



**University of North Carolina at Wilmington
Department of Communication Studies
Communication 200: Research Methods
Spring 2016 Section 001**



Course Information

Professor: Rick Olsen	Office: 223 Leutze Hall
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Class Time: MWF 8:00-8:50	Class Location: MO 100

Course Abstract

This one-page summary of essentials of the course will get you through today’s session. Please visit my website to find out more about me and the course. You will not do well in the class unless you regularly visit my website to learn about assignment descriptions, worksheets, etc. Please bookmark the site and download the syllabus and schedule of sessions.

Website: <http://people.uncw.edu/olsenr/>

Purpose: The purpose of COM 200 is increasing your awareness of, appreciation for, and ability to conduct useful and meaningful research in your major and beyond. To that end, we will examine the major approaches to formal research that you will need to succeed as a COM major and in your job search, job, life decisions, etc. Research skills are needed everywhere!

Assignments: These are the major assignments you will complete this semester. If you do not think that you can give the time necessary to do well on these assignments or work effectively in a group, please withdraw from the course now. The course content and group work require focus and commitment.

Assignment	Points Available
IRB Certification	30 (pass/fail based on certificate of completion)
CBT training on group skills	30 (pass/fail based on certificate of completion)
Group Reflection Report	25
Research project one: interview	60
Research project two conference	25
Research project two: research proposal	100
Peer evaluations	30 (three evaluations at 10 pts. each)
Exam one: secondary research	100 (Individual BB portion and Team portion)
Exams two and three (on Blackboard)	200 (2 X 100)
Final exam (in class during final exam)	100
“Daily” quizzes based on readings, worksheets and class discussion	About 400 points (quizzes most every day at about 15 pts. each)

Attendance: I have an attendance policy since responsibility is a core skill (see below) and several of the key assignments are group assignments and you need to be in class to be a productive group member. I will take attendance using the response pads. Upon your sixth zero for a quiz you fail the course regardless of your current grade. I will typically post quiz scores soon after class and you need to check them regularly and protest any posted score within 48 hours of posting.

Required Materials: There are four resources required for this class. The first is our main text that you need to begin reading immediately. The next two are fairly inexpensive, guidebooks for writing in the expected scholarly manner for formal submissions within the major. The fourth is the keypad we’ll use to take attendance quizzes.

You’ll also need a jump drive, of course, to keep copies of your work. Create a COM 200 folder tonight!

1. Treadwell, D. (2014) Introduction to communication research: Paths of inquiry (2nd ed.). Los Angeles: Sage.
2. TurningPoint ResponseCard RF Keypad. You can use this for multiple classes.

It is also *recommended* that you get the APA guide and the Writing Empirical Reports but these are not required. There are also several **free books** in electronic format in your SkillPort folder to help you in this class and the major.

Visit website and read syllabus & schedule carefully—it will be on upcoming quizzes and exams!

Some Notes on my Teaching Philosophy



(Or, “Why this is, at times, a demanding class”)

Dr. Rick Olsen



I like my job. I want to be here. I assume that you like your job and want to be here too. I believe that college is one of many options after high school. I assume that you are here because you made a choice to pursue your personal development through the opportunities provided by formal education. If you only want to be hired as a worker, go get trained. If you only want to socialize, go home. If you want to grow as a person, then embrace your education and then take personal responsibility for it.

You are a student, not “the customer.” Education is far more significant than a business transaction. The student-teacher relationship is much richer than the customer-merchant metaphor could ever capture. If there are customers at all, they are the citizens of this state and country, and your children. Tax dollars make this education affordable and your children and fellow citizens will be direct beneficiaries, or sufferers, of the person you become. Become legacy minded—it can change your perspective in wonderful ways.

I as an instructor, and we as a department, ask that you develop your whole person. We expect and will work to cultivate the following traits: confidence, intellectual curiosity, responsibility, collaboration, critical thinking, problems solving, civility and praxis. We also will expect and keep you accountable to a high ethical standard.

Learning how to learn is as important as learning itself. My role is to act as coach. The course content is our common challenge. I understand that my expectations are fairly high. View that as a compliment to what I see as your potential. I want each of you to succeed in mastering the course content. I hope you will look back with pride at having achieved positive changes within yourself through this course.

Learn to enjoy the striving for excellence. Excellence is pursued because it is, of itself, a right thing to strive for. Do not be intimidated into mediocrity by your peers or your own ability to be “good enough” without much effort. I make the assumption that we are creatures of habit. A goal of this course is to develop good habits. Look for ways that this course material—and your efforts to master it—can change the way you perceive, think, feel, respond and act. Look for ways to turn information into knowledge and knowledge into wisdom. Turn your education into action. To a large extent, you are what you do.

Many of you ask college to prepare you for a career. That request comes with some clear implications: In a career you will be asked to put in a 40 hour week (or more) and be at work by eight or nine in the morning. You’ll likely be allowed about 30 minutes for lunch. A career will not allow for daytime TV, late night TV, or skipping work without being fully prepared to make up for the time you lost. A career is not conducive to habitual mid-week partying, late night web surfing, X-box addictions, or any other activity that would undermine your ability to perform to your highest potential the next day. If you strive to act intentionally as a student you could likely be done studying by 8:00 pm., enjoy the weekends and still get solid grades. The “40-hr.-week-approach” is both demanding and liberating! I don’t have two full-time jobs. I don’t expect you to have two full time jobs either. If you work full-time don’t expect to go to school full time. I don’t say this to be mean, but to save you from the trap of the “you can have it all” myth.

Active reading, attendance, curiosity, participation, efforts to personalize the material, assisting your classmates and asking questions are not required . . . but then success in this class, or in life, are not required either. Grades are not a statement about your potential or a denial of the equality offered to everyone in the eyes of God or the Constitution. Grades reflect an assessment about your performance according to agreed upon standards for a given assignment or course.

I realize many of you work and we all have lives outside of the classroom. However, college is a special and short season in your life. College is ideally a time to immerse yourself in the life of the mind and create or refine the compass that will guide you on your life-journey. Work to find ways to focus on your studies, knowing that these efforts are what is called for, for now.



Core Skills and Attributes Summary Sheet

The Department of Communication Studies offers a diverse array of courses and faculty. Below is a summary of some common attributes and objectives we seek to foster. We expect you to work with us to acquire and develop these outcomes through private reflection on course content and through activities and assignments you encounter.

It is important to see this list as central, not comprehensive: Other concepts could easily be added. These were selected because they are foundational to pursuing other important outcomes and because they reflect an understanding of our discipline as an art, craft, and science. In each of our emphasis areas you will encounter assignments that require and seek to develop these traits.

You will often hear that “theory informs practice” in our courses. That is also true on this list. Some of the concepts are primarily “habits of mind” and focus on thought processes. Others are “habits of action” and focus primarily on behaviors. Clearly they work together: habits of mind should result in habits of action and certain actions can help refine habits of mind. Finally, remember that living by these concepts should be framed by a strong awareness of the *ethical dimensions, ideals and obligations* of whatever you are thinking, valuing, and doing. (The following list was adapted from *Megaskills* by Dorothy Rich).

Core Skill	Definition	Example From COM Experience/Curriculum
Confidence	Feeling able to do what you set out to do, mentally, emotionally, and physically.	Performance and writing assignments throughout the curriculum should work to instill confidence in your ability to speak and write well under pressure.
Intellectual Curiosity	Valuing and participating in experiences that comprise “the life of the mind”	Asking higher level questions in class. Connecting concepts, themes and behaviors between courses. Completing extra work of an academic or scholarly nature; participating in extracurricular opportunities, offered by the university that are academic or scholarly nature (e.g., attendance at lecture series or challenging artistic performance).
Responsibility	Taking control of the processes necessary to achieve what you set out to accomplish. This involves the coordination of motivation, initiative, and perseverance.	Consistently meeting due dates and criteria of assignments. Honoring your advising appointments, office visits by being on time and prepared. Many assignments in various situations require responsibility; both as a member seeking positive final peer evaluation and in giving honest feedback.
Collaboration	Working well with others to accomplish a high quality outcome of a completed task, service, product or performance.	Panel presentations, video projects and many other COM assignments will require and foster collaboration. It is important to explicitly work on becoming a better team member, as well as completing the task at hand. Both process and product are important concerns.
Critical Thinking	Using sound reasoning, criteria, theories and definitions to explore specific questions or issues of concern.	Debates, class discussions and performance analyses, as well as essays that ask for arguments help to acquire and develop critical thinking skills.
Problem Solving	Coordinating all that you know and can do to bring about satisfactory outcomes.	Research and DIS projects, internships, extracurricular opportunities within the department (Advertising Club, CSS, PRSN, Lambda Pi Eta) as well as groups and organizations outside the department such as SGA and SBTV are all ways to demonstrate and refine problem solving abilities.
Civility	Showing regard for the dignity of other people and the importance of social expectations.	Respectful involvement in class discussion and performances (active listening and meaningful contributions). “Pulling your own weight” out of respect for your fellow group members as people. Being honest but tactful in peer feedback, interaction with faculty and other communication exchanges.
Praxis	Able to do what the theory or concept tells you to do with skill and self-awareness.	Making clear, insightful and recognizable connections in assignments that demonstrate your ability to connect course content to your own thinking, performance choices and habits. This concept speaks to your ability to put course vocabulary into practice.