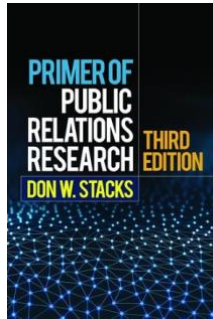


PUR 3500 - Public Relations Research Spring 2021

Meeting Time: Wednesday | Period 3 - 5 (4:05 PM - 7:05 PM)
Meeting Room: FLG 0220 or via Zoom for the online section
Instructor: Osama Albishri
Contact: oaalbishri@ufl.edu or contact me via Canvas Messages.
Office: Weimer G034
Office hours: Thursdays 1 - 2:30 p.m., or by appointment
Zoom link: All Zoom links will be provided to you in Canvas

Required Texts

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



**Supplemental readings will be made available to you through the course website.*

Quick Reference

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- [Learning Objectives](#)
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Course Goals

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.

Course Learning Objectives

- 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

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.

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*“Success is no accident.
It is hard work,
perseverance, learning,
studying, sacrifice and
most of all, love of what
you are doing or
learning to do.”*

Pele

Course Policies

Attendance

We will meet in the classroom (for the in-campus section) and via Zoom (for the online section) 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 the lectures, 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 either in the classroom or in 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.

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 visit me in my office to discuss these matters. In general, face-to-face meetings via Zoom 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 via Zoom depending on the complexity of the issue.

Late Work/Make-up Work

All written assignments must be turned in to Canvas by the due day and time specified in Canvas. The system will automatically mark assignments as late if they are uploaded even one second after the due date. **You have 24 hours after the due date to turn in your assignment for a 10% grade reduction. A grade of ZERO will be assigned after the initial 24 hours.** 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 for exams or graded activities, for any reason beyond university or religious excused absences.

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 or arriving or leaving late. Treat our in-classroom or Zoom meetings as if they were interviews – practice your professionalism now!

Extra Credits Policy

- Any group that delivers the final report in a professionally appealing design will be awarded an extra 5-15 points depending on the proficiency of the design.
- For [student evaluations of teaching](#), all members of the class will be awarded 10 extra points if at least 80% of the enrolled class completes evaluations, and 15 extra points if 100% of the enrolled class completes evaluations.

Instructional Methods

Due to Covid-19, this class is now divided into two sections, one will require physical attendance to campus and the other will be 100% online depending on which one your registered for. However, this course will be a mixture of synchronous and asynchronous activities for both sections. Specifically, it uses a flipped classroom, where you will have access to the reading, PowerPoints, activities on Canvas, while in in the class time we will spend less time on lecture and more time will be dedicated to Q&A, collaborative activities and groups meeting. You must complete all the readings, review the PowerPoint, and take any assigned activity before the class meeting time. It is highly recommended that you take notes during the lectures or while reading the assigned text, so you can ask for any clarification during the class meeting. Completing all the assigned materials before the class time, will give you the preparation needed to actively engage during the live class sessions. If you are not fully prepared before the class meetings, you will struggle to keep up with your peers while doing the activities during the live sessions, and you will slow down your group. Your engagement is very critical to the success in this course and it will help to facilitate the overall mastery of the [course objectives](#) for you and your peers.

Points Distribution

Exams	400 pts
Research Project	450 pts
Group Contract	15 pts
Background Report	50 pts
Focus Group Protocol	50 pts
Focus Group Report	75 pts
Peer Evaluation	10 pts
Survey Questions	50 pts
Survey Report	75 pts
Final Report	100 pts
Presentation	25 pts
In-class/Online activities	100 pts
IRB Training	25 pts
SPSS Training	25 pts
TOTAL	1000 pts

"The only difference between ordinary and extraordinary is that little extra."

Jimmy Johnson

Points earned	930-1000	900-929	870-899	830-869	800-829	770-799	730-769	700-729	670-699	600-669	0-599
Letter Grade	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	F
Grade Points	4.0	3.7	3.3	3.00	2.7	2.3	2.00	1.7	1.3	1.00	0

Overview of Course Components

Exams

Two unit exams will be given, in addition to the **OPTIONAL** final, which if taken would replace your lowest unit exam grade. Each exam will be worth 200 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

A key objective of this class is to provide you with hands-on experience conducting research that is commonly used in various communication professions. Students will be required to engage in creating, conducting and analyzing information from both a focus group and a survey. Students will be allowed to choose their own client and research question for the semester within their assigned teams. Yes, this will require group work, but life is a group project, and communication research in the real world almost always will require group work. There will be multiple assignments related to the research projects that will be completed throughout the semester. There is an overview of the entire project on Canvas. These projects will be discussed in significant depth later in the course and materials will be provided in class and is available on the course website.

In-class/online activities

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 10% of your grade. Your top 10 weekly scores will count, which will provide you with a cushion if you need to miss a class.

IRB Training

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>.

SPSS Training

Data analysis and visualization have become essential skills of the 21st century. Thus, you will be given several tutorials to navigate through SPSS and learn how to run several statistical tests. You will be given a data set to analyze, then you will submit the results for grading. This training will prepare to analysis the data you will be collecting for your group research project.

Course Schedule*

WEEK	DATES	TOPICS	READINGS
1	1/13	Intro to course, purpose of research	Chapter 1 & 2
2	1/20	Intro to focus groups	Chapter 11
3	1/27	Focus groups continued	Focus Group Supplement
4	2/3	Other qualitative methods	Chapter 9 & 10
5	2/10	Measurement	Chapter 4 & 5
6	2/17	Exam #1	Ch. 1, 2, 4, 5, 9, 10, 11 & Supplement
7	2/24	Survey design	Chapter 12
8	3/3	Sampling	Chapter 13
9	3/10	Content analysis	Chapter 8
10	3/17	Experimental design	Chapter 14
11	3/24	Descriptive statistics	Chapter 6
12	3/31	Hypothesis testing	Chapter 15
13	4/7	Report creation	
14	4/14	Exam #2	Ch. 6, 8, 12-15
15	4/21	Presentations	Chapter 16
TUESDAY 4/27 5:30 PM-7:30 PM		Final Exam	ALL CONTENT

**This schedule is tentative and subject to change. Changes to the schedule will be discussed in class. You are responsible for attending all classes unless it is marked as a holiday.*

Deadlines and Due Dates

ASSIGNMENT	POINTS	DUE DATE
Group Contract	15 pts	Jan 20, 2021 at 11:59pm
IRB Training	25 pts	Jan 27, 2021 at 11:59pm
Background Report	50 pts	Feb 03, 2021 at 11:59pm
Focus Group Protocol	50 pts	Feb 10, 2021 at 11:59pm
Exam #1	200 pts	Feb 17, 2021 (Class Time)
Focus Group Report	75 pts	Mar 03, 2021 at 11:59pm
Midterm Peer Evaluations	5 pts	Mar 03, 2021 at 11:59pm
Survey Questionnaire	50 pts	Mar 17, 2021 at 11:59pm
UF Apps/SPSS Training	25 pts	Mar 31, 2021 at 11:59pm
Survey Report	75 pts	Apr 07, 2021 at 11:59pm
Exam #2	200 pts	Apr 14, 2021 (Class Time)
Final Report	100 pts	Apr 21, 2021 at 11:59pm
Presentation	25 pts	Apr 21, 2021 (Class time)
Final Peer Evaluations	5 pts	Apr 21, 2021 at 11:59pm
Exam #3 (Optional)	200 pts	Apr 27, 2021 (5:30 PM – 7:30 PM)

Standard UF Policy Information and Links

Honor Code

Please note that all of your work in this class should conform to the university's honor code, which states: We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity by abiding by the Student Honor Code. 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." For more information please see <http://regulations.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/4.040-1.pdf>

All honor code violations, including cheating, lying and plagiarism. or plagiarism in any form is unacceptable and inexcusable behavior, and it will result in the failure of this course.

Accommodations

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.

Online Course Evaluation

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course based on 10 criteria. These evaluations are conducted online at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last 2-3 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>.

UF Grading Policy

[http://gradcatalog.ufl.edu/content.php?catoid=10&navoid=2020#grades site.](http://gradcatalog.ufl.edu/content.php?catoid=10&navoid=2020#grades%20site.)
<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

Students 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.)

COVID Related Practices

For those who registered for the face-to-face section, we will have face-to-face instructional sessions to accomplish the student learning objectives of this course. In response to COVID-19, the following policies and requirements are in place to maintain your learning environment and to enhance the safety of our in-classroom interactions.

- A. You are required to wear approved face coverings at all times during class and within buildings. Following and enforcing these policies and requirements are all of our responsibility. Failure to do so will lead to a report to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution.
 - B. This course has been assigned a physical classroom with enough capacity to maintain physical distancing (6 feet between individuals) requirements. Please utilize designated seats and maintain appropriate spacing between students. Please do not move desks or stations.
 - C. Sanitizing supplies are available in the classroom if you wish to wipe down your desks prior to sitting down and at the end of the class.
 - D. Follow your instructor's guidance on how to enter and exit the classroom. Practice physical distancing to the extent possible when entering and exiting the classroom.
 - E. If you are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms ([Click here for guidance from the CDC on symptoms of coronavirus](#)), please use the UF Health screening system and follow the instructions on whether you are able to attend class. [Click here for UF Health guidance on what to do if you have been exposed to or are experiencing Covid-19 symptoms](#).
1. Course materials will be provided to you with an excused absence, and you will be given a reasonable amount of time to make up work. [Find more information in the university attendance policies](#).