



PUR 3500 Public Relations Research (FALL 2020)

Instructor: Judith Higgins Donohue

Communication with the instructor: Please use Canvas email

Office Hours: Online anytime. Text or
telephone, any day except Sunday

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. Public relations professionals are information specialists who require and receive information to be transmitted to clients or to internal and external publics. As such, they must understand how to access and objectively report research data. 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 clearly present the findings and recommendations, free of bias. By the end of this course students should be able to:

1. Articulate the reason for conducting research in public relations;
2. Discuss the ethical principles involved in conducting research;
3. Explain various methodologies and decide which research method produces the most appropriate 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. Explain 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.

The Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications requires that by graduation all students should be able to:

1. understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press for the US;
2. demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications;
3. demonstrate an understanding of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and, as appropriate, other forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to mass communications;
4. demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society;
5. understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information;
6. demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;
7. think critically, creatively and independently;
8. conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work;
9. write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;

10. critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;
11. apply basic numerical and statistical concepts;
12. apply current tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work, and to understand the digital world.

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.

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 no exams or quizzes in this course (*except the ungraded syllabus quiz*). There are 7 graded discussions (35%); 8 written assignments (40%) and a final project (25%). Deadlines are **Wednesdays** by 11:59 p.m. for discussions and **Saturdays** by 11:59 p.m. for discussion responses and written assignments *unless otherwise indicated*, e.g. during short holiday weeks. **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:

Here is the grading scale used in this course.

Grade	Percentage
A	92.5-100%
A-	89.5-92.4%
B+	86.5-89.4%
B	82.5-86.4%
B-	79.5-82.4%
C+	76.5-79.4%
C	72.5-76.4%
C-	69.5-72.4%
D+	66.5-69.4%
D	62.5-66.4%
D-	59.5-62.4%
E	0 – 59.4%

TEXTS AND RESOURCES REQUIRED:

1. Don W. Stacks (2017). *Primer of Public Relations Research*, 3rd 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/>.
3. You will be assigned several articles and videos from the popular business press and professional organizations
4. Technology requirements: A reliable computer with and internet access. **Note:**
Technological/connectivity problems at your end are not accepted as excuses for late work..

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).

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/) 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 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)

Commitment to an inclusive learning environment: UF adheres to the philosophy that all community members should enjoy an environment free of any form of harassment, sexual misconduct, or discrimination. If you encounter sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, sexual assault, or discrimination based on race, color, religion, age, national origin, ancestry, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability please contact the Title IX Coordinator.

Respect for Diversity: It is my intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well served by this course, and that the diversity that students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength and benefit. It is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity: gender, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, and culture. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated.

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/>.

HERE IS A WEEK-BY-WEEK COURSE SUMMARY:

WEEK		MODULE TITLE	Chapter	What's Due?
1	8/31-9/5	Module 1 Understanding Research	Ch. 1	Syllabus quiz, Discussion 1, Assignment 1
2	9/6-12	Module 2 Management of Research	Ch. 2	Written Assignment 2 (Why research?)
3	9/13-19	Module 3 Standards/Measuring Outcomes	Ch. 3 &4	Discussion 2 (B.A.S.I.C)
4	9/20-26	Module 4 Data and Analysis	Ch. 5&6	Discussion 3 (Share a learning)
5	9/27-10/3	Module 5 Ethics	Ch. 7	Discussion 4 (Why PR people have a bad rep)
6	10/4-10	Module 6 Content Analysis	Ch. 8	Written Assignment 3 (Content analysis)
7	10/11-17	Module 7 Historical/Secondary Research	Ch. 9	Written Assignment 4 (4 abstracts)
8	10/18-24	Module 8 Case Studies	Ch. 10	Discussion 5 (Covid case studies)
9	10/25-31	Module 9 Focus Groups	Ch. 11	Written Assignment 5 (Focus group)
10	11/1-7	Module 10 Sampling	Ch. 12	Discussion 6 (Sampling presidential preference)
11	11/8-14	Module 11 Surveys and Polls	Ch. 13	Written Assignment 6 (GROUP Project)
12	11/15-21	Module 12 Social Media	Assigned	Written Assignment 7- Social Media audit
13	11/22-25	Module 13 Thanksgiving Research (3-day week)	Assigned	Discussion 7 (Cranberry case study) (Wed.)
14	11/29-12/5	Module 14 Experiments and Final Reflection	Ch. 14	Written Assignment 8-Final Reflection
15	12/6-9	Module 15 Research Project (3-day week)	Ch. 15	Research project due