SYLLABUS: PUR3500 Public Relations Research (3 credits)

Course Goal

The goal of this course is to present an overview of the role that research plays in the field of public relations. This includes an introduction to the various measurement tools and methodologies for gathering and analyzing data, as well as some practical applications. Increased awareness of ethical issues involved in research is also a primary goal.

Instructor information and virtual office hours: Judith Donohue **352-603-3941 (cell)**

You can call me any day, 7 days a week, between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. **Please** do not call after 8 p.m. If I am not available when you call, leave your name and phone number and I will return your call within a few hours if possible**.**

My Teaching Philosophy

As a communication professional who has spent several decades working in journalism and public relations, I understand the importance of being able to articulate ideas and information clearly and accurately. Thus, teaching students to write succinctly is a top priority. It matters little how much one knows if one cannot communicate it well. I encourage "plain talk," free of inflated language, clichés, buzzwords and corporate-speak. I believe I have an obligation to apply the highest standards of writing excellence in my classes. To that end, I spend a significant amount of time correcting and commenting on written assignments. Discussion postings should adhere to the same high writing standards.

I focus on engaging students through interesting, informative lectures and stimulating discussions. I encourage students to read the work of professionals in the field and to build on that knowledge, continually looking for ways to extend learning. Students are also encouraged to share their ideas and learn from their peers, exploring and applying new ideas and methods.

I am committed to being both approachable and available, ready to offer guidance and encouragement as needed.

Communication ethics are woven throughout these lessons. I believe it is my job to create an awareness of the ethical issues inherent in every aspect of communication.

I believe that learning should be a pleasant experience, both for the teacher and the student. My ultimate goal is to create an environment where students are inspired to be excellent business communicators, guided by sound ethical principles.

Description: This 14-week course provides an overview of Public Relations research. The course material is presented in readings, videos and lectures. Student mastery of the material is measured through discussions, written assignments, quizzes and a final research project.

(*Note: There are only **13** modules, since Week 10, March 5-11, is spring break.*)

The goal is to develop an understanding of the role research plays in the planning, program development, and evaluation process in the field of PR. We will study techniques and applications of various formal and informal research methods. Among the specific topics to be covered are sampling, scales, computer data analysis, quantitative and qualitative research, content analysis, case studies, surveys and focus groups. Assignments will include both theoretical and hands-on applications. By the end of this course, students will be able to create a research study in the field of public relations, using the tools learned throughout the semester.

1. **Course Textbook: Primer of Public Relations Research by Don Stack, third edition.** *(ISBN 978-146-2522-705)* **(Note that the chapters are not assigned in consecutive order.)**

2. **Two Harvard Business School case studies** Follow this link and go to the Harvard Business School site, then register to get the reduced student rate of $4.25 per article**.** The readings, which are used in weeks 9 and 12, will be located in a UF CoursePak on the Harvard Business School site. **http://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cbmp/access/56520494**

   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/

Technology requirements: A reliable computer and internet access

Course Goals: Upon completion of this course students will be able to:

- Compare various types of research methodologies and tools, stating the benefits and shortcomings of each
- Apply various research methodologies and tools used to actual situations
- Analyze the results of research and develop programs based on the findings
- Design and execute a research project using the methods learned in the class.

Assignments will be weighted as follows:

- Participation in **7 online discussions**, with "substantive" posts (not just "I agree.") - 20 percent *(Note: Students will receive a single discussion grade at the end of the course. This grade will be the average of grades from all 7 discussions, based on the rubric.)*
- **7 written assignments** – 45 percent (5@ percent and 2@10 percent)
- **5 quizzes** - Total 10 percent (2 percent each) (**Quiz scores available as soon as the quiz closes Saturday night at 11 p.m.)**
- **Final research project** (15-20 pages) - 25 percent

NOTE: *Points will be deducted for basic spelling and grammatical errors. Since you are earning a degree in COMMUNICATION, the highest standards of writing excellence are expected. I am passionately committed to **plain speaking.** Avoid clichés and buzz words. I also deduct one point for every vague, meaningless word, such as "very," "rather," and "quite." (I usually give one free pass in this category.)*

Grading is based on 100 percentage points. Here is the grading scale:
The final grade will be awarded as follows:

A	100%	to	92.5%
A-	< 92%	to	89.5%
B+	< 89%	to	86.5%
B	< 86 %	to	82.5%
B-	< 82%	to	79.5%
C+	< 79%	to	76.5%
C	< 76%	to	72.5%
C-	< 72%	to	69.5%
D+	< 69%	to	66.5%
D	< 66%	to	62.5%
D-	< 62 %	to	59.5%
F	<59 %	to	0%

Honesty and 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 (University of Florida Honor Code, 2008)

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)

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/.

NETIQUETTE GUIDE FOR ONLINE COURSES

It is important to recognize that the online classroom is in fact a classroom, and certain behaviors are expected when you communicate with both your peers and your instructors. These guidelines for online behavior and interaction are known as netiquette.

Security
- Don't share your password with anyone.
- Change your password if you think someone else might know it.

General Guidelines
When communicating online, you should always:

- Treat the instructor with respect, even in email or in any other online communication.
- Always use your professors' proper title: Dr. or Prof., or if you in doubt use Mr. or Ms.
- Unless specifically invited, don't refer to them by first name.
- Use clear and concise language.
- **Remember that all college level communication should have correct spelling and grammar**.
- Avoid slang terms such as "wassup?" and texting abbreviations such as "u" instead of "you."
- Limit and possibly avoid the use of emoticons like :) or □
- Be cautious when using humor or sarcasm as tone is sometimes lost in an email or discussion post.
- Be careful with personal information (both yours and others).
- Do not send confidential information via email.

When you send an email to your instructor, teaching assistant, or classmates, you should:

- Use a descriptive subject line.
- Be brief.
- Avoid attachments unless you are sure your recipients can open them.
- Avoid HTML in favor of plain text.
- Think before you send the e-mail to more than one person. Does everyone really need to see your message?
- Be sure you REALLY want everyone to receive your response when you click, "reply all."
- Be sure that the message author intended for the information to be passed along before you click the "forward" button.

<u>Message Board Netiquette and Guidelines</u>

When posting on the Discussion Board in your online class, you should:

- Make posts that are on topic and within the scope of the course material.
- Take your posts seriously and review and edit your posts before sending.

- Always give proper credit when referencing or quoting another source.
- Be sure to read all messages in a thread before replying.
- Don't repeat someone else's post without adding something of your own to it.
- Avoid short, generic replies such as, "I agree." You should include why you agree or add to the previous point
- Always be respectful of others' opinions even when they differ from your own.
- When you disagree with someone, you should express your differing opinion in a respectful, non-critical way.
- Do not make personal or insulting remarks.
- Be open-minded.

When you need technical HELP!

Please note that there are several good places to go for help. There are tutorials posted on the e-learning Support Services site, https://lss.at.ufl.edu/help/Student_Faq . You can also call the UF Computing **Help Desk** at 352-392-4357 or visit http://helpdesk.ufl.edu . Often you can get help from your classmates on the course discussion board. **I will not be your source for technical help.**

All email should go through the Canvas tool. No private emails will be exchanged. I will respond to your email within 48 hours, and probably within 24 hours.

In the unlikely event of a UF system-wide technology failure, any quizzes or other deadlines will be postponed until the system is up and running again. Otherwise, internet problems and computer problems on your end will not be considered as an excuse for missing deadlines.

<u>Other policies:</u> Online tests will be timed and once a test is posted, you may not go back and make changes. You will get test scores immediately.

Unless otherwise indicated, **deadlines for papers and discussion postings will be Saturdays at 11 p.m. Late work is not accepted and no extra credit work is offered**. If you are expecting a problem, please let me know in advance so that we can make special arrangements.

Free advice: Log into the course often and stay on top of the assignments and discussions.

Issues with uploading work for a grade is not an excuse. If a student is having technical difficulties with Canvas, there are other means to submit completed work. Student may email .zip files or even links to Dropbox folders to Instructor via UF email. Students should compensate for technical difficulties by not waiting until the last minute to submit work.

Suggested technical issue policy: Any requests for make-ups due to technical issues MUST be accompanied by the ticket number received from LSS when the problem was reported to them. The ticket number will document the time and date of the problem. You MUST e-mail your instructor within 24 hours of the technical difficulty if you wish to request a make-up. Contact UF helpdesk (352) 392-HELP.

Emergency and extenuating circumstances policy: Students who face emergencies, such as a major personal medical issue, a death in the family, serious illness of a family member, or other situations beyond their control should notify their instructors immediately.
Students are also advised to contact the Dean of Students Office if they would like more information on the medical withdrawal or drop process: https://www.dso.ufl.edu/care/medical-withdrawal-process/ .

Students MUST inform their academic advisor before dropping a course, whether for medical or non-medical reasons. Your advisor will assist with notifying professors and go over options for how to proceed with their classes.