

THIS SYLLABUS WILL ALWAYS BE AVAILABLE IN ONCOURSE.
IF YOU STILL FEEL THAT IT IS NECESSARY TO PRINT IT OUT, PLEASE PRINT DOUBLE-SIDED

Communication Research Methods

COMM 323-01, Fall 2019
8-9:20am; T&R, Fenton Hall 175

Instructor Dr. Tracy Marafiotte (she/her/hers)
Best contact: tracy.marafiotte@fredonia.edu (write name/course in Subject Line)
Office: 316 McEwen Hall, 673-3825
Office Hours: Tues 12:30-1, Wed 1-3, Thurs 11-12:30, and by appointment
Dept of Communication: 324 McEwen Hall, 673-3410

Course Description & Objectives

Research methods are the process by which we develop new knowledge in the communication field. This course consists of introductions to the underlying rationale behind the selection of, and the methods and procedures for, a qualitative or quantitative research study.

The **conceptual objectives**—goals related to thought processes—of the course are:

- as a student, to come to understand the process of extending and discovering knowledge;
- as a scholar, to gain experience making original knowledge claims.
- as a critic, to gain experience analyzing concepts and evaluating evidence;
- as a researcher, to gain skill in identifying studies relevant to your area;

The **practical objectives**—goals related to skills—for this course, include that you will be able to:

- critically analyze research literature within the communication disciplines, as well as other studies you may encounter in your work or everyday life;
- understand the primary distinctions between qualitative and quantitative research methods;
- define the major characteristics of, strategies for, and procedures in qualitative and quantitative communication research;
- enhance skills in identifying communication literature resources and in search techniques;
- comprehend the guidelines for ethical research practice;
- propose, investigate, and write communication research scholarship.

In addition, the course addresses the following (revised) **Department of Communication Learning Goals**, which state that *Students will demonstrate the ability to be:*

4. Ethical: understand and apply ethical principles to the practice of communication in research, interactions, and creative processes in diverse social, cultural, and professional spheres.
5. Problem Solving: develop and implement creative, knowledge-based solutions across a variety of communication contexts within and beyond the university.
6. Proficient: forge connections between the skills and knowledge acquired in their communication major with their lives, careers, and education beyond the baccalaureate.

Your continued enrollment in this course indicates your agreement to abide by the guidelines, policies, and standards outlined in this syllabus.

Texts

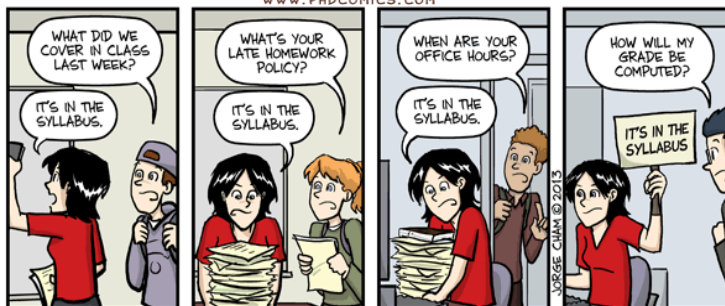
- Davis, C. S., & Lachlan, K. A., (2017). *Straight Talk about Communication Research Methods*. 3rd ed. Dubuque, IA: Kendall Hunt. ISBN: 9781524916138
 - Follow link to purchase an e-book (save\$! help the environment!) from [Kendall Hunt Publishing](#)
- Additional readings are available in OnCourse. Additional materials may be required.

Department of Communication Philosophy

IT'S IN THE SYLLABUS

This message brought to you by every instructor that ever lived.

WWW.PHDCOMICS.COM



Communication does not exist outside of relationships. With this in mind, the faculty of the SUNY Fredonia Department of Communication believe that all communicators, whether in the classroom, on the air, or within created works, have a responsibility to themselves and their audience.

The faculty believe that it is our responsibility to provide perspective and structure as students make choices about their work, and consequently, about themselves and who they are as adults and scholars. We encourage students to make the effort to consider the consequences of their choices for themselves, for others, and for those relationships.

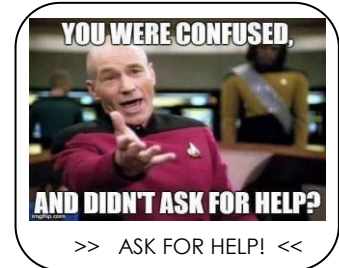
The faculty encourages projects and behaviors that are undertaken with thoughtful respect and consideration for others. We support and encourage work that is both ethical and enriching to the students' community and to personal and professional relationships.

All students should review the **Department of Communication Ethical and Professional Standards** at <http://www.fredonia.edu/department/communication/standards.asp>

Instructor Philosophy/Availability

This is a rigorous and effort-intensive course; you will be exposed to issues, perspectives, and theoretical concepts that will demand a high level of effort and engagement. I will conduct each class and our interactions with these expectations. If at any time during this semester you feel that my expectations are unclear, have difficulty meeting any of the above requirements, or have any course-related concerns, please talk with me – preferably **before** it becomes an issue (for assignments, *prior* to any due date) – so that we can discuss a solution. I make an effort to always be accessible both in and out of the classroom, and am always willing to discuss any issues related to your learning.

Be aware that I feel strongly that an education is earned through engaged effort to expand your understanding and knowledge of new topics/issues/ideas, as well as your critical thinking abilities. Neither an education nor a good grade is gained simply by paying tuition, attending class, and turning in assignments. As a student you choose the extent to which this course and your education is a priority for you; it is likely that your intellectual success and your grades will reflect your choices and your effort.



Course, Department, & University Policies

Inclusive Learning Statement The diverse knowledges that students bring to this class are a resource and benefit for learning, intellectual growth, and democracy. I am committed to creating an inclusive classroom free of discrimination or harassment, and in which: each class member is able to hear and respect each other; students of all genders, sexualities, abilities, races, ethnicities, religions, ages, socioeconomic statuses, and cultures feel heard, safe, respected; all members are able to focus on our shared task of gaining knowledge. These require that all members of the class commit to ([University Policies](#)) and participate in ([Student Rights & Responsibilities \(Code of Conduct\)](#)) maintaining respectful and professional relationships. For example:

- **Names/Pronouns** We each have the right to be addressed by the name and pronouns that correspond to our gender identity, including non-binary pronouns (see [Guide](#)). If you use a name that differs from the official Fredonia list, let me know so I can address you using your preferred or chosen name. Rosters do not list gender or pronouns; please (optional!) indicate the pronouns you use so that I/others don't make assumptions based on your name and/or appearance/self-presentation. Shared chosen names and pronouns are to be respected at all times in the classroom.
- **Religion** If any class meetings or requirements conflict with your religious observation, let me know in advance so that we can try to make other arrangements for you to complete the work.
- **Concerns** While a speaker's *intention** may not be to cause discomfort or offense, if something is said (by anyone) in class—or in course materials—that bothers you, please talk about it. If and when this occurs, there are several ways to alleviate some of the discomfort or distress you may experience—this is important in life in general, and especially in a Communication course:
 1. *Discuss the situation privately with me.* I am always open to listening to students' experiences, and want to work with students to find acceptable ways to process and address an issue.
 2. *Discuss the situation with the class.* Chances are there is at least one other student in the class who had a similar response. Discussion enhances the ability for all class participants to have a

fuller understanding of context and impact of course material and class discussions.

3. *Notify me of the issue through another source.* If for any reason you do not feel comfortable discussing the issue directly with me, I encourage you to seek out another, more comfortable avenue to address the issue such as an academic advisor, trusted faculty member, or peer.¹

- **Suggestions** *As communication scholars, we know that an audience/receiver's interpretation/understanding/response is as, or more, important as the speaker/sender's intent. As scholars, we are always in the process of learning more about diverse perspectives and identities. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated. Let me know your ideas to increase the effectiveness of the course for you personally, or for other students or student groups.

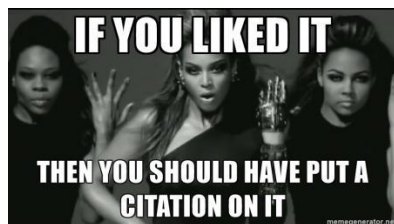
ADA Statement Reasonable accommodations are available to students with documented disabilities at Fredonia. Students who may require instructional and/or examination accommodations should contact the office of Disability Support Services for Students (DSS), located on the 4th Floor of the Reed Library (716-673-3270 or disability.services@fredonia.edu). The DSS coordinator will review documentation and determine accommodations on a case-by-case basis. DSS will notify me with an accommodation letter which verifies that you have registered with that office and which describes any accommodations approved for you. Contact me early in the semester so that I can provide or facilitate in providing accommodations you may need.

Attendance & Punctuality policy Regular attendance and punctuality are expected for all class meetings. If you have a scheduling dilemma that makes punctuality difficult, you should reconsider your registration. We will both begin and end classes on time every meeting. Repeatedly arriving after class begins will reduce your attendance grade. Three late arrivals or departures equal an absence. Arriving over 15 minutes late or leaving early is considered an absence. **If you miss class**, it is your responsibility to *contact another student* regarding lecture material, notes, assignments, etc. *In any class, in contacting instructors about absences, have the common sense not ask if you did or if you will "miss anything 'important'."*



Make up Policy/Assignment Deadlines Quizzes, in-class assignments, reading summaries, etc. cannot be made up; all work is due on the designated day – this *includes* absences for weddings, vacations/trips, doctor visits, interviews, business/work, etc. Notifying me in advance is advised but does not constitute an “excused absence.” In the case of *emergencies* or *extreme personal difficulty* (none of the above reasons qualify), some assignments may be made up *with documentation* (copy of hospital bill, funeral notice, etc.); see me. I am happy to provide **feedback on drafts** of assignments; to allow time in my schedule to do so, such requests must be submitted—with the *100% complete* draft—one week prior to the assignment due date. **Late assignments** will be penalized 5% for each day late and will not be accepted more than one week late. Makeup tests must be completed immediately upon return. Begin assignments early enough so that computer “glitches” are not an obstacle. In addition, you are strongly advised to retain back-up copies of all submitted work for the entirety of the semester.

Academic Honesty/Plagiarism Compliance with strict standards of academic honesty is expected.



Academic misconduct/plagiarism will not be tolerated and may be grounds for failure of the course, and suspension or dismissal from the University. Note that **plagiarism** is the failure to correctly cite/reference ANY words OR ideas that are not ORIGINALLY yours. You should *always* reference the sources of your information. Plagiarism also includes the using of others' (or sharing your own) essays, quizzes, etc., and the use of pre-written, purchased, or downloaded materials.

If you do not understand how to cite others' work in your own writing, schedule an appointment with me; I always am very happy to discuss referencing and learning-related topics with you. Additionally, any **material written for another course** may not be used in this course (or vice versa) without specific permission of both course instructors.

Class Environment Your continued enrollment in this course indicates your agreement that all discussions and interactions will be conducted with thought, maturity, and respect for others' rights to differing values and views. Discussion of differing beliefs is encouraged, and will be conducted in a manner that maintains a climate conducive to the thinking and learning of all members of the

class. Students are encouraged to exercise personal responsibility and self-discipline, and engage in the rigors of discovery and scholarship.

Classroom Behaviors See the Dept. of Comm. Ethical and Professional Standards on our website.

Additional behaviors include, for example, use of class time. If you would like to eat during class, you must 1) have your food items in hand by start of class, 2) eat quietly and neatly, 3) clean up after yourself, placing materials in the garbage or recycle bin when you are done.

Sustainability Policy In keeping with SUNY Fredonia's Green Initiatives to use resources more thoughtfully, you are encouraged you to be mindful about paper (and other resource) usage.

Please use double-sided printing for all hard copies of course work. Moreover, you're encouraged to print selectively from our course E-reserves, share/reuse with classmates, and recycle all E-reserve and other materials that cannot be passed on to future students.

Cell Phone Policy Phones must be TURNED OFF and PUT AWAY in bag or backpack during class. [Research](#) shows that *the mere presence of a cellphone distracts and reduces the ability to focus*; a phone that is out during class will automatically result in a loss of participation points, and may be confiscated during class for the remainder of the class. I retain the right to answer any incoming calls or texts. If you are expecting an emergency call or text, let me know in advance.



Laptop Policy [Research](#) shows that laptops are a distraction in the classroom. Other than for occasional class assignments, laptops will generally only be allowed in order to accommodate documented special needs (ADA accommodations), or well-supported requests.

Study time The Communication Department enforces rigorous academic standards, which maintain the high quality and success of our graduates. Students should expect to devote a minimum of 3 hours of study/preparation time for each in-class/credit hour.

Email communication Emails written to any faculty or staff, or to any community member as a representative of SUNY Fredonia, should use standard professional formatting. This includes a clear subject heading, a courteous greeting, proper spelling and grammar, respectful content, and an identifying "signature." See: [Great info #1](#) and [Good Example #2](#) *Pro tip: never start with "Hey"*.



Requests for Reevaluation/24 hour rule The burden of proof in any reevaluation of your work rests with you. Requests for reevaluation must be made *within one week* of the original evaluation. Before meeting with me, please use the first 24 hours to carefully consider my comments in relation to the assignment guidelines. Then, in writing, identify specific concerns or proposed changes and provide an argument and evidence in support of your position, which we will meet to discuss.

Recording Class Material Students may not take photographic, video, or audio recordings of any course material without express permission of the instructor. Any permission granted will be for one-time only and does not extend to other class meetings or materials. Any materials recorded with permission may be used only for the personal study purposes of the individual to whom permission was granted, and may not be shared with other individuals or entities for any purpose.

Course Requirements & Assignments

1. You have ample opportunity to do your work thoroughly throughout the semester and to work with me if you are having difficulties; **extra credit** assignments are not given.
2. In keeping with Fredonia's Green Initiative, this a (relatively) **paperless classroom**; unless otherwise stated, work will be turned in electronically to drop boxes on OnCourse (Assignment Submissions/ Drop Boxes folder). Please print double-sided if printing is necessary.
3. Log onto the **class OnCourse site** for copies of the syllabus, schedule, course assignment guidelines and other course-related materials or information, to submit assignments and communicate with team members, and to keep track of your grades. If you have any difficulty logging into OnCourse, contact the ITS Service Center, W203 Thompson, 673-3407.

NOTE 1: You MUST double-check OnCourse drop boxes to ensure that your assignment was successfully submitted by the due date/time. Failing to verify that your document is attached

means that, if it is accepted it at a later date, it will be *late* and will lose points.

NOTE 2: You will typically **receive some written feedback** on assignments, not just number grades. To access comments, go the drop box where the assignment was submitted. **DO NOT submit PDF.**

NOTE 3: **Any submitted documents that cannot be opened using MS Word will receive a zero.** The only way to receive credit (minus 5-10%/day late) is: copy or click and drag (do *not* open and save) the file to a flash/thumb-drive, *retaining the original save date*. This date must be on or prior to the assignment's original due date to earn any credit. **DO NOT submit PDF files.**

4. SUNY requires you to keep track of your **Fredonia.edu email account** so you receive both university-wide notices and individual emails regarding class-related information. Failure to read Fredonia.edu emails does not exempt you from the content of any messages. **Starfish Statement:** *We Care About your Success! This course is part of a Fredonia initiative that utilizes the Starfish Student Success Network. It is designed to promote student success through coordination and communication between students, instructors, and support staff. Throughout the semester, you may receive emails regarding your attendance, course grades, or academic performance. To benefit, it is important that you check your Fredonia email regularly and take recommended actions. You may be contacted directly by an Academic Advisor or Campus Support Professional.*
5. To assist in refining your **referencing skills**, we will use TurnItIn.com. **Written assignments** are due electronically to BOTH the OnCourse AND the TurnItIn.com drop boxes (go to Assignment Submissions/Drop Boxes folder) on the dates listed on your course schedule; however, you may access the reports early to check and correct any problems. Work with a rank higher than 3%* on TurnItIn will not be accepted; see "How to correct TurnItIn 'Originality Report' Errors" (Assignments & Descriptions folder) and resubmit prior to due date. *NOTE that the 3% is only to allow for common phrases (i.e., "The purpose of this study..." "The research found that..."); it does not mean that a "little bit of plagiarism is acceptable. See me with any questions.
6. The content of **presentations, videos, and guest speakers' talks** is considered assigned material for which you are responsible. You must be in attendance for all of these.
7. We cannot discuss every concept from **assigned material** in class. *You are still responsible* for: the readings' content in assignments and tests; for asking questions about any material that you would like to clarify or that you believe relates to a concept we are discussing. Questions, concerns, and comments related to any of the course readings, materials, or assignments are always welcome.
8. In accordance with SUNY Fredonia guidelines, overall **grading/evaluation standards** are as follows:
 - A(94+)A-(93-0):** Superior performance and achievement: demonstrating *exceptional* synthesis of concepts and evidence of critical thinking, and *far exceeding* the basic requirements.
 - B+(89-7) B(86-4)B-(83-0):** Very Good performance, substantial achievement: demonstrating effectual effort in engaging concepts and *exceeding* the basic requirements
 - C+(79-7) C(76-4)C-(73-0):** Fair or standard performance and achievement: demonstrating enough effort for *meeting* the basic requirements.
 - D+(69-7) D(66-4)D-(63-0):** Passing yet substandard performance, minimal achievement: demonstrating *marginal* effort and *not meeting* all of the basic requirements.

NOTES: - Detailed **requirements for the below assignments** are on OnCourse (Assignments Descriptions & Information folder). *It is your responsibility to read and fulfill all assignments' guidelines as noted on the assignment description and/or as discussed in class.*

- **Due dates** may not be discussed in class; you should track them on the Course Schedule.

- **ALL group/team assignment grades** will be influenced by **peer evaluations**.

- **Failure to complete** any two of the course assignments (excluding quizzes but including the final exam) will automatically result in a failing grade for the course, as will not completing the single assignment: CITI Human Subjects training at citiprogram.org (see course schedule for due date).



Research Foundations 11% Create a 2 pg Research topic proposal for the topic you will work on throughout entire semester and write a 4-5 pg annotated bibliography in which you will locate and describe several elements of the 10-15 most relevant articles for your research topic.

Human Subjects Protocol 12% To understand the importance of ethical research practices you must complete the CITI online training. You will then fill out an actual Human Subjects IRB Form and create a Consent Form, which are required before conducting research on people.

Quantitative Assignments 14% By completing a preliminary survey, a final survey, and a survey data analysis, you will learn to write strong survey questions, merge them into an effective instrument, administer (& critique) complete surveys and do a preliminary analysis of aggregate data.

Qualitative Assignments 14% Complete qualitative interviews and/or an ethnographic observations that will expand your understanding of your research topic and the utility of qualitative knowledge, and will result in a 2 pg summary and a ~4 pp discussion/analysis write-up.

Research Proposal 14% The final ~12-14 pg research proposal is a cumulative project in which you will propose a "new research project" using the knowledge gained throughout the semester. This grade will be influenced by peer and self-evaluations of performance on all team work projects.

Tests 25% Since so much of this course is dependent on class members having fully engaged the course materials, over the course of the semester you will have ~7 tests plus weekly chapter quizzes (in total, these will equal one test) (15%) and a written final exam (10%). There are no makeup dates for the exam—you must be there as scheduled.

Reading Summaries & Reading Questions* For every chapter, complete a Reading Summary Worksheet (see OnCourse) *before class* the day the reading is due. Bring a hard copy to class to use for both individual and team work. *Summaries not brought to class will lose ½ credit.* (Summaries are not required for non-textbook readings.) Summaries ask that you make note of Reading Questions you think of as you read (and you will have questions!). Rather than remaining confused and hoping material is explained in class, you will have the opportunity identify your questions at the beginning of class meetings, as well as throughout the class discussion.

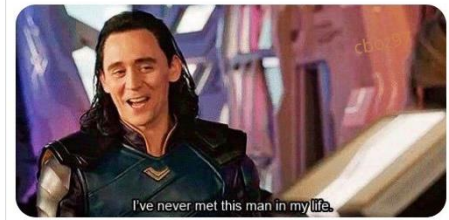
Attendance/Participation/Assignments 10% Attendance is required. It is your responsibility to make sure that you are marked on the roster each class. To benefit from the concepts and discussions in this course, it is essential that you regularly and actively participate; this requires your presence.

Consequently, *participation grades cannot be more than 5% higher than attendance grades.* Participation is considered informed and insightful comments on, or questions about, class concepts, theories, and processes; a motivated and supportive attitude; the meeting of deadlines and guidelines; and involvement in class and small-group/team discussions. Quality of preparation for and participation in groups/teams is graded. You should also come to every class having thoroughly completed any assignments that are due, the reading, and the

Reading Summaries; consequently, *participation grades cannot be more than 10% higher than assignments grades.* Assignments include group/team assignments, readings, in-class, and take-home work designed to strengthen your understanding of the readings and various perspectives and theoretical concepts that we discuss. The majority of this grade will be your ***Reading Summaries**.

Study partner: *does no work on group project, but wants half the credit*

Me:



Notes about team work:

1) Your peer's evaluation will affect your grades, and vice versa. Work hard, be fair. 2) You can be "fired" from your team. 3) Thinking your ideas are always better than anyone else's is as detrimental (and obnoxious) as not contributing ideas. 4) You can help make sure that your teamwork is a productive and positive experience, and that → is not accurate.

Student Resources

- Counseling Center 673-3424 <http://www.fredonia.edu/counseling/>
 - **sexual assault; alcohol/substance abuse; anxiety, grief, depression, suicidal thoughts;** other

- LoGrasso Health Center 673-3131, 673-3132 <http://www.fredonia.edu/healthcenter/>
birth control; immunizations; various health and medical issues
- Learning Center 673-3550, Carnahan-Jackson Ctr, 4th floor Reed Library <http://www.fredonia.edu/tlc/>
 - tutoring, supplemental instruction; language and/or disability support services; other
- University Police 673-3333, 2nd floor Gregory Hall, <http://www.fredonia.edu/upd/>
 - escort bus service; silent witness; bluelight program; other

Off Campus: (this is informational only, these orgs are not sanctioned by the instructor or by SUNY Fredonia)

- AIDS Community Services of WNY Inc – Buffalo&Jamestown <http://www.evergreenhs.org/> & <http://www.evergreenhs.org/HIV-STD-Testing.php> 111 West Second Street, Jamestown (716) 664-7855
- Family Planning Clinic, Dunkirk <http://www.211wny.org/Chautauqua-County/Service-Category-List/category.aspx?category=Birth%20Control/Family%20Planning> Graf Bldg, 319 Central Ave, Dunkirk 363-3661

¹ "Concerns" adapted from: Lynn Hernandez, Behavioral and Social Sciences, School of Public Health, Brown University <https://www.brown.edu/sheridan/teaching-learning-resources/inclusive-teaching/statements>

©Marafiotte, 2019. Any reproduction of any of this material is prohibited without the author's consent.

COMM 323 Research Methods F19 Course Schedule **EXCERPT** Subject to modification

Dr. Tracy Marafiotte: tracy.marafiotte@fredonia.edu; McEwen 316; 673-3825

Ch: D&L chapters; **Other readings** in OnCourse– please read e-version or print dbl-sided

week	date	topics/readings	assignments
		QUIZ CONTENT: any material covered since the previous quiz	T=Tues, R=Thurs
1	8/27	Intro to the Course, the Issues, & Each Other PART 1: Introduction to Communication Research	R: Form research teams (in class)
	8/29	Ch 1 – What is Communication Research?	
	8/30	LAST DAY TO DROP CLASSES	
2	9/3	Ch 2 – Metatheoretical Considerations [1 st Reading Summary]	T: research topic – team ideas
	9/5	ch 2 continued; research topics	
3	9/10	Ch 3 – Discovering What's Already Known ...; research topic	R: research topic write-up
	9/12	Library Database workshop → MEET IN LIBRARY CLASSROOM	
4	9/17	Ch 4 – Writing a Literature Review; QUIZ 1 (Chs1,2,&3)	R: Annotated Bib & Abstracts
	9/19	ch 4 cont	
5	9/24	Ch 5 – Understanding Research Ethics; CITI Human Subjects Training: citiprogram.org (see log-in information, OnCourse)	T: CITI Basic Course (not RCR) training* (plan ahead, this requires time)
	9/26	ch 5 & CITI cont; QUIZ 2 (Chs4, 5,&CITI)	
		PART 2: Preparing to Conduct Research	
6	10/1	Ch 6 – Research Questions & Hypotheses Besley et al. "The Impact of Comm ...": pp. 3-4	T: IRB form & Letter of Informed Consent
	10/3	Ch 7 – Understanding Variables; ch6 cont	
7	10/8	Ch 8 – Sampling; ch7 cont; QUIZ 3 (Chs 6&7)	
	10/10-11	FALL BREAK– NO CLASSES ☺	
8	10/15	Ch 9 – Ensuring Validity, Reliability, & Credibility; ch8 cont	
	10/17	ch9 continued; QUIZ 4 (chs 8&9)	
9	10/22	PART 3: Research Under QUANTITATIVE Paradigm Ch 10 – Survey Research	R: pilot survey & rationale (one document) – due after class but by 8am Friday
	10/24	ch 10 cont → Schedule 20 min+ meeting with me—with all group members—between Friday 10/20 and Tues 10/24	
10	10/29	Ch 13 – Writing, Analyzing, & Critiquing Quant Research	R: final survey&rationale (sep docs), & revised LoC
	10/31	ch 13 continued; QUIZ 5 (chs 10&13)	

* Complete CITI training before class. I'll receive notification of your status from the Institutional Research Office. You cannot participate in surveys or interviews or pass the class if training has not been completed.

©Marafiotte, 2019. Any reproduction of any of this material is prohibited without the author's consent.