | diehl1th@cmich.edu |

## Bulletin Description
Examination of quantitative research methods applied to the study of mass communication.

## Course Objectives
After successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:
1. Analyze the various quantitative mass communication research methodologies and designs.
2. Explain and apply basic statistics to mass communication data.
3. Identify and analyze quantitative research methods in peer-reviewed journal articles.
4. Apply quantitative mass communication research methods to your own research proposal.

## Textbooks & Course Readings
Wrench, J. S., Thomas-Maddox, C., Richmond, V. P., & McCroskey, J. C. (2019). *Quantitative research methods for communication: A hands-on approach* (4th ed.). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Salkind, N. J. (2014). *Statistics for people who (think they) hate statistics* (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Inc. (optional)

Other texts as required by the instructor.

**Course Methodology and Structure** The course will meet once a week. Our meetings will be a mix of lecture, discussion of readings, group exercises, and lab work. In order to get the most out of class discussion, all the readings and assignments for a particular class should be finished before that meeting.

## BCA 604 Workload
Students are expected to write several papers and assignments of varying lengths during the semester. Instructions for all assignments are posted on Blackboard. Students are expected to follow all instructions and deadlines. Failure to comply with and follow all instructions may result in grade deductions including a zero for the assignment. Some assignments and papers may require topic approval by the instructor before students begin writing their papers.

## Grade Breakdown
*Methods Knowledge (30%)*

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| Quantitative Article Reviews | 20% |
| Presentation on Method | 10% |

*Statistics Training (25%)*
Statistics Labs                                                              25%
*Research Project (45%)*
Research Proposal                                                          5%
Annotated Bibliography                                                10%
Extended Abstract                                                       30%
**Total**                                                                     **100%**

**Letter Grade Scale**

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| **A**  = 100-93.50% | **C+** = 79.49-76.50% |
| **A-**  = 93.49-89.50% | **C**  = 76.49-73.50% |
| **B+** = 89.49-86.50% | **C-** = 73.49-69.50% |
| **B**  = 86.49-83.50% | **E**  = 69.49-0% |
| **B-**  = 83.49-79.50% | |

**Major Assignments**
A total of 1,000 points are available for this course. Details for each assignment will be available on Blackboard.

*Quantitative article reviews (200 points total, 50 points each)*: Throughout the semester, you will report on quantitative research studies related to the topic/method for that week. Choose four of five opportunities. These consist of critical reviews (about two pages double-spaced, details on Blackboard).

*Presentation on a Method (100 points)*: Early in the semester, you will sign-up to present the readings on a method for that week. You will be an expert on that topic for the day. I may also call on you to help foster discussion.

*Statistics labs (250 points total, 25 points each)*: Class will be broken into lectures and labs. During lab time, we will practice using statistical software to illustrate basic principles of statistical inference in media studies. These will consist of about 10 weekly problem sets, and are equivalent to in-class participation exercises.

*Research proposal (50 points total, 25 each):* You will submit two drafts of your research proposal that outlines the theory you would like explore, as well as the research questions and data analysis plan. One will be due early in the semester, and another in the lead-up to the final project.

*Annotated bibliography (100 points):* In order to place your research project within the greater context of the field, you will conduct a brief (about 10 entries) bibliography search. This will be due in the final month of class.

*Extended abstract (300 points):* The goal of this class is to produce an extended abstract of about 3,000-5,000 words for an empirical study employing a quantitative research design. Abstracts will include an introduction, short literature review, formal research questions/hypotheses, and a methods section. Ideally, you would have some data collected and preliminary results.

**Policies and Equipment**

**Late Work/Missed Assignments**
Most work cannot be late because the class meeting for that day depends on your contribution. In general, you will lose one letter grade per day if you fail to hand-in an assignment when due (e.g. an 'A' paper will automatically become a 'B' paper). *I will not grade assignments more than 7 days late.* Please note that for the final project, late papers will not be accepted except in cases of exceptional circumstances.

*All written work must strictly follow the APA publication style*. All assignments must be submitted to the instructor as one Microsoft Word file through Blackboard by the assigned date and time (some assignments may require additional files). If the instructor cannot open your assignment in Microsoft Word you will not receive credit for the assignment and receive a grade of zero. No assignments will be accepted in paper or through email.

**Class Participation**
Students are expected to participate in every class discussion with thoughtful and insightful contributions. Students are expected to have read and digested course readings before coming to class. It will be assumed that you have done the course readings; therefore, material presented during class will go beyond the course readings. This course will be conducted in quasi-seminar format, which means that there must be discussion from students in order for students to gain knowledge and understanding of the subject matter.  Attendance will be taken every class, although no grade component is attached. Students are expected to come to every class on time and stay for the entire class. If you should miss a class, it is your responsibility to get class information and notes from your peers. **You are responsible for announcements made in class during your absence or tardiness.**

The last month of lab time during the semester is devoted to your research projects. Each student will be expected to give updates/presentations of their research proposals in class, but also facilitate class discussion about the proposal's topic, theory and methodology. Therefore, students will be expected to be engaged during student presentations ready to give comments and discuss each research proposal.

**Blackboard (Bb), CMU Virtual Lab & U-Drive**
Pertinent and useful information for the course will be posted on the CMU Blackboard system (http://blackboard.cmich.edu). Information about student assignments and papers are available **only** on Blackboard. All assignments must be submitted to the instructor through Blackboard.

You will also need access to the IBM SPSS statistical software package and/or the statistical software RStudio to complete some course assignments. There are two ways that CMU students can access the SPSS software. **First, the patron computers in Park Library have SPSS installed on them. This is the easiest way to access SPSS**. Second, you can access SPSS through the CMU Virtual Lab. Instructions for how to access the Virtual Lab will be posted on Blackboard. To access the Virtual lab, you will need to load a free program (VMware) on your computer. The Virtual Lab will automatically connect to your university U-Drive, so it is also suggested that you look up how to use this resource. Using the

Virtual lab can be very slow and laborious especially off-campus, so you may have better luck at a computer in the library. R is available for free at https://rstudio.com/products/rstudio/download/

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**If you have questions or require assistance, with any of these university computer technologies (Including Blackboard and the Virtual Lab) you can contact the CMU Help Desk:**
**By phone at 989-774-3662**
**Or visit the Help Desk on the first floor of Park Library just inside of the South entrance.**

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### Policy on Academic Integrity
In the academic community, the high value placed on truth implies a corresponding intolerance of scholastic dishonesty. Plagiarism, cheating and other forms of academic dishonesty including dishonesty involving computer technology, are prohibited by the Central Michigan University *Academic Integrity Policy* which applies to all university students and classes.  This policy can be obtained on the CMU Presidents website (accessed through CentralLink) and is linked to on Blackboard. All academic work is expected to be in compliance with this policy. Course work that is not in compliance with the CMU *Academic Integrity Policy* **may result in a failing grade for the assignment. A second offense will result in a zero for the course.** Please do your own work and cite all information that is not your own.

### BCA Department Policy on Class Absences
Absences for which the student is requesting special accommodation must be requested in advance and in writing.  These absences may adversely impact the student's grade. Conferences, co-curricular, or other school-related activities do not excuse students from class.

### Incompletes
The last day to withdrawal from (or drop) the course is **Friday, March 27**. If you find that you are unable to complete this course before March 27 (due to illness or some other obstacle to attending class and completing assignments), then you should drop the class. If you find that you are unable to complete this course after March 27, then you can request an incomplete if the following three requirements are met:

1) You must be able to document that some extreme and unavoidable circumstance is preventing you from completing this course.

2) The problem that is causing you to request the Incomplete must have developed or became apparent AFTER the deadline for withdrawing from the course.

3) At the time you make the request, you must be passing the course. Do not wait until you have missed graded material to request the incomplete.

Requests for an Incomplete must be submitted by **Monday, April 27 at 5:00 PM**, in a formal typed letter, with written verifiable documentation from an appropriate source about your circumstances. If you do not meet the above requirements, then do not request an Incomplete.

### BCA Department Policy on Classroom Civility
Each CMU student is encouraged to create an environment during class that promotes learning, dignity, and mutual respect for everyone. Students who carry on private conversations, pass notes,

read material unrelated to the class, sleep in class, interrupt the class by arriving late or leaving early, engage in disruptive behaviors, or are verbally or physically abusive may be required to leave the class and subjected to disciplinary action under the *Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities and Disciplinary Procedures*.

**BCA Intellectual Property Protection Statement**
Lectures given in this course are the property of the instructors and Central Michigan University. Class lectures may not be recorded in any form without prior permission from the instructors and any guest lecturers that may speak to this class. Recordings, including class notes, may never be used for commercial purposes.

**ADA Statement**
CMU provides students with disabilities reasonable accommodations to participate in educational programs, activities, or services. Students with disabilities requiring accommodations to participate in class activities or meet course objectives should first register with the Office of Student Disability Services (120 Park Library; 989-774-3018) and then contact the instructor within the first week of class.

# BCA 604 Spring Semester 2020
# Course Schedule
# Updated 3/1/2020

| Week | Topic, Readings & Assignments |
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| Week 1<br>M Jan 13 | Course Introduction: Quantitative and qualitative research, research tools, anatomy of a scholarly article<br><br>📖 Wrench et al., Chapters 1-4 |
| Week 2<br>M Jan 20 | *No class, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day* |
| Week 3<br>M Jan 27 | Method: Research design & research questions/hypotheses<br>Stats Lab: Importing datasets, variables & levels of measurement<br><br>**Due: Software Set-Up; Article Summary # 1: Quantitative Construct**<br><br>📖 Wrench et al., Chapters 6-8 |
| Week 5<br>M Feb 10 | Method: Surveys 1, Design and Sampling<br>Stats Lab: Descriptive statistics, distributions & histograms<br><br>**Due: Survey design group presents**<br><br>📖 Wrench et al., Chapters 9, 12, 14<br>📖 Cairo, Chapter 7 |
| Week 6<br>M Feb 17 | Method: Experimental Design<br><br>Stats Lab: Descriptive statistics, distributions & histograms<br><br><br>**Due: Article Summary # 2: Survey Study**<br>**Due: Experimental design group presents**<br><br>📖 Wrench et al., Chapters 11, 15-17 |

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| Week 7<br>M Feb 24 | Method: Content Analysis 1<br><br>Stats Lab: Codebook design<br><br>**Due: Content analysis group presents**<br>**Article Summary # 3: Experiment Study**<br><br> 📖 Wrench et al., Chapter 10<br> 📖 Lacy et al., 2015<br> 📖 Krippendorff, 1999 |
| Week 8<br>M Mar2 | Method: Content Analysis 2<br><br>Stats Lab: Pilot testing and Inter-coder reliability with recal tools<br><br>**Due: Research Proposal First Ideas**<br><br> 📖 Grimmer & Stewart, 2013<br> 📖 Schwartz & Ungar, 2015 |
| M Mar 9 | *Spring Break* |
| Week 9<br>M Mar 16 | Mid-Term Review<br><br>Stats Lab: Hypothesis testing for relationships & correlation<br><br>**Due: Article Summary # 4: Content Analysis Study**<br><br> 📖 Wrench et al., Chapter 19 |
| Week 10<br>M Mar 23 | Method: Network Analysis<br><br>Lab: Social and text analysis for media studies<br>Stats Lab: Group differences w/Chi-Square tests, T-tests & ANOVA<br><br>**Due: Network analysis group presents**<br><br> 📖 TBA |

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| Week 11<br>M Mar 30 | Method: Scraping Big Data and Mass Communication Research<br><br>Stats Lab: Data visualization<br><br>**Due: Article Summary # 5: Network Analysis or Big Data Study**<br><br>   📖 Russell & Klassen, Prelude, Chapters 1-2<br>   📖 TBA |
| Week 12<br>M Apr 6 | Writers workshop 1: Writing methods and results sections in APA style<br><br>Lab: Interpreting statistic and review<br><br>Research workshop–Conferences with instructor to discuss draft of research paper, data source and theory |
| Week 13<br>M Apr 20 | Writers workshop 2: Writing literature reviews<br><br>**Due: Research Proposal Due**<br>**Due: Annotated Bibliography & Formal Research Questions**<br><br>   📖 Wrench et al., Chapter 5 |
| Week 14<br>M Apr 27 | Method: Issues in research practice: Ethics, IRB @ CMU, & Authorship<br>Lab: IRB modules for CAM<br><br>   📖 Wrench et al., Chapter 4 |
| Week 15<br>M May 4 | Paper Workshops & Presentations<br><br>**Due Monday May 4: Research Extended Abstract** |