

SYLLABUS – PUR 3500 (2H23) Public Relations Research (☀)

Spring 2017
Tuesday | Period 7 - 8 (1:55 PM - 3:50 PM)
Thursday | Period 8 (3:00 PM - 3:50 PM)
Room: WEIM 1094

Instructor:

Mr. Jasper Fessmann, M.Sc.
Office Hours: Tuesday 12:30 – 1:30,
Thursday: 1:00 - 3.00 p.m. or by appointment

Office: Weimer 2039B
Office Phone: (352) 273-1638
Email (preferred) fessmann@ufl.edu

Course Description

Prerequisite: A minimum of “C” in PUR 3000 and statistics; junior standing in the college. If you do not have these prerequisites, you are advised to drop this class unless you have permission from the instructor.

This course is designed to introduce public relations students to social science research methods, with a focus on the application of those methods to public relations. This course is intended to help students understand why research is essential in identifying problems and issues of concerns, guiding strategic planning, message development, and evaluating public relations campaigns. The course focuses on different types of research- qualitative, quantitative research, and online research.

A Canvas blog is activated to post and answer questions/comments related to the class. This allows an open discussion on class matters. The instructor will read and answer blog's comments once per day except Saturdays and Sundays. The instructor e-mail addresses should be used only to communicate student's personal issues. The mail function of Canvas is also available for this purpose.

(☀) This syllabus is subject to change as the instructor deems appropriate and necessary.

Method of Instruction

This course is outcomes-based, and you will be evaluated primarily on your ability to transfer the theory and knowledge shared in class into workable solutions. It is essential that you keep up with the reading schedule and come to class with the assigned reading's concepts in your memory and in your written notes. Not all of the materials that you read will be discussed or explained in class, therefore, if you need further explanations or clarifications please take advantage of the posted office hours. If you have a problem, see the professor sooner, not later.

Course Objectives & Learning Outcomes

As a result of the course, students should:

- Understand the role of research in public relations management.
- Have been introduced to basic concepts and methods in public relations research
- Be able to analyze issues related to measurement in public relations research and make appropriate measurement choices.
- Understand the assumptions of various research methods in public relations.
- Learn how to apply research methods to specific situations in public relations campaign management.
- Learn how to write persuasive research reports and deliver the results successfully in a professional oral presentation.

The course specifically supports 8 of the 12 professional values and competencies required of graduates by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC):

- Understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information;
- Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;
- Think critically, creatively and independently;
- Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work;
- Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;
- Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;
- Apply basic numerical and statistical concepts;
- Apply current tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work, and to understand the digital world.

Required Books & Readings

- **Stacks, D.W. (2016). *Primer of Public Relations Research*, (3rd Ed.). New York: Guilford.**
- If and when additional readings are assigned, an announcement will be made in class and the material will be posted on Canvas.

Recommended Reading

- Field, A. P. (2013). *Discovering statistics using SPSS* (4th ed.). London: Sage publications.
- Kanter, B., & Paine, K. D. (2012). *Measuring the networked nonprofit: Using data to change the world*. John Wiley & Sons.

Additional Requirements

- Access to SPSS data analysis software: Students are required to be able to access SPSS software during class. Software can be purchased at the HUB or accessed using the UF App at apps.ufl.edu. Computer labs in Weimer Hall also provide access to SPSS.
- Access to Lynda.com tutorials: These video tutorials are free to access via lss.at.ufl.edu under "Teaching Tools." You must be logged into the UF system to access these for free.

Course Evaluation

The evaluation of coursework will be based on the student's performance in four major areas, each of which constitutes a proportion of the final grade. These include weekly attendance and active participation, three exams, writing an individual research paper and two group projects. The area and allocations for each are as follows:

- **Active participation** **10%**
- **Examinations** **45%**
 - First exam 15%
 - Second exam 15%
 - Third exam 15%
- **Individual (Secondary) Research** **15%**
 - Annotated Bibliography 05%
 - Secondary Research Report 10%
- **Group Projects** **30%**
 - Focus Group 15%
 - Survey 15%

Grading for the course follows current UF grading policies for assigning grade points (see <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>).

The grading scale for the course is as follows:

A	92-100%
A-	90-91%
B+	88-89%
B	82-87%
B-	80-81%
C+	78-79%
C	72-77%
C-	70-71%
D+	68-69%
D	62-67%
D-	60-61%
E	below 60%

Letter grades for this course will be based on the total points earned over the term. For further information about grades and grading policy, please consult:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

(*) The three exams of the term will be held during the regularly scheduled class periods. Exams are designed to test the student's knowledge of the main ideas covered in each of the readings, handouts, guest speakers, and class discussions as specified in the syllabus. The exams will be multiple-choice and **non-cumulative**. Exam grades will be posted on Canvas.

There Are No Make-Up Exams

If you miss an exam you will receive a grade of zero for that test. Documented exceptions for extreme circumstances will be considered and must be discussed with the instructor. Material turned in late will be penalized by one letter grade per day. Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

Online Course Administration — e-Learning in Canvas

<http://lss.at.ufl.edu/> will be used to administer the course communication, materials (e.g., PowerPoint files, additional readings, handouts, assignment guidelines, evaluation forms), and grades. For instance, an electronic file of this document is posted on Canvas. You can access the site by using your GatorLink username and password. Please check the site for announcements and/or threads of comments from classmates and the professor.

End of Course Evaluations

Students are expected to provide feedback during specified times (usually last two or three weeks of the semester) on the quality of instruction in this course based on 10 criteria online at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results>.

Course Professionalism

The College of Journalism and Communications is a professional school and professional decorum is expected at all times. Therefore, the student and the professor adhere to workplace norms for collegial and respectful interaction. Students are expected to arrive on time, not leave early unless prior permission is granted, and wait for the class to end before packing to leave.

Further, students are expected to conduct themselves in an honest, ethical, and courteous manner — with classmates, guests or the professor. Eating, drinking, and privately chatting in class do not demonstrate professional behavior. Chatting while the instructor or another student is talking is unacceptable behavior; such actions can result in being asked to leave the classroom and will result in a lowering of your class participation grade.

Cell phones and other electronic devices must be turned off completely during class; silent mode or vibrate is not considered off. In the event of an emergency situation, notify the professor at the start of class. Laptops may be used only as a note-taking device. Surfing the Internet, checking or creating email, playing games, and other online activities not related to class are strictly prohibited.

The conduct of students will be measured against what is expected of a public relations professional in an agency or in-house department. Students are encouraged to keep this in mind.

APA Style

All references must follow the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA Style)*. For those not familiar with APA, the following webpages might be helpful:

- <http://flash1r.apa.org/apastyle/basics/>
- <https://www.library.cornell.edu/research/citation/apa>
- <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>

The Honor Pledge

The University of Florida Honor Code applies to all work related to this class. All students are expected to be honorable and to observe standards of conduct appropriate to a community of scholars. Students are expected to attend every class, arrive on time, and participate in class discussions. Assigned readings should be completed prior to class, and students should be prepared to discuss the assigned material. Any material discussed in class and/or covered in the assigned readings may be included on examinations. Students will not be allowed to make up exams. Exceptions to this policy will be limited to documented exceptional (as defined by the professor) circumstances and at the discretion of the professor. Students arriving more than 10 minutes late to an exam will not be allowed to take the exam.

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." The Honor Code (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obliged to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor in this class.

Students with Challenges

We are committed to helping students with special challenges overcome difficulties with comprehending the subject matter, while abiding by the standard code of confidentiality. In order to address academic needs, we must be informed of the student's circumstance at the beginning of the semester *before* performance becomes a factor. This is not to imply that standards of fairness will not be generally applied when evaluating student work; only that reasonable and appropriate measures will be taken to ensure that officially recognized challenges do not become a hindrance to a student's ability to succeed in this course.

Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office (Disability Research Center – 352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter that must be presented to the instructor or teaching assistant when requesting accommodation. Students with challenges should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Phone number and contact site for university counseling services and mental health services: 392-1575, <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>.

University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

Assignments

Because public relations professionals work in teams, for the later TWO (2) assignments you will be placed in “research teams” to develop a public relations research report (details will be given in class). Each team will apply various types of research methodologies and techniques— (1) focus group, and (2) survey—to the development of a strategic public relations research plan. You are on agency research team (of approx. 4-5 team members depending on enrollment). The grade is a team grade, meaning that each team member receives the same grade. However, to insure that everyone contributes equally your team will agree on how to split the work in a signed contract in the beginning. Furthermore, you will indicate to me who is responsible for which part and I reserve the right to assign individual grades if there are major discrepancies in the quality of the work.

Assignment 1 (Individual): Create Annotated Bibliography Using APA Style (5%)

An annotated bibliography is a way to collect information that can later be used to prepare a literature review on a particular academic topic. In it you cite, using proper APA style, 3 research article and then give a brief summary and description of the contents of the article. Examples and a rubric will be provided.

Assignment 2 (Individual): Secondary Research and Web Analytics (10%)

Treat this as if your public relations agency had been hired by a major foundation to study the issue (your topic) with a particular emphasis on understanding the potential and barriers/challenges of the issues and/or among the target audiences. Your first step is conducting secondary research on the topic and preparing a research report and oral presentation that summarize your research.

Assignment 3 (Group): Focus Group (15%)

Your public relations agency has been hired by your client to learn potential and barriers/challenges regarding your topic and develop insights for future or existing campaigns. Working with your account team, your second step is to conduct a focus group on the topic and prepare a research report and oral presentation that summarize your research.

Assignment 4 (Group): Survey and Analytics (15%)

Based on your focus group results, working with your account team, you will design a survey in *Qualtrics* and run the survey. You will then statistically analyze the results to prepare a research report and oral presentation that summarize your research.

Extra Credit

Since this is a research class, participation in research studies for extra credit is highly encouraged. Please register through the CJC’s SONA research management system (<https://ufl-cjc.sona-systems.com>) and choose studies to participate in to receive extra credits for this class. Check SONA regularly to see what studies have become available. Studies are typically not available until the third week of the semester; however, you should NOT wait until the last minute to sign up for participation because people tend to procrastinate and research opportunities will be limited by the end of the semester. Please see this video for how to set up your SONA account: <https://youtu.be/1OnT2ZU6QQ>

Other Important Notes

- The instructor reserves the right to make changes, if necessary, to the grading system, schedule, or other matters pertaining to the class. The students will be informed of these changes in a timely manner.
- The instructor may be reached via e-mail and the telephone, but please be aware that the professor will not be able to respond immediately to your communication. As a rule, allow up to 48 hours for a response. Therefore, barring an emergency situation, it is advisable to contact the instructor well in advance of an exam or a deadline in order to give the professor adequate time to respond you.
- Students are not to consume food or beverages in the classroom or to use laptop computers for other than to take class notes or follow PowerPoint presentations. Mobile telephones or other electronic devices are not allowed to use during class unless specifically authorized by the instructor.
- Students are not permitted to bring guests to class unless special arrangements have been made with the professor prior to class.
- If you notice yourself having trouble in the course, it is crucial that you see the instructor immediately. Please feel free to approach the instructor about any concerns or comments you might have about this class. I will be happy to meet with you during my office hours, or by appointment.
- You are expected to arrive promptly for class, fully prepared to discuss the assigned readings. While I understand the problems created by a large campus, it is your responsibility to arrive in class in a timely manner. Anyone arriving more than 10 minutes late for class will be noted as absent, and his or her class participation grade will suffer as a result.
- **Attendance policy: Attendance is mandatory.** Absences count from the first class meeting and **each unexcused absence will reduce your attendance grade by 5%** since you cannot participate if you are not there. Excused absence requires either prior explicit permission by the instructor or a doctor's note. and subsequently assign a lower or failing grade for excessive absences; **More than three absences** during the semester will be considered "excessive absences" resulting in reduction of the final grade by a full letter grade for such each day. I may, after due warning, prohibit further attendance in the courses in such cases. You are responsible for signing the attendance sheet every class period as well as notifying me of the cause of your absence for a class meeting (for further information, please consult: <http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationattendance.html>).
- Do not submit the same work to more than one class without prior written permission from both instructors. Do not adapt work from another class for this class without my prior written permission. Do not adapt someone else's work and submit it as your own. This course requires original work, created at this time, for this purpose. Any evidence of **plagiarism or cheating** will result in an **"E" for the course** and possible **disciplinary action**.
- An assignment turned in passed the deadline will be penalized one letter grade for each weekday it is late. This is a business where **deadlines count**. You can't make excuses to your boss or a client if your work is late. Spelling counts. So does grammar, punctuation and professional presentation techniques.
- In addition to the required and recommended readings, you are expected to maintain comprehensive class notes because class lectures often contain information that is not contained in the readings. You will be tested on this information on examinations.
- Lectures given in this course, including handouts and presentations, are the property of the instructor and the University of Florida. Class lectures may not be recorded in any form without prior permission from the instructor and any guest lecturers that may speak to this class. Recordings, including class notes, may not be used for commercial purposes.

Course Schedule and Reading

This course outline is tentative and subject to change.

	Readings
Week 1: Introduction to the course.	
1/5 (TR): Welcome & Course Overview	
<i>Assignment:</i> Watch: <i>The Century of the Self - Part 1: "Happiness Machines"</i> https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DnPmg0R1M04	
Week 2: Social research in the context of public relations	
1/10 (T): Understanding and Managing Research. Asking good Questions.	
1/12 (TR): Research Resources. Guest Speaker: April Hines - UF CJC librarian	Chap. 1-3
<i>Assignment:</i> Become familiar with APA style & references. Watch: http://www.apastyle.org/learn/tutorials/basics-tutorial.aspx	
Week 3: Secondary Research	
1/17 (T): Secondary Research	
1/19 (TR): Secondary Research (con't) & Web Analytics	Chap. 9
<i>Assignment:</i> <i>Project group topic</i> due January 20th	
Week 4: Qualitative Research	
1/24 (T): Qualitative Research	
1/26 (TR): Qualitative Research (con't) / Exam 1 Review	Chap. 10 & 11
<i>Assignment:</i> <i>Annotated Bibliography</i> due January 27th	
Week 5: Measurements & Ethics	
1/31 (T): Measuring Outcomes. Research Ethics. Exam 1 Review.	Chap. 4 & 7
2/2 (TR): Exam 1	
Week 6: Publics segmentation & sampling	
2/7 (T): Sampling	
2/9 (TR): Sampling (con't)	Chap. 5 & 12
<i>Assignment:</i> <i>Secondary Research Report</i> due February 10th	
Week 7: Surveys	
2/14 (T): Survey Research	Chap. 13
2/16 (TR): Survey (con't) / Qualtric Intro / Discussion of Focus Group Project	
Week 8: Content Analysis	
2/21 (T): Content Analysis	Chap. 8
2/23 (TR): Content Analysis (con't)	
Week 9: Quantitative vs. Quantitative.	
2/28 (T): Quantitative vs. Quantitative. Exam 2 Review	
3/2 (TR): Exam 2	
Week 10: Spring Break	
3/7 (T) & 3/9 (TR): No Class	
Week 11: Experimental Research	
3/14 (T): Experimental Research	
3/16 (TR): Experimental Research (con't)	Chap. 14
<i>Assignment:</i> <i>Focus Group Project Report</i> due March 17rd	

Week 12: Introduction to Statistics, Descriptive Statistics, and SPSS Training

3/21 (T): Descriptive Statistics

3/23 (TR): **Focus Group Research Presentations**

Chap. 6

Assignment: Lynda.com: SPSS Statistics Essential Training 1-5

Week 13: Correlation and Reliability, and SPSS Training

3/28 (T): Statistical Reasoning and Data Analysis

3/30 (TR): Statistical Reasoning and Data Analysis (con't)

Chap. 15

Assignment: Lynda.com: SPSS Statistics Essential Training 6-8

Assignment: Survey Data due March 31st

Week 14: Other forms of research; Putting it together

4/4 (T): Other forms of research; Interpreting data and making
Recommendations; Writing Tips.

Chap. 16

4/6 (TR): Project Q & A & Group Meeting Day

Assignment: Survey Research Project Report Due April 7th

Week 15: Presentations

4/11 (T): **Survey Research Presentation** (If you are observing *Pesach*, contact
me early in the semester and your group will present on Thursday)

4/13 (TR): Exam 3 Review

Week 16: Finals

4/18 (T): **Exam 3** (If you are observing *Pesach*, contact me)

Have a great Summer Break! ☺