

# Public Relations Research (PUR3500)

**Time: 9:35AM to 12:35PM Room: Weimer 1078**

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<b>Office:</b>	3050 Weimer Hall	<b>Course Schedule:</b>	Project Calendar
<b>TA:</b>	Leping You, M.A. Email: <a href="mailto:letitia299@ufl.edu">letitia299@ufl.edu</a> Office: Weimer G031 Tel: 352-294-0829, (cell) 352-214-6169	<b>TA office hours:</b>	T: 2:00 to 3:30PM  R: 9:30 to 11:00AM

## Course Description

The purpose of PUR3500 is to learn about the relationships among public relations processes and public relations research. This course provides an introduction to and experience with research methods in public relations.

## Course Objectives

### This course will help you:

1. To understand the role and importance of research in responding to potential or immersing public relations problems or utilizing potential opportunities.
2. To obtain a keen knowledge of research methods and to demonstrate the application of quantitative and qualitative research methods in public relations through a number of group assignments and examinations.
3. To have an opportunity to research a public relations issue and recommend effective solutions to the given problem.
4. To learn how to work as a group effectively and efficiently.

**These objectives will be achieved by hands-on experience with a project. You will produce a high-quality research report as a professional (but pro-bono) consultant.**

## Course Requirements

Requirements include reading assigned materials, participating in class discussions and one research project (a focus group and a survey), completing one examination, developing effective recommendations and a final presentation.

- **Reading Assigned Materials:** There is one textbook (see below). Students are responsible for all assigned readings and material covered in class. You should read appropriate materials **BEFORE**

the assigned class session so you can contribute to our discourse in a manner that can benefit everyone in class.

**Required Textbook:**

Austin, E. W. & Pinkleton, B. E. (2006), Strategic public relations management: Planning and managing effective communication programs, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Mahwah, NJ. (An electronic copy will be available on our e-learning site)

\*\*Please note that additional recommended supplementary readings may be provided at a later time during the semester. The supplementary readings will be available on our E-learning site.

- Class Participation: You will be expected to participate in class discussions. Your input in class will be greatly valued.
- Research Projects: You will conduct focus group and survey research. Your project work will be done in teams. Expect to devote considerable out-of-class time to the projects.
- Examinations: Examinations count for 40 percent of your grade.
- Final Presentation: During the final week of the course, each student team will make a formal presentation of their research findings to the class.

**Deadline and Makeup Exams:** Failure to meet group project deadlines will result in a lowered grade for the entire project team per day. A post-exam will not be given, so see me if you have a conflict with the exam time and plan to take it early.

**Grading:**

Grading Items	Date	%
Background Research & Research Plan	Sept. 19	10
Mid-Term Exam.	Oct. 03	20
Research Project	Nov. 7	30
Final Report	Nov. 28	5
Final Presentation	Nov. 28	5
Second Exam	Dec. 5	20
Group Member Evaluation	To be weighed in the final report	
Attendance		10
Total Points		100

<b>Range</b>	<b>Final Grade</b>
93 - 100 pts	A
90 - 92 pts	A-
87 - 89 pts	B+
83 - 86 pts	B
80 - 82 pts	B-
77 - 79 pts	C +
73 - 76 pts	C
70 - 72 pts	C-
67 - 69 pts	D +
60 - 66 pts	D
Below 59 pts	E

### **The Mid-Term Exam (20 Percent)**

Twenty five (up to forty) multiple-choice questions will be given.

### **Research Projects & Final Reports (35 percent)**

You are responsible to conduct either a focus group study or a survey as a group project.

- You are responsible for gathering background information for the topic your group is assigned.
- The procedure and structure of the research project will be chosen based on your group consensus.
- In the report, you should justify why and how you used the particular method.
- Writing should be clear.
- Every one in your group is equally responsible for producing the final report. This means that the project will be graded as a group project.

### **Research Project Management Components**

**Agency memos:** Your agency will need to meet at least once each week, usually twice and sometimes more, depending on deadlines. At each meeting, the group needs to designate a coordinator who will note attendance and keep track of decisions made, tasks assigned, deadlines set and major problems or questions facing the group. I should receive at least one memo from each group each week, preferably via an email message copied to all agency members. I'll save these (and you should, too) for assessing your individual and your agency's performance.

**Background Research & Research plan (10%):** This is the outline of your agency's situation analysis of the problem (literature review), research needs, research questions, research methods and explanation of how you would use the data you gather. In other words, you should be able to answer some questions such as “what do you need to find out?”, “how will you do that?”, “what will you know when you are done?”, etc. The plan should also include a timeline for accomplishing these tasks.

**Research report:** After the agency follows through with its research plan, you will submit a report summarizing what you did and what you found. The report should briefly review the problems, goals and expectations (hypotheses) stated in the plan, then discuss the research methods that you used. The bulk of the report will be the results of your data-gathering, discussed in terms of the research questions you began with and briefly interpreted. Then you will discuss the theoretical and practical implications of study findings and make final recommendations.

**Final Report:** Your final report is the summary of your semester's worth of work - this is the document you will present to me. Included will be summaries of components of the previous sections but the main portion will be your final recommendations based on your research findings.

### **The Second Exam (20 Percent)**

Between twenty-five and forty multiple-choice questions will be given.

### **Final Presentation (5 Percent)**

During the final week of the course, each agency will make a formal presentation of their research findings and recommendations to the class.

- Appropriate visual aids such as tables and graphics are required for presenting your final report.
- The explanation and justification of the research procedure should be comprehensive.
- The explanation of main findings should be clear and precise.
- The limitations of the study and the suggestion for further studies should be included in the final report and the presentation.
- Your final recommendations should be based on your findings.

### **Group Members/self Evaluation**

The forms for your peer and self evaluation will be distributed to you in the middle of the semester and at the end of your final presentation and will otherwise be available on our online learning system. Be aware that members in your agency may not get the same grade. Rather, your grades on the group projects (including your final report) will be weighed by agency/self evaluations. For example, if your group scores a 92% on the research project, but your average score from the self/agency 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%, you would get the group project grade of 91%. The purpose of this complicated procedure is to reduce the likelihood that someone in the group slacks off and still receives the full benefit of the others' work.

### **Class Participation (10 percent)**

During the semester, I will check attendance (10% of your grade). Unexcused absences will be counted negatively. **Each unexcused absence will be counted as -2.5. This means that four unexcused absences will be considered 0 out of possible 10 % of your total grade. Please remember that you might not be able to pass this course if you have more than four unexcused absences.**

### **Academic Honesty**

Students should maintain academic honesty in fulfilling all course requirements. Plagiarism is not tolerated. If you use information from a publication, you must attribute a source to it.

### **Class Etiquette**

- Reading a newspaper or other unrelated materials during class is not permitted.
- Do not use cell phones or audible pagers.
- Food, drinks and tobacco products are not allowed in the classroom.

### **Seeking Help**

If you need individual assistance beyond the help you receive in class, you can see me during office hours or set up an appointment for another time. If you have any special concerns for your instructor to know in order to ensure your academic success in class, please inform me as soon as possible, so I can assist you accordingly. Please, see me if you have any problems! I consider my student's failure to learn as my own failure to teach effectively. We are going to work together to provide a high quality academic environment for your learning.

**Special Assistance:** Reasonable accommodations are available for students who have a documented disability. Please notify me during the first week of class of any accommodations needed for the course. Late notification may cause the requested accommodations to be unavailable. All accommodations must be approved through the Disability Resource Center (DRC) in Peabody Hall 202 (Tel.352-392-1261).

*This is a tentative schedule and is subject to change.*

<b>Course Calendar</b>	
<b>INTRODUCTION -- COURSE OVERVIEW</b>	<b>Project Calendar</b>
<p><b>Week 1: August 21 – 25</b></p> <p>Course Objectives and Requirements</p> <p>1. Defining PR and PR Management <a href="#">Handout1</a></p> <p>** Reading: Chapter 1</p>	<p>Get to know each other</p> <p>1) Review Syllabus &amp; Agency Sign-ups</p>
<b>Planning Phase</b>	
<p><b>Week 2: August 28 - Sept. 1</b></p> <p>2. Management by Objectives <a href="#">Handout2</a></p> <p>3. Client Orientation and Ethical Issues</p> <p>4. The Uses of Research in MBO: Determining Research Needs</p> <p>Content: Mission, Situation Analysis, Problem Statement</p> <p>** Reading: Chapter 2 &amp; 4</p>	<p>Review the previous situation analysis and research report!</p> <p>2) Should be meeting to get organized!</p> <p><a href="#">Guidelines for Working in Agencies (Memo 1)</a></p> <p>3) Gathering client info.</p>
<p><b>Week 3: Sept. 4 – 8</b></p> <p>5. Formative vs. Summative Research: Making Informed Decisions</p> <p>** Recommended Reading: Chapter 5 &amp; 7 <a href="#">Handout4</a></p>	<p><a href="#">First Assignment</a></p> <p>4) Lexis/Nexis, Internet, and library research</p> <p>5) Develop a research plan!</p> <p>6) Prepare for IRB approval! (if required)</p> <p><b>Agencies should be conducting background research. (<a href="#">Additional Guidelines: Part1</a>).</b></p>

<p><b>Week 4: Sept. 11 – 15</b></p> <p>6. The Focus Group</p> <p>** Reading: Chapter 8 (<a href="#">Handout 7</a>)</p>	
<p><b>Week 5: Sept. 18 – 22</b></p> <p><b>Research Planning</b></p> <p>7. Operationalization &amp; Questionnaire Design (<a href="#">Handout 8</a>):</p> <p>** Reading: Chapter 11</p> <p>8. Sampling (<a href="#">Handout6</a>):</p> <p>** Reading : Chapter 6</p>	<p><b>Agencies should be developing a research plan including instruments.</b></p> <p>7) Draft a research/campaign plan</p> <p>8) <b>Sept. 19 – Background research with a research plan due</b></p> <p>9) <b>Sept 19 - Peer/Self Evaluation 1 Due</b></p>
<p><b>Week 6: Sept. 25 – 29</b></p> <p>9. <b>Preparation for Research:</b> Questionnaire Design and Refinement: <b>Inter-Agency Meetings</b></p>	<p><b>** Remember: Do not start your project without obtaining approvals from instructor and client.</b></p>
<p><b>COLLECTING DATA</b></p>	
<p><b>Week 7: Oct. 2 – 6</b></p> <p><b>Exam Preparation and Exam</b></p>	<p>10) <b>Oct. 3– Mid-Term Exam</b></p>
<p><b>Week 8: Oct. 9 – 13</b></p> <p><b>Collecting Data – Inter-Agency Meetings</b></p> <p>Oct 13-14: Homecoming</p>	<p>11) <b>Formative Research</b></p>

<p><b>Week 9: Oct. 16 – 20</b></p> <p><b>Formative Research</b></p> <p>10. Formal Research Methods: (<a href="#">Handout 9</a>)</p> <p>**Reading: Chapter 9 and Chapter 10</p>	<p>**Agencies should prepare for a research report. <a href="#">Project Guidelines: Part 3</a></p> <p><b>**Evaluation Sheets for Research Report will be available on E-learning.</b></p> <p>12) <b>Formative Research</b></p>
<p><b>Week 10: Oct. 23 – Oct. 27</b></p> <p><b>ANALYZING &amp; REPORTING THE FINDINGS</b></p> <p>11. Collecting, Analyzing, and Reporting Data  12. Data Gathering Process (<a href="#">Handout 10</a>): **  13. Learning SPSS (<b>with Ms. You</b>)</p> <p>**Reading: Chapter 12</p>	<p>**Agencies should be analyzing data, collecting additional data as needed, and drafting research reports. <a href="#">Project Guidelines: Part 3</a></p> <p>13) Analyzing the findings (Learning SPSS)</p> <p>14) Writing a report</p> <p><a href="#">Evaluation Sheet for the Research Report</a></p>
<p><b>Evaluation Phase</b></p>	
<p><b>Week 11: Oct. 30 – Nov. 3</b></p> <p>14. Reporting Research Findings</p>	<p><a href="#">Project Guidelines: Part 4</a></p>
<p><b>Week 12: Nov. 6 – 10</b></p> <p>15. Final review of the research report</p>	<p>15) Writing Research Report</p> <p>16) <b>Nov. 7: Research Report and Peer/Self Evaluation 2 Due</b></p>



<p><b>Week 13: Nov. 13 – 17</b></p> <p>16. Writing and Presenting Tips</p>	<p>17) Writing Final Recommendations</p>
<p><b>Week 14: Nov. 20 – 24:</b></p> <p>17. Writing the Final Report Continue 18. <b>Preparing for the Presentation</b></p> <p><i>Thanksgiving Break</i></p>	<p>18) Prepare for presentation <a href="#">Evaluation Sheet for the Presentation</a></p> <p><a href="#">Project Guidelines: Part5</a> (For the Presentation)</p>
<p><b>Final Presentation</b></p>	
<p><b>Week 15: Nov. 27 – Dec. 1</b></p> <p>19. Presentation of Research Findings: 30 Minutes Formal Presentation Per Group (20 minutes' presentation and 10 minutes Q &amp;A)</p>	<p>19) <b>Nov. 28: Final Presentations: 20 Minutes Formal Presentation Per Group.</b></p> <p>20) <b>Nov. 28 in class:</b> Submit Final Report (No Exceptions)</p> <p>21) Nov. 28: Class Evaluations (Please bring a laptop or electronic device for class evaluations)</p>
<p><b>Reflection Phase</b></p>	
<p><b>Week 16: Dec 4 – 8</b></p> <p>20. <b>Second Exam</b> and Reflection</p>	<p>22) Final Peer Evaluation 3 <b>(Due on Dec. 5 in class)</b></p> <p><b>23) Final Exam: Dec. 5</b></p>

*Have a wonderful break!*