



ENGL 5563- X10: Research Methods in Writing Studies

Fall 2025

Syllabus & Schedule

Contact Information

Instructor: Dr. Sally Henschel
sally.henschel@msutexas.edu
Office: BW 214

Office hours: We can visit in person, by phone, or in Zoom (Central Time)

Mon. 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. following weekly class

Tues. 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Fri. 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Other times by appointment

Important Dates

- Academic Calendar
- For long semester courses, last day to drop with a grade of “W”: **Mon. Nov. 24, 2025**, before 4:00 p.m. Withdrawals after this date will receive grades of “F.” Note: You can receive an Instructor drop with a grade of “F” or “WF” prior to that date: See course policies for Late Assignments, Academic Dishonesty, and the University policies on Withdrawals.

Course description

A survey of qualitative and quantitative research methods, methodological strategies, and analytical tools in writing, rhetoric, and technical communication studies. Students will examine and discuss the practical, theoretical, and ethical issues of writing research in a variety of contexts or sites of inquiry (e.g., the workplace, the classroom, in communities, and on the Internet). Students will become familiar with research methods and methodologies, read and respond critically to current research, and design a major research study.

Course objectives

Students will

- acquire knowledge of research methods and methodologies
- demonstrate the ability to classify research based on its goals and methods
- demonstrate the ability to read and respond critically to current research

- demonstrate the ability to plan and manage a research project through the following phases: defining research goals and questions, conducting a review of the literature and identifying gaps in existing research, selecting appropriate methodology, and designing a study
- gain experience in presenting research to peers

Course Texts

1. *A Research Primer for Technical Communication: Methods, Exemplars, and Analyses*. Pam Estes Brewer & George F. Hayhoe. 2nd edition, 2020.
2. *Strategies for Empirical Research in Writing*. Mary Sue MacNealy. (Best price is used through Amazon)
3. Other assigned readings will be available on the course D2L web site.

Assignments/Grading

Table 1: Points allocated to each assignment

Assignment (Points)

- PTC Journal spreadsheet (10)
- Discussion posts (2) (5 each, 10 total)
- Methodologies presentation (10)

Research Project:

- Project proposal (10 points)
- Literature review (15 points)
- Methodology/methods (10 points)
- Report draft (10 points)
- Class presentation (15 points)
- Final research report (10 points)

Course total: 100

Table 2: Total points for final grade

Grade	Points
A	90 – 100
B	80 – 89
C	70 – 79
D	60 – 69
F	< 60

University and Course Policies and Procedures

Professionalism

Members of this class are expected to treat one another with courtesy, professionalism, and respect.

Instructor Response Policy

I will respond to emails within 24 hours on weekdays, and within 48 hours on weekends and holidays. I typically grade and return assignments within one week following the due date.

Late Assignment Policy

All assignments will be due on dates assigned. Students falling two assignments behind are subject to administrative withdrawal from the course by the instructor.

University Academic Dishonesty Policy & Procedures

Academic Dishonesty is defined as “Cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted techniques of crediting, or the submission for credit of work not the individual’s to whom credit is given).” Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the Student Handbook, under Academic Dishonesty Procedure or through the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities.

Course Academic Dishonesty Policy Details and Advice

All work submitted to D2L will be scanned by the Turnitin program which flags text that is quoted from a source or generated by AI. If quoted text is not placed in quotation marks **and** the correct source cited, you will receive a grade of zero for that assignment. If this occurs twice in the course, you will receive a grade of “F” for the course. There are no exceptions to this rule. To avoid this from happening, I suggest the following:

- **Ask for help:** First, and importantly, as the instructor of this course, I am available to assist you with any questions you have about the use and citation of sources. Just contact me several days before the assignment is due with a link to the source so that I have adequate time to look over the article and meet with you to discuss your concerns or need for assistance.
- **Don’t use AI:** Generally speaking, you are not allowed to use artificial intelligence (AI) engines, software, or artwork generating programs to produce content submitted for grading in this class **unless** the assignment instructions specifically call for the use of AI. I will provide more information about any specific assignment that involves the use of AI when the time is appropriate in the course. You may not, however, construe this limited use as permission to use these technologies in any other facet of this course.
- **Provide Instructor access to all sources used in assignments:** All sources cited in an assignment must be available, accessible online for me, the instructor, to review as I grade your assignments. Simply provide a working link (URL) to the **complete article** at the end of each source cited in your Reference or Works Cited list, which should be included at the end of the document. If you cannot link to the article, upload the article to the dropbox for the submission. A link to an abstract or to an online database which has a paywall won’t work: I need to be able to read the entire article, just as you did.
- **Accurately cite sources:** When using the ideas of other published and/or unpublished

sources, students must use accepted documentation conventions (i.e., MLA or APA). All quoted content must be placed in “quotation marks,” and for quoted, paraphrased, and summarized content, the correct source must be cited in the text. Stating, “I meant to put the text in quotation marks but forgot to do so,” “I cited the name of the source but forgot the quotation marks,” or “I cited the wrong source” are not acceptable explanations for inaccurately citing sources.

- **Be aware of the penalty:** Please don't allow inaccurate use and citing of sources to negatively impact your grade. Doing so will result in a grade of zero for the assignment. If this happens twice, you will receive a grade of “F” for the course.

Constitutional Carry and Campus Facts Policies

Information on the University's policy may be found at [Campus Carry at MSU Texas](#).

Grade Appeal Process

Students who wish to appeal a grade should consult [Academic Affairs Grade Appeals](#) for instructions.

Services for Students with Disabilities

In accordance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Midwestern State University endeavors to make reasonable accommodations to ensure equal opportunity for qualified persons with disabilities to participate in all educational, social, and recreational programs and activities. After notification of acceptance, students requiring accommodations should make application for such assistance through Disability Support Services, located in the Clark Student Center, Room 168, (940) 397-4140. Current documentation of a disability will be required in order to provide appropriate services, and each request will be individually reviewed. For more details, please go to [Disability Support Services](#).

Tentative Weekly Schedule of Assignments

A Research Primer for Technical Communication = **RP**

Strategies for Empirical Research in Writing = **ST**

Week One: 8/25

Introduction to the course: syllabus, texts, assignments—our goals for the semester!

Week Two: 9/1 [Labor Day Holiday]

Have read prior to class:

- RP One—Research *Why*?
- RP Two—Research Phases
- ST One—Empirical Research in the Humanities

Week Three: 9/8

Have read prior to class:

- RP Three—Reviewing the Literature
- RP Eight—Analyzing a Literature Review

- ST Two—Library-Based Research

Week Four: 9/15

Have read prior to class:

- ST Three—Overview of Empirical Methodology
- RP Four—Conducting a Quantitative Study
- RP Nine—Analyzing a Quantitative Research Report
- Review ST Four—Concepts Basic to Quantitative Research

Discuss PTC Spreadsheet assignment

Due: Discussion Post One: Possible research topics with research questions, Sun. 9/21 by 11:00 PM

Week Five: 9/22

Have read prior to class:

- RP Five—Conducting a Qualitative Study
- RP Ten—Analyzing a Qualitative Research Report

Due: Discussion Post Two: Possible methodologies, methods for study, due Sun. 9/28 by 11:00 PM

Week Six: 9/29

Have read prior to class:

- ST Seven—Discourse or Text Analysis
- ST Nine—Focus Groups
- ST Ten—Case Study Research

Due: PTC Spreadsheet assignment: a summary of methodologies in a PTC journal, uploaded Tues. 9/30 by 11:00 PM

Week Seven: 10/6

Due: Project proposal. Upload to dropbox Tues. 10/7 by 11:00 PM

Have read prior to class:

- ST Eleven—Ethnography
- ST 12 Qualitative Research with Special Lenses: Feminist and Teacher Research
- Choice or ST Eight—Conducting Surveys or RP Six—Conducting Surveys and Eleven Analyzing a report on the Results of a Survey

Week Eight: 10/13

This week's presenters: upload journal article and ppt. Sunday by midnight. *Names to follow.*

Week Nine: 10/20

This week's presenters: upload journal article and ppt. Sunday by midnight. *Names to follow.*

Week Ten: 10/27

This week's presenters: upload journal article and ppt. Sunday by midnight by midnight. *Presenters' names to follow.*

Week Eleven: 11/3

Due: Comprehensive Literature Review: upload to dropbox Tues. 11/4 by 11:00 PM

This week's presenters: upload journal article and ppt. Tues. prior, by midnight. *Presenters' names to follow.*

Week Twelve: 11/10

Due: Methods section due: upload to dropbox Tues. 11/11 by 11:00 PM

Week Thirteen: 11/17

Due: Draft of report: upload to dropbox Tues. 11/18 by 11:00 PM

Week Fourteen: 11/24

Monday 11/24 Last day to drop with "W"

Week Fifteen 12/1 last class

Due: Final presentations begin, upload PPTs Sunday night prior

Week Sixteen 12/8 (Finals week)

Final presentations continue. Upload to dropbox Sunday night prior

Due: Final draft of research report. Upload to dropbox Tues. 12/9 by 11:00 PM