

PUR 3500 | Public Relations Research | Fall 2018

Day	Period	Building/Room
Tuesdays	4:05PM – 7:05PM	WEIMER 1078

Instructor	Office	Phone/Cell	Email	Office Hours
Katy Robinson	Weimer G042		robinsonkatyl@ufl.edu	Daily. Schedule ahead

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

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 emphasizes a number of research methods and strategies to help students understand why research is essential in identifying public relations issues, guiding strategic planning, message development, and evaluating public relations campaigns.

COURSE FORMAT:

Class time will be dedicated to lectures/discussions and/or time reserved for team meetings and work sessions. Students should prepare to dedicate ample time outside of classroom hours to complete their research projects. For effective understanding of the role of research in public relations management, each course period will incorporate some interactive class activities. Because the material is cumulative, class participation is essential, and will be incorporated into the final research project and presentation. This course makes use of SPSS, a statistical software program, available at no cost via UF Apps along with access instructions for first-time users. Go to <http://apps.ufl.edu> click "First Time Here?" in the upper right navigation.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

The objectives of this course guide you to:

- Understand the role of research in public relations management
- Introduce basic concepts and methods in public relations research
- Analyze issues related to measurement in public relations research and make appropriate measurement choices
- Understand the assumptions of various research methods in public relations
- Learn how to apply research methods to specific situations in public relations campaign management
- Learn how to write persuasive research reports and deliver the results successfully in a professional oral presentation

REQUIRED TEXT:

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

ADDITIONAL TEXT: *NOT REQUIRED*

Cunningham, J. B., & Aldrich, J. O. (2012). *Using SPSS: An interactive hands-on approach*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage. ISBN: 9781412995153

CONTINUING READING:

Students are expected to read news periodicals (local, national, and international) and communication-related professional and academic journals regularly. Higher levels of professional competence and authority demand not only awareness of current news events but also an applied understanding of how economic, political, and social trends affect the communication profession. Suggested resources include, but are not limited to, Journal of Public Relations Research, Public Relations Review, Public Relations Journal (<http://www.prsa.org/prjournal/>), and PRism (<http://www.prismjournal.org>). Other helpful practitioner-based resources include The Institute for Public Relations (www.instituteforpr.com) and PRSA (www.prsa.org).

ABSENCES AND PUNCTUALITY:

Attendance is required for each scheduled class meeting. Each student is allowed ONE unexcused absence for the semester (*This is a once weekly course – once absence is the equivalent of two*). Your final grade may be lowered by one letter grade (e.g., B- to C-) for each unexcused absence beyond one. 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.

OTHER CLASS POLICIES:

- The University of Florida Honor Code applies to all activities associated with this class.
<https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>
- Class members are expected to read the assigned reading (if any) before class and participate actively in class discussion.
- Although you may use computers in class, internet messaging and surfing are disruptive and, if caught, you may forfeit computer use in the class.
- All work will be judged by professional standards. All out-of-class work must be well written, typed and visually appealing, with no spelling or grammatical errors.

SPECIAL NOTES:

- Disability Accommodations: Students needing academic accommodations for a disability must first contact Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565) to verify the disability and establish eligibility for accommodations. They should then schedule an appointment with the professor to make appropriate arrangements.
- Religious Observance: Religiously observant students wishing to be absent on holidays that require missing class should notify their professors in writing at the beginning of the semester, and should discuss with them, in advance, acceptable ways of making up any work missed because of the absence.
- Excused Absences for University Extracurricular Activities: Students participating in an officially sanctioned, scheduled University extracurricular activity should be given the opportunity to make up any graded assignments missed as a result of their participation. It is the responsibility of the student to make arrangements with the instructor prior to any missed scheduled examination or other missed assignment for making up the work.

ALL ASSIGNMENTS ARE DUE ON TUESDAY AT 11:59 P.M.

GRADING:

Grades are earned via five modes totaling 100%

Exams	Research projects & presentation [group]	Case presentation [group]	Assignments/ exercises	Class participation
40% of final grade	25% of final grade	15% of final grade	10% of final grade	10% of final grade

A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E
100-93	92-90	89-87	86-84	83-80	79-77	76-74	73-70	69-67	66-64	63-60	59

COURSE SCHEDULE – SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment
Week 1 Jan 8	Welcome Syllabus Overview, Understanding Research Management of Research in PR	Stacks Chapter 1&2	<i>Project Discussion: Case Presentation & Sign Up</i>
Week 2 Jan 22	Standard for Conducting & Measuring PR Research, Outcomes	Stacks Chapter 3&4	<i>Catching up /in progress: Chapters 1&2</i>
Week 3 Jan 29	Ethical Concerns in PR Research, Secondary Research	Stacks Chapter 7&9	<i>Project Discussion: Secondary Research</i>
Week 4 Feb 5	Qualitative Research Case Study, Methods of Observing People	Stacks Chapter 10&11	

Week 5 Feb 12	Quantitative Research Sampling, Messages & People	Stacks Chapter 12	<i>Project Discussion: Quantitative Research</i>
Week 6 Feb 19	<i>Exam 1 Review</i>		<i>Report Due: Secondary Research</i>
Week 7 Feb 26	<i>Exam 1</i>		
Week 8 March 5	SPRING BREAK:		NO CLASS
Week 9 March 12	Survey & Poll Methods, Qualtrics Intro	Stacks Chapter 13	<i>Project Discussion: Qualitative Research</i>
Week 10 March 19	Content Analysis & Experimental Research	Stacks Chapter 8&14	<i>Report Due: Quantitative Research</i>
Week 11 March 26	SPSS: Descriptive Statistical Reasoning & Interpretation	Stacks Chapter 6	
Week 12 April 2	Data Analysis & Reporting <i>Exam 2 Review</i>	Stacks Chapter 15&16	<i>Report Due: Qualitative Research</i>
Week 13 April 9	<i>Exam 2</i> Research Report Review, Revision, and Finalization		<i>Project Discussion: Final Research Report & Presentation</i>
Week 14 April 16	FINAL PRESENTATIONS		<i>PowerPoint Presentations Final Research Reports Peer Evaluations</i>
Week 15 April 23	FINAL PRESENTATIONS		

EXAMS: 40% OF GRADE (20% | 20%)

Exams are 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 **TWO** exams, closed-book, comprehensive exams which will be held in class during the regularly scheduled class period. The exams may include multiple choice questions, true/false, and short answer questions. A study guide will be provided to you prior to the exam.

RESEARCH REPORTS: 25% OF GRADE (75% TEAM | 25% INDIVIDUAL)

Because public relations professionals work in teams, you will be placed in “research teams” throughout the semester. The final research project requires students to work in teams to research and propose a public relations strategy for an actual client selected by the instructor. An oral research report will be presented along with a written research report, which will be turned in for grading. Edited and revised versions of **THREE (3) research projects** submitted during the semester will comprise the final report. Each team will apply various types of research methodologies and techniques, such as (1) secondary (internet) research (2) qualitative (focus group), and (3) quantitative (survey) —to the development of a strategic public relations research plan.

The Team Project grade is comprised of a Team Grade (75%) and an Individual Grade (25%). Individual grade will be based on peer evaluations. Utilizing confidential forms, team members will evaluate each other's contributions. Team Grade will be based on the quality of the research report (75%) as well as the final oral presentation (25%).

FINAL PRESENTATION: *TEAM*

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 each of the three research projects, with an additional 5 minutes for questions from the class. Prepare well for Q&A, consider having responses and complimentary slides to prompt questions prepared. Look back to case presentations for inspiration and common research issues and gaps.

PEER EVALUATION: *INDIVIDUAL*

Peer evaluation will be conducted to assess each group member's contributions to the project. Team research report and presentation grades will be essentially the same for all team members however, 25 % of each student's research report grade is established based on peer assessments of individual contribution. Peer evaluations emphasize the critical importance of teamwork, and support of one another. Peer evaluations must be handed in to the instructor for all team members, failure to do so will result in a zero grade for the peer portion of the research report.

CASE STUDY PRESENTATIONS: 15% OF GRADE

Students will sign up in groups to present public relations case studies from the PRSA Silver Anvil website (available at <http://www.prsa.org/Awards/SilverAnvil/Search>). Feel free to use my PRSA account for access (**Account no.:#####, password:#####**). Each team will be required to read through all the cases of the year and select the best one for analysis and present to the class. Alternatively, you may find a casebook of public relations campaigns (approved by the professor). Read through all the cases of the book and select the best one for analysis and presentation.

- At least one case study will be presented each class period
- Each student will present at least one case study
- Case study presentations are assigned in groups and graded in groups and cannot be made up without an excused absence under the University of Florida's excused absence policy (i.e., doctor's note). Students not in attendance for their assigned case study presentation will receive a zero grade
- Case study presentations should emphasize the research component of the campaign (i.e., what was done well, what could be improved upon?)
- PowerPoint and appropriate presentation attire is expected

Case Presentation Guidelines adopted from Dr. Rita Men:

A typical case study presentation lasts approximately 15 minutes.

Be prepared to defend your presentation as the instructor/Students will ask questions throughout the session.

Using PowerPoint, create slides with appropriate information for each of the following slides. Be sure to provide answers to ALL of the questions listed here as you'll lose points for every question you fail to answer. You may use more than one slide per section.

Title slide:

- *List who conducted the program and when. If an agency conducted the program, list the agency and the client.*
- *Also include your name/date/course information on this slide.*

Background/Situation Analysis:

- *Describe the situation that called for the campaign, including any important background information (i.e., situation analysis).*
- *What's the issue/problem?*

Research:

- *Describe any research that campaigners conducted to gain insight into the problem/opportunity/audience. Which methods did planners use?*
- *Describe whether they conducted primary or secondary research and whether it was qualitative or quantitative.*
- *Is the research that the planners conducted considered to be formal or informal research?*

Target public(s):

- *Outline the target audiences/publics for the campaign. Who was the primary public?*
- *How were the publics segmented (e.g., demographically, psychographically, geographically, by reputation, by position, etc.)?*
- *Who else, in your opinion, should have been considered as a target?*

Goals/objectives:

- *Identify each goal as either awareness, attitudinal, or behavioral.*

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Outline the objectives for the campaign and tell whether these were <u>output</u> or <u>outcome</u> (impact) objectives.</i> ▪ <i>Were the objectives measurable? In other words, did planners quantify each objective (e.g., increase awareness by 40%...)? How could the objectives be re-written to make them more effective?</i> <p><u>Key messages:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>List the major messages campaigners wished to communicate in the campaign?</i> ▪ <i>What did planners want the target public(s) to know, remember, think about, or do?</i> ▪ <i>Did they develop a campaign theme/slogan to make the messages more memorable?</i> ▪ <i>If there was no clear theme, what would you suggest?</i> ▪ <u>Strategy:</u> <i>Identify the strategy or strategies for the campaign. What are the overall concepts, approaches, or general plans to achieve the goal(s) and objectives?</i> <p><u>Tactics/Channels:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Describe how were the messages communicated. Be specific.</i> ▪ <i>Did planners rely on <u>controlled</u> media, <u>uncontrolled</u> media, or both? Be sure to indicate which is which.</i> ▪ <i>Indicate whether these were communication or action/event-driven tactics.</i> <p><u>Evaluation:</u> <i>Discuss how the campaign was evaluated, and whether it achieved its stated objectives. What were the results of the campaign?</i></p> <p><u>Stewardship:</u> <i>Discuss how planners maintained existing relationships with stakeholders throughout the campaign.</i></p> <p><u>Opinion:</u> <i>On this last slide, explain whether this was a campaign you would have enjoyed planning and executing. Why/why not?</i></p> <p><u>Use your own words.</u> <i>Do NOT “lift” entire sentences and paragraphs from the case study and place them in your presentation. This is plagiarism and you will receive a zero for the assignment.</i></p>

RESEARCH AT WORK (INCLUDED IN ASSIGNMENTS & EXERCISES)

Several in-class assignments and exercises will be provided to synthesize and apply concepts learned in class and research methods into public relations practice. Consisting of questions from lecture, reading, class, current events, and the contemporary working world, these exercises include individual writing assignments and case study assignments that require you to apply the principles, techniques, and skills you’ve learned to real-world scenarios to solve various problems.

IN THE NEWS: 10% OF GRADE (INCLUDED IN PARTICIPATION)

Because Public Relations is heavily intertwined with current events, students should come to class prepared to discuss current events as they relate to PR:

- Come to class prepared to discuss current events in the news and the potential role of PR
 - The impact to the profession
 - How PR may be able to contribute (i.e., drive attitude change, behavior change, etc.)
- Come to class prepared to discuss topics of interest and whether or not such topics may potentially relate to PR from your perspective
- Be sure to evaluate the quality of news source, (i.e., industry publications such as PR News typically offer quality information related to the PR profession)

FURTHER PARTICIPATION OPPORTUNITIES:

- In-Class Reports: “What points are most clear to you?” and “What do you still not understand?”
- Q&As/Class Discussions: Your level of engagement and participation in class discussions and work attitude throughout the semester.

ESSAY GRADING (RESEARCH REPORT)

A fixed grading scale allows you to earn a 0, 70, 80, 90 or 100 on each project, which will be evaluated as follows:

Grade Earned	Following Instructions	Writing Style	Content
An essay will earn the grade of 0 if it is not turned in by the deadline OR <u>any</u> of the following occurs:	The essay is written without any regard for the instructions provided.	Many errors in grammar, punctuation, spelling, and/or word choice render the essay incomprehensible.	The content of the essay suggests the author is “winging it” without any regard for the assignment OR sources <i>other than class materials</i> are not properly referenced.

An essay will earn the grade of 70 if <u>any</u> of the following occurs:	The essay is missing major required elements stated in the instructions.	Three or more errors in grammar, punctuation, spelling, and/or word choice.	The content of the essay suggests the author does not fully comprehend the assignment. Some content is correct but major points are missed.
An essay will earn the grade of 80 if <u>any</u> of the following occurs:	The essay is missing some required elements stated in the instructions.	Two errors in grammar, punctuation, spelling, and/or word choice. Some writing is not very clear and adequate.	The content of the essay suggests the author does not fully comprehend the assignment. Some content is correct but some points are missed.
An essay will earn the grade of 90 if <u>each</u> of the following occurs:	The essay meets the expectations of the instructions provided. All required elements are covered.	No more than one error in grammar, punctuation, spelling, and/or word choice. Writing style is basic but clear and adequate.	The content of the essay suggests the author has an accurate and thorough grasp of the assignment.
An essay will earn the grade of 100 if <u>each</u> of the following occurs:	The essay exceeds the expectations of the instructions provided. Required elements are not only covered, but also enhanced by additional content drawn from class discussions and well-informed insights.	No errors in grammar, punctuation, spelling, and/or word choice. Writing style is advanced yet highly readable and engaging.	The content of the essay suggests the author has an advanced and applied understanding of the assignment. That is, the author incorporates topics covered in class to enhance his/her points in an original way that exceeds expectations.

CASE PRESENTATION GRADING					
<i>A fixed grading scale allows you to earn a 0, 70, 80, 90 or 100 on each project, which will be evaluated as follows:</i>					
	Superior 100	Excellent 90	Good 80	Fair 70	Poor 0
Completeness	All required components incorporated into submission	Only 1 component not incorporated	Two or more components not incorporated	Up to half of the required components not incorporated	More than half of the required components not incorporated
Thoroughness	Each topic is treated very thoroughly	Each topic is treated somewhat thoroughly	Only some topics are treated somewhat thoroughly	Some topics are treated somewhat weakly	Each topic is treated only weakly
Readings (Application of case materials)	Very clear that readings were understood and incorporated well	Clear that readings were understood and incorporated well	Somewhat unclear that readings were understood	Submission has questionable relationship to reading material	No evidence that readings were incorporated
Accuracy and/or quality of ideas	Contains well-developed original ideas and/or precisely-worded, accurate information	Contains original ideas and/or accurate information	Contains at least some original ideas and/or some accurate information	Contains few original ideas or some accurate information	Contains only unoriginal ideas and/or inaccurate information
Surface features Surface features	Controls very well for surface features (i.e.,	Controls well for surface features (i.e., formatting,	Somewhat lax in control of surface features	Very lax in control of surface features	Lacks acceptable control of surface features

(e.g., formatting, correct spelling, grammar, complete sentences, and appropriate citation of sources)	formatting, spelling, grammar, typographical errors, etc.)	spelling, grammar, typographical errors, etc.)	(i.e., formatting, spelling, grammar, typographical errors, etc.)	(i.e., formatting, spelling, grammar, typographical errors, etc.)	(i.e., numerous distracting flaws in formatting, spelling, grammar, etc.)
--	--	--	---	---	---

SCORE SHEET FOR STRATEGIC PLAN PRESENTATION

REVIEWER:

TEAM:

On a scale of 1-5 (1="strongly disagree," 5="strongly agree"), please rate the team's performance on each of the following criteria (*Highest possible score = 100*)

1. USE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING

- Each recommendation is supported by primary or secondary research _____
- Goals are connected to objectives and supported by strategies and tactics _____
- There is a clear statement of who the audience is and what we want them to do _____
- There is a plan for using what has been learned from evaluation to drive lasting change within the organization _____

2. VISUAL COMMUNICATION

- Slides use images that provide clarity and underscore key points _____
- The presenters use appropriate visual language in their presentation _____
- Images are cited properly _____
- There is a cohesive look to the presentation _____

3. PRESENTATION

- There is a strong overview that explains the problem/opportunities and context of the project _____
- There is a strong conclusion with recommendations that are well-supported by research _____
- Each team member makes contributions to the content _____
- The presentation includes stories, and stories contribute to the overarching message. _____

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recommendations are relevant to the problem outlined in the opening statement _____
- Recommendations are actionable and practical _____
- Recommendations are likely to be effective _____
- Recommendations are supported by research _____

5. OVERALL PERFORMANCE

- There is a cohesive vision for the presentation _____
- The presentation is polished, professional and articulate _____
- Q and A is handled adeptly, questions are given clear, specific answers or "I don't know" _____
- Q and A is followed by a strong closing statement _____

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

TEAM MEMBER EVALUATION FORM

Each student is required to complete a copy of this form to **individually and confidentially** evaluate the contribution made by each of his/her fellow team members at the conclusion of the Team Project. That is, a student on a team of six members will turn in five separate team evaluation forms: one for each team member, excluding himself/herself.

Neither early nor late submittals will be accepted; failure to turn in evaluation forms on time or failure to turn in a form for every team member will result in a letter-grade reduction of the student's Individual Grade on the Team Project.

THESE EVALUATIONS ARE TO BE COMPLETED INDIVIDUALLY AND NOT DISCUSSED AS A TEAM OR WITH ANY OTHER STUDENT.

Name of team member completing form: _____

Name of team member being evaluated: _____

Rate the team member's performance in each of the following categories (each equally weighed), using the following scale and providing supporting comments for each rating:

5 - Excellent 4 - Very good 3 - Average 2 - Fair 1 - Poor

Rating for Preparedness: _____

Preparedness is the extent to which a team member "does his/her homework" in preparation for team and client meetings. A prepared team member arrives ready to work and doesn't use team/client meeting time to complete tasks that should have been completed beforehand.

Supporting Comments/Examples: _____

Rating for Quality of Individual Input: _____

Quality of individual input is indicated by a team member carrying his/her fair share of the workload and being an active, contributing participant in team discussions. Furthermore, work product produced by the team member reflects completed staff work of high quality (e.g., thorough, proofread, streamlined).

Supporting Comments/Examples: _____

Rating for Contribution to Teamwork: _____

Productive contribution to teamwork is indicated by the extent to which a team member assists the team in fulfilling its objectives and helping to create the best outcome possible. It does not mean, however, that the team member must always agree with the group. A team member can make beneficial contributions to the group by effectively playing the role of "devil's advocate" to test the validity and appropriateness of ideas.

Supporting Comments/Examples: _____

Rating for Reliability: _____

A reliable team member meets his/her commitments to the team on time and on budget, demonstrating an appreciation and respect for other members' time and commitments and the overall objectives of the team.

Supporting Comments/Examples: _____

Rating for Leadership or Management Quality: _____

There is a difference between leaders and managers, and each makes an important contribution to teamwork. Indicate which trait you perceive as more predominant for this team member, providing evidence to support your selection and rating. Predominant Style (circle one): Leader Manager

Supporting Comments/Examples: _____

Additional Comments:
