

Sally Henschel, PhD
 sally.henschel@msutexas.edu
 Skype: sally.henschel
 Office: Bea Wood 211

Research Methods in Rhetoric and Technical Communication

ENGL 5563 Fall 2019

Syllabus and Assignment Schedule

Seminar meetings	Thursday evenings from 6:00-7:30 PM (CT) in Skype. Asynchronous participation also will take place in D2L.
Office hours	Office Hours Monday, 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM Tuesday and Thursday, 11:00 AM to 12:00 PM Other times by appointment
Course description	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 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 materials	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>A Research Primer for Technical Communication: Methods, Exemplars, and Analyses</i>. Michael A. Hughes & George F. Hayhoe. ISBN: 0-8058-6335-4 2. <i>Strategies for Empirical Research in Writing</i>. Mary Sue MacNealy. ISBN 0-205-27253-3 3. Other assigned readings will be available on the course D2L web site. <p>[Note: In the MSU bookstore, texts are arranged by the last name of the first author.]</p>
Course expectations	Assignment (Weight) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PTC Journal spreadsheet (10) • Methodologies presentations (2) (10 each, 20 total)

- Discussion posts (2) (5 each, 10 total)

Research Project:

- Project proposal (5 points)
- Literature review (15 points)
- Methodology/methods (10 points)
- Report draft (10 points)
- Class presentation (10 points)
- Final research report (10 points)

Course total: 100

Grading System

100-90%—A
89-80%—B
79-70%—C
69-60%—D
<60%—F

All assignments will be due on dates assigned. No late work will be accepted unless specific arrangements have been made prior to the due date. Students falling two assignments behind are subject to administrative withdrawal from the course by the instructor.

Absentee Policy

Students with three unexcused absences are subject to an administrative withdrawal from the course. Three tardies are counted as one absence. School closure policy: **If the university is closed due to weather or a security alert on the date of a scheduled class, the class still will be held in Skype.**

Academic Dishonesty

All students are expected to adhere to the Midwestern State University Student Honor Creed when completing any work for this course. A student's name on any assignment scheduled to be turned in is his/her pledge that all work contained therein is his/hers alone. When using the ideas of other unpublished and published sources, students must use accepted MLA documentation conventions. See the *MSU Student Handbook* (available on the MSU Web site and attached to the course Web site) to read the Student Honor Creed (4) and the university's policy on academic dishonesty (71).

Professionalism

Members of this class are expected to treat one another with courtesy, professionalism, and respect. Repeated unprofessional, rude, or inappropriate behavior can result in 50-100 points being deducted from a student's final grade for the course per instance of such behavior.

Americans with Disabilities Act

Midwestern State University is committed to providing equal access for qualified students with disabilities to all university courses and programs, and by law, all students with disabilities are guaranteed a learning environment that provides reasonable accommodation of their disabilities.

This guarantee is provided through Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act. The ADA reads: "No qualified individual with a disability shall, by reason of such disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the services, programs, or activities of a public entity, or be subject to discrimination by any such entity." To obtain disability support services, students must

- be accepted for admission to Midwestern State University,

- complete a request for services form available through the Office of Disability Support Services, and
- provide current documentation from a qualified professional (such as a licensed physician, psychologist, audiologist, etc.) diagnosing the disability, as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

For more information: [Disability Support Services](#)

If the instructor does not have proper notification, she will expect the same performance from each student enrolled in the course.

Weekly Schedule of Assignments

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

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

Week One: 8/29

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

Week Two: 9/5

Have read prior to class in:

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

Week Three: 9/12

Discuss TC Spreadsheet assignment

Have read prior to class in RP:

- RP Three—Reviewing the Literature
- RP Seven—Analyzing a Literature Review
- ST Two—Library-Based Research

Week Four: 9/19

Due: PTC Spreadsheet assignment: a summary of methodologies in a PTC journal, uploaded Tues. prior to class, by midnight

Have read prior to class:

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

Week Five: 9/26

Due: Discussion Post One: Possible research topics with research questions, Tues. prior, by midnight

Have read prior to class:

- RP Five—Conducting a Qualitative Study
- RP Nine—Analyzing a Qualitative Study

Week Six: 10/3

Due: Discussion Post Two: Possible methodologies, methods for study, due Tues. prior, by midnight

Have read prior to class:

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

Week Seven: 10/10

Due: Project proposal. Upload to dropbox Tues. prior, by midnight

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

Week Eight: 10/17

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

Week Nine: 10/24

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

Monday 10/28 Last day to drop with "W"

Week Ten: 10/31 (Halloween :)

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

Week Eleven: 11/7

Due: Comprehensive Literature Review: upload to dropbox Tues. prior, by midnight

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

Week Twelve: 11/14

Due: Methods section due: upload to dropbox Tues. prior, by midnight

Week Thirteen: 11/21

Due: Draft of report: upload to dropbox Tues. prior by midnight

Week Fourteen: 11/28 Thanksgiving holiday, no class

Week Fifteen 12/5 last class

Final presentations begin, upload PPTs Tues. prior by midnight

Week Sixteen 12/12

Final presentations continue. Upload to dropbox Tues. prior by midnight

Due: Final draft of research report. Upload to dropbox Tues. prior by midnight