



**Public Relations Research - PUR 3500  
Fall 2020**

M 04:05pm - 07:05pm (M 9-11), Class # (19670)

**1. Instructor Info & Course Description**

**1.1 Instructor**

**Hadeel Alhaddadeh, M.A. & M.S. (Syracuse University & CIFE)**

**Email:** [halhaddadeh@ufl.edu](mailto:halhaddadeh@ufl.edu) or contact me via Canvas Messages.  
Normally, I respond to emails within 24 hours during workdays.  
Please, begin your email subject with “**PUR3500**”.

**Office:** Weimer G-038

**Office Hours:** Monday 3:00pm - 4:00pm (Via Zoom), or by appointment (Please check Zoom Link on Canvas)

**Class Hours:** Mondays 04:05 – 07:05 (M 9-11) – Class # (19670)

**1.2 Prerequisites**

PUR 3000 - Principles of Public Relations

**1.3 Course Description**

This course serves two goals. One is to provide you with a critical framework for understanding and evaluating social science research so when you encounter it in almost any PR-related job you can interpret and report social science research with a reasonable level of competence. Think of the course material as professional survival skills. The second goal is to provide you with some first-hand experience in conducting a research project. This practical experience will be beneficial both in future courses you take in the CJC, but also in your professional careers. Given my desire for this course to be practically useful we will spend the majority of our time learning how to conduct and analyze quality surveys and focus groups, which are the most commonly used methods for public relations professionals. We will also spend some time briefly learning about other common techniques used by PR researchers.

## 2. Course

### 2.1 Course Learning Objectives

**Upon successful completion of this course, students should accomplish the following:**

- Identify strengths and weaknesses of various methods frequently used in communication (e.g. focus groups, surveys, etc.)
- Practice creating various data collection tools used in PR research
- Practice interpreting common types of data used in PR research
- Practice reporting PR research in an easily understood format

### 2.2 College of Journalism and Communications Objectives

**The Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications requires that by graduation all students should be able to:**

- Understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press for the US
- Demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications
- Demonstrate an understanding of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and, as appropriate, other forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to mass communications
- Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society
- Understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information
- Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity; • think critically, creatively and independently
- Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work
- Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve
- Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness
- Apply basic numerical and statistical concepts
- Apply current tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work, and to understand the digital world

### 3. Course Materials

#### 3.1 Required readings

Stacks, D. W. (2016). *Primer of public relations research*, (3rd Ed.). New York: Guilford.

Chapters from the text are assigned in the Weekly Course Plan section of this syllabus. Supplemental readings will be made available to you through the course website. All readings must be read in advance of the class dates for which they are assigned.

### 4. Academic Requirements & Grading

#### 4.1 Overview of Course Components

I will be as fair and impartial as is humanly possible in the grading process. Each of you will be graded on the same basis. Because of this, no extra work or special assignments will be given. Normally, by the time I return your graded assignment, I have looked at each person's work at least several times and feel comfortable with the grade assigned to it. Grades are earned; they are not gifts, nor are they negotiated. Grades are awarded on the basis on the quality of the work performed, not the amount of time expended.

I will work my hardest to make this course enjoyable and interesting. However, some students struggle with the material. Please see me if you are having problems understanding the concepts covered in class. I am your resource for this class, see me in office hours or make an appointment if you can't come to office hours. I will do all I can to help you before a deadline. After a deadline has past, or an exam has been given, there is nothing I can do to help you.

#### Exams (500 Points)

Two unit exams will be given, in addition to the **OPTIONAL** final, which if taken would replace your lowest unit exam grade. All exams will be worth 250 points and will be administered online via Honorlock. Honorlock requires that you have a working webcam, and you must download the Chrome extension prior to the exam. There will be a practice exam posted to make sure you are comfortable with the program and requirements. You must be on time for exams. **As soon as one person has completed their exam, no more exams can begin. No make-up exams are given regardless of the reason.**

If you do well on the two unit exams, and are satisfied with your grade, you can skip the final exam without consequence. If you miss an exam, or do poorly on an exam, you can take the final to replace the earlier exam grade that you may not be pleased with. The exams will cover the material in the readings and lectures – that includes the textbook chapters and any supplemental material posted online to Canvas. The unit exams will not be intentionally cumulative, but some chapters will utilize concepts from previous chapters. I will try to point these instances out when covering the material in lecture. **The final exam will be cumulative, covering the whole semester and must be taken during the scheduled final exam period.** The tests will be multiple choice/true-false/matching.

### Research project (450 Points)

A key objective of this class is to provide you with hands-on experience conducting research utilizing methods that are commonly used across various communication professions. During the course of the semester, you will develop instruments to collect focus group and survey data. You will then collect both types of data and analyze them. The research project for this course will be a group assignment. As you may know already (or will soon learn), much of the work you do in communication professions happens in groups. I will provide you with an overview of the entire project along with specific directions for each assignment on the course website.

### In-class/online activities (50 Points)

I believe, and research has shown, that active participation in learning is crucial for long term learning. Most weeks we will complete some sort of activity designed to help you understand the course material. These assignments – which could include content quizzes – will together make up 5% of your grade. Your top 10 weekly scores will count, which will provide you with a cushion if you need to miss a class. **Students are responsible for all assigned readings; exam questions will come from all of these sources. Exam study guides will be provided.**

### IRB Training (25 Points)

Not only is it important to learn the nuts and bolts of conducting research, but it is important to make sure that the research you do meets ethical standards. Prior to engaging in any research, you need to complete UF's module on ethical research, and upload a screenshot of your completed training certificate. You

can complete the training by going to  
<http://irb.ufl.edu/index/requiredtraining.html>

## 4.2 Grading scheme

### Point Distribution

<b>Exams</b>	<b>500 pts</b>
<b>Research Project</b>	<b>425 pts</b>
Group Contract	15 pts
Background Report	40 pts
Focus Group Protocol	50 pts
Focus Group Report	75 pts
Survey Questionnaire	45 pts
Survey Report	75 pts
Final Report	100 pts
Presentation	25 pts
<b>In-class/ Online activities</b>	<b>50 pts</b>
<b>IRB Training</b>	<b>25 pts</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1000 pts</b>

**Letter grades will be calculated using this formula:**

Letter	Course Points	Percentage	Grade Points
A	1000-930	100-93	4.0
A-	929-900	92.9-90	3.7
B+	899-870	89.9-87	3.3
B	869-830	86.9-83	3
B-	829-800	82.9-80	2.7
C+	799-770	79.9-77	2.3
C	769-730	76.9-73	2
C-	729-700	72.9-700	1.7
D+	699-670	69.9-67	1.3
D	669-600	66.9-60	1
F	599-0	59.9-0	0

### 4.3 Extra Credit Opportunities

If there are be any other extra credit opportunities, students will be notified via Canvas.

## 5. Course Policy

### 5.1 Attendance

We will meet via Zoom during our scheduled class time, and I do expect that you are there and ready to participate, although formal attendance will not be taken. If a participation activity is done in class, and you are not present, those points cannot be made up for any reason. We will use our class time to go over activities, deal with course updates and questions, and most importantly you will have time to work with your group members which will have a large impact on your grade. Professionalism is important as a public relations student, and I expect a professional demeanor in our course Zooms (i.e., camera on, fully clothed, sitting up, in a quiet environment and/or using headphones, etc.). These course Zooms will not be recorded. Straight lecture material will be pre-recorded for you to view on your own schedule. As in all courses, **unauthorized recording and unauthorized sharing of recorded materials is prohibited.**

### 5.2 Email Policy

As a state employee, my email is considered a public record, and can be requested via an open-records request. Because of this, federal privacy laws prevent me from discussing grades or other personal matters via email, and you must schedule a time to speak with me to discuss these matters. In general, face-to-face (or Zoom-to-Zoom) meetings tend to take less time, and result in less confusion than emailed conversations. While you are welcome to email me, I may indicate that you need an in-person meeting depending on the complexity of the issue. Also, please be aware that email is considered formal communication, and it is important to practice professionalism. Make sure that you do not treat email as text (i.e., don't use text abbreviations) and never email something that you would not say to your boss' face.

### 5.3 Late Work/Make-up Work

All written assignments must be turned in to Canvas by 11:59pm the day the assignment is due. Canvas will automatically mark assignments as late if they are uploaded even one second after 11:59pm. You have 24 hours after the due

date to turn in your assignment for a 10% grade reduction. It is your responsibility to make sure you properly uploaded your paper, blaming a group member doesn't work as it is the group's joint responsibility. There are no make-ups/late exceptions for exams or in-class activities, for any reason beyond university or religious excused absences.

#### 5.4 Professionalism

As PR students I expect you to maintain a high level of professionalism in all of our interactions. This includes being courteous and respectful to all members of the course. Being respectful includes making sure you are not distracting to others via your cell phone or computer usage, talking with others during lecture, or arriving or leaving late. Treat our Zoom meetings as if they were interviews – practice your professionalism now!

#### 5.5 Course evaluation

**Students are expected to provide feedback** on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations. You will be notified by email when the evaluations are open, near the end of the semester. Summary results are available to you and the general public.

### 6. Standard UF Policy Information and Links

#### 6.1 Students Requiring Accommodations

Students requesting accommodation for disabilities must first register with the **Dean of Students Office** ([www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/)). The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation. You must submit this documentation prior to submitting assignments or taking the quizzes or exams. Accommodations are not retroactive, therefore, students should contact the office as soon as possible in the term for which they are seeking accommodations.

#### 6.2 Honor Code

Students are expected to act in accordance with the University of Florida policy on academic integrity. As a student at the University of Florida, you have committed yourself to uphold the Honor Code, which includes the following pledge:

*“ We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity. “*

You are expected to exhibit behavior consistent with this commitment to the UF academic community, and on all work submitted for credit 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. “*

It is your individual responsibility to know and comply with all university policies and procedures regarding academic integrity and the Student Honor Code.

**Violations of the Honor Code at the University of Florida will not be tolerated.**

Violations will be reported to the Dean of Students Office for consideration of disciplinary action. For additional information regarding Academic Integrity, please see Student Conduct and Honor Code or the Graduate Student Website for additional details: <https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/> <http://gradschool.ufl.edu/students/introduction.html>

**Please remember cheating, lying, misrepresentation, or plagiarism in any form is unacceptable and inexcusable behavior.**

### 6.3 Software Use

All faculty, staff, and students of the University are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also against University policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate. We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to uphold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity.

### 6.4 Student Privacy

There are federal laws protecting your privacy with regards to grades earned in courses and on individual assignments. For more information, please see: <http://registrar.ufl.edu/catalog0910/policies/regulationferpa.html> (Links to an external site.)



## 7. Campus Resources

### 7.1 Health and Wellness

#### **U Matter, We Care:**

If you or a friend is in distress, please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu) or 352 392-1575 so that a team member can reach out to the student.

**Counseling and Wellness Center:** <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc> (Links to an external site.), and 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

#### **Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS)**

Student Health Care Center, 392-1161.

**University Police Department** at 392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies), or <http://www.police.ufl.edu/> (Links to an external site.).

### 7.2 Academic Resources

**E-learning technical support**, 352-392-4357 (select option 2) or e-mail to [Learning-support@ufl.edu](mailto:Learning-support@ufl.edu). <https://lss.at.ufl.edu/help.shtml> (Links to an external site.).

**Career Resource Center**, Reitz Union, 392-1601. Career assistance and counseling. <https://www.crc.ufl.edu/> (Links to an external site.).

**Library Support**, <http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask> (Links to an external site.). Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.

**Teaching Center**, Broward Hall, 392-2010 or 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring. <https://teachingcenter.ufl.edu/> (Links to an external site.).

**Writing Studio, 302 Tigert Hall**, 846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers. <https://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/> (Links to an external site.).

### **Student Complaints**

**Campus:** [https://www.dso.ufl.edu/documents/UF Complaints\\_policy.pdf](https://www.dso.ufl.edu/documents/UF_Complaints_policy.pdf) (Links to an external site.).

**On-Line Students Complaints:** <http://www.distance.ufl.edu/student-complaint-process> (Links to an external site.).

### **8. Miscellaneous**

The instructor reserves the right to make changes, if necessary, to the syllabus, grading system, schedule, or other matters pertaining to the class.

**Please be aware that the instructor will not be able to respond immediately to your communication. As a rule, allow up to 48 hours for a response.**

Therefore, barring an emergency situation, it is advisable to contact the instructor well in advance of an exam or a deadline in order to give the professor adequate time to respond you.

If you notice yourself having trouble in the course, it is crucial that you see me immediately. Please feel free to approach me about any concerns or comments you might have about this class. I will be happy to meet with you during my office hours, or by appointment.

## 9. Course Schedule and Due Dates

### 9.1 Weekly Schedule\*

WEEK	TOPICS	READINGS
Week 1 - 8/31	Intro to course, purpose of research	Chapter 1 & 2
Week 2 - 9/7	Holiday (Labor Day)	No Class
Week 3 - 9/14	Intro to focus groups	Chapter 11
Week 4 - 9/21	Focus groups continued & Other qualitative methods	Chapter 9 & 10 - Focus Group Supplement
Week 5 - 9/28	Measurement	Chapter 4 & 5
Week 6 – 10/5	<b>Exam #1 (from 04:05pm to 07:05pm)</b>	<b>Chapter 1, 2, 4, 5, 9, 10, 11 &amp; Supplement</b>
Week 7 - 10/12	Survey design	Chapter 12
Week 8 - 10/19	Sampling	Chapter 13
Week 9 - 10/26	Content analysis	Chapter 8
Week 10 - 11/2	Experimental design	Chapter 14
Week 11 - 11/9	Descriptive statistics	Chapter 6
Week 12 - 11/16	Hypothesis testing	Chapter 15
Week 13 - 11/23	Report creation	
Week 14 - 11/30	<b>Exam #2 (from 04:05pm to 07:05pm)</b>	<b>Chapter 6, 8, 12,13,14,15</b>
Week 15 - 12/7	Presentations	Chapter 16
Week 16 - 12/14	<b>Exam #3 (Optional) (from 04:05pm to 07:05pm)</b>	<b>ALL CONTENT</b>

*\*This schedule is tentative and subject to change. Changes to the schedule will be discussed in class.*

## 9.2 Deadlines and Due Dates

Assignment	Points	Due Date
Group Contract	15 pts	Sep 14, 2020 at 11:59pm
IRP Training	25 pts	Sep 14, 2020 at 11:59pm
Background Report	40 pts	Sep 21, 2020 at 11:59pm
Focus Group Protocol	50 pts	Sep 28, 2020 at 11:59pm
Exam #1	250 pts	Oct 05, 2020 (Class Time)
Focus Group Report	75 pts	Oct 19, 2020 at 11:59pm
Midterm Group Evaluations	0 pts	Oct 19, 2020 at 11:59pm
Survey Questionnaire	45 pts	Nov 02, 2020 at 11:59pm
UF APPS/SPSS	0 pts	Nov 11, 2020 at 11:59pm
Survey Report	75 pts	Nov 23, 2020 at 11:59pm
Exam #2	250 pts	Nov 30, 2020 (Class Time)
Final Report	100 pts	Dec 07, 2020 at 11:59pm
Presentation	25 pts	Dec 07, 2020 (Class time)
Final Group Evaluations	0 pts	Dec 07, 2020 at 11:59pm
Exam #3 (Optional)	250 pts	Dec 14, 2020 (Class time)
In-class/Online activities	50 pts	Throughout the semester
<b>Total</b>	<b>1000 pts</b>	