

**Common Course Outline**  
**SPCM/MCOM 113**  
**Research in Communication**  
**3 Semester Hours**

**The Community College of Baltimore County**

**Description**

**SPCM/MCOM 113 – 3 Credits - Research in Communication** focuses on the source selection and information gathering process in the scholarly investigation of communication. It emphasizes the critical assessment of the relevance, reliability, and credibility of each source used.

Prerequisites: SPCM 101 and ENGL 101.

**Overall Course Objectives**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. formulate effective questions for defining research problems in communication;
2. identify the scope and underlying assumptions associated with a problem;
3. evaluate and select supporting articles from scholarly journals and popular periodicals;
4. assess the relevance and credibility of informational sources;
5. identify the perspectives of written or spoken evidence to provide balanced conclusions;
6. analyze the impact of technological developments on information gathering processes;
7. analyze advantages and disadvantages in various information gathering processes;
8. analyze strengths and weaknesses in various mass media information gathering processes;
9. critically assess the appropriateness of information in relation to a problem; and
10. apply information gathering analysis skills to problem solving.

**Major Topics**

- I. Determining relevance, credibility, and perspective in the information gathering process
- II. Selecting approved appropriate sources
- III. Strengths and weakness of electronic information gathering and face-to-face interviewing methods
- IV. Techniques for interviewing experts

- V. Checking current sources for accuracy
- VI. Incorporating evidence into various communication formats
- VII. Citing sources in written documents and oral presentations
- VIII. Making and checking assumptions and premises
- IX. Creating hypotheses
- X. Researching questions and hypotheses

### **Course Requirements**

Grading: grading procedures will be determined by individual faculty members but will include the following:

Exams: a minimum of two written exams

Oral presentations: a minimum of 2, with at least 1 interviewing assignment leading to an oral presentation about the process of setting up and conducting research interviews

Written:

At least one annotated bibliography containing a minimum of 20 sources related to a topic selected by the student

A minimum of 4 research assignments to find and analyze background information to support messages in a number of communication formats

### **Other Course Information**

This course is an elective designed specifically for students who are considering careers in Communication Studies, Journalism, and/or Public Relations and Advertising.

This course may include guest lecturer visits from media professionals.