

# PUR 3500

Public Relations Research  
Methods Spring 2026

Wednesday. 9:35am– 12:35pm, (Period 3-5), Weimer G030

**Instructor:** Cloe Zeidan, PhD

**Email:** czeidan@ufl.edu

**Office:** Weimer 2018

**Office hours:** Thursday 2pm to 4pm or by appointment

**Phone:** 352-273-4122 (email is generally the fastest way to get a hold of me)

## Required Texts

Dainton, M. & Lannutti, P. J. (2021). *Strategic Communication Research Methods*.

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

## Course Learning 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

## 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:

- apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press, in a global context, and for the country in which the institution that invites ACEJMC is located;
- demonstrate an understanding of the multicultural history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications;
- present images and information effectively and creatively, using appropriate tools and technologies;
- write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;
- demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;
- apply critical thinking skills in conducting research and evaluating information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work;
- effectively and correctly apply basic numerical and statistical concepts;
- critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;
- apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.

## **Course Policies**

### **Attendance**

I will take attendance. I will track whether you miss class, arrive late, or leave early.

#### **Missed Classes, Arriving Late or Leaving Early**

If you miss class or part of it, you won't be able to make up the in-class activities from that day. I offer more activities than required, so it is still possible to get full points for in-class activities.

Consequences for Missing Class:

- More than 2 absences (for any reason) = no extra credit eligibility.
- 3 or more absences = 10% deduction from your final grade for each additional class missed.

### **Arriving Late or Leaving Early**

If you're going to be late or leave early, please email me in advance.

#### **Consequences for Late Arrival / Early Departure:**

- More than 5 minutes late or leaving before class ends without notice = counts as a missed class
- More than 2 unexcused instance = no extra credit eligibility
- Each additional unexcused instance = 2.5% deduction from your final grade per additional instance
  - *Example: 4 unexcused late arrivals = 5% off your final grade*

### **Email Policy**

As a state employee, my email is considered a public record and may be accessed through an open-records request. Because of federal privacy laws, I cannot discuss grades or other personal matters via email.

Guidelines for Communication:

- To discuss grades or sensitive issues, you'll need to meet with me in person during office hours.
- Face-to-face meetings are generally quicker and clearer than email exchanges.
- While you're welcome to email me, I may ask you to schedule an in-person meeting depending on the complexity of your question.

Professionalism in Emails:

- Email is considered formal communication - please write professionally.
- Avoid text-message style writing (e.g., abbreviations like "u" or "lol").
- Only send messages you would feel comfortable saying in a face-to-face conversation.

### **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>

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. More than one violation will result in failing the course.

## AI Policy

In this class, you are expected to produce your own work without assistance from generative AI tools, unless I explicitly direct you to use them for a specific assignment. It's important that I can assess what you know and can create independently. Using generative AI without permission is a violation of the honor code, as it involves submitting work that was not fully created by you.

If you are permitted to use AI, you must:

- List the tool(s) you used (e.g., ChatGPT, DALL-E, Grammarly, etc.)
- Include the prompts you entered
- Explain how you used the output in your final submission

Failure to follow these guidelines will be treated as an honor code violation. I use AI detection tools (including those built into Canvas and external platforms), and many AI-generated responses follow recognizable patterns. If I suspect your work is AI-generated, I will investigate. If confirmed, the assignment will be reported as a violation, and penalties for honor code violations will apply.

## Accommodations

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, [www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/](http://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.

## Late Assignments

Assignments must be submitted to Canvas **before 11:59 p.m. on the due date**.

- It's your responsibility to ensure your file uploads correctly and is in a format I can open (e.g., .doc or .pdf, not .pages).
- If your file can't be opened, it will be considered **late**.
- If you're having technical issues, submit screenshots or a readable file to avoid penalties.

Late Submission Penalties:

- 25% deduction per day (including incorrect file types)
  - *Example: 2 days late = 50% deduction*
- No submissions accepted after 48 hours past the deadline
- Late work will be graded after all on-time submissions and may receive minimal feedback

## Professionalism

As PR students, you're expected to maintain a high level of professionalism in all course interactions.

## Expectations:

- Arrive on time and prepared for class
- Be respectful and courteous to everyone in class
- Avoid distracting others with phones or devices
- If using a laptop for notes, keep only your notes page open
- If technology becomes disruptive, I may restrict device use in class

## Grades

Grades are based on the criteria outlined in the syllabus and assignment instructions. I strive to be fair and consistent in evaluating your work - everyone is graded by the same standards. Once grades are posted, they reflect what you've earned based on your performance and the expectations set for the course. I will keep grades posted on Canvas - it is your responsibility to check it and make sure you know where you are at.

If you have questions about a grade or assignment, please reach out to schedule a time to meet. I'm happy to discuss your work in person.

If you're struggling with course material, exams, or group dynamics, **please talk to me early** - ideally before an assignment is due. I'll do my best to support you before a deadline, but once an assignment has been submitted or an exam has been taken, my ability to help is limited.

## Grading Breakdown (Total: 1000 points)

Exams – 500 points

Research Project – 400 points total

Group Assignments – 250 points

- Group Contract: 15 pts
- Background Report: 40 pts
- Focus Group Protocol: 50 pts
- Survey Questions: 45 pts
- Final Report: 75 pts
- Presentation: 25 pts

Individual Assignments – 150 points

- Focus Group Report: 75 pts
- Survey Report: 75 pts

Participation – 100 points

- In-class Activities: 50 pts
- Online / Out-of-Class Activities: 50 pts

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

## **Overview of Course Components**

### **Exams**

There will be three exams during the semester: two unit exams and one final exam.

- Only two exams will count toward your final grade.
- If you're satisfied with your performance on the two unit exams, you may skip the final exam without penalty.
- If you miss a unit exam or want to improve your score, you may take the final exam to replace one of your earlier exam grades.

Exam Content & Preparation:

- Exams will cover material from readings, lectures, and supplemental content posted on Canvas
- Weekly reading guides and lecture review guides will serve as your study tools
- Unit exams are not cumulative, though some concepts may build on earlier material
- The final exam is cumulative and must be taken during the scheduled exam period
- Exam format includes multiple choice, true/false, and matching questions

Exam Day Expectations:

- You must arrive on time—late arrivals will only have the remaining class time to complete the exam
- Once a student finishes and leaves, no one else may begin the exam
- Only students enrolled in the course may be present during exams

### **Research project**

One of the main goals of this course is to give you hands-on experience conducting research using methods commonly applied in communication professions. Throughout the semester, you'll design instruments to collect both **focus group** and **survey data**, and you'll analyze the results.

Several components of the research project will be completed in **groups**, reflecting the collaborative nature of work in PR fields. Detailed instructions for each assignment will be provided on the course website.

**Peer Evaluations:**

- You'll complete peer evaluations as part of the group work.
- Failure to submit your peer evaluation will result in a 10-point deduction from your grade.
- Low peer evaluations may also lead to grade deductions, as outlined in the evaluation instructions.
- I reserve the right to adjust peer evaluation scores based on additional information gathered during the semester.

## **In-class activities**

Active participation is essential for meaningful learning. Most weeks, you'll complete at least one in-class activity designed to help you apply course concepts to real-world scenarios.

Grading for Activities:

- You'll receive full credit as long as you put forth a reasonable effort
- A few brief out-of-class activities will also be assigned throughout the semester

## **Extra Credit**

You can earn up to 20 extra credit points in this course. There are two ways to receive extra credit:

1. **Class Participation**
  - Speaking during class discussions or in response to in-class activity prompts
  - You'll earn 1 point per contribution, up to 2 points per class session
2. **SONA Research Participation**
  - Completing 1 approved research study through the SONA system during the semester
  - You'll earn 5 points per research study hour, max of 10 points

### **Important Notes:**

- These are the only extra credit opportunities available in this course
- To be eligible for extra credit, you must not miss more than two class sessions during the semester

## **University Policies & Resources**

### **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>. 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.).

### **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 (<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-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 the instructor or TAs in this class.

### **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.).

**Tentative Course Schedule\***

WEEK	TOPICS	READINGS
1	Intro to course, Purpose of research <b>Info Sheet Due</b>	Chapter 1 & 2
2	Intro to focus groups	Chapter 5
3	Focus groups continued, <b>Group Contract Due, IRB Assignment Due</b>	Chapter 9
4	Other qualitative methods, <b>Background Report Due</b>	Chapter 6, Chapter 11 pgs. 211-216
5	Measurement, <b>Focus Group Protocol Due</b>	Chapter 3 & Supplemental Reading
6	<b>Exam #1</b>	<b>Ch. 1, 2, 5, 9, 6, 3, and selected pages of Ch. 11</b>
7	Survey design	Chapter 8
8	Survey Design cont. & Sampling, <b>Focus Group Report Due, Midterm Group Eval Due</b>	Chapter 4
9	Sampling cont. & Content analysis, <b>Qualtrics Assignment Due</b>	Chapter 7



10	Descriptive statistics, <b>Survey Questions Due</b>	Chapter 11 pgs. 217-226; Supplemental Reading
11	Hypothesis Testing, <b>Descriptive Stats Due</b>	Supplemental Reading
12	Experimental design, <b>Inferential Stats Due</b>	Chapter 10
13	Report creation, <b>Survey Report Due</b>	Chapter 12
14 11/20	<b>Exam #2 Presentations, Final Group Eval, Final Report Due to Canvas by 11:59pm</b>	Ch. 8, 4, 7, 10, 12, selected pages of Ch.11, and supplemental readings
Final	<b>Final Exam 12/8 10am to 12pm</b>	<b>ALL CONTENT</b>

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