

ORIGINAL COMMUNICATION RESEARCH PROJECT

The entire cohort project asks you to examine a particular aspect of communication within a specific context, to review how communication theory has been used in previous scholarly studies and then to **design and carry out your own original research study**. The 351 manuscript will serve as a Rationale and Review of Literature which is the first part of any scholarly communication study. The 365 research methods paper is divided into three parts; but all three are actually written and submitted as one document.

The theoretical framework that you develop for COM 351 (Communication Theory) will be employed in COM 365 (Research Methods). You will construct an actual research study that will be completed by the end of the semester. [Note: I will grade only the research methods section of the paper; Dr. Tsay will grade only the literature review-theory and directions for future research section of the paper.]

This project requires each student to conduct an original communication study and write a 15-25 page research paper. Your task is to address a significant communication problem, topic, or issue and design original communication research. Students generally feel most comfortable using survey research, but any of the methods we discuss during the course can be used- assuming that the method is appropriate for the research questions/hypotheses posed.

Research Questions or Hypotheses and Methods (Research Design) (Typed, double-spaced)

METHODS

This part of the project will clearly **identify the research questions and/or research hypotheses** as well as the **methodological design** of the study (**subjects, variables, operationalizations, detailed procedures**). You will provide precise information about the sampling and subjects as well as specific details of the **exact procedures** which will be followed. **IRB approval** may need to accompany the methods section. In addition, any and all specific instruments (e.g., survey questions) will be submitted as an appendix to the final written report.

RESULTS

The second part of the research methods project will present the complete statistical/descriptive results of your study. Actual data (e.g., field notes, surveys, videotape, audiotape, etc.) as well as all SPSS statistical output should be included as part of the appendices. While the results may be relatively short (depending on the specific methodology employed), it must be written using appropriate language, rules, and social science customs.

DISCUSSION: Theory Reconceptualization (Discussion & Interpretation, Limitations, Future Research Directions)

This part of the project will consist of an insightful discussion of your results in which you interpret the meaning of the findings as they relate to theory, previous research, and/or expectations. You should In addition, you should identify limitations of the research due to internal as well as external validity threats as well as implications for future research (follow guidelines established on pp. 381-396).. The discussion will include an APA bibliography as well as an Appendix that will include complete measurement instruments (demographic questions, survey, scales, etc.) and the SPSS analysis from the results.

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR PAPER:

- Title page 1 page
- Abstract 1 page
- Introduction & Rationale for your Study 1-2 pages
- *Literature Review (including RQ/RH)* 8-10 pages
- Method 2-3 pages
- Results 1-2 pages
- Discussion and Conclusion 4-5 pages
- References 1-2 pages
- Tables (optional) 1 page each

SPECIFIC GUIDELINES FOR PAPER:

- *Title Page.* At a minimum, make sure your title identifies each of the variables under investigation.
- *Abstract.* Provide a 120 word (*maximum*) summary of the entire paper (including the Introduction, Method, Results, and Discussion).
- *Introduction (including Rationale) and Literature Review.* Provide the introduction, rationale, and research question/s or hypothesis/hypotheses from your COM 351 paper.
- *Method.* Clearly and completely identify and discuss the methodological design of the study, including (1) research participants; (2) procedures; and (3) instrumentation – make sure you identify and provide the conceptual and operational definitions for each variable under investigation, including previous reliability and validity information when available.
- *Results.* Clearly and completely present the statistical/descriptive results of your study, including (1) reliability of all instruments – if applicable; (2) descriptive statistics; and (3) test of each RQ or RH. While this part of the project may be relatively short, it must be written using appropriate language, rules, and social science customs.
- *Discussion and Conclusion.* Provide a thorough and insightful discussion of your results. At a minimum, you should (1) interpret the meaning of the research findings; (2) identify limitations; and (3) suggest directions for future research (see Chapter 15 in the text for more on each of these sections). This is one of the most important parts of the paper; make sure you allow yourself enough time to write a thorough and thoughtful Discussion section.
- *References.* Include citations in APA for sources that are part of both COM 365 and 351 portion of the paper.
- *Table.* Tables are optional. Tables are typically used to present a lot of information in a small(er) amount of space. You might consider using a table to present your procedures or results.

WHAT TO HAND IN: In a manila folder (with your full name typed on the tab), hand in the following:

- *Paper:* Your completed paper, including title page, abstract, introduction, method, results, discussion/conclusion, references, and tables (the completed paper should be *stapled* together).
- *Blank Copy of Survey and Consent Form:* You must hand in a blank copy of the final version of your survey (*do not* attach the blank survey to anything – just place it after the paper in the manila folder).
- *All Completed Consent Forms:* You must hand in *all* completed consent forms when you turn in the completed paper (all completed consent forms should be *stapled* together and placed behind the blank copy of your surveys).

WHAT TO EMAIL:

- *Paper:* Your completed paper, including title page, abstract, introduction, method, results, discussion/conclusion, references, and tables. ***ALL IN ONE FILE***