PUR 3500
Public Relations Research (Section 001B)
Summer 2020

Class Meeting:

T | Period 2 - 3 (9:30 AM - 12:15 PM) (2h 45min)
Break: 10:40-10:50AM short break

R | Period 2 - 4 (9:30 AM - 1:45 PM) (4h 15min)
Break: 10:30-10:40AM short break, 11:30AM-12PM lunch break

Instructor: April Yue
Email: yuecen@ufl.edu

Zoom drop-in time:
T 12:15-12:45PM, R 1:45-2:15PM, and by appointment
Phone: 425-614-5012 (email is generally the fastest way to get a hold of me 😊)

Required Texts
Stacks, D. W. (2016). *Primer of public relations research*, (3rd Ed.). New York: Guilford.

Supplemental readings will be made available to you through the course website.

Course Goals
This course serves two goals. One is to provide you with a critical framework for understanding and evaluating social science research so when you encounter it in almost any PR-related job you can interpret and report social science research with a reasonable level of competence. Think of the course material as professional survival skills. The second goal is to provide you with some first-hand experience in conducting a research project. This practical experience will be beneficial both in future courses you take in the CJC, but also in your professional careers. Given my desire for this course to be practically useful we will spend the majority of our time learning how to conduct and analyze quality surveys and focus groups, which are the most commonly used methods for public relations professionals. We will also spend some time briefly learning about other common techniques used by PR researchers.

Course Format:
On most days, we will have **synchronous class sessions**, in which everyone logs in to Zoom at our class time. Synchronous class format helps create engagement and foster community in fully online courses like ours.

Online Meeting Netiquette:
- ❖ Turn on your cameras

- ❖ Look at the camera in order to make eye contact when you're talking
- ❖ Mute your mics when you aren't contributing
- ❖ Use the **Public** Chat field for constructive comments
- ❖ Use the **Private** Chat field for where you are still confused (Direct questions/comments to me)

Course Learning Objectives
- Identify strengths and weaknesses of various methods frequently used in communication (e.g. focus groups, surveys, etc.)
- Practice creating various data collection tools used in PR research
- Practice interpreting common types of data used in PR research
- Practice reporting PR research in an easily understood format

College of Journalism and Communications Objectives

The Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications requires that by graduation all students should be able to:
- understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press for the US
- demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications;
- demonstrate an understanding of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and, as appropriate, other forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to mass communications;
- demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society;
- 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.

Course Policies

Attendance: I expect that you attend our synchronous Zoom class, and you will have the opportunity to gain points by completing in-class assignments, but I do not take formal attendance. **If you miss class please do not ask me if you missed "anything important."** Of course, you did! I think every day is important. If what you mean to ask is if I made any announcements about changes to due dates or something of that nature, those types of

announcements will always be posted on the course website. *[I will gather everybody's opinions/consent on recording the zoom meeting]*

Late Work/Make-up Work: All written assignments must be turned in to Canvas prior to the start of class the day the assignment is due. The Canvas will automatically mark assignments as late if they are uploaded even one second after the class period has begun. **You have 24 hours after the due date to turn in your assignment for a 10% grade reduction. A grade of ZERO will be assigned after the initial 24 hours.** It is your responsibility to make sure you properly uploaded your paper, blaming a group member doesn't work as it is the group's joint responsibility. There are no make-ups for exams or in-class activities, for any reason beyond university or religious excused absences. Please see the exam section below in the "How you Get Points" section for more details.

Email Policy: As a state employee, my email is considered a public record, and can be requested via an open-records request. Because of this, federal privacy laws prevent me from discussing grades or other personal matters via email, and if this is the case, you must call me via phone or Zoom to discuss these matters. Also, please be aware that email is considered formal communication, and it is important to practice professionalism. Make sure that you do not treat email as text (i.e., don't use text abbreviations) and never email something that you would not say to your boss' face.

Honor Code: Please note that all of your work in this class should conform to the university's honor code, which states: We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity by abiding by the Student 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." For more information please see http://regulations.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/4.040-1.pdf

I will document and report all honor code violations, including cheating and plagiarism. The minimum penalty for a violation of the honor code is a zero on the assignment or exam, but may be higher depending on the severity of the violation.

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

Online Course Evaluation
Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course based on 10 criteria. These evaluations are conducted online at https://evaluations.ufl.edu. Evaluations are typically open during the last 2-3 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.

How You Get Points

Point Distribution

Exams		500 pts
Research Project		450 pts
Background Report	50 pts	
Focus Group Protocol	50 pts	
Focus Group Report	75 pts	
Survey Questions	50 pts	
Survey Report	75 pts	
Final Report	100 pts	
Final Report Presentation	25 pts	
Group Evaluation	25 pts	
In-class/online activities		50 pts
TOTAL		1000 pts

Letter grades will be calculated using this formula:

Letter	Course Points	Percentage	Grade Points
A	1000-930	100-93	4.0
A-	929-900	92.9-90	3.7
B+	899-870	89.9-87	3.3
B	869-830	86.9-83	3
B-	829-800	82.9-80	2.7
C+	799-770	79.9-77	2.3
C	769-730	76.9-73	2
C-	729-700	72.9-700	1.7
D+	699-670	69.9-67	1.3
D	669-600	66.9-60	1
F	599-0	59.9-0	0

I don't round up. I will keep grades posted on Canvas - it is your responsibility to check it and make sure you know where you are at.

Overview of Course Components

I will be as fair and impartial as is humanly possible in the grading process. Each of you will be graded on the same basis. Because of this, no extra work or special assignments will be given. Normally, by the time I return your graded assignment, I have looked at each person's work at least several times and feel comfortable with the grade assigned to it. Grades are earned; they are not gifts, nor are they negotiated. Grades are awarded on the basis on the quality of the work performed, not the amount of time expended.

I will work my hardest to make this course enjoyable and interesting. However, some students struggle with the material. Please see me if you are having problems understanding the concepts covered in class. I am your resource for this class, see me in office hours or make an appointment

if you can't come to office hours. I will do all I can to help you before a deadline. After a deadline has past, or an exam has been given, there is nothing I can do to help you.

Exams
Two open book unit exams will be given on Zoom, in addition to the **OPTIONAL** final, which if taken would replace your lowest unit exam grade. All exams will be worth 250 points. You must be on time for exams. **As soon as one person has completed their exam, no more exams will be handed out.** Only students enrolled in the course may be present during exam days. No make-up exams are given regardless of the reason. If you do well on the two unit exams, and are satisfied with your grade, you can skip the final exam without consequence. If you miss an exam, or do poorly on an exam, you can take the final to replace the earlier exam grade that you may not be pleased with. The exams will cover the material in the readings and lectures – that includes the textbook chapters and any supplemental material posted online to Canvas. The unit exams will not be intentionally cumulative, but some chapters will utilize concepts from previous chapters. I will try to point these instances out when covering the material in lecture. **The final exam will be cumulative and covering the whole semester.** The tests will be multiple choice/true-false/matching. **When taking exams: Make sure you turn on your camera and mute yourself throughout the exam. Once you finish the exam, you can exit the Zoom meeting. You can refer to your online notes - that is no problem. Text/call during exams is strictly forbidden.**

Research project
A key objective of this class is to provide you with hands-on experience conducting research that is commonly used in various communication professions. Students will be required to engage in creating, conducting and analyzing information from both a focus group and a survey. Yes, this will require group work, but life is a group project, and communication research in the real world almost always will require group work. There will be multiple assignments related to the research projects that will be completed throughout the semester. There is an overview of the entire project on Canvas. These projects will be discussed in significant depth later in the course and materials will be provided in class and is available on the course website. Peer evaluation will be conducted to assess each group member's contributions to the project. While your team research report and presentation grades are the same for all team members, your peer evaluation grade (25 points) differs. Your peer evaluation grade is subject to adjustments according to your average peer evaluation. If your team does not think you have put forth the same amount of effort and the same quality of work as they have throughout the length of the project, your peer evaluation will negatively influence your final grade.

Participation activities
I believe, and research has shown, that active participation in learning is crucial for long term learning. Most weeks we will complete some sort of activity designed to help you understand the course material. Some are individual, and some are group activities. These assignments will be graded on a completed/not completed scale and together make up 5% of your grade.

Tentative Course Schedule*

Week	Readings (due before each class time)
Week 1:	
5/12 Intro to course; Purpose of research	Chapter 1 & 2
5/14 Intro to focus groups **(class discussion on research topic)**	Chapter 11 pp. 202-214
5/17 - Focus Group Background Report Due by 11:59pm	
Week 2:	
5/19 Other qualitative methods & Guest lecture on secondary research (by April Hines)	Chapter 9, 10 & rest of Chapter 11
5/21 Measurement & Exam #1 review & Work on FG protocol in class **5/22 - Focus Group Protocol Due by 11:59pm**	Chapter 4 & 5
Week 3:	
5/26 Exam #1 in class	Exam 1 on Ch. 1, 2, 4, 5, 9, 10, 11 & Supplement
5/28 Survey design	Chapter 13
Week 4:	
6/2 Qualtrics training; Sampling **6/2 – Focus Group Report Due by 11:59pm**	Chapter 12
6/4 Content Analysis & Guest lecture on qualitative research	Chapter 8
6/8 – Survey Questions Due by 11:59pm	
Week 5:	
6/9 Experimental design	Chapter 14

6/11 Descriptive & Inferential data analysis (Hypothesis testing)	Chapter 6 & Chapter 15

Week 6:

6/16 Exam #2 in class	Exam 2 on Ch. 6, 8, 12, 13, 14, 15 & Supplement
6/17 – Survey Report Due by 11:59pm	
6/18 Research presentation. Work on final report in class.	Each group meets with me to work through data analysis at assigned time (we may schedule this to happen between 6.11-6.13)
6/21 Final Report Due by 11:59pm **Group Evaluation Due by 11:59pm**	

*This schedule is tentative and subject to change. Changes to the schedule will be discussed in class. You are responsible for attending all classes unless it is marked as a holiday.