

PUR3500 (22432)

Public Relations Research

Course Info

When: Thursdays 3:00 – 6:00 pm

Where: Williamson Hall 0202

Instructor: Jie Jin

Email: jinnie@ufl.edu (Preferred method of communication. Please include PUR3500 in the subject line.)

Office hours: by email appointment

Office: 2041A Weimer Hall

Course Objectives

This course has two goals. The first is to provide you with a general framework for understanding and evaluating social science research so when you encounter it in almost any PR-related job you can understand and apply the information to your own project with a reasonable level of competence. 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 and your professional careers. We will spend the majority of our time learning how to collect and analyze data from 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.

In this class, students will:

- 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

Required Readings

Michaelson, D., & Stacks, D. W. (2017). *A professional and practitioner's guide to public relations research, measurement, and evaluation*. Business Expert Press.

Instructional Methods

This course will be a mix of lectures, activities, Q&A, and groups meeting. You must complete all the readings before the class meeting time. You are encouraged to take notes and ask for any clarification during the class meeting. These actions will help you understand and familiarize yourself with week topic and the many new concepts that get to know throughout the semester. Similarly, you are expected to actively engage in the class meeting sessions. Your engagement is very critical to the success in this course, and it will benefit both you and your peers.

Grading Criteria

NOTE: Please understand that points and percentages are different units. The total point of this course is 1,000 and the total percentage is 100%. Therefore, 10 points are equal to 1 percent. All the following grading criteria (including extra credit) are based on the point system (1,000 points). All assignment due dates can be found in the course schedule attached to this syllabus.

- **In-Class Activities (50 points/5 percent)**

Most weeks we will complete at least one activity in class. These are designed to get you to apply the knowledge you've learned to a real-world type of situation. You will get full credit for these if you put forth a reasonable amount of effort. For the in-class activities, I typically offer a few more than the minimum number needed to get full credit for this component of your grade. Therefore, if you miss a class there won't be make up assignments. Instead, you should be able to get full credit if you keep attending class throughout the semester.

In-class activities must always be posted to Canvas by 6:00 pm of the day in which they are due.

- **Out-Of-Class Activities (50 points/5 percent)**

In addition to the in-class activities, you will have two assignments/activities to complete outside of class: one is the IRB training, and the other is the SPSS training.

- **Exams (450 points/45 percent)**

There will be three exams given during the semester: Two unit exams and one final exam. Two of the three exams will count toward your final grade. There will be no make-up exams. 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. The exams will cover the material in the readings and lectures – this includes the textbook chapters and any supplemental material posted on the course website. Ahead of each exam, you will receive a study guide to help you prepare. The unit exams will not be cumulative. That being said, some content/concepts might rely on

the cumulative knowledge you have built up during class. For the most part, these will be topics that are important to the course. 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.

NO early exam or make-up opportunities will be offered unless there are extremely exceptional cases officially approved by the university.

- **Research Project (450 points/45 percent)**

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 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.

Grading

The grading scale for the course is as follows:

A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E
93-100%	90-92%	88-89%	82-87%	80-81%	78-79%	72-77%	70-71%	68-69%	62-67%	60-61%	below 60%

To be fair to all students, all numbers are absolute and will not be rounded up at any stage (e.g., a B+ will be inclusive of all scores of 870 through 899.999).

Exams: 450 points/45%

Research Project: 450 points/45%

Group Contract: 15 points
Background Report: 50 points
Focus Group Protocol: 50 points
Focus Group Report: 75 points
Peer Evaluations: 10 points
Survey Questions: 50 points
Survey Report: 75 points
Final Report: 100 points
Presentation: 25 points

In-Class Activities: 50 points/5%

Out-of-Class Activities: 50 points/5%

IRB Training: 25 points
UF Apps/SPSS Training: 25 points

Course Policies

Instructor Interaction

I am happy to meet with students by appointment on Zoom. The best way to reach me is by e-mail. I will try to send a response as soon as possible but it may take up to 48 hours to get a reply. If I haven't responded within that timeframe, please re-send your email. If you are struggling with the course material, exams, having problems with members of your group, etc., it is imperative that you talk to me as soon as you think you're having a problem before assignment deadlines.

Assignment Professionalism

Everything submitted for this course, including emails with the professor, should be written with a level of professionalism that would be expected by an employer. If you need assistance with professional writing skills, grammar, APA formatting, or other writing needs please visit the campus writing center for help. If assignments are submitted with writing mistakes it will harm your grade and I may direct you to the writing center. The center can be reached at Writing Studio, 302 Tigert Hall, 352-846-1138.

Attendance

I will do roll call during each class. You must arrive on time and stay through the whole class session to get full credit for in-class points that day. Attendance will also be tied to whether you can accrue bonus/extra credit points. I will post slides, activities, etc. on the course website. If you have questions regarding the content, please send me an email. If you miss more than three classes, you will lose 10% from your grade for each additional class you miss during the course of the semester. Please be courteous and arrive to class on time and do not leave until you are instructed the class is over. If you will need to arrive late or leave early, please let the instructor know ahead of time.

Electronic Devices

You are allowed to use laptops or tablets for notetaking. Please turn your phone off or to silent mode during class and keep it tucked away unless we are using it to do in-class activities.

Honor Code

As a student at this university, you have accepted a commitment to the Honor Code, and the principles of academic integrity, personal honesty, and responsible citizenship on which it was founded. As an instructor at this university, I am also charged with its enforcement and take that responsibility very seriously. You can find the complete honor code via this link: <https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>

Among the activities that could result in Honor Code violations are plagiarism, cheating, misrepresenting sources, the unauthorized use of others' work, etc.

Consult the APA manual for definitions of plagiarism. Consult me if you are uncertain about your Honor Code responsibilities within this course.

Special Needs

Students requesting classroom accommodation should first register with the Dean of Students Office's Disability Resource Center. The Dean of Students Office will provide an accommodation letter that must be presented to me when requesting accommodation. Students should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester. To contact the Disability Resource Center, visit www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/ or call 352-392-8565. 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>. 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 Recording Policy

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.

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 Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

Student Resources

U Matter, We Care

If you or a friend is in distress, please contact 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> and 352-392-1575; and the University Police Department: 352-392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS)

Student Health Care Center, 352-392-1161.

University Police Department

352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies), or <http://www.police.ufl.edu/>

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>

Career Resource Center

Reitz Union, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling.
<https://www.crc.ufl.edu/>

Library Support

<http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask> Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.

Teaching Center

Broward Hall, 352-392-2010 or 352-392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.
<https://teachingcenter.ufl.edu/>

Writing Studio

302 Tigert Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.
<https://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/>

Student Complaints

Campus: https://www.dso.ufl.edu/documents/UF_Complaints_policy.pdf

On-Line Students Complaints

<http://www.distance.ufl.edu/student-complaint-process>

Tentative Course Schedule

WEEK	DATES	TOPICS	READINGS
1	Jan 11	Intro to the course + Purpose of research; Info Sheet Due	Chapter 1, 2, & 3
2	Jan 18	Intro to focus group; IRB Assignment Due	Chapter 5 & 6
3	Jan 25	Focus group continued + Other qualitative methods; Group Contract Due, Background Report	Chapter 6
4	Feb 1	Measurement; Focus Group Protocol Due	Chapter 4
5	Feb 8	Exam #1	Ch. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
6	Feb 15	Content Analysis	Chapter 7
7	Feb 22	Survey design; Focus Group Report Due, Midterm Group Eval Due	Chapter 8
8	Feb 29	Survey design cont. & Sampling	Chapter 8 & 10
9	Mar 7	Sampling cont.; Survey Questionnaire Due	Chapter 10
10	Mar 14 Spring Break	No Class	
11	Mar 21	Descriptive statistics; UF Apps/SPSS training	Chapter 9
12	Mar 28	Hypothesis testing; UF Apps/SPSS training	Chapter 9
13	April 4	Survey Report Consultation; Survey Report Due	
14	April 11	Exam #2	Ch. 7, 8, 9, 10
15	April 18	Presentations, Final Report, & Final Group Eval Due to Canvas by 11:59 pm	Ch.11
16	April 25	NO CLASS: READING DAY	
Final – May 2		Final Exam	ALL CONTENT

Note: If not otherwise specified, the due dates for most assignments are on the **respective Sundays at 11:59 pm**. For instance, the survey report is due on Sunday, April 7th, at 11:59 pm.