



PUR3500 Public Relations Research (3 credits)

Web-Based, Spring 2019

Department of Public Relations
College of Journalism and
Communications

Instructor: Judith Higgins Donohue

Communication with the instructor: Please use Canvas email

Office Hours: Online anytime; Telephone any day 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. Course objectives are: (1) to understand how research is practiced in public relations; (2) to ask appropriate research questions; (3) to practice research in an ethical manner; (4) to design research programs and employ appropriate research methods; (5) to critically appraise research results; and (6) to effectively communicate research results. Students must possess a basic understanding of basic statistical methods of information analysis and be able to present results effectively.

Public relations professionals are information specialists who require and receive information to be transmitted within the agency and to clients or to internal and external publics. As such, they must understand the information received, and, when necessary, commission others to collect that information. This requires the ability to “speak the language” of research. Finally, the course is designed to provide “hands-on” experience in collecting, interpreting, evaluating, and reporting research.

Course Objectives

At the course's end 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 present the findings and recommendations. Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Understand the reason for conducting research in public relations;
2. Understand the ethics of conducting research;
3. Understand what method produces the most appropriate results;
4. Be able to identify and explain the work of significant public relations researchers who represent diverse cultures and social networks;
5. Demonstrate an ability to critically appraise research results, looking for potential errors in either design;
6. Demonstrate an understanding of the statistics used in inferring data and research results;
7. Understand which statistical procedures are most appropriate given the research questions posed;
8. Read and interpret computer-produced results;
9. Communicate research results effectively to the intended audiences.

CLASS FORMAT

This web-based course meets entirely online, meaning 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, and do NOT try to catch up after several weeks of ignoring the course. Some materials are posted for a limited period of time and cannot be accessed after being removed from the course.

This course format is recommended for students who are **self-motivated and independently resourceful**. Generally, it is recommended that students check the course **a minimum of three times each week**. (Course analytics tools show your instructor the level of your engagement each week.)

Typically, there is a quiz or assignment associated with each module. Deadlines are usually **Saturday nights at 11 p.m.** **LATE WORK IS NOT ACCEPTED.**

GRADING/EVALUATION:

A standard grading scale is used in this course. Note that most final letter grades have a +/- range. The letter grade 'C' and 70-79 percentile is considered "Average" level. Therefore, in order to earn an 'A' or 'B' in this course, your work must be **consistently exceptional**.

A	100 %	to 94.0%
A-	< 93.9 %	to 90.0%
B+	< 89.9 %	to 87.0%
B	< 86.9 %	to 84.0%
B-	< 83.9 %	to 80.0%
C+	< 79.9 %	to 77.0%
C	< 76.9 %	to 74.0%
C-	< 73.9 %	to 70.0%
D+	< 69.9 %	to 67.0%
D	< 66.9 %	to 64.0%
D-	< 63.9 %	to 61.0%
F	60.9 %	to 0.0%

Grades are *earned* via three modes: (1) exams (2) quizzes and (3) a written final project.

Quizzes & Assignments = 30%

Exams (2 @ 20% each) = 40%

Final Study Proposal = 30%

There is a common misconception that online courses are "easier" than face-to-face courses. Please do not fall victim to this misconception.

Quizzes/Assignments (30%): There are 9 scheduled quizzes in this course. In addition to addressing weekly topics, quizzes and assignments are intended to prepare students for exams and the final course project. Quizzes are generally multiple-choice, and students have 15 minutes to complete 15 quiz questions. Each quiz addresses a specific module's and chapter's related content. Students should use quizzes to prepare for exams.

Exams (40%): There is a midterm and final exam scheduled in this course. The midterm exam assesses students' knowledge of the first half of the course content,

and the final exam assesses students' knowledge of the second half of the course content. Exams are a combination of multiple-choice and short essay questions with 90 minutes to complete.

Final Study Proposal (30%): The final project is a research proposal for a small nonprofit client organization identified by the student (and approved by the instructor). In general, a research proposal identifies a problem/opportunity (the need for research); a review of existing literature and documents (historical/secondary research); a detailed description of how the proposed research would be conducted (research method to include measurement instruments such as a questionnaire or interview guide); and a discussion of how the research method and anticipated results address the client's problem/opportunity. Additional details are provided as the course progresses.

- Length: 12-15 pages (not including title page and works cited)
- Format: APA Style, 1" margins, 12-point Times New Roman font

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/>

Technology requirements: A reliable computer with webcam and internet access. This course employs ProctorU for exams. Learn more here:

<https://www.proctoru.com/resources/test-takers/live/>

Technological/connectivity problems at your end are not accepted as excuses for late work. Do not wait until the last minute to submit your work.

If there is a technological problem at the UF end, submit a ticket and screen shot explaining the problem.

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>

(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/>.

COURSE SUMMARY

Week 1	1/7-1/12	Mod. 1 Research: Why Bother? Ch.1	Quiz 1
Week 2	1/13-1/19	Mod. 2 Management of Research Ch.2	Quiz 2
Week 3	1/20-1/26	Mod. 3 Measuring Outcomes Ch. 3 & 4	Quiz 3
Week 4	1/27-2/2	Continue Mod. 3	Written assignment
Week 5	2/3-2/9	Mod. 4: Data Analysis Ch. 5 &6	Quiz 4
Week 6	2/10-2/16	Mod. 5 Ethics in PR Research Ch. 7	Quiz 5
Week 7	2/17-2/23	Mod. 6 Content Analysis Ch.8	EXAM 1
Week 8	2/24-3/1	Mod.7 Historical/Secondary Research Ch.9	Quiz 6
Spring Break between Weeks 8 and 9			
Week 9	3/11-3/16	Continue Module 7	CLIENT PROPOSAL DUE
Week 10	3/17-3/23	Mod.8 Case Studies Ch. 10	Quiz 7
Week 11	3/24-3/30	Mod.9 Interviews/Focus Groups Ch. 11	Quiz 8
Week 12	3/31-4/6	Continue Module 9	
Week 13	4/7-4/13	Module 10 Sampling Ch. 12	Quiz 9
Week 14	4/14-4/20	Module 11 Surveys and Polls Ch. 13	EXAM #2
Week 15	4/21-4/27	Continue Module 11	
Week 16	4/28-5/3	FINAL RESEARCH PROPOSALS DUE	