

## CRITIQUE PAPERS - COMM 601

Your assignment is to find, read, and evaluate relevant research articles from scholarly journals that illustrate particular research methods (experiment, survey, textual analysis, ethnography). Evaluations must be clearly grounded in the criteria discussed in class and in the readings.

**Read, consider, and critique the article from class.** Focus your critique on the article we discussed in class to illustrate the research method under consideration (experiment, survey, textual analysis, ethnography). Even though you should have read it carefully and thoughtfully in preparation for class discussion, you should spend time re-reading and re-evaluating the work.

Since it has been competitively selected for publication in a respected scholarly journal, it is likely that the work is overall quite good, but don't assume everything published is without limitation (nothing is by the way), and some aspects of the work may be quite flawed.

Examine the work with the recognition that the goal of your critique will be to demonstrate your understanding of the research itself and your ability to apply appropriate critical standards to determine both the strengths and limitations of the research. Base your critique on the standards for good research presented in class and in the reading.

**Write your paper.** Be sure it is clear, well written, and thorough. Since this is not an opinion or position paper, write exclusively in third person. Include the following:

- A cover page (assignment, name, date). Include a proper APA style reference for the research article on the cover page.
- An introduction. Include a one paragraph overview of the purpose, procedures, and results of the study. Then provide a one paragraph preview of the critical content of your paper.
- An overall critique of the research (1-2 pages). Explicitly ground all critical observations in the questions for all research in the Frey, Botan, Friedman, and Kreps (1992, pp. 15-19) packet. Provide citations referencing the questions used as criteria. Do not try to answer all the questions. Choose to focus on the issues you determine to be most relevant to the particular research study. Limit your overall critique to one or two strengths and one or two limitations to allow for full clarification and support.
- A method-specific critique (2-3 pages). Explicitly ground all critical observations in the questions from the Frey, Botan, Friedman, and Kreps (1992) packet relevant to the particular method used in the study (e.g., pp. 88-89 and 129-130 for survey interview research). Provide citations referencing the questions used as criteria. Do not try to answer all the questions. Choose to focus on the issues you determine to be most relevant to the particular research study. Limit your method-specific critique to two or three strengths and two or three limitations to allow for full clarification and support.
- A conclusion that summarizes the critical content of your paper and ends smoothly.
- An APA reference page including information for the Frey, Botan, Friedman, and Kreps material as well as the article being critiqued.

Note: Include Introduction, Critique, and Conclusion as first-level headings. Include Overall Critique and Method-Specific Critique as second-level headings within the Critique section.

**Locate and preview additional research examples.** Use appropriate literature search tools and techniques to locate four additional research articles that use the research method under consideration (experiment, survey, textual analysis, ethnography). Limit your searching to scholarly communication journals that have been published in the last five years. You may use any search tool or technique you wish, but be sure the articles you find are published in the journals associated with the communication field. See the list in our text (p. 53) or go to <http://www.cios.org/www/tocs/tablesnew.htm>.

It is recommended that you try to find articles related to a topic of particular interest to you, but there are times when that may not be possible. The most important thing is that the research clearly applies the research method under consideration as described in the Frey, Botan, and Kreps text.

For each of the four articles, (1) make a copy of the first page of each of the research reports, (2) find and make a copy of the page from the method section that provides clear validation that the research method under consideration was applied, and (3) use a yellow highlighter to identify the sentence or two in the methods section that indicates use of the research method. Turn these copies in with your critique paper.

### **Some things to note...**

- Remember to write the paper exclusively in 3rd person.
- Write deductively. For each critical observation, clearly and concisely state your critical claim up front, making sure that all critical observations are explicitly grounded in criteria out of the Frey, Botan, Friedman, and Kreps packet. Then follow up with clarification and support from the article content.
- Use standard margins, page numbering, and font size.
- Submit materials in this order: cover page, critique, reference page, photocopies of the required pages from the four additional articles. Staple all materials together in the top left corner.

### **Expectations**

- The overall critique is appropriate length, identifies both strengths and limitations, and indicates good understanding of the general principles of good research. Evaluative criteria are clearly identified, evaluative comments are fully justified and supported with direct reference to article content, and observations demonstrate valuable insight.
- The method-specific critique is appropriate length, identifies both strengths and limitations, and indicates good understanding of the specific research method used and of the standards for research method quality. Evaluative criteria are clearly identified, evaluative comments are fully justified and supported with direct reference to article content, and observations demonstrate valuable insight.
- Proper wording and phrasing are used, and writing is free from errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation, etc. Writing style is consistent with expectations for a research critique.
- Idea development is supported by effective introduction, conclusion, paragraph divisions, section headings, transitions, controlling sentences, etc.
- Document is in proper format.

### **Evaluation**

Evaluation will be based on how well your paper meets the expectations above. Grades will be assigned according to the following chart:

A+ = 100	B+ = 88	C+ = 78	D+ = 68	F = 0-58
A = 96	B = 85	C = 75	D = 65	
A- = 92	B- = 82	C- = 72	D- = 62	