

**PUR 6506**

Public Relations Research

Autumn 2021

T 11:45 – 2:45 (T 5-7), section 12DD

**Instructor: Dr. Myiah Hutchens**

**Email:** myiahhutchens@ufl.edu

**Office:** Weimer 3058

**Office hours:** Tuesdays & Wednesdays 3-4p.m., or by appointment

**Phone:** 273-4163 (email is generally the fastest way to get a hold of me)

**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.*

*\*We will use the statistics program SPSS towards the end of the semester. This is available on lab computers and through UF Apps at no charge; however, I strongly encourage you to purchase a student license for your personal computer (\$35 through the IT department, located at HUB 132).*

**Course Goals**

The purpose of Public Relations Research for graduate students is to learn about the relationships among public relations processes and public relations research. The course introduces you to and gives you experience with research methods in public relations. This course will give you a preview of methods and analysis techniques you will use for your thesis while introducing you to what research in social science looks like more generally.

**Course Learning Objectives**

- Identify strengths and weaknesses of various methods frequently used in communication
- Practice creating various data collection tools used in PR research
- Practice interpreting common types of data used in PR research
- Practice reporting PR research for an academic audience

**KEY COURSE POLICIES*****Instructor Interaction***

Please feel free to stop by my office during office hours or make an appointment to see me. The best way to reach me is by e-mail. I check my e-mail account regularly, but please do not expect a response by e-mail after normal business hours/over the weekend. If I have not written back within 48 hours, please send your email again. As my email is considered a state public record, I do not discuss grades or any student records issues via e-mail. Please schedule a meeting with me to discuss these issues. The classroom is typically not an appropriate place for these discussions.

### ***Late or Missed Work***

Deadlines for each assignment will be given and students are expected to meet them. Late assignments will automatically lose a full letter grade for each day it is late (e.g. B to a C). Some consideration, however, might be given (at the discretion of the instructor) if there are extenuating circumstances such as prolonged hospitalization, family death, or extended individual sickness; however, you need to notify the instructor before the deadline is missed, not after the fact.

### ***Attendance***

This course focuses on class participation and group discussion. Your attendance is an important aspect of this course. Excessive absences will harm your grade. I will deduct 10 percent from your final grade for excessive absences (i.e., missing more than 2 classes).

### ***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 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.

### ***University Honesty Policy***

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the 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." [The Honor Code](#) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with me.

I will document and report all honor code violations, including cheating and plagiarism. The minimum penalty for a violation of the honor code is a zero on the assignment or exam, but may be higher depending on the severity of the violation.

### ***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 – practice your professionalism now!

### ***In-Class Recording Policy (TL;DR version, full text is at the end of the syllabus)***

You can record ONLY me speaking, while delivering course lecture material in the classroom, during which a question-and-answer session is not present. You may not record me out of the classroom, nor may you record anything any of your classmates say. You cannot share your recordings, except with a lawyer, nor post them online anywhere.

## **GRADING AND ASSIGNMENTS**

### ***Homework Assignments***

All of the homework assignments are designed to help you understand the process of conducting research and evaluating research. The class includes seven homework assignments (see list below). You should pick one topic of interest for all of your assignments. It will be most time efficient if you pick the same topic for your homework assignments and for your course project. The assignments are briefly described below. The written/narrative portion of all assignments must conform to APA style (double spaced, one-inch margins, 12 point font, etc.) and be turned into the appropriate Canvas assignment box before midnight on the day it is due.

**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>.

**Developing Questions:** For this assignment you will be asked to reflect on what your overarching research question is, and how it can be broken down into testable research questions and hypotheses for individual studies.

**Protocol/Script Creation:** For this assignment you will need to create a qualitative script or protocol that you would use to investigate your topic of interest. This can be a focus group protocol or an interview script.

**Codebook Creation:** For this assignment you will create a codebook that you would use to examine media or other written content relevant to your topic of interest. You will need to describe the content, the elements you would code for and the corresponding coding categories. You need to make sure you include both latent and manifest content in your codebook.

**Paired Coding:** You will be randomly paired in Canvas to use each other's codebooks to practice coding and calculating intercoder reliability. You will need to document how the training period went, and what you learned about revising your codebook through the coding process.

**Survey Creation:** For this assignment you need to create a survey focused on your topic of interest. You need to describe the sample you would use, the sampling technique, in addition to providing a minimum of 20 formatted survey questions programmed in Qualtrics.

**Data Analysis:** You will be given a data set and asked to test and evaluate hypotheses that are utilize chi-square, correlation, t-tests and ANOVA.

### ***Course Proposal***

For this course you will present a proposal that utilizes one of the methods we have learned about throughout the semester to answer a question of interest. You should use what you do for your homework assignments as a basis for your larger project. For example, if you plan on doing

interviews, the script creation assignment should be an opportunity to create and refine your protocol that you will then revise and submit as part of your proposal. If you plan on doing a content analysis, you should expand upon the codebook and codesheet that you created for your earlier homework assignment. This is an excellent opportunity to pilot test materials and techniques that you plan to use for your thesis. There are three key aspects of the written proposal that should be turned in, and are described below. You should also include a full instrument that corresponds to your proposed method (protocol or script; codebook and codesheet; survey; questionnaire and experimental manipulations). Additionally, you will present your proposal to the class on the last day of the course, which will be factored into your grade for this assignment.

**Introduction:** This should be a brief introduction to the problem that your research will address and supporting literature of prior attempts to address this issue. Clearly state the research questions and/or hypotheses you will try to address.

**Method:** This portion of your project will provide a detailed outline of how you plan on answering your research questions. This includes addressing what data will be used, how it will be collected, the interview protocols to be used, questionnaire items used, etc. The length of this paper will largely depend on the project and method you are using but should be a complete and detailed description of your proposed method. The goal for this project is that myself (or another person) will know exactly what you plan on doing.

**Conclusion:** This section should describe how your proposed method will allow you to address the problem introduced in the introduction, and also address what limitations are associated with your method. This assignment serves as the culmination of the entire semester and should demonstrate that you know how to effectively use a social science data gathering method.

### *Grading*

I will be as fair and impartial as is humanly possible in the grading process. Each of you will be graded on the same criteria. 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. Grades are awarded on the basis of quality, not the amount of time expended. I don't round up (e.g., if you get 89.9 points, you earn a B+ not an A-). I will keep grades posted on Canvas - it is your responsibility to check on your progress throughout the semester.

<b>IRB completion</b>	10 points	This course will be graded on the following grading system: A: 94 and above A-: 90-93 B+: 87-89 B: 84-86 B-: 80-83 C+: 77-79 (and as above for lower grades, although grades below C+ is considered unsatisfactory progress and will result in probation/suspension)
<b>Developing questions</b>	10 points	
<b>Script</b>	10 points	
<b>Codebook creation</b>	10 points	
<b>Coding</b>	10 points	
<b>Survey</b>	10 points	
<b>Data Analysis</b>	10 points	
<b>Course Proposal</b>	30 points	
<b>Total</b>	<b>100 points</b>	

Tentative Course Schedule\*

WEEK Week/Dates	TOPICS & WHAT IS DUE	TEXT READINGS (Additional on Canvas)
1 8/24	Intro to course, purpose of research	Chapter 1, 2 & 3
2 8/31	Research ethics	Chapter 7
3 9/7	Ontology and Epistemology, <b>IRB Training due</b>	
4 9/14	Measurement	Chapter 4 & 5
5 9/21	Focus groups, <b>Developing Questions due</b>	Chapter 11
6 9/28	Participant Observation/Case studies	Chapter 10
7 10/5	Qualitative analysis	
8 10/12	Content analysis, <b>Script due</b>	Chapter 8
9 10/19	Sampling	Chapter 13
10 10/26	Survey design, <b>Codebook due</b>	Chapter 12
11 11/2	Experimental design, <b>Coding due</b>	Chapter 14
12 11/9	Descriptive statistics	Chapter 6
13 11/16	Hypothesis testing, <b>Survey due</b>	Chapter 15
14 11/23	Report creation	Chapter 16
15 11/30	Publicly available data, <b>Data Analysis due</b>	Chapter 9
16 12/7	<b>Presentations, Final Report Due</b>	

\*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.

## **Standard UF Policy Information and Links**

### ***UF Grading Policy***

<http://gradcatalog.ufl.edu/content.php?catoid=10&navoid=2020#grades> (Links to an external site.)

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx> (Links to an external site.)

### ***Students Requiring Accommodations***

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, <https://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.

### ***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/evals> (Links to an external site.). 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/> (Links to an external site.).

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### ***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.

### ***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.)

### *In-Class Recording*

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

A “class lecture” is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Policy on Course Syllabi 3 UF, Academic Affairs, July 28th, 2021 Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

### [Campus Resources](#)

#### *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.](#)).

#### *Academic Resources*

**E-learning technical support**, 352-392-4357 (select option 2) or e-mail to 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.).