

**College of Journalism and Communications – Department of Public Relations
Spring 2014 – PUR 3500, Section 1497 — Public Relations Research (☼)**

Instructor: Jorie Scholnik, M.Ed., Ed.S., NCC
Adjunct Professor, Department of Public Relations

Contact Information: jscholnik@gmail.com
Note: Please allow a full 24 hours on weekdays for a response. I will try my best to return emails sent over the weekend, but plan on any email sent after 4 p.m. on Friday to be returned on Monday. Please do not email me through Sakai.

Office: 3059 Weimer Hall

Office hours: Thursday, 1:45 – 4:45 p.m.
Other times can be available by appointment.

Class meetings: Tuesdays – 3rd & 4th period (9:35 – 11:30 a.m.)
Thursdays – 4th period (10:40 – 11:30 a.m.)

Class location: Weimer 1084

A Sakai discussion forum is activated to post and answer general questions related to the class. This allows for an open discussion on class matters, and students frequently have the same questions about the class project. The instructor will log in to read and answer these questions every afternoon, except Saturdays and Sundays. Note that your name will be associated with what you post and it will be viewable by everyone in the class. The instructor's email address should be used to communicate a student's/group's personal issues.

(☼) This syllabus is subject to change as the professor deems appropriate and necessary.

Course description: PUR 3500 provides an introduction to and experience with social science research methods used in public relations. The focus is on using applied research for public relations program/campaign management—planning, monitoring, and evaluating.

Course objectives: Upon successful completion of this course, students should accomplish the following:

1. To gain knowledge of the social scientific research perspective.
2. To learn the strengths and limitations of qualitative and quantitative research methods.
3. To become aware of the different uses of research in public relations.
4. To understand, design, implement, and present an applied research project.
5. To become familiar with the SPSS software.

Prerequisites: A minimum of “C” in PUR 3000 and statistics; junior standing in the college. If you do not have these prerequisites, you are advised to drop this class. Failure to do so or to obtain the instructor's permission to remain in the course may mean the departmental office will drop you. In addition, it is fully expected that students will use knowledge gained in earlier statistics courses as the basis for this class.

Method of instruction: This course is learner-centered, which means that class time will consist of discussions about the readings, interactive PowerPoints, applied research exercises and hands-on instruction to engage in the learning process. Inquiry about the group project should also be expected so please stay on top of the assignments and be aware of ALL your group members' efforts. It is expected that students read the textbook outside of class prior to the corresponding class period because the instructor will rarely simply recount what is stated in the readings, but rather use the material as a springboard for expanded discussion. There will be an emphasize *interactivity* and *collaboration*. Students are treated like team members in the professional world so the expectations will match accordingly. This course is outcomes-based, and you will be evaluated primarily on your ability to transfer the theory and knowledge shared in class into workable solutions.

Laptop policy: Students should be prepared to take notes by hand. All PowerPoints will be posted on Sakai the night before class. This will allow plenty of time to print out the slides for class. Based on exam results from previous semesters, students scored higher if their undivided attention was on the material being presented. If laptops are preferred for a class activity, the instructor will give advance notice. During such activities, surfing the Internet, checking email, playing games, and other activities not related to class are prohibited.

Reading assignments: While there is one required textbook with designated readings, additional required readings may be assigned, as needed. A specific reading schedule is listed at the end of this syllabus. **Assigned readings should be completed prior to class** in order to intelligently engage in class discussions. Again, it is essential that you keep up with the readings and come to class with the concepts in your memory and in your written notes. **Students may quickly fall behind because each chapter contains a lot of information.**

Not all of the materials that you read will be discussed or explained in class. Therefore, if you need further explanation or clarification please take advantage of the posted office hours. If you have a problem, see the professor sooner, not later.

Students, particularly public relations majors, should consider regularly reading and taking advantage of special student discounts for the following publications: *Public Relations Tactics*, *Communication World* (available through IABC membership), *PR Week* (a weekly tabloid), *The Wall Street Journal*, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Economist*, *London Times*, *Financial Times*, etc.

Required book:

Wimmer, D., & Dominick, J.R. (2014). *Mass Media Research: An introduction (10th ed.)*. Boston, MA: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning.

Recommended book (not needed for class assignments):

Payne, K.D. (2011). *Measure what matters: Online tools for understanding customers, social media, engagement, and key relationships*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Son.

Additional required readings: As assigned and made available on Sakai

Online course administration — e-Learning in Sakai: <http://lss.at.ufl.edu/> will be used to post course announcements, materials (e.g., PowerPoint files, additional readings, handouts, assignment guidelines, evaluation forms), and grades. For instance, an electronic file of this syllabus will be posted on Sakai. You can access the site by using your GatorLink username and password. It is expected that students are checking Sakai daily. Students will be held accountable for any course updates announced on Sakai.

Course professionalism: The College of Journalism and Communications is a professional school and professional decorum is expected at all times. Therefore, all students and the professor adhere to workplace norms for respectful interaction. **Students are expected to arrive on time, not leave early unless prior permission is granted, and wait for the class to end before packing to leave.**

Further, students are expected to conduct themselves in an honest, ethical, and courteous manner — with classmates and with the professor. Eating, drinking, and privately chatting in class do not demonstrate professional behavior. Chatting while the instructor or another student is talking is unacceptable behavior; such actions can result in being asked to leave the classroom and will result in a lowering of your class participation grade.

Cell phones and other electronic devices must be turned off completely during class; vibrate is not considered off. In the event of an emergency situation, notify the professor at the start of class.

Class Project: The class project will focus on the crisis management of Beyond Petroleum (BP), a British oil giant, during and after its Gulf of Mexico oil spill in 2010. This unprecedented oil spill in U.S. history tarnished BP’s reputation in the United States, and to date, BP is still making efforts to repair its brand reputation. The project includes two parts: part I focuses on the effectiveness of BP’s responses and other parties’ reactions to BP surrounding the crisis from a public relations’ perspective; part II focuses on BP’s post-crisis efforts to rebuild its reputation, which continues even until today. In particular, students will evaluate the ongoing campaign addressing the recovery efforts and tourism promotion of the affected Gulf Coast Region.

Course evaluation: Evaluation in this course will be based on the student’s performance in four major areas, each of which is a portion of the final grade. These areas include weekly attendance and active participation, two exams, four assignments, and a final project. The area and allocations for each are as follows:

		Percentage Allocation
Class attendance and active participation		10%
Two exams (10% each)		20%
First assignment		10%
Second assignment		05%
Third assignment		15%
Fourth assignment		05%
Final Project:	Quantitative research findings	15%
	Final executive summary	10%
	Peer evaluation	10%
Total:		100%

The majority of each student’s grade centers around submitting written reports of a research project, which will be developed by the different groups formed. Participation in the group effort will be closely monitored, especially through peer evaluations. **Prior to the due date for every assignment, each group member will complete peer evaluations, which will account for 10 percent of the final grade.** Thus, members of a group may receive a different grade at the end of the course. Be aware that investing a comparable amount of time and effort in the development of the research project will impact your group performance and your individual grade.

Simply put, the quality of your participation in group projects will determine your individual grade. If your peers evaluate you poorly, your individual grade will be up to 10 percent less than the rest of the members of your group. This is to emphasize the importance of your active participation in the group effort.

The grading scale for the course is as follows:

Grading Scale:	A	92-100%
	A-	90-91%
	B+	87-89%
	B	82-86%
	B-	80-82%
	C+	77-79%
	C	72-76%

C-	70-71%
D+	67-69%
D	62-66%
D-	60-62%
E	below 60%

Letter grades for this course will be based on the total points earned over the term. For further information about grades and grading policy, please consult: <http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html>

(*) The two exams during the term will be held during normal class periods. Exams are designed to test the student's knowledge of the main ideas covered in the assigned readings, class lectures, class discussions, and handouts. If there are guest speakers, questions could come from their presentations too. **The exams will be multiple-choice and non-cumulative.** Exam grades will be posted on Sakai. Students will have the opportunity to suggest exam questions during class sessions and on Sakai.

There are no make-up exams: If you miss an exam you will receive a grade of zero for that test. Documented exceptions for extreme circumstances will be considered and should be discussed with the instructor prior to the exam.

Assignments

- First Assignment:** **DUE 2/4/2014** – *Situation Analysis* (minimum of 15 double-spaced pages, 12-point Times Roman font, 1" margins): The oil spill crisis, BP's response and other parties' reactions will be examined and supported by secondary research and a brief conversation analysis. The paper should include academic and/or trade (professional and news media) references that follow the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. The components of this analysis are: problem/opportunity statement, background of the situation, communication techniques and efforts, strategic key messages, targeted publics, conversation analysis, and SWOT analysis of the campaign (i.e., strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats).
- Second Assignment:** **DUE 2/13/2014** – *Qualitative Planning*: Design the qualitative research methodology for the BP project, which includes a purpose statement, description of the method (e.g., focus groups, in-depth interviews, etc), research protocol (stages of the process), instrument construction (present a set of questions to be asked to participants), sampling technique and sample, data gathering process and analysis protocol. The class will need to fill out some forms and seek the approval of the UF Institutional Review Board (IRB) for conducting research with human subjects.
- Third Assignment:** **DUE 3/16/2014** – *Qualitative Execution & Reporting*: Report the qualitative research findings and provide an in-depth analysis, including method used and brief research protocol (stages of the research process), sample description (demographics), summary of findings (use verbatim quotes to illustrate findings), interpretation, and limitations/future quantitative research.
- Fourth Assignment:** **DUE 3/27/2014** – *Quantitative Planning*: Design the quantitative research methodology, which includes a purpose statement, description of the method (e.g., survey), research protocol (stages of the process), instrument construction (present a set of questions to be asked to participants), sampling technique and sample, data gathering process and analysis. This portion of the project will also involve the use of Qualtrics.
- Final Report:** **DUE 4/22/2014** – *Quantitative Execution and Reporting, and Executive Summary*: Final executive summary intended to be presented to a fictitious client (in this case, BP), which includes highlights of the situation analysis, qualitative research findings,

quantitative research findings, and recommendations for enhancing public relations techniques and efforts. I would advise you to see the Bateman team's executive summaries (only the research component) as examples of what is expected for this final assignment. Also, each team member must submit evaluations of their peers with this final assignment.

Policies and assignments: The University of Florida Honor Code applies to all work related to this class (complete code at the end of the syllabus). All students are expected to be ethical, honorable and adhere to standards of conduct appropriate for a community of scholars. Students are expected to attend every class, arrive on time, and participate in class discussions. Assigned readings should be completed prior to class, and students should be prepared to discuss the assigned material. Any material discussed in class and/or covered in the assigned readings may be included on examinations. Students will not be allowed to make up exams. Exceptions to this policy will be limited to documented circumstances (as defined by the professor) and at the discretion of the professor. Students arriving more than 10 minutes late to an exam will not be allowed to take the exam.

Attendance policy: Attendance is required. Absences count from the first class meeting. **More than three absences during the semester will be considered "excessive absences."** You are responsible for signing the attendance sheet every class period as well as notifying me of the cause of your absence for a class meeting. If you forgot to sign the attendance sheet, it will not be up for debate after the class ends. After three absences, I will deduct five points from your 100-point attendance grade. Therefore, if you miss four class periods, a 95/100 will be calculated as 10 percent of your grade, etc. For further information on UF' attendance policy, please consult: <http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationattendance.html>).

Students with challenges: I am committed to helping students with special challenges overcome difficulties with comprehending the subject matter, while abiding by the standard code of confidentiality. In order to address academic needs, I must be informed of the student's circumstance at the beginning of the semester *before* performance becomes a factor. This is not to imply that standards of fairness will not be generally applied when evaluating student work; only that reasonable and appropriate measures will be taken to ensure that officially recognized challenges do not become a hindrance to a student's ability to succeed in this course. Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation.

Other important notes:

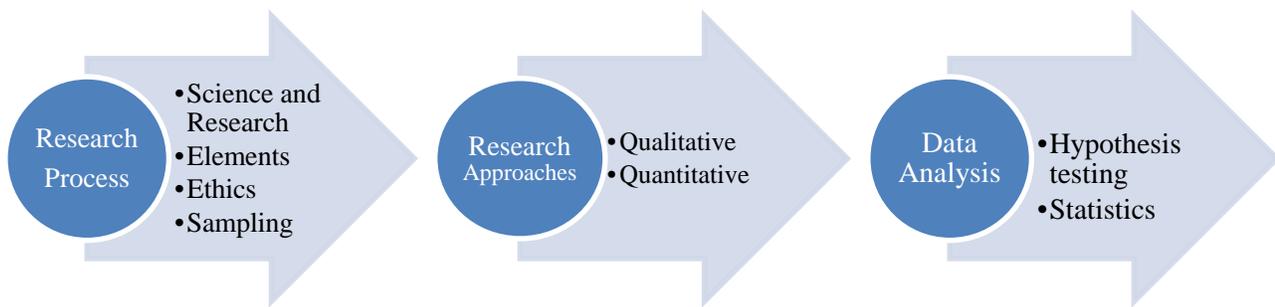
- The professor reserves the right to make changes, if necessary, to the grading system, schedule, or other matters pertaining to the class.
- The professor may be reached via email, but please be aware that the professor will not be able to respond immediately to your communication. As a rule, allow a full 24 hours for a response. Therefore, barring an emergency situation, it is advisable to contact the instructor well in advance of an exam or a deadline in order to give the professor adequate time to respond.
- Phones are not allowed to be used during class. Please do not bring food into the classroom.
- Students are not permitted to bring guests to class unless special arrangements have been made with the professor prior to class.
- If you notice yourself having trouble in the course, it is crucial that you see me immediately. Please feel free to approach me about any concerns or comments you might have about this class. I will be happy to meet with you during my office hours, or by appointment.
- You are expected to arrive promptly for class, fully prepared to discuss the assigned readings. While I understand the problems created by a large campus, it is your responsibility to arrive to class in a timely manner. Therefore my good nature extends only 10 minutes. Anyone arriving more than 10 minutes late for class will be noted as absent, and his or her class participation grade will suffer as a result.
- Any evidence of plagiarism or cheating will result in an "E" for the course and possible disciplinary action.
- Do not submit the same work to more than one class without prior written permission from both instructors. Do not adapt work from another class for this class without my prior written permission. Do not adapt

someone else's work and submit it as your own. This course requires original work, created at this time, for this purpose.

- Spelling counts. So does grammar, punctuation and professional presentation techniques.
- **An assignment turned in past the deadline will be penalized one letter grade for each weekday it is late.** This is a business where deadlines count. You can't make excuses to your boss or a client if your work is late.
- In addition to the required and recommended readings, you are expected to maintain comprehensive class notes because class lectures often contain information that is not contained in the readings. You will be tested on this information on examinations.
- Phone number and contact site for university counseling services and mental health services:
<http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>; 352-392-1575

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE AND READINGS

Figure 1: Outline of the Research Process in Public Relations



Week/Dates (Mon – Sun)	Class Discussion	Readings	Assignment Due/Note
Week 1 (1/6 – 1/12)	T: Course introduction Understanding research reports and search engine techniques R: Public relations research; Overview of the applied research project	Syllabus & other course materials in Sakai	Become familiar with UF library system
Week 2 (1/13 – 1/19)	T: Career research Science and research R: Situation analysis	Article on Sakai Chapter 1 Handout	Email group members by Wednesday at 5 p.m. Work on group project
Week 3 (1/20 – 1/26)	T: Elements of research and ethics R: Situation analysis (continued)	Chapter 2-3	Work on group project

Week 4 (1/27 – 2/2)	T: Qualitative research methods R: Focus groups & interviewing continued Qualitative research planning	Chapter 5	
Week 5 (2/3 – 2/9)	T: Coding Qualitative planning handout Sampling techniques R: IRB Procedures and informed consent	Handout Chapter 4	<i>First assignment due: Situation Analysis</i>
Week 6 (2/10 – 2/16)	T: Feedback on situation analysis Content analysis R: Qualitative research execution Exam Review	Chapter 6 Handout	<i>Second assignment due: Qualitative research planning</i> Study for exam
Week 7 (2/17 – 2/23)	T: Work Day Thursday: Second Exam	Chapters 1-6 and class notes	Work on group project
Week 8 (2/24 – 3/2)	T: Surveys and Qualtrics R: Longitudinal research	Chapter 7 Chapter 8	Work on group project
Week 9 – SPRING BREAK! ENJOY! (3/3 – 3/9)	N/A	N/A	Work on group project if needed
Week 10 (3/10 – 3/16)	T: Experimental research Qualitative Execution work day (if there is time) R: Qualitative execution work day	Chapter 9	Third assignment due Sunday: Qualitative Execution

Week 11 (3/17 – 3/23)	T: Quantitative Planning Introduction to statistics R: Hypothesis Testing	Handout Chapter 10 Chapter 11	Work on group project
Week 12 (3/24 – 3/30)	T: Statistical Procedures Feedback on qualitative execution Intro to SPSS R: Quantitative execution Feedback on Quantitative Research Plan	Chapter 12 Handout	Fourth assignment due: Quantitative Planning
Week 13 (3/31 – 4/6)	T: Research application in public relations R: exam review	Chapter 16	Work on group project Study for second exam
Week 14 (4/7 – 4/13)	Tuesday: Second Exam R: SPSS continued and data analysis		Work on group project
Week 15 (4/14 – 4/20)	T: Executive Summaries The remainder of Tuesday and Thursday will be dedicated to working on your project and meeting with your instructor		Work on group project
Week 16 (4/21 – 4/23) Last day of class on Tuesday.	Discussion in class about your experience conducting and reporting qualitative and quantitative research		Final Executive Summary and Final Peer Evaluations due

Online course evaluation process: Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course based on 10 criteria. These evaluations are conducted online 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>.

The University of Florida Honor Code was voted on and passed by the Student Body in the Fall 1995 semester. The Honor Code reads as follows:

Preamble: In adopting this Honor Code, the students of the University of Florida recognize that academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. Students who enroll at the University commit to holding themselves and their peers to the high standard of honor required by the Honor Code. Any individual who becomes aware of a violation of the Honor Code is bound by honor to take corrective action. A student-run Honor Court and faculty support are crucial to the success of the Honor Code. The quality of a University of Florida education is dependent upon the community acceptance and enforcement of the Honor Code.

The Honor Code: We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity. 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 about academic honesty, contact, Student Judicial Affairs, P202 Peabody Hall, 392-1261.

You can review UF's academic honesty guidelines in detail at:
<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/studentguide/studentrights.php#academichonestyguidelines>