



Journalism + Media

SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION + JOURNALISM
SPANISH-LANGUAGE MASTER'S PROGRAM IN JOURNALISM

MMC 5440 - B51

APPLIED RESEARCH METHODS IN THE MASS MEDIA

FALL TERM 2016

ACADEMIC CENTER TWO - AC 2, ROOM 208

THURSDAY, 6:25 P.M. - 9:05 P.M.

(TAUGHT IN SPANISH)

LEONARDO FERREIRA, PH.D., J.D. (ABOGADO)

PROFESSOR

ACADEMIC BUILDING, AC2, ROOM 329A

ANDEAN STUDIES PROGRAM, DIRECTOR

KIMBERLY GREEN LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN CENTER (LACC)

OFFICE HOURS: 3:30 - 5:00 P.M., EVERY THURSDAY

OR BY APPOINTMENT

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COURSE DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE

MMC 5440 is a graduate-level seminar intended to provide advanced information, practical lessons, critical analyses, and meaningful discussion on social science methods used by reporters and news organizations in contemporary times. It examines methodologies applied during the conception, design, and production of journalistic works, including historical, contextual, documentary, survey, content analysis, case study, semiotic, ethnographic, participant observation, and other investigative techniques, procedures, or modes of inquiry.

OBJECTIVES

Specific learning objectives in this seminar, which combines lectures, hands-on exercises, and in-class discussions, are:

1. Demonstrate a fundamental understanding of the origins and evolution of various research methods in the practice of journalism, primarily in Spanish-speaking media communities across the Americas;
2. Acquire a working knowledge of social science research techniques for everyday use in the world of contemporary journalism;
3. Learn about the implications of using quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods in the journalism profession;
4. Place the conceptualization, implementation, and execution of journalistic methods in adequate local, national, and global contexts;
5. Develop critical-thinking abilities for storytelling and for the study of journalistic issues, situations, and products.

When relevant, international comparisons will be made. This course invites professional-oriented and academic approaches to journalistic creations and for quality reporting. Lectures and class discussions will pay special attention to localism, globalism and environmental, ethnic, gender and socioeconomic gaps for improved journalistic narratives.

COURSE PREREQUISITES

Fully Online Program students may not enroll in this class section.

COURSE FORMAT AND RULES

MMC 5440 is a seminar-type of class, combining lectures, active student participation, written exercises, and class discussions on assigned readings, videos and online materials.

Again, active and informed participation is expected from every student (e.g. oral reports). Participation is critical in this course and will be assessed according to the quality and accuracy of student comments. **THIS IS A HEAVY READING COURSE**, going beyond book chapters. Remember, your book is simply a basic guide. Expect additional readings announced in class, such as, reviews of websites and online articles, current news, scholarly reports, and commentaries. I invite you to check the news stories of the day and look for the use of research methods in them. Readings do not necessarily overlap with class lectures.

Although, strictly speaking, MMC 5440 is not a writing-skills class, we will have mid-semester and final written assignments. A clearly careful writing is expected, especially from journalism graduate students.

Class projects will be explained in class and in separate handouts.

COURSE ASSESSMENT

A pre/test, post/test evaluation for overall assessment purposes will be conducted at the beginning and end of the semester (a semantic differential scale plus open-ended questions). This test has no bearing on the final grade.

It is customary for accreditors to periodically visit campuses and evaluate student learning and school performance. And every time, appointed visitors come with various criteria to carry out such an evaluation (so-called competencies), including knowledge of history, communication law and ethics, global media, audience effects, research methods, and media technology, among other subjects. Although less focus on policy and media technology per se, this course calls every student to approach the content with an interdisciplinary spirit, including basic concepts of communication theory – a subject often ignored, underestimated, or misunderstood by journalists in their reporting.

REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDED TEXTBOOKS

Berg, B. L. & Lune, H. (2013). *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences: Pearson new international edition*. Eight edition. Boston, MA: Pearson/ Allyn & Bacon.

REQUIRED

ISBN 978-1292022499. Go to:

<http://www.pearsonhighered.com/educator/product/Qualitative-Research-Methods-for-the-Social-Sciences-8E/9780205809387.page>

Lozano-Rendón, Jose C. (2007). *Teoría e investigación de la comunicación de Masas*. Segunda edición. Estado de México: Pearson Educación. **ISBN 968-444-200-9**
RECOMMENDED.

These are just basic books. Other readings, available online, will be added to your textbooks. Some may come, for instance, from the CI or *Communication Initiative Network* (www.comminit.com), *Sala de Prensa, New America Media* (www.newamericamedia.org), or *Infoamérica*, or *El Portal de la Comunicación* (www.infoamerica.org). Just like these four sites, there are hundreds if not thousands of media related portals displaying various uses of communication research methodologies.

The following texts are suggested for further reading (a partial list, indeed):

Baxter, L. A. & Babbie, E. (2004). *The basics of communication research*. Belmont, CA: Thomson/Wadsworth.

- Bloch, M. (1992). *The Historian's craft*. Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press.
- Carrera-Álvarez, P. (2008). *Periodismo en la era de Internet*. Madrid, España: Editorial Planeta/Ariel-Fundación Telefónica.
- Houston, B. (Ed.). (2008). *The investigative reporter's handbook: a guide to documents, databases, and techniques*. Fifth edition. Boston, MA: Bedford/St Martin's.
- Houston, B. (2004). *Computer Assisted Reporting: a practical guide*. Third edition. Boston, MA: Bedford/St Martin's.
- Howell, M. & Prevenier, W. (2001). *From reliable sources: an introduction to historical methods*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University.
- Kennedy, G., & Moen, D. (2007). *What good is journalism? How reporters and editors are saving America's way of life*. Columbia, MO: The University of Missouri Press.
- McCullagh, C. B. (1984, re-issued digitally in 2009). *Justifying historical descriptions*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Miller, L. C. (1998). *Power journalism: computer-assisted reporting*. Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace College Publishers.
- Ragin, C. C. (2007). *La construcción de la investigación social: introducción a los métodos y su diversidad*. Bogotá, Colombia: Universidad de los Andes/Sage Publicacions.
- Reyes, G. (2006 [1996]). *Periodismo de investigación*, Mexico DF: EditorialTrillas /Editorial Mad.
- Rodríguez, P. (1994). *El periodismo de investigación: técnicas y estrategias*. Barcelona, España: Paidós Ibérica.
- Rogers, E. M. (1997). *A history of communication study*. New York, NY: The Free Press.
- Santoro, D. (2004). *Técnicas de investigación: métodos desarrollados en diarios y revistas de América Latina*. México D.F.: Fondo de Cultura Económica /FNPI.
- Shafer, R. J. (1980). *A guide to historical method*. Third edition. Homewood, IL: The Dorsey Press.
- Tashakkori, A. & Teddlie, C. (Eds.). (2003). *Handbook of mixed methods in social and behavioral research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Vallance-Jones, F. & McKie, D. (2009). *Computer-assisted reporting: a Canadian primer*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Wimmer, R. D. & Dominick, J. R. (1996). *La investigación científica de los medios de comunicación: una introducción a sus métodos*. Barcelona, España.

* Some of these books are available in the bookstore while others are available at the Green and even the Glenn Hubert libraries.

GRADING/EVALUATION

One mid-semester exam is scheduled below. **THERE WILL BE NO MAKE-UP TESTS**, I repeat, **NO MAKE-UP EXAMS**. If you have a compelling situation, contact me **AS SOON AS POSSIBLE**. Please **DO NOT** ask for extra-credit

Grading Items

Mid-Semester Assignment	15%
Mid-Semester Exam	20%
Class Participation	30%
Final Project	35%
	100%

Grade Scale:

93-100 = A	80-82.5 = B-
90-92.5 = A-	74-79.5 = C+
87-89.5 = B+	64-73.5 = C
83-86.5 = B	50-63.5 = D
Below 50 = F	

ATTENDANCE POLICY

You cannot participate if you do not come to class. Regular attendance and active participation will be a deciding factor in the final grade. Frequent tardiness will also be a sign of poor performance. The more classes you miss, the more your participation grade suffers. For example, three (3) unexcused absences will automatically lower your final score one whole letter-grade (e.g. from B to C). Only university-approved reasons will be accepted as student absences. I will be particularly strict in checking excuses. Please make sure personal commitments (travel before holidays, routine medical appointments, family visits, etc.) do not conflict with this class, especially when there is an exam or a scheduled assignment.

HONOR CODE AND PLAGIARISM

Students enrolled in this course are expected to abide by Florida International University's Honor Code. As FIU students, you are expected to strictly follow the honor code regarding academic honesty. Our University outlines your responsibilities as follows:

Florida International University is a community dedicated to generating and imparting knowledge through excellent teaching and research, the rigorous and respectful exchange of ideas and community service. All students should respect the right of others to have an equitable opportunity to learn and honestly to demonstrate the quality of their learning. Therefore, all students are expected to adhere to a standard of

academic conduct, which demonstrates respect for themselves, their fellow students, and the educational mission of the University. All students are deemed by the University to understand that if they are found responsible for academic misconduct, they will be subject to the Academic Misconduct procedures and sanctions, as outlined in the Student Handbook.

Misconduct includes:

Plagiarism –The taking of someone else’s ideas or means of expression and passing them off as your own efforts. For more information on this form of intellectual or academic fraud, please read “What You Need to Read About Plagiarism” by Steven M. Richman, The New Jersey State Bar Foundation, 2007 (http://www.njsbf.org/images/content/1/1/11085/Plagiarism07_final.pdf).

Cheating – The unauthorized use of books, notes, aids, electronic sources; or assistance from another person with respect to examinations, course assignments, field service reports, class recitations; or the unauthorized possession of examination papers or course materials, whether originally authorized or not. Plagiarism – The use and appropriation of another’s work without any indication of the source and the representation of such work as the student’s own. Any student who fails to give credit for ideas, expressions or materials taken from another source, including internet sources, is responsible for plagiarism.

Simply stated, academic dishonesty will not be tolerated.

Any students who fail to meet these expectations will receive an “F” for the course grade and will be reported to the Chair of the Department, as well as the Dean of the School.

COURSE OUTLINE

- | | |
|------|---|
| 8/25 | Introduction
The importance of social context in journalism |
| 9/1 | Reporters as historians
<u>Read:</u> Ch. 9 (B&L) |
| 9/8 | Grounded theory and research for journalists
<u>Read:</u> Chs. 1 & 2 (B&L) |
| 9/15 | A look at interviewing, in-depth conversations and focus groups
<u>Read:</u> Chs. 4 & 5 (B&L) |

Mid-semester assignment.

- 9/22 **Ethnographic strategies in journalism**
Read: Ch. 6 (B&L)
- 9/29 **Journalists as action researchers**
Read: Ch. 7 (B&L)
- 10/6 **Mid-semester exam. Follow-up session: Q&A**
- 10/13 **News stories as case studies**
Read: Ch. 10 (B&L)
- 10/20 **Content analyses: How useful for journalists?**
Read: Ch. 11 (B&L)
- 10/27 **Archival and database research**
Read: Ch. 8 (B&L)
Mid-semester project due
- 11/3 **Survey research and “data journalism”**
Read: Online Sources Provided in Class
- 11/10 **Accessing information: Governmental and business**
Read: Online Sources Provided in Class
- 11/17 **Accessing information: Legal precedents**
Read: Ch. 3 (B&L)
- 11/24 **Thanksgiving holiday. No class.**
- 12/1 **Ethical issues**
Read: Online Sources Provided in Class
Note: First 15 minutes will be used for course evaluation purposes
- 12/8 **Final Project Due at 6:30 p.m.**

DEAR STUDENTS,

PLEASE SIGN THE FOLLOWING FORM.

I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTOOD THE SYLLABUS FOR MMC 5440 – B51 (APPLIED RESEARCH METHODS IN THE MASS MEDIA) AND I WILL FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS AND RULES ESTABLISHED BY THE PROFESSOR AND THE MASTER’S PROGRAM.

Name: _____

Date: _____

PID: _____

Signature:
