



## **PUR3500 Public Relations Research (3 credits)**

SUMMER 2020

Department of Public Relations

College of Journalism and

Communications

**Instructor:** Judith Higgins Donohue

**Communication with the instructor:** Please use Canvas email

Office Hours: Online anytime; Telephone any day between **8 a.m. and 8 p.m. 352-603-3941**

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE:**

Public relations research techniques focusing on applications to strategic planning, message evaluation, opinion research, and testing of public relations programs. Emphasis is placed on qualitative and quantitative methods and data analysis.

### **Detailed Course Description**

PUR 3500 is an introduction to research methods for public relations. Course objectives are: (1) to understand how research is practiced in public relations; (2) to ask appropriate research questions; (3) to practice research in an ethical manner; (4) to design research programs and employ appropriate research methods; (5) to critically appraise research results; and (6) to effectively communicate research results.

Public relations professionals are information specialists who require and receive information to be transmitted within the agency and to clients or to internal and external publics. As such, they must understand the information received, and, when necessary, commission others to collect that information. This requires the ability to “speak the language” of research. Finally, the course is designed to provide “hands-on” experience in collecting, interpreting, evaluating, and reporting research.

## Course Objectives

By the end of this course students will be able to demonstrate how to approach a public relations research problem, define and state goals and objectives, choose and employ the appropriate research method, collect and analyze data, and present the findings and recommendations. Additionally, student will be able to

1. Determine the reason for conducting research in public relations;
2. Articulate the ethics involved in conducting research;
3. Select the best research method to achieve the most necessary results;
4. Demonstrate an ability to critically appraise research results;
5. Demonstrate an understanding of the statistics used in inferring data and research results;
6. Assess which statistical procedures are most appropriate given the research questions posed;
7. Read and interpret computer-produced results;
8. Communicate research results effectively and accurately to audiences.

## CLASS FORMAT

This asynchronous course meets entirely online. Students are responsible for managing their time and attention to course materials. This course is designed for students who log in regularly, perform readings and assignments weekly, and do NOT try to catch up after several weeks of ignoring the course.

This format is recommended for students who are **self-motivated and independently resourceful**. Students should check the course **a minimum of three times each week**, since the instructor posts announcements frequently. (*Note: Course analytics tools show your instructor the level of your engagement each week.*)

**There are 5 written assignments and a final project.** Deadlines are **Saturday nights at 11 p.m.** **LATE WORK IS NOT ACCEPTED.**

(There are rare exceptions to this policy that will be considered on a case-by-case basis, such as accidents and serious (documented) illness, unplanned hospitalization, death of an immediate family member, having a baby on the assignment due date, and natural disasters. However, technical problems at your end, business travel and vacations are NOT included in this category.)

## **GRADING/EVALUATION:**

A standard grading scale is used in this course. Note that most final letter grades have a +/- range. The letter grade C and 70-79 percentile is considered “Average” level. Therefore, in order to earn an A or B in this course, your work must be **consistently exceptional**.

A	100 %	to 94.0%
A-	< 93.9 %	to 90.0%
B+	< 89.9 %	to 87.0%
B	< 86.9 %	to 84.0%
B-	< 83.9 %	to 80.0%
C+	< 79.9 %	to 77.0%
C	< 76.9 %	to 74.0%
C-	< 73.9 %	to 70.0%
D+	< 69.9 %	to 67.0%
D	< 66.9 %	to 64.0%
D-	< 63.9 %	to 61.0%
F	60.9 %	to 0.0%

Grades are *earned* via two modes: **5 written assignments @15% (75%)**; and a final research project **(25%)**.

There is a common misconception that online courses are easier than face-to-face courses. Please do not fall victim to this misconception.

**Final Project (25%):** Length: 2,500-3,000 words (approx.10-12 pages, not including title page, appendix or works cited)

- Format: APA Style, 1” margins, 12-point Times New Roman font

## **TEXTS AND RESOURCES REQUIRED:**

1. Don W. Stacks (2017). *Primer of Public Relations Research*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed. New York: Guilford.
2. You will also be exploring professional journals and academic publications in the field which are available online through the UF

Library. <http://www.uflib.ufl.edu/>

**Technology requirements:** A reliable computer with and internet access.

**Note: Technological/connectivity problems at your end are not accepted as excuses for late work. Do not wait until the last minute to submit your work.**

If there is a technological problem at the UF end, submit a ticket and screen shot explaining the problem.

## **HONESTY & INTEGRITY**

The highest standards of ethical behavior and integrity are expected in this class. Students are expected to comply with the letter and the spirit of the UF Honor Code which reads as follows:

**Student Honor Code Preamble:** In adopting this Honor Code, the students of the University of Florida recognize that academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. Students who enroll at the University commit to holding themselves and their peers to the high standard of honor required by the Honor Code. Any individual who becomes aware of a violation of the Honor Code is bound by honor to take corrective action. The quality of a University of Florida education is dependent upon the community acceptance and enforcement of the Honor Code.

**The Honor Code** We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity. 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."

**Academic Honesty Guidelines** All students are required to abide by the Academic Honesty Guidelines which have been accepted by the University. The academic community of students and faculty at the University of Florida strives to develop, sustain and protect an environment of honesty, trust and respect. Students are expected to pursue knowledge with integrity. Exhibiting honesty in academic pursuits and reporting violations of the Academic Honesty Guidelines will encourage others to act with integrity. Violations of the Academic Honesty Guidelines shall result in judicial action and a student being subject to the sanctions in paragraph XIV of the Student Conduct Code. The conduct set forth hereinafter constitutes a violation of the Academic Honesty Guidelines (University of Florida Rule 6C1-4.017).

*Note: This professor monitors "study" sites such as CourseHero and Quizlet to determine unethical usage.*

For more information about academic honesty, contact the Dean of Students Office. You can review UF's academic honesty guidelines in detail at:  
<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/academic.php>

You are assumed to be the sole author of all work presented. Submitting work written by another or stolen from another (i.e. plagiarized) is not only unethical, it is foolish, embarrassing and may result in course failure. When quoting the work of others, be sure to credit the author properly. **I will be using software to detect plagiarism.**

**Students Requiring Accommodation** Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, [www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/)) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

**U Matter, We Care** Your well-being is important to the University of Florida. The U Matter, We Care initiative is committed to creating a culture of care on our campus by encouraging members of our community to look out for one another and to reach out for help if a member of our community is in need. If you or a friend is in distress, please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu) so that the U Matter, We Care Team can reach out to the student in distress. A nighttime and weekend crisis counselor is available by phone at 352-392-1575. The U Matter, We Care Team can help connect students to the many other helping resources available including, but not limited to, Victim Advocates, Housing staff, and the Counseling and Wellness Center. Please remember that asking for help is a sign of strength. In case of emergency, call 9-1-1.

**Mental Health or Emergency Resources:** You can reach the University Counseling Service at 352-392-1575 or go to this link. <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx> (For emergencies, call 9-1-1)

**Course Evaluation** Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open.

Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>.

**COURSE SUMMARY PUR 3500  
SUMMER A 2020**

**Week 1 May 11-16 Module 1,2,3** Why Research/Management/Measuring Outcomes  
**Assignment:** Submit research question (no credit)

**Week 2 May 17-23 Modules 4,5,6** Data Analysis/ Ethics/ Content Analysis  
**Assignment #1** Content Analysis

**Week 3 May 24-30 Modules 7, 8** Secondary Research/Case Studies  
**Assignment #2** Literature Review

**Week 4 May 31-June 6 Modules 9, 10** Sampling/Focus Groups  
**Assignment #3** Conduct a focus group

**Week 5 June 7-13 Module 11** Polls/Surveys  
**Assignment #4** Conduct a survey

**Week 6 June 14-19 (Friday) Module 12/13** Social Media/Final Project  
**1. Assignment #5** Conduct a social media audit  
**2. Submit Final Project**