

COMM 0320 – Foundations of Communication Research (3 CR) (Summer online)

Professor Donald Treadwell

email: dtreadwell@wsc.ma.edu

Course Description

Explores basic qualitative and quantitative methodologies of communication research, including experiments, surveys, focus groups, field observations, and content analysis. These methodologies are examined as ways of posing questions and solving problems in communication. Each student will write papers based on a research project including problem definition, literature review, data gathering and analysis.

Prerequisites:

- COMM 0101 – Introduction to Mass Communication
- COMM 0221 – Communication Theory
- junior or senior status
- or permission of instructor.

Overview

In this course we will look at some methods commonly used in human communication research, and the thinking and theories behind communication research. You will have the opportunity to design and execute some communication studies centered on a topic that interests you.

I regard communication research as one of the most important and interesting courses in the communication curriculum because it focuses on looking at human communication behaviors first hand and trying to understand them, report them and perhaps use the findings of research to help improve the way we communicate.

This is a “curiosity course.” To do well, you need to have an interest in some aspect of human communication and be prepared to think about communication and how best to explore it.

Obviously, this is an online course that also packs a regular 15 week course into six

weeks. If you have not taken an online course before, take the following quiz to help you decide if online study is for you:

[University of Illinois Self Evaluation for Potential Online Students](#)

You will need access to the Internet and to a computer that can play audio and video. You will also need software that can read Microsoft Word documents, PowerPoint files and Adobe Acrobat. All these are available free. You can get free Microsoft Word and PowerPoint readers at <http://www.microsoft.com> and www.adobe.com. The Microsoft “office” suite of software is available free to most students registered at this college. Contact the college’s Information Technology help desk for more information on this.

Text:

Required readings will be available online.

About the Instructor

I am professor of communication at Westfield State College. I teach public relations, public relations writing, organizational communication, and research methods. My professional background is in agriculture and health sector communication. I have graduate degrees in communication from Cornell University and RPI.

Recent publications include:

Treadwell, D. F. (2011). *Introducing Communication Research: Paths of Inquiry*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Treadwell, D. F. (2007). Situating communication studies: A study in academic boundaries. *Journal of Human Subjectivity*, 4(2), 96-116.

Treadwell, D. F. & Treadwell, J. B. (2005). *Public relations writing: Principles in practice*. (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Treadwell, D. F. (2003). Can your institution’s name influence constituent response? An initial assessment of consumer response to college names. *Public Relations Review*, 29(2003), 185-197.

Ruiz, J. & Treadwell, D. F. (2002). The perp walk: Due process v. freedom of the press. *Criminal Justice Ethics*, 21(2). 44-56.