

# PUR 3500

## Public Relations Research Methods

### Spring 2026 Syllabus

**Professor:** Tracey Kyles, PhD

**Class Time / Location:** Tues. 3:00-3:50 p.m., Thurs. 3:00 – 4:55 p.m. in MCAA 2186

**Office Hours/Location:** Mon. & Wed. 12:00 – 4:00 p.m., via Zoom at  
<https://ufl.zoom.us/j/8975457035>

Meeting ID: 897 545 7035

**Email:** [traceykyles@ufl.edu](mailto:traceykyles@ufl.edu)

**Course Website:** Relevant course info will be posted on Canvas.

## Materials

- Required: *Strategic Communication Research Methods*, Dainton, M. & Lannutti, P. J. (2021).
- Supplemental readings will be made available to you through the course website.

## Course Description

There are two main goals to take from this course. First, you are provided a practical framework for understanding and evaluating social science research. No matter what PR role you end up in, the goal is to be able to apply these concepts to your own projects with a solid level of competence. Second, by the end of the term, you will have a simulated, first-hand experience conducting a research project. That kind of hands-on practice will serve you well in your future courses as well as in your professional work. Because of these goals, here's how the course will run:

- Spend most of our time learning how to collect and analyze data from surveys and focus groups—the methods PR professionals rely on most
- Spend time exploring other common techniques used in PR research, so you leave with a broader sense of the tools

## Course Objectives

- Identify strengths and weaknesses of various methods frequently used in PR (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.

## Assignments

Exams	500 pts
Research Projects (Group Assignment)	250 pts
Research Projects (individual)	150 pts
In-Class Activities	50
Online/Out of Class activities	50

## Grading

1000 – 930 = A

899 – 870 = B+

799 – 700 = C+

699 – 670 = D+

929 – 900 = A-

869 – 830 = B

769 – 730 = C

699 – 600 = D

829 – 800 = B-

729 – 700 = C-

599 – 0 = F

## Course Components

- **Exam:** You'll have three exams total. There are two unit exams and one final. Only two of the three will count toward your final grade. **There are no make-ups.** If you're happy with your scores on the two unit exams, you can skip the final with no penalty. If you miss an exam or fail one, you can take the final to replace that earlier grade. The exams will cover everything from the readings and the lectures. Each week, I'll give you reading guides, which serve as your study guides for the assigned readings, along with review guides for the lectures. Together, those make up your study material for each unit exam. All exams will be multiple choice, true/false, and matching. Each exam is worth 250 points. You need to be on time. Once the exam window closes, if you did not finish, then you're out of luck. You can take the exam in person or online. If you choose the online option, you get 20 minutes to complete the test. The exam opens at the start of class and closes 35 minutes later. That 35-minute window includes the 15-minute late-start cutoff. If you start late, you simply have less time. For example, if you start 25 minutes late, you only get 10 minutes to work.
- **Research Projects:** Several parts of this project will be group work. Most of what you'll end up doing in communication jobs happens in teams, and you need to get comfortable with that now. I'll give you clear instructions for every assignment on the course website. As part of the project, you'll also complete peer evaluations. If you don't turn those in, you lose 10 points. Low peer evaluations will also cost you points; the exact deductions will be explained in the peer evaluation guidelines.
- **In Class Activities:** We'll tackle at least one in-class activity, sometimes more. These are meant to push you to apply what you've learned to situations that mirror the real world. As long as you put in a reasonable amount of effort, you'll get full credit. Along with the in-class work, there will be a few short assignments you'll complete outside of class. For the in-class activities, I usually provide more opportunities than you actually need to earn full credit. Because of that, there are no make-ups if you miss a class. If you show up consistently, you'll have more than enough chances to earn the points.
- **Extra Credit:** A maximum of 20 extra credit points can be offered if you answer actively in class. I will give you 1 point for talking in class, up to two points for a day. You can get a maximum of 20 points during the semester. Moreover, you can only miss two classes if you want to earn these points. Missing more than two classes will result in forfeiting these points.

## Policies

- **In-Person Course:** Our course is an in-person course. Lecture, discussion, activities and exams will occur in the classroom. You are responsible for getting notes from a classmate if you are unable to attend class.
- **Attendance, Late Assignments, Make-Ups:** In an applied course, attendance is very important. It's the time where we learn, discuss, and critique work. We will follow the UF policy set out here: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>. If you miss class due to a university-approved excused absence such as jury duty or illness, then you must contact the instructor prior to missing class and turn in any missed assignments on the first day you return to campus.

- **Classroom Preparedness:** Students should attend classes and participate in class discussions. Students should complete readings before the class in which they are discussed. Finally, students should check email and Canvas frequently for the latest class information and updates.
- **Technology/Paying Attention:** I don't mind that you take notes via computer, but please, no text messaging/social media during class (unless it makes sense for an assignment). If you do this you will be asked to stop. If you continue, you will be asked to leave.
- **Grade Challenges:** Grades will not be discussed via email, the telephone or in class. If you disagree with a grade given on any assignment, you must appeal the grade during my office hours or in an appointment with me. In this appeal, you must clearly state the problem and give a clear, concise explanation as to why you feel the grade is inaccurate. You must appeal assigned grades within two weeks of your receiving that particular grade. After two weeks, all grades are final.
- **Hours of Work:** Per UF policy, for each hour you are in class, you should plan to spend at least two hours on preparing for the next class and completing homework and assignments. Because this course is worth three credit hours, you should expect to spend nine hours per week on the course.
- **Honor Code:** Please review the UF Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code, which can be found at: <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>. Any violation of the codes will be reported to the proper University administrators and may result in other sanctions.
- **Plagiarism:** Original writing is essential to ethical advertising. It is also essential for this class. Cheating is any action that violates University norms or an instructor's guidelines for the preparation and submission of assignments. Such actions may include using or providing unauthorized assistance or materials on course assignments or possessing unauthorized materials during an exam.

Plagiarism involves the representation of another's work as your own, for example: (a) Submitting as one's own any material that is copied from published or unpublished sources such as the Internet, print sources, or video programs without proper acknowledgement that it is someone else's (b) Paraphrasing another's views, opinions or insights without proper acknowledgement or copying of any source in whole or in part with only minor changes in wording or syntax even with acknowledgement (c) Submitting as one's own work a report, examination, paper, computer file, lab report or other assignment which has been prepared by someone else (d) Presenting work created for another course as original work in this class.

UF requires faculty who find evidence of plagiarism to submit a report to Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution. Please read the UF Student Honor Code for more information.

- **E-mail Policy:** As e-mail has become a favored way to communicate in academia and industry, you must learn to use it appropriately. Thus, when e-mailing me, address me formally. I will generally return it within 24 hours of receiving it on weekdays or by Monday evening if I receive it on the weekend. If you need to discuss something in length, visit my digital office hours or email me to set up a time to meet virtually.
- **Students with Disabilities:** Students with disabilities can receive accommodations. The first step is to contact the Disability Resource Center (352-329-8565; [www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/)). Once you receive your accommodation letter, provide a copy to the professor as early as possible in the semester.

- Counseling and Wellness Center:** Your well-being is important to the University of Florida. The U Matter, We Care initiative is committed to creating a culture of care on our campus by encouraging members of our community to look out for one another and to reach out for help if a member of our community is in need. If you or a friend is in distress, please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu) so that the U Matter, We Care Team can reach out to the student in distress. A nighttime and weekend crisis counselor is available by phone at 352-392-1575. The U Matter, We Care Team can help connect students to the many other helping resources available including, but not limited to, Victim Advocates, Housing staff, and the Counseling and Wellness Center. Please remember that asking for help is a sign of strength. In case of emergency, call 9-1-1.
- Course Evaluations:** Students are expected to provide professional and constructive feedback on the quality of instruction via the online course evaluation system, GatorEvals. You will be notified when the evaluation period begins, and you can find GatorEvals through your Canvas course menu.
- Recording the Professor:** 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 Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

## PUR 3500

## Tentative Course Schedule

	Date	Topic / Lecture	Read / Listen	Assignments Due
1	Jan 13	Intro to PUR 3500		
	Jan 15	Intro to Focus Groups	Chapter 1, 2, and 5	
2	Jan 20	Focus Groups Con't	Chapter 9	
	Jan 22			Group Contract, IRB Assignment
3	Jan 27	Other Qualitative Methods	Chapter 6, Chapter 11 (211 – 216)	
	Jan 29			Background Report

4	Feb 3	Measurement	Chapter 3 & Supplemental reading	
	Feb 5			Focus Group Protocol
5	Feb 10	<b>Exam 1 – 1,2,5,9,6,3,11</b>		
	Feb 12			
6	Feb 17	Survey Design	Chapter 8	
	Feb 19			
7	Feb 24	Survey Design cont. + Sampling	Chapter 4	
	Feb 26			Focus Group Report, Midterm Group Evaluation
8	Mar 3	Sampling cont. + Content analysis		
	Mar 5		Chapter 7	Qualtrics Assignment
9	Mar 10	Descriptive Statistics	Chapter 11 (217 – 226) + Supplemental Reading	
	Mar 12			Survey Questions
11	Mar 24	Hypothesis Testing	Supplemental Reading	
	Mar 26			Descriptive Stats
12	Mar 31	Experimental Design	Chapter 10	
	April 2			Inferential Stats
13	April 7	Report Creations	Chapter 12	
	April 9			Survey Report
14	April 14	<b>Exam 2 – 8,4,7,10,12, 11, Supplemental reading</b>		
	April 16			
15	April 21	<b>Presentations and Final Group Evaluation</b>		
	FINALS	<b>4/28 – Final Exam – All Content</b>		

*\*This syllabus is subject to change as the instructor deems appropriate and necessary.*

*\*When only chapters are listed, that refers to Advertising Concept Book*

*\*Other readings will be posted on Canvas*