

Public Relations Research (PUR 3500: Section 1497)

Spring 2013 T 9:35 - 11:30AM / TR 10:40 – 11:30AM

Weimer Hall 1084

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(When you contact me via email,

Please be sure to include the course number PUR 3500 in the subject line)

Office Hours and by appointment: T/TR 11:40 AM - 12:30 PM

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is intended to provide opportunities to students to understand why research is essential in Public Relations campaign development, monitoring of PR programs and evaluation of campaign effectiveness. You will learn different types of qualitative research, quantitative research, traditional research, and online research. Through assignments and class-discussion, you will get hands-on experience of PR project. Also, at the end of semester, you will produce a high-quality of report as professional consultants.

The course imparts a managerial perspective rather than a technical skill approach to the use of a wide range of research methods. You are expected to display an ability to integrate research components into PR campaign development and to become prepared for higher level courses such as PR strategy and PR campaigns.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- To understand the importance and necessity of research in responding to potential/immerging public relations problems or utilizing potential opportunities
- To introduce you to basic concepts and methods of communication research
- To familiarize you with the contexts and uses of research in PR
- To become skilled in developing PR research and evaluation of PR programs
- To learn how to work as a group effectively and efficiently

REQUIRED READING

- Austin & Pinkleton (2006). Strategic Public Relations Management (2nd Edition).
 - Lecture notes and reading material will be available on Sakai
- ***NOTES: you are required to print the lecture notes out before each class session. The lecture notes do not have all of the information you need. Therefore, you need to attend classes and fill in the blanks in the notes. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to get notes from classmates.

SUPPLEMENTAL READING

- Wimmer & Dominick, Mass Media Research: An introduction, 8th edition, Thomson Wardsworth: 2006.

GRADING

| Grading Items | Grading | Point |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|--------------|
| Attendance & Class Participation | Individual | 20 |
| Pop Quizzes | Individual | 10 |
| Background Research & Research Plan | Group | 30 |
| Mid-term Exam | Individual | 30 |
| Final Exam | Individual | 30 |
| Final Research Project Report | Group | 50 |
| Final Presentation | Group | 20 |
| Peer Evaluation | Individual | 10 |
| Total Point | | 200 |

GRADING CRITERIA***Attendance & Participation (10%)***

You **MUST** treat class attendance as an academic appointment that must be met. Each day of class, you are responsible for initialing next to your name on the attendance sheet. It is your responsibility to sign the sheet at each class.

Please note that signing a friend's name to the sheet is academic dishonesty and will result in the loss of your ENTIRE attendance grade for the term, as well as other appropriate ramifications related to academic dishonesty.

Related to the number of absences permitted, each student will receive two unpenalized absences during the semester. For each unexcused absence past two, 5 points will be deducted. Four unexcused absences will be considered 0 out of 20 attendance & participation points. It will first be subtracted from the attendance portion of your grade, then OTHER PORTIONS of your grade as necessary. In order to get excused absences due to sickness, family emergencies, or attending conferences, you should submit related documentations such as official doctor's notes, flight tickets, official notes from the department, etc.

Participation Requirements

- Regularly attend class.
- Read appropriate materials BEFORE the assigned class session so you can contribute to class discussion in manner that can benefit everyone in class.
- Participate actively in discussions.
- Be seated at the start of class. Be prepared to remain seated for the ENTIRE period. Leaving early is disruptive to the rest of the class and me.

- Students may NOT complete work for other courses during class or read any materials unrelated to class (e.g. The Alligator, etc.)
- Laptops can be used for note taking. Using the Internet is not allowed.
- Texting and using the Internet with you phone are not allowed.
- Unprofessional/inappropriate behavior during class meetings may result in a significant reduction of class participation point.

Pop Quizzes (5%)

Unannounced and announced quizzed based on lecture notes will be given. The purpose of this category is to encourage students to prepare for the class in advance and to check your understanding of materials covered in the class. The general pop quiz format is a combination of true/false, multiple choice, and short answer.

Background Research & Research Plan (15%)

- You will need to submit a 7-page (at least) background research report about your client using marketing and media databases, and online resources (websites, blogs, and your favorite search engines).
- The report should include background research about your client (e.g. description and brief history of your client, mission statement of the client, a summary of news coverage about the client for the past six months, SWOT analysis of the client/industry, analysis of its competitors etc.) and the possible topics of the research project.
- Research needs and research questions should be included in the research plan. Description of research methods is also expected to articulate.
- The research plan should also include a timeline for research project.

Mid-term and Final Exam (15% Each)

A mid-term and final exam will be given to assess your comprehension of materials covered in the course. The exam will cover material from lectures and book chapters. The general exam format is a combination of true/false, multiple choice, and short answer. A make-up exam should be discussed with me in advance. Because no post-exam will be given, plan to take it early if you have a conflict with the exam time. A study guide will be provided.

Final Research Project Report (25%)

- You are responsible to conduct a focus group research or an in-depth interview (qualitative research) as well as a survey research (quantitative research) as a group project.
- The procedure and structure of the research project will be decided based on your group topic.
- Writing should be clear and visual aids (e.g. tables, graphs etc.) are expected to be included in the report.
- Everyone in your group is equally responsible for producing the final report.

Final Presentation (10%)

During the final week of the course, each agency will make a 15-minute formal presentation of research findings and campaign plan to their client and the class.

- Appropriate visual aids such as tables and graphics are required for presenting your final

report.

- The explanation and justification of the research procedure should be comprehensive.
- The explanation of main findings should be clear and precise.
- The limitations of the study and the suggestion for further studies should be included in the final report and the presentation.

Peer Evaluation (5%)

You are required to participate in many group projects and assignments in this course. In order to assess each team member's contributions to the project, twice peer evaluations will be conducted. Points will be reduced any member of a group who has not fulfilled his/her responsibilities according to the consensus of the other members of the group.

* You, based on a group decision, may fire one of the group members who does not carry a fair share of the work. The decision should be made carefully and you should consult with me before the final decision. Final approval of a firing will be up to me. The person, who is subject to it, will not receive any points for group projects. Group projects account for 50% of the final grade, meaning automatic failure.

LATE WORK

There will be no extensions of deadlines. Due dates have been announced in advance in the "timeline for classes" so that you can schedule other activities around these deadlines. After the deadline, 10% of the assignment's grade will be deducted each day the assignment is turned in late.

GRADING SCALE

It is recommended for you to calculate your own score whenever you get score. You may be able to check your score on the E-learning website.

Final grades will be calculated as followed:

200-185 = A, 184-180 = A-

179-174 = B+, 173-166 = B, 165-160 = B-

159-154 = C+, 153-146 = C, 145-140 = C-

139-134 = D+, 133-126 = D, 125-120 = D-

Less than 120 = E

*****NOTE: Final grades are not negotiable. After the course is over, asking for special consideration is never appropriate, and I will not respond to such inquiries.**

THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA HONOR CODE

I take academic honesty very seriously since cheating robs you of your education, devalues your degree and reflects poorly on the University of Florida. If you are not familiar with the University of Florida's honor code, please make sure to review it thoroughly since violations will be appropriately addressed in this course. The code may be found online at:

<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/honorcode.php>

Please note that plagiarism includes attempts to recycle your own work from another course and use it as original work. Also, note that failure to properly cite a source used in any assignment is considered plagiarism and will result in severe penalties. **Plagiarism will result in an automatic zero for the exam and an “E” for the overall course.** All university policies regarding academic honesty (Rule 6C1-4.017) will be strictly enforced.

Plagiarism often happens due to ignorance of how to properly cite sources, so I strongly recommend you consult an appropriate resource to make sure you are clear on what constitutes plagiarism. An excellent Internet source is the Owl at Purdue (<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/01/>).

CAMPUS RESOURCES

Here are selections of campus resources which may help you succeed in this course or in your college life in general:

- Computers – Dial 392-HELP or log onto <http://labs.circa.ufl.edu/> to find the hours and locations of campus computer labs.
- Communications School Library – The communications school library may be found next door to Gannett Auditorium inside Weimer Hall and has a wonderful collection of resources related to journalism and mass communication.
- Knight Division for Scholarships, Career Services and Multicultural Affairs – Provides information on scholarships and internships, 1080 Weimer. Talk with Mr. Charles Harris.
- Career Resource Center – The University provides free testing and counseling about careers. The placement office is in the Reitz Union (392-1601). The contact person for our college is Ms. Nadine Francis, who is a grad of the college.
- Division of Student Services – Contact this office at 392-1261 if you need to miss class due to an ongoing medical problem or family emergency. The office will send a courtesy letter to your instructors in your absence.
- Counseling Center (392-1575) – The center provides scheduled and drop-in appointments with counselors to discuss a range of personal issues. Find them online at: <http://www.counsel.ufl.edu>
- Disability Resources (392-1261) – Students requesting accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students will provide documentation to the student, who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation. You must meet take action immediately to ensure requested accommodations can be provided.

*****NOTE: All course guidelines, including grading criteria, are subject to change at the instructor’s discretion.**

Timeline for Classes

Below is very *tentative* schedule to follow. Please note that all dates are subject to change and are dependent upon the speed at which the material is covered in class as well as unforeseeable events such as guest-speaker's presentation.

| WEEK | DATE | REQUIRED READINGS | CLASS OVERVIEW | *ASSIGNMENT DUE |
|--------|--------------|-------------------|--|--|
| WEEK 1 | Jan. 8 - 10 | Ch. 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course introduction and overview of class requirements • Defining PR and PR Management | Jan. 10: Introduce yourself Form |
| WEEK 2 | Jan. 15 - 17 | Ch. 2 & 4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The uses of research in PR • Mission statement, Problem statement, and Situation analysis • Developing the research plan | |
| WEEK 3 | Jan. 22 - 24 | Ch. 5, 7 & 8 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research issues • Informal Research Methods • Focus Group | Jan. 24: Draft of Background Research |
| WEEK 4 | Jan. 29 - 31 | Ch. 6 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sampling I, II | |
| WEEK 5 | Feb. 5 - 7 | Ch. 9 & 10 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal Research Methods • Experiments • Content Analysis • Survey | |
| WEEK 6 | Feb. 12 - 14 | Ch. 11 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operationalization • Questionnaire Design I, II | |
| WEEK 7 | Feb. 19 -21 | Ch. 11 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questionnaire Design III • <i>Project</i>: Questionnaire Design and Refinement (Inter-agency meetings in class) | |
| WEEK 8 | Feb. 26 | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Project</i>: Questionnaire Design and Refinement (Inter-agency meetings in class) | Feb. 26: Background Research and Research Plan & 1st Peer Evaluation |
| | Feb. 28 | | MID-TERM EXAM | |
| WEEK 9 | Mar. 5 - 7 | | Spring Break – No Class | |

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|------------|--------------|--------|---|--|
| WEEK 10 | Mar. 12 - 14 | Ch. 12 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collecting, Analyzing, and Reporting Data <i>Project</i>: Collecting Data | |
| WEEK 11 | Mar. 19 - 21 | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SPSS Sessions | |
| WEEK 12 | Mar. 26 - 28 | Ch. 16 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writing and Presenting Research Finding Tips <i>Project</i>: Reporting the Research Findings | Mar. 26: SPSS data output |
| WEEK 13 | Apr. 2 - 4 | Ch. 16 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writing and Presenting Research Finding Tips <i>Project</i>: Preparing for the presentation | Apr. 4: Draft of Research Report |
| WEEK 14 | Apr. 9 | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project Day – No Class | |
| | Apr. 11 | | FINAL TERM EXAM | |
| WEEK 15 | Apr. 16 | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project Day – No Class | |
| | Apr. 18 | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation of Research Project | |
| WEEK 16 | Apr. 23 | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation of Research Project | Apr. 25: Final Report of Research & 2nd Peer Evaluation (by 5:00 PM) |

Your signature:

Please sign below to certify that you have read and understand the content of this document, including all the policies it spells out.

I hereby certify that I have read and understood all the policies and procedures spelled out in the Course Syllabus for course PUR 3500, Public Relations Research. Furthermore, I agree to abide by all of these policies and procedures. Most specifically, I certify that I understand:

- how final grades are computed
- that no assignment submissions or resubmissions will be accepted after the final date specified by the instructor
- that there will be no reconsideration of grades for any reason once the semester is over
- that plagiarism in all its forms is cheating
- that I will receive a failing grade in this course if I cheat and that there will be no “second chances” given

Print name: _____

Date: _____

Sign: _____