MCM 483 Communications Research Methods

<u>Instructor:</u> Dr. Christopher White <u>Phone</u>: 294-1343 or cwhite@shsu.edu In Communications Building Room #125 M-T-W-Th-F from 2-3:50 Office Hours: M/T/W 9-10, 4-5 and by appointment on Th & F

Text: Research in Mass Communication Poindexter & McCoombs

<u>Goals</u>: To introduce students to assumptions, goals, nomenclature, selected techniques and approaches to media research. Various methodologies will be addressed -- both quantitative and qualitative -- and students will be required to be familiar with all types of research presented in-class. At the end of the semester you should know how to do some rudimentary statistics; you should be familiar with the strengths and weaknesses of statistical research; you should recognize the strengths and weaknesses of alternative kinds of research; and finally you should be able to critique much of the mainstream research that is reported in newspapers, magazines and in trade publications.

Topics to be covered include: Science & Research, Sampling Procedures, Survey Research, Experimental Research, Field Observations, Content Analysis, Focus Groups, Statistical Analysis, Research Ethics and General Research Theory.

Grading:

Two (2) exams (100 points each) Total 200 points and dates TBA

Two abstracts Total 50 pts
One Research Project Total 50 pts

Total 300 pts A=300-270, B=269-240, C=239-210, D=209-180, F=179-0

<u>Research Projects</u>: Either individual projects or the class will be divided up into groups of 4-5 and each group will be responsible for a project or part of a project. Project work may be presented to the class and a summary may be submitted in writing to the instructor. A hand-out at mid-semester will clarify this.

A hand-out explaining <u>Abstracts</u> will be distributed & discussed at a later date. If you miss a class and do not get a hand-out it is your responsibility to get copies from your classmates.

Class notes are not posted on Blackboard. Reviews for tests are posted on Blackboard.

Exams include short essay questions that MUST BE ANSWERED IN COMPLETE, GRAMMATICALLY CORRECT sentences. I won't read gibberish.

Extra Credit: None

If you haven't ALREADY passed college math or MCM 330 drop this class. Junior standing required.

Attendance: After four (4) absences each additional absence FOR ANY REASON will subtract 40 points from your grade total. Don't use up your absences!

Make-up exams: only in extreme circumstances – likely to be essay.

No beepers, cell phones, palm-pilots, satellite dishes or anything that otherwise beeps, vibrates or whistles allowed in class. No eating, sleeping or doing work unrelated to the class. Live with it. Generally students will refrain from behavior that intentionally or unintentionally disrupts the learning process. And please maintain complete honesty and integrity in your academic experience both in and out of this classroom (this from Faculty Handbook).

Arriving late for class is considered absent -- bad weather is an exception to this rule.

Note: No calling the Instructor at home -- never, ever...never -- that's why God created Office Hours. I promise I won't call you at home.

A hand-calculator is required. Unless you can do square-roots in your head! You are required to buy the book. We will use it in-class & possibly during test-taking. Laptops permitted as long as they are not unduly noisy AND if you only use them for work in this class. Do not do work related to any other class or any other concern in this class.

Note: this is a preliminary schedule that might be altered. Additional readings or assignments are possible. <u>Every week</u> we will be doing some statistical or qualitative exercises in class. This is not reflected in the outline below. Always bring a calculator.

Week 1 Ch 1, Intro to Research & Ch 2, Pre-Research

Week 2 Ch 3, The Research Phase & Ch 4, Survey Questionnaire

1st Abstract Due

Week 3 Ch 5, Selecting Respondents & Ch 6, Training & Data Collection **TEST**

Week 3 Ch 11, Content Analysis

Week 4 Ch 12, Experiments 2nd Abstract Due

Week 5 Ch 13, Focus Groups etc.

TEST/PROJECTS

Again additional chapters or readings may be assigned. You are responsible for reading and understanding all hand-outs. You will be tested on all assigned readings & handouts.

2nd Test as scheduled by SHSU during Finals Week

STUDENT ABSENCES ON RELIGIOUS HOLY DAYS POLICY

University policy 861001 provides the procedures to be followed by the student and instructor

DISABLED STUDENT POLICY

It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that no otherwise qualified disabled individual shall, solely by reason of his/her handicap, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any academic or Student Life program or activity.