# PUR3500: Public Relations Research (Section 4743)

# Fall 2022

Department of Public Relations

College of Journalism and Communications

University of Florida

(Syllabus subject to change based on the best interests of students' learning in the course)

**Instructor:** Jie Jin

**Class Meeting:** Thursday 3:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. (TR 8-10); Weimer 1078

**Email:** jinjie@ufl.edu (preferred contact method; please include PUR3500 in the email subject line)

**Office:** Weimer 2034

**Office Hours:** Tuesday 2:30 p.m. – 5: 30 p.m. or by appointment (via Zoom)

## COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course has two goals. The first is to provide you with a general framework for understanding and evaluating social science research so when you encounter it in almost any PR-related job you can understand and apply the information to your own project with a reasonable level of competence. 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 and your professional careers. We will spend the majority of our time learning how to collect and analyze data from **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.

## REQUIRED TEXT:

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

## LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Upon completion of this course the students will be able to:

- 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:

- apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press, in a global context, and for the country in which the institution that invites ACEJMC is located
- demonstrate an understanding of the multicultural history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications
- demonstrate culturally proficient communication that empowers those traditionally disenfranchised in society, especially as grounded in race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and ability, domestically and globally, across communication and media contexts
- present images and information effectively and creatively, using appropriate tools and technologies
- write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve
- demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity
- apply critical thinking skills in conducting research and evaluating information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work
- effectively and correctly apply basic numerical and statistical concepts
- critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness
- apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work

## COURSE POLICIES

### *Attendance*

Each student is allowed **two** unexcused absences for the semester. Your final grade may be loweredby one letter grade (e.g., B- to C-) for each unexcused absence **beyond two.** An excused absence is one supported by documentation (e.g., from UF or a doctor's office) or specially approved by the professor prior to the absence. Regardless of the reason for your absence, you are responsible for all class work missed, and a missed class is not an excuse for

missing a deadline. Late arrivals and/or early departures from class, without prior approval from the professor, will be counted as unexcused absences.

### *Late work policy*

All written assignments must be turned in to Canvas **by the due day and time specified in Canvas.** The system will automatically mark assignments as late if they are uploaded even one second after the due date. 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 plan ahead and 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 graded activities, for any reason beyond university or religious excused absences.**

### *Email Policy*

As a state employee, my email is considered a public record. Therefore, it can be requested via an open-records request. Because emails are considered public records, federal privacy laws prevent me from discussing grades or other personal matters via email. As a result, you will need to visit me in my office to discuss grades. In general, face-to-face meetings tend to take less time, and result in less confusion than emailed conversations. **While you are welcome to email me, I may indicate that you need an in-person meeting depending on the complexity of the issue.**

### *Extra Credits Policy*

For student evaluations of teaching, all members of the class will be awarded 10 extra points if at least 80% of the enrolled class completes evaluations, and 15 extra points if 100% of the enrolled class completes evaluations.

### **INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS:**

This course will be a mix of lectures, activities, Q&A, and groups meeting. You must complete all the readings before the class meeting time. You are encouraged to take notes and ask for any clarification during the class meeting. These actions will help you understand and familiarize yourself with week topic and the many new concepts that get to know throughout the semester. Similarly, you are expected to actively engage in the class meeting sessions. Your engagement is very critical to the success in this course, and it will help to facilitate the overall mastery of the for you and your peers.

## POINTS DISTRIBUTION:

| | |
|---|---|
| **Exams** | 450 pts |
| **Research Project** | 450 pts |
|     Background Report | 50 points |
|     Focus Group Protocol | 50 points |
|     Focus Group Report | 75 points |
|     Peer Evaluations | 10 points |
|     Survey Questionnaire | 50 points |
|     Survey Report | 75 points |
|     Final Report | 100 points |
|     Presentation | 40 points |
| **In-Class Activities** | 50 pts |
| **IRB Training** | 25 pts |
| **SPSS Training** | 25 pts |
| **TOTAL** | 1000 pts |

Final letter grades will be assigned based on your final point total at the end of the semester.

| Points Earned | 930-1000 | 900-929 | 870-899 | 830-869 | 800-829 | 770-799 | 730-769 | 700-729 | 670-699 | 600-669 | 0-599 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Letter Grade | A | A- | B+ | B | B- | C+ | C | C- | D+ | D | F |
| Grade Points | 4.0 | 3.7 | 3.3 | 3.00 | 2.7 | 2.3 | 2.00 | 1.7 | 1.3 | 1.00 | 0 |

To be fair to all students, all numbers are absolute and will not be rounded up at any stage (e.g., a B+ will be inclusive of all scores of 870 through 899.999).

## OVERVIEW OF COURSE COMPONENTS

I will do my best to be fair and impartial when it comes to grading assignments. Each of you will be graded on the same basis. If you are struggling with the course material, exams, having problems with members of your group, etc., it is imperative that you talk to me as soon as you think you're having a problem. In essence, if you're struggling with an assignment, **talk to me before you have to hand in the assignment. 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.

You do not receive a grade for how hard you worked, only on the final product. I grade your work on the degree of excellence it demonstrates. Make no mistake about the relationship

between the two, as hard work often results in solid evaluations. That said, just because you spent "10 hours in the library" before a test or a group project doesn't guarantee you a good grade. You have to study properly, address assignment requirements, and the like in order to assure a solid grade. **I will help out in every way I can along the way and ALWAYS want you to do well. Don't hesitate for a second to reach out to me (just don't do it at the last second!).**

## 1.  Group Research Project (45%)

The team research project requires students to work in research teams to complete a study designed by them under the supervision of the professor. Students will be allowed to choose their own client and research question for the semester within their assigned teams. Each team will apply various types of research methodologies and techniques — such as (1) focus group, and (2) survey — to the development of a strategic public relations research plan. 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.

*Final Presentation.* For final report representation, each group should provide a report based on the findings and make a 10-minute presentation regarding the research findings from research projects (secondary (Internet) research; focus group and survey), with an additional 5 minutes for questions from the class. The Q & A sessions at the end of presentation are a very important part of this course. Be prepared for questions. Have responses planned – maybe even supplementary slides.

*Peer Evaluation.* Peer evaluation will be conducted to assess each group member's contributions to the project. Your team research report and presentation grades are basically the same for all team members, but extra points will be deducted based on your contribution. If your team does not think you haveput 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. For example,if your group scores a 92% on the research project, but your average score from the self/group evaluations is 80% (less than 90%), then the grade you receive for the research project would be 74% (80% * 92%). If your average score is a 91% (more than 90%), you would get the group project grade of 92%.

If you have any problems with your group or a particular group member, you need to let me know immediately.

## 2. Exams (45%)

Two unit exams will be given, in addition to the **OPTIONAL** final, which if taken would replace your lowest unit exam grade. Each exam will be worth 225 points and will be administered online via Honorlock. Honorlock requires that you have a working webcam, and you must download the Chrome extension prior to the exam. There will be a practice exam posted to make sure you are comfortable with the program and requirements. You must be on time for exams. **As soon as one person has completed their exam, no more exams can begin. 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, covering the whole semester and must be taken during the scheduled final exam period. The tests will be multiple choice/true-false/matching.

**NO early exam or make-up opportunities will be offered unless there are extremely exceptional cases officially approved by the university.**

## 3. Class Assignment and Participation (5%)

Class assignment and participation points may be earned via any or all of the following in-class exercises. Most weeks we will complete some sort of activity designed to help you understand the course material. These assignments will together make up 5% of your grade. This is graded for presence/absence. **These must always be posted to Canvas by 6:00 pm of the day in which they are due.**

**NOTE:** None of the in-class exercises may be made-up.

## 4. IRB Training (2.5%)

Complete IRB Training by going to http://irb.ufl.edu/index/requiredtraining.html. Not only is

it important to learn the nuts and bolts of conducting research, but it is important to make sure that the research you do meets ethical standards. Prior to engaging in any research, you need to complete UF's module on ethical research, and upload a screenshot of your completed training certificate.

### 5.  UF APPS/SPSS Training (2.5%)

Data analysis and visualization have become essential skills of the 21$^{st}$ century. Thus, you will be given several tutorials to navigate through SPSS and learn how to run several statistical tests. You will be given a data set to analyze, then you will submit the results for grading. This training will prepare to analysis the data you will be collecting for your group research project.

### COURSE SCHEDULE:

| WEEK | DATES | TOPICS | READINGS |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | August 25 | Intro to the course + Purpose of research | Chapter 1 & 2 |
| 2 | September 1 | Focus Group | Chapter 11 |
| 3 | September 8 | Other Qualitative Methods | Chapter 9 & 10 |
| 4 | September 15 | Measurement | Chapter 4 & 5 |
| 5 | September 22 | **Exam #1** | Ch. 1, 2, 4, 5, 9, 10, 11 |
| 6 | September 29 | Survey Design | Chapter 13 |
| 7 | October 6 | Sampling | Chapter 12 |
| 8 | October 13 | Content Analysis | Chapter 8 |
| 9 | October 20 | Experimental Design | Chapter 14 |
| 10 | October 27 | Descriptive Statistics | Chapter 6 |
| 11 | November 3 | Hypothesis Testing | Chapter 15 |
| 12 | November 10 | Survey Report Consultation | |
| 13 | November 17 | **Exam #2** | **Ch. 6, 8, 12-15** |
| 14 | November 24 | NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING | |
| 15 | December 1 | **Presentations** | Chapter 16 |
| 16 | December 8 | NO CLASS: READING DAY | |
| **Final Week Thursday DECEMBER 15$^{TH}$, 3:00-5:00 P.M** | | **Final Exam** | ALL CONTENT |

*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.

## DEADLINES AND DUE DATES:

| ASSIGNMENT | POINTS | DUE DATE |
|---|---|---|
| IRB Training | 25 points | September 1, 2022 at 11:59 pm |
| Background Report | 50 points | September 8, 2022 at 11:59 pm |
| Focus Group Protocol | 50 points | September 15, 2022 at 11:59 pm |
| Exam #1 | 225 points | September 22, 2022 (Class Time) |
| Focus Group Report | 75 points | October 6, 2022 at 11:59 pm |
| Midterm Peer Evaluations | 5 points | October 6, 2022 at 11:59 pm |
| Survey Questionnaire | 50 points | October 20, 2022 at 11:59 pm |
| UF Apps/SPSS Training | 25 points | October 27, 2022 at 11:59 pm |
| Survey Report | 75 points | November 10, 2022 at 11:59 pm |
| Exam #2 | 225 points | November 17, 2022 (Class Time) |
| Final Report | 100 points | December 1, 2022 at 11:59 pm |
| Presentation | 40 points | December 1, 2022 (Class Time) |
| Final Peer Evaluation | 5 points | December 1, 2022 at 11:59 pm |
| In-Class Activities | 50 points | By 6:00 pm of the day in which they are due |
| Exam #3 (Optional) | 225 points | December 15, 2022 (**3:00 – 6:00 pm**) |

## STANDARD UF POLICY INFORMATION AND LINKS

### *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

All honor code violations, including cheating, lying and plagiarism. or plagiarism in any form is unacceptable and inexcusable behavior, and it will result in the failure of this course.

### *Students Requiring Accommodations*

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, https://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.

## UF Grading Policy

http://gradcatalog.ufl.edu/content.php?catoid=10&navoid=2020#grades   (Links to an external site.)

https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx (Links to an external site.)

## Online 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/evals (Links to an external site.). 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/ (Links to an external site.).

## Student Privacy

There are federal laws protecting your privacy with regards to grades earned in courses and on individual assignments. For more information, please see: http://registrar.ufl.edu/catalog0910/policies/regulationferpa.html (Links to an external site.)

## In-Class Recording

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

A "class lecture" is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To "publish" means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third party note/tutoring services.

## CAMPUS RESOURCES

### *Health and Wellness*

**U Matter, We Care:** If you or a friend is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu or 352 392-1575 so that a team member can reach out to the student.

**Counseling and Wellness Center:** http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc (Links to an external site.), and 3921575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

**Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS):** Student Health Care Center, 392-1161.

**University Police Department** at 392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies), or http://www.police.ufl.edu/ (Links to an external site.).

### *Academic Resources*

**E-learning technical support,** 352-392-4357 (select option 2) or e-mail to Learning-support@ufl.edu. https://lss.at.ufl.edu/help.shtml (Links to an external site.).

**Career Resource Center,** Reitz Union, 392-1601. Career assistance and counseling. https://www.crc.ufl.edu/ (Links to an external site.).

**Library Support,** http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask (Links to an external site.). Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.

**Teaching Center, Broward Hall,** 392-2010 or 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring. https://teachingcenter.ufl.edu/ (Links to an external site.).

**Writing Studio, 302 Tigert Hall,** 846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing

papers. https://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/ (Links to an external site.).

**Student Complaints Campus:**

https://www.dso.ufl.edu/documents/UF_Complaints_policy.pdf (Links to an external site.).

**On-Line Students Complaints:** http://www.distance.ufl.edu/student-complaint-process (Links to an external site).