COURSE SYLLABUS

COURSE DETAILS

Course:	MEDC 3190/50 Introduction to Media Research
Term/Semester:	Fall Semester
ECTS:	6 ECTS
Required reading materials:	Wimmer, D. R. & Dominick J. R. (2015). *Mass Media Research: An Introduction* (10th ed.). Hampshire: Cengage Learning. Berger, A. A. (2016). *Media and Communication Research Methods: An Introduction to Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* (4th ed.). London: Sage.
Last update:	17.08.2017

INSTRUCTOR DETAILS

Instructor:	Resul Umit
e-mail:	resulumit70@webster.edu
Office hours:	By appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

What makes fake news so popular? How do some advertisements appear to be more memorable than others? Why do some politicians embrace social media while others completely turn away from it? Some of the most interesting questions of our time require systematic analyses of the media. This course will not only introduce students to discussions of the contemporary mass media research but it will also help them develop a research project.

Students will learn about all stages of the scientific research process, from formulation of research questions to presentation of the results, in media communications scholarship. The course will cover both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Through two course activities, students will have the opportunity to put what they learn into practice by developing their own research project.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

(1) distinguish scientific research from other methods of knowing and the good research from the bad,
(2) identify common research methods used in media research,
(3) define a research problem,
(4) review existing research and theory related to that problem, and
(5) develop an appropriate research design for their project.

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GRADE BREAKDOWN

EVALUATION COMPONENTS (Based on 100 points):	
Exams:	**50%**
Midterm:	25 points (assessing learning outcomes 1&2)
Final:	25 points (assessing learning outcomes 1&2)
Written work:	**50%**
Activity I:	10 points (assessing learning outcome 3)
Activity II:	25 points (assessing learning outcomes 4&5)
Small Assignments:	15 points (assessing learning outcomes 1–5)

COURSE STRUCTURE

The course is based on two weekly classes lasting 1.5 hours each, with a total of 30 sessions. It roughly follows the stages of research process: (1) defining a researchable problem, (2) choosing an appropriate approach for the problem, (3) collecting data with that approach, and (4) and analysing the data. Learning outcomes will be assessed over four components: various small assignments, two activities, a midterm exam, and a final exam.

Activity I (10%) – due on Monday (by midnight) of Week 6
For this assignment, students will produce a material (short paper, poster, podcast, etc.) that defines a research problem within the area of mass media, supported with arguments as to the importance of investigating that problem. Stage I of the class will help students achieve these aims.

Activity II (25%) – due on Monday (by midnight) of Week 13
This assignment will build upon the previous one as students will produce a report by working further on their research problem defined in Activity I. It will include (1) a review of the existing literature and theory relevant to the research question, (2) the research question and hypotheses stemming from that review, and (3) a research design with an appropriate methodology for the question. Stage II of the class will help students achieve these aims.

Small Assignments (15%) – due at the beginning of following class
In addition to the main class activities above, students will be given various small tasks to complete throughout the semester. These assignments will not require as much time as the main activities, but they are equally important to understand and engage with the research process in media communications scholarship. Each task will be explained at the time of assignment.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Students are required to inform themselves of WVPU academic policies. A full list of these policies is available on the WVPU website: http://webster.ac.at/academic-policies

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WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Stage I. Scientific Research	
Week 1 (21–25.08)	Methods of Knowing and Scientific Research • Wimmer & Dominick (2015): Chapter 1 • Berger (2016): Chapter 1
Week 2 (28.08–01.09)	Key Concepts in Scientific Research • Wimmer & Dominick (2015): Chapters 2 & 3
Week 3 (04–08.09)	Finding, Reading, and Using Research • Berger (2016): Chapter 2
Stage II. Research Approaches in Media Research	
Week 4 (11–15.09)	Interviews and Focus Groups • Wimmer & Dominick (2015): Chapter 5 • Berger (2016): Chapter 8
Week 5 (18–22.09)	Discourse Analysis • Berger (2016): Chapter 7
Week 6 (25–29.09)	*Activity I is due by Monday midnight.* Participant Observation • Berger (2016): Chapter 11
Week 7 (02–06.10)	Content Analysis • Wimmer & Dominick (2015): Chapter 6 • Berger (2016): Chapter 12
Week 8 (09–13.10)	*Midterm Exam Week* Survey Research • Wimmer & Dominick (2015): Chapter 7 • Berger (2016): Chapter 13
Week 9 (16–20.10)	*Break week—No classes are held during this week.*
Week 10 (23–27.10)	Experimental Research • Wimmer & Dominick (2015): Chapter 9 • Berger (2016): Chapter 14
Stage III. Data Analysis	
Week 11 (30.10–03.11)	Descriptive Statistics • Wimmer & Dominick (2015): Chapter 10 • Berger (2016): Chapter 15
Week 12 (06–10.11)	Hypothesis Testing • Wimmer & Dominick (2015): Chapter 11
Week 13 (13–17.11)	*Activity II is due by Monday midnight.* Statistical Procedures • Wimmer & Dominick (2015): Chapters 4 & 12
Stage IV. Research Applications	
Week 14 (20–24.11)	Newspaper and Magazine Research • Wimmer & Dominick (2015): Chapter 13
Week 15 (27.11–01.12)	Research in the Electronic Media • Wimmer & Dominick (2015): Chapter 14
Week 16 (04–08.12)	*Final Exam Week* Research in Advertising • Wimmer & Dominick (2015): Chapter 15