COMM302: Data Analysis and Report Writing for Law Enforcement Professionals

College of Graduate and Continuing Studies, Norwich University

Print This Page

Course Description

COMM302: Data Analysis and Report Writing for Law Enforcement Professionals

Professional literature regularly includes results that are based on analysis. This course is designed to strengthen students' technological, analytical and communications skills as preparation for a career in law enforcement, intelligence, and security. The course will introduce analytical tools with which to deal with changing events as well as technology that is used to convey information. This course will also help to establish definitions for particular words and concepts and how they might be applied in various situations as well as prepare the student for writing and interpreting the various reports and communication venues used in the law enforcement community.

Pre-requisite: SOCI209.

Course Outcomes

- Identify and be able to explain basic key grammatical concepts
- Analyze, synthesize and critically evaluate data for professional writing
- Demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively within the law enforcement community
- Evaluate data and apply standard statistical inference procedures to draw conclusions from such analyses
- Explain the Johari Window model of communication
- Discuss the model Schramm developed to explain the communication process
- Identify critical data sources and summarize the different uses for data

Weekly Outline

Every week has a prescribed checklist of activities required to successfully complete the lesson. Follow this checklist, in the specified order, to complete each lesson.

Week	Topic	Assignments
Week 01	The Need for Effective Communication	Discussion 1, Assignment-Officer Report
Week 02	Oral versus Written Communication	Discussion 2
Week 03	The Communication Process	Discussion 3, Assignment-Internal Memo
Week 04	Improving communications	Discussion 4, Midterm
Week 05	Reports for Court, Reports for the Media	Discussion 5, Assignment-Police Report
Week 06	Data, Data and more Data	Discussion 6, Draft of Final Presentation
Week 07	Special Issues	Discussion 7,
Week 08	Wrap Up	Discussion 8, Final Presentation

Required Textbooks

Textbook required for this course:

Texts:

- Wallace,H., Roberson, C. (2012). Written and Interpersonal Communications: Methods for Law Enforcement, 5th edition: Pearson. Digital ISBN: 9780133463316 Print ISBN: 9780132623681
- Reynolds, J. (2011). The criminal justice report writing guide for officers. Winter Haven, Fla.: Maple Leaf Press. Print ISBN: 9781470164454

See **Required Reading** list for additional seminar readings.

Norwich University is not able to provide links to all *recommended* readings, but you are encouraged to seek them out according to your interests and learning goals.

Course Components

POLICIES: The following policies apply to this seminar:

Critical Thinking

Although critical thinking is not always identified as an assignment requirement or as a key element in classroom discussion, you can use this skill every time you complete an assignment and speak with your classmates. It is important to think critically because, when you do, you reason through concepts rather than make automatic or emotionally based conclusions. Having an opinion is important, and you do not want to disregard your feelings on any given subject. In fact, you should support your feelings with evidence and ensure your feelings are relevant to the issue at hand. Consider an idea from all angles to understand both your own perspective and the perspectives of others.

I like to see more critical thinking in your own words in an assignment. It is good to use quotes but they should not be **more than 20 percent of the paper.** Using mostly quotes and block quotes for the majority of your paper is not critical thinking. Of course, I will be looking for proper in-text citations in APA style for quotes and block quotes.

What is research? Research is scientifically conducted study of an issue with mathematical precision, or specific description of a phenomenon such as an unstudied cultural issue. When we research something there are often numbers involved or percentages. Sometimes, and sometimes not, there are control groups where one group receives an intervention or a medication and one group does not. That way we can "control" the variables such as people getting better because of a placebo effect.

Why do we look for scholarly, peer-reviewed, articles? The articles that are chosen for scientific journals are well reviewed by other scholars to see if the research plan was viable, if the population is the correct size, and if the methods and statistical analyses were correctly chosen. Be very cautious of your references. Online research is tricky. Sites like Wikipedia and Answers.com, etc are not peer reviewed and should not be used as your only source.

The results then, are as close as we can get to "truth." While we can never say that research creates facts or that research proves anything, we can say that the research supports a certain trend or result. When research from several different sources supports the same result, we can begin to add this up to a verifiable conclusion.

This process relies on trust among professionals that we agree on ethical and professional conduct. We also look at issues such as who has financially supported a study. By the way, we also cannot, as scholars say that something caused or did not cause something. The language is more tentative and sounds something like: "There is a possible causal relationship between X and Y."

Now that you are becoming a scholar, you will have to stop saying things like: "Everyone knows that...." and Research proves that..." You will need to start using correct language. When you say research, I need to see what research you are discussing, about whose research, and when was it conducted?

This is where citation and referencing come in.

When addressing problems or assignments, try using the following critical thinking techniques:

- Consider the purpose or goal of an assignment.
- Restate a question in numerous ways.
- Gather information.
- Look for inferences and assumptions inherent in a problem or assignment.
- Clarify the thought process you use to understand a problem or assignment.

- Try to understand other points of view.
- Think through the implications and possibilities of your solution or idea.

In general, follow these guidelines for demonstrating your thinking process:

- Be clear. State what you mean and provide various explanations and examples.
- Be accurate. Justify or explain how you know your claims are true. If you are uncertain about the truth of your claims, how could you ascertain their truth?
- Be relevant. Explain how your ideas relate to the topic at hand.
- Be logical. Explain how ideas fit together and why they make sense. Describe how you came to your conclusions.
- Be fair. Consider how your ideas and behaviors will make others feel or think. Treat yourself, your classmates, and your facilitators with respect.

If there are any questions about this, please let me know.

Quizzes and Exams

This course may have Quizzes and/or Exams. The exams are not timed.

Grades

You will be provided a weekly commentary/lecture and have required readings and discussion assignments. There will also be a number of written assignments and exercises. A total of 1000 points are available in the course distributed across the components listed below, with both points and percent of final grade indicated.

As a student in this course, you have a number of responsibilities that will affect the level of learning you achieve. These responsibilities include: 1) working actively to create a challenging and useful learning experience for yourself, your discussion group and the class as a whole; 2) encouraging and supporting the learning of each member of the class; 3) preparing and participating fully in discussions as well as group and/or class activities; and 4) completing all assigned work on time or making prior arrangements if an absence of late submission is unavailable. In this course you have the opportunity to acquire knowledge and skills that will help you become effective, confident and focused in your learning.

Activities	Total Points	Weights (%)
Weekly Discussions: 8 at 25 points each)	200	20%
Assignment-Officer Report (aprox 500 words)	100	10%
Assignment-Internal Memo(aprox 750 – 1250 words) *Due at end of Week 3*	200	20%

Midterm Presentation (10-20 slides)	150	15%
Assignment-Police Report (aprox 500 words)	100	10%
Final Presentation (10-20 slides)	250	25%

Letter grades for the course will be based on the following grading scale.

Letter Grade	Percentage	Grade Point
A	93–100%	4.0
A -	90-92.9%	3.7
B +	87-89.9%	3.3
B	83-86.9%	3.0
B -	80-82.9%	2.7
C +	77-79.9%	2.3
C	75-76.9%	2.0
C -	73-74.9%	1.7
D +	70-72.9%	1.3
D	67-69.9%	1.0
D -	63-66.9%	0.7
F	Below 63.0%	0.0

For complete information on the Grading Policy, please refer to the CGCS Online Catalog.

All writing for this seminar must follow the APA writing style. All writing for this seminar must follow APA guidelines for formatting and citation, which can be found at The Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL). Grading rubrics for assignments and discussions are provided from the Grading Guidelines and Rubrics link.

Discussion Groups

Each week I will post discussion questions that are designed to explore the content of this course as well as some more "immediate" topics. Please refer to the *Grading Guidelines and Rubrics* for **Rules** and **Grading** on **Discussions**.

Late Work

It is important that writing assignments and discussion posts be completed on time. Extensions of deadlines will be given only for serious extenuating circumstances. In the absence of such extensions, assignments may be downgraded for lateness at the discretion of the instructor. Regardless, it is imperative that you complete all assignments. Remember, your final paper is worth 35% of your final grade, is cumulative and requires a strong grasp of each of our topics!

Academic Honesty and the Norwich University Honor Code

A student must submit work that represents the student's own original analysis and writing. Copying another's work is not appropriate. If the student relies on the research or writing of others, the student must cite those sources. Words or ideas that require citations include, but are not limited to all hardcopy or electronic publications, whether copyrighted or not, and all verbal or visual communication when the content of such communication clearly originates from an identifiable source. While students are encouraged to seek editing feedback, extensive revisions of one's work by another person is considered a lack of academic honesty, as it is representing another student's work as one's own.

For more information see:

[Academic Dishonesty](#)
[Academic Integrity](#)
[Norwich University Honor Code](#)

Copyright Notice

The content of this seminar contains material used in compliance with the U.S. Copyright Law, including the TEACH Act and principles of "fair use." Materials may not be downloaded, saved, revised, copied, printed or distributed without permission other than as specified to complete seminar assignments. Use of these materials is limited to class members for the duration of the seminar only.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973/ADA

Please consult [Appendix H: University Policy - Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973/Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)](#) for instructions on obtaining an accommodation.

Disclaimer: Please note the specifics of this Course Syllabus are subject to change. Students are responsible for abiding by any such changes. Your instructor will notify you of any changes.