



PUR 3500
Public Relations Research (Section 2H23)
Spring 2018

Department of Public Relations
College of Journalism and Communications
University of Florida

Class Meeting: T 7-8th (1:55-3:50 p.m.)
TR 8th (3:00-3:50 p.m.)
Weimer 1094

Instructor: Leping You
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Office: Weimer Ground Floor Office 31
Office Hours: TR (11:55 a.m.-2:55 p.m.) or by appointment

Course Descriptions

Welcome to Public Relations Research! This course is designed to introduce public relations students to social science research methods, with a focus on the application of those methods to public relations. This course is intended to help students understand why research is essential in identifying problems and issues of concerns, guiding strategic planning, message development, and evaluating public relations campaigns. The course focuses on different types of research-qualitative, quantitative research, and online research.

The objectives of this course guide you:

- To understand the role of research in public relations management.
- To introduce basic concepts and methods in public relations research
- To analyze issues related to measurement in public relations research and make appropriate measurement choices.
- To understand the assumptions of various research methods in public relations.
- To learn how to apply research methods to specific situations in public relations campaign management.
- To learn how to write persuasive research reports and deliver the results successfully in a professional oral presentation.

Course Format & Expectation

For effective understanding of the role of research in public relations management, each course period will incorporate some interactive class activities (e.g., case study and Internet/Web research). In-class activities and assignments will be sometimes given in order to facilitate the

learning process. It is in students' long-term interest to complete thoroughly, because the material is cumulative.

Throughout the course, students are expected **to attend each class and arrive on time and be committed to learning/studying during the class time**. Laptops or smartphones are NOT allowed to participate in the in-class activities. But, none of the following is allowed; texting, checking emails/social media or surfing the Web. **Attitude is fundamental and crucial thing wherever you go and whatever you do**, and I can't emphasize I believe to become an Every student is expected to **read the assigned materials before coming to class and actively participate in class discussion and activities**. There are no wrong questions, and you always learn and remember better when you ask.

Note: As a public relations professional, effective email communication is valuable. Whenever you send me an email, please be sure to include "PUR3500" in the email subject line. This will help you and your clients to archive communication emails. I will reply your email within 48 hours.

Required Reading

- Stacks, D.W. (2016). *Primer of Public Relations Research*, (3rd Ed.). New York: Guilford.

Recommended Reading

- Field, A. P. (2013). *Discovering statistics using SPSS* (4th ed.). London: Sage publications.
- Paine, K. D. (2011). *Measure What Matters: Online Tools For Understanding Customers, Social Media, Engagement, and Key Relationships*. John Wiley & sons
- Paine, K. D. (n.d.) *Fifty Shades of PR ROI: 50 case studies illustrating PR's worth* (*only online available)

Course Grading

Your evaluation in this course will be based on the following components:

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------|------|
| Team research report (3) | 100 points | 20% |
| Exams (3) | 225 points | 45% |
| Attendance | 50 points | 10% |
| Class participation and assignments | 25 points | 5% |
| SPSS Assignment | 20 points | 4% |
| Final report and presentation | 80 points | 16% |
| Total | 500 points | 100% |

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

| Letter Grade | 100 Scale (100%) | 500 Scale (total points for this class) |
|--------------|------------------|---|
| A | 94-100% | 470-500 points |
| A- | 90-93.9% | 450-469 points |
| B+ | 87-89.9% | 435-449 points |
| B | 84-86.9% | 420-434 points |
| B- | 80-83.9% | 400-419 points |
| C+ | 77-79.9% | 385-399 points |
| C | 74-76.9% | 370-384 points |
| C- | 70-73.9% | 350-369 points |
| D+ | 66-69.9% | 330-349 points |
| D | 64-66.9% | 320-329 points |
| D- | 60-63.9% | 300-319 points |
| E | 66-69.9% | Below 0-299 points |

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 435 through 449.999). My hope is that you will focus on learning rather than grades in this class. **What I won't do is negotiate grades.** My goal is to be fair to everyone in the class, which means I will hold everyone to the same standards.

Grading Criteria

1. Team Research Report and Presentation (20% + 16% = 36%)

Because public relations professionals work in teams, you will be placed in “research teams” throughout the semester to develop a public relations research report (details will be given in class). Each team will submit **THREE (3) research projects** during the semester. Each team will apply various types of research methodologies and techniques—such as (1) secondary (Internet) research (7%), (2) focus group (7%), and (3) survey (6%)—to the development of a strategic public relations research plan.

You are on agency research team (of approx. 4-5 team members depending on enrollment). The grade is a team grade, meaning that each team member receives the same grade.

Project due and presentation dates:

- **Secondary Research (Internet Research) Project: February 15 (Thursday)**
- **Focus Group Research Project: March 27 (Tuesday)**
- **Survey Research Project: April 12 (Thursday)**
- **Final Report and Presentation April 19 (Thursday)**

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 question and answer 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.

All research reports and presentation slides should be submitted to Canvas under “Assignment” by the beginning of class on the due date. The research report and presentation grade rubric will be available on Canvas.

I will ask individuals to give audience feedback via forms/surveys that I will provide to the class. This feedback will then be given to each team in order to help them self-assess their performance.

- **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 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. 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%, you would get the group project grade of 91%. **If you have any problems with your group or a particular group member, you need to let me know immediately.**

We respect your right to privacy, so you may print out the form, fill it out in private, and bring it to hand in on presentation day of each project. We will have a sealed envelope, and these forms are CONFIDENTIAL. Not turning one in on the due date will also cause a 5-point deduction.

2. Exams (15%)

The exam is designed to test your knowledge and application of the main ideas covered in the textbook, assigned readings, lecture material, class discussions, team presentations, videos, and guest lectures. **You are responsible for everything covered** in the previously stated areas.

Throughout the semester there will be **THREE exams**, which will be held in class during the regularly scheduled class period. The exams will be primarily made up of multiple-choice questions, true/false, and short answer questions.

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

Exam Dates:

- **Exam 1: February 26 (Tuesday)**
- **Exam 2: March 13 (Tuesday)**
- **Exam 3: April 10 (Tuesday)**

3. Attendance (10%)

Attendance counts for 10% of your grade and attendance is taken daily. You are expected to attend class. There are **two non-penalized absences for this class with proper and formal excuses**. For each recorded absence—beyond the first two—you will lose 5 of your 50 points. The way this works is: if you are absent three times, then you will only earn 45 of the 50 points, four absences and you earn 40 of the 50 points and so forth. Students are responsible for any information missed during an absence. **Coming late more than 15 mins for a class will lead to 2-point deduction for each time.**

In order to receive an excused absence, you must let me know you will miss class **BEFORE** the class meets except in certain (rare) emergency situations. Explain why you will not be in class, and bring in a written documentation to verify your excuse when you come back to class. Make sure to make a photocopy of the documentation if you need it for other classes.

Excused absences include:

- Religious holidays (only the holiday).
- Documented, dated, necessary medical excuse or official documented legal excuse (a dated doctor's note or prescription). The Student Health Center will provide you a specific kind of note that indicates they think you should've missed class or will need to miss additional days.
- University competitive events (that means athletes).

The following is a partial list of the types of situations that are **NOT** considered excused absences:

- Social events, meetings, entertaining out-of-town guests, holiday/travel plans, weddings, etc.

4. Class Assignment and Participation (5%)

Several in-class **assignments** will be provided to encourage you to learn how to apply concepts learned in class and research methods into public relations practice. These assignments will consist of questions based on the lecture and/or reading assigned for the class. All assignments are to be typed. Team and individual assignments and are **due by the beginning of class on the due date**. If you have a conflict with the deadline, alert me and turn it in early.

Late work policy:

Public relations is a deadline business. All due dates for assignments, once set, are final. If an assignment or activity is not received prior to the deadline, **a grade of ZERO** will be assigned unless **PRIOR** arrangements are approved by me. If prior arrangements are not possible due to the circumstances of the absence, an excused absence must be requested in writing and documentation provided for verification. If an excused absence is granted, late work may be accepted with penalties assessed for late submission.

In addition to assignments, you will be graded on **how thoughtfully you participate in class discussions**. I will be making this summary judgment—not on how often you talk—but on the quality of that contribution.

5. Extra Credits (2%)

Extra credits will be offered for research participation through **1) individual research** provided by researchers and **2) CJC's SONA research** management system (<https://ufl-cjc.sona-systems.com>). Individual research will be offered based upon requests of UF researchers. Regarding SONA system, please register a SONA account and choose studies to participate in to receive extra credits for this class. Check SONA regularly to see what studies have become available. Typically, it is not until around maybe the third week of the semester that studies will become available. You should NOT wait until the last minute to sign up for participation because people tend to procrastinate, and research opportunities will be limited by the end of the semester. In fact, it is probably wise to participate early in the semester when your course loads are the lightest. Please see this video below for how to set up your SONA account:

https://youtu.be/_1OnT2ZU6QQ

Academic Honesty

Students must regard academic honesty as crucial and essential part of your academic life. The instructor treats the academic honesty as a serious issue. All your works for this course should be created on your own, and you are required to follow appropriate citation methods and guidelines. False information (fabrication) also leads to fail of this course. Please find appropriate information and guideline such as Purdue Owl

(<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/01/>) to avoid plagiarism. Your academic dishonesty will be reported to Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution, which might ask you additional penalties. Plagiarism will result in an automatic zero point and The University's guidelines regarding academic honesty can be found at:

<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>

Religious Holy Days

By UF policy, a student who misses classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day must notify me of his or her pending absence prior to the date of a religious holy day, so that arrangements can be made to complete an assignment or activity within a reasonable time after the absence.

Course and Instructor Evaluation

It is important to participate in the evaluation of every class in order to improve class by providing your feedback on the quality of instruction. Regarding the course evaluation, you will receive an email reminder or you will be able to assess evaluation system to complete it at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Your feedback will be appreciated and helpful to advance this course further. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at:

<https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results>

Students with Challenges

Students who requesting accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office, Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/). The Dean of Students will provide documentation to the student, who must then **provide this documentation to the instructor** when requesting accommodation **IN ADVANCE**. You must meet take action immediately to ensure requested accommodations can be provided.

Counseling Services

University counseling services and mental health services are available at <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>; 392-1575, University Police Department 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

COURSE SCHEDULE

| | |
|---|------------|
| Week 1: | |
| 1/9 (T): Welcome & Course Overview; Understanding Research | Chap. 1, 2 |
| 1/11 (TR): Management of Research in Public Relations | |
| Week 2: | |
| 1/16 (T): Standard for Conducting PR Research; Measuring Outcomes I | Chap. 3,4 |
| 1/18 (TR): Measuring Outcomes II | |
| Week 3: | |
| 1/23 (T): Ethical Concerns in Public Relations Research; Secondary Research | Chap. 7,9 |
| 1/25 (TR): Secondary Research cont.; Discussion of Research Project | |
| Week 4: | |
| 1/30(T): Qualitative Research: Case Study | Chap. 10 |
| 2/1 (TR): Exam 1 Review | |
| Week 5: | |
| 2/6 (T): Exam 1 | Chap. 11 |
| 2/8 (TR): Qualitative Research: Methods of Observing People | |
| Week 6: | |
| 2/13(T): Quantitative Research Sampling Messages and People | |
| 2/15 (TR): Discussion of Research Project | Chap. 12 |
| <i>Secondary Research Project Report Due;</i> | |
| Week 7: | |
| 2/20 (T): Survey and Poll Methods | Chap. 13 |
| 2/22 (TR): Qualtrics Intro; Discussion of Focus Group Project; | |
| Week 8: | |
| 2/27 (T): Content Analysis | Chap. 8 |
| 3/1 (TR): Exam 2 Review | |
| Week 9: Spring Break | |
| 3/6(T) & 3/8 (TR): No Class | |

Week 10: Spring Break

3/13 (T): **Exam 2**

Chap. 14

3/15 (TR): Experimental Research (intro)

Week 11:

3/20 (T): Experimental Research (cont)

Chap 6

3/22 (TR): Descriptive Statistical Reasoning and Computer Analysis

Week 12:

3/27 (T): **Learning SPSS I** (data analysis and interpret results)

Focus Group Project Report Due

Peer Evaluation Due

3/29 (TR): **Learning SPSS II** (data analysis and interpret results)

Week 13:

4/3 (T): Statistical Reasoning; Final Research Report

Chap15, 16

4/5 (TR): Data Analysis (SPSS) Exam 3 Review

Week 14:

4/10 (T): **Exam 3**

4/12 (TR): Discussion of final report

Survey Research Project Report Due

Week 15:

4/17 (T): **Final Research Report Due**; Survey Project Analysis and Q&A

4/19 (TR): Final Research Report Presentation