



**PUR 3500**  
**Public Relations Research (#6018)**  
**Fall 2015**

Department of Public Relations  
College of Journalism and Communications  
University of Florida

Class Meeting: T 5-6 (11:45 a.m. – 1:40 p.m.) Weimer Hall 1092  
TH 6 (12:50 – 1:40 p.m.)

Professor: Eunice Kim, Ph.D.

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Office: Weimer Hall 2084, (352)392-5059

Office Hours: W 3-4 (9:35 – 11:30 a.m.) or by appointment or by appointment

### Course Description

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Welcome to Public Relations Research! This course is designed to introduce public relations students to social science research methods, with a focus on the application of those methods to public relations. This course is intended to help students understand why research is essential in identifying problems and issues of concerns, guiding strategic planning, message development, and evaluating public relations campaigns.

By the end of the course, you will:

- Understand of the role of research in public relations management.
- Understand ethical concerns in conducting research.
- Analyze issues related to measurement in public relations research and make appropriate measurement choices.
- Gain hands on experience, including defining the research problems, collecting primary and secondary data, analyzing data and interpreting the results, and presenting conclusions.
- Learn application of research methods and techniques to current public relations.
- Write persuasive research reports and deliver the results successfully in a professional oral presentation.

### Textbook

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- Stacks, D.W. (2011). *Primer of Public Relations Research*, (2nd Ed.). New York: Guilford

### Course Website

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- All announcements, assignments, and grades will be posted on Canvas).
- Be sure you have a valid email address connected with Canvas. It is your responsibility to check Canvas regularly.

## Class Format & Expectations

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The instructor will use an interactive lecture/discussion approach. So students must come to class prepared and participate. Please be prepared for in-class discussions and exercises that will evaluate your understanding of these readings. It is also in students' long-term interest to prepare thoroughly for each class because the material is cumulative. In-class activities will be sometimes conducted in order to facilitate the learning process.

Every student is expected to participate actively. There are no wrong questions. Throughout your academic career you've heard this phrase. But in this class, it is imperative that you believe it.

## Evaluation

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Your evaluation in this course will be based on the following components:

Team research report and presentations (3)	225 points	45%
Exams (3)	225 points	45%
Attendance and in-class assignments	50 points	10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>500 points</b>	<b>100%</b>

Final letter grades will be assigned based on your final point total at the end of the semester.

Letter Grade	100 Scale (100%)	500 Scale (total points for this class)
A	94-100%	470-500 points
A-	90-93.9%	450-469 points
B+	87-89.9%	435-449 points
B	84-86.9%	420-434 points
B-	80-83.9%	400-419 points
C+	77-79.9%	385-399 points
C	74-76.9%	370-384 points
C-	70-73.9%	350-369 points
D+	66-69.9%	330-349 points
D	64-66.9%	320-329 points
D-	60-63.9%	300-319 points
E	Below	0-299 points

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 435 through 449.999). My hope is that you will focus on learning rather than grades in this class. **What I won't do is negotiate grades.** My goal is to be fair to everyone in the class, which means I will hold everyone to the same standards.

## 1. Team Research Report and Presentations (15% × 3 = 45%)

### Research Report and Presentations (13% × 3 = 39%):

Because public relations professionals work in teams, you will be placed in “research teams” throughout the semester to develop a public relations research report (details will be given in class). Each team will submit **THREE (3) research projects** during the semester. Each team will apply various types of research methodologies and techniques—such as (1) secondary (Internet) research, (2) focus group, and (3) survey—to the development of a strategic public relations research plan.

You are on agency research team (of approx. 4-5 team members depending on enrollment). The grade is a team grade, meaning that each team member receives the same grade. For each research project, the grade is divided between the team research report grade (55 points) and the team presentation grade (10 points) (65 points × 3 = total 195 points).

Project due and presentation dates:

- **Secondary Research (Internet Research) Project: October 1<sup>st</sup> (Thursday)**
- **Focus Group Research Project: November 5<sup>th</sup> (Thursday)**
- **Survey Research Project: December 8<sup>th</sup> (Tuesday)**  
- Survey Data Due: November 12<sup>th</sup> (Tuesday)

Each group should provide a report based on the findings and make a 10-minute presentation regarding the research findings, with an additional 5 minutes for questions from the class. The question and answer sessions at the end of each presentation are a very important part of this course. Be prepared for questions. Have responses planned – maybe even supplementary slides.

All research reports and presentation slides should be submitted to Canvas under “Assignment” by the beginning of class on the due date. The research report and presentation grade rubric will be available on Canvas.

I will ask individuals to give audience feedback via forms/surveys that I will provide to the class. This feedback will then be given to each team in order to help them self-assess their performance.

### Peer Evaluation (6%):

Peer evaluation will be conducted to assess each group member’s contributions to the project. While your team research report and presentation grades are the same for all team members, your peer evaluation grade (30 points) differs. Your peer evaluation grade is subject to adjustments according to your average peer evaluation.

If your team does not think you have put forth the same amount of effort and the same quality of work as they have throughout the length of the project, your peer evaluation will negatively influence your final grade. **If you have any problems with your group or a particular group member, you need to address and resolve it immediately.**

We respect your right to privacy, so you may print out the form, fill it out in private, and bring it to hand in on our last day of class. We will have a sealed envelope and these forms are CONFIDENTIAL. Not turning one in on the due date is a 10-point deduction.

## 2. Exam (15% × 3 = 45%)

Exam is designed to test your knowledge and application of the main ideas covered in the textbook, assigned readings, lecture material, class discussions, team presentations, videos, and guest lectures.

**You are responsible for everything covered** in the previously stated areas.

Throughout the semester there will be **THREE exams**, which will be held in class during the regularly scheduled class period. The exams will be primarily made up of multiple-choice questions, true/false, and short answer questions.

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

Exam Dates:

- **Exam 1: September 24<sup>th</sup> (Thursday)**
- **Exam 2: October 27<sup>th</sup> (Tuesday)**
- **Exam 3: December 3<sup>rd</sup> (Thursday)**

## 3. Attendance and In-class Assignments (10% total)

There is a high correlation between regular class attendance and the best grade. Each student is allowed two absences for the semester without penalty to the final attendance point total. **Unexcused absences beyond TWO will result in a loss of 20 points per absence and may directly affect the student's grade.** Students are responsible for any information missed during an absence.

Your reactions, and your questions, your constant participation is critical. For some class sessions, you will be asked to prepare for discussion.

To encourage you to learn how to apply concepts learned in class and research methods into public relations practice, there will be some in-class assignments. These assignments will consist of questions based on the lecture and/or reading assigned for the class. Laptops or smartphones are allowed to participate in the in-class activities, but are NOT to be allowed for texting, checking emails or surfing the Web.

## General Course Policies

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### Absences

In order to receive an excused absence, you must let me know you will miss class **BEFORE** the class meets except in certain (rare) emergency situations. Explain why you will not be in class, and bring in a written documentation to verify your excuse when you come back to class. Make sure to make a photocopy of the documentation if you need it for other classes.

Excused absences include:

- Religious holidays (only the holiday).
- Documented, dated, necessary medical excuse or official documented legal excuse (a dated doctor's note or prescription). The Student Health Center will provide you a specific kind of note that indicates they think you should've missed class or will need to miss additional days.
- University competitive events (that means athletes).

The following is a partial list of the types of situations that are NOT considered excused absences:

- Social events, meetings, entertaining out-of-town guests, holiday/travel plans, weddings, etc.

### Assignments

All assignments are to be typed. Team and individual assignments and are **due by the beginning of class on the due date**. If you have a conflict with the deadline, alert me and turn it in early.

Late work policy:

Advertising is a deadline business. All due dates for assignments, once set, are final. If an assignment or activity is not received prior to the deadline, **a grade of ZERO** will be assigned unless PRIOR arrangements are approved by me. If prior arrangements are not possible due to the circumstances of the absence, an excused absence must be requested in writing and documentation provided for verification. If an excused absence is granted, late work may be accepted with penalties assessed for late submission.

### 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 it 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, come see me during office hours or we can schedule an alternative time.

### Professional Courtesy

As a courtesy to your instructor and to your classmates, please make sure at the beginning of each class period that your cell phones are turned **OFF**. In-class laptop usage is restricted to taking notes about this particular class. Inappropriate use of a laptop—using the internet for reasons not related to this class—will not be accepted.

### **Policy on Scholastic Dishonesty**

The University defines academic dishonesty as cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, falsifying academic records, and any act designed to avoid participating honestly in the learning process. Scholastic dishonesty also includes, but is not limited to, providing false or misleading information to receive a postponement or an extension on a test or other assignment, and submission of essentially the same written assignment for two courses without the prior permission of the instructor. By accepting this syllabus, you have agreed to these guidelines and must adhere to them. Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Please read more information on academic dishonesty at <https://www.dso.ufl.edu/scr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>

### **Students with Disabilities**

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 me when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

### **Religious Holy Days**

By UF policy, a student who misses classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day must notify me of his or her pending absence prior to the date of a religious holy day, so that arrangements can be made to complete an assignment or activity within a reasonable time after the absence.

### **Online Course Evaluation**

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 2-3 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>.

### **Tentative Nature of the Syllabus**

I reserve the right to change and/or add readings throughout the semester. Furthermore, I reserve the right to change and or move around scheduled lectures in order to facilitate for potential unplanned events (cancellations or guest speakers). If changes in the schedule are necessary, students will be held responsible for such changes, which will be announced in class ahead of time.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

*The course outline is subject to change*

### Week 1:

T: 8/25- Welcome & Course Overview

TH: 8/27: Understanding Research, Management of Research Chap.1-2

### Week 2:

T: 9/1-Measuring Outcomes/Team Final Project Brief Chap.3

TH: 9/3-Measuring Outcomes (con't)

### Week 3:

T: 9/8- Secondary Research/Discussion of Secondary Research Project Chap.7

TH: 9/10-Secondary Research (con't)

### Week 4:

T: 9/15- Qualitative Research Chap.9

TH: 9/17-Qualitative Research (con')

### Week 5:

T: 9/22-Qualitative Research (con't)/Exam 1 Review Chap.8

TH: 9/24-**Exam 1**

### Week 6:

T: 9/29- Sampling Chap.10

TH: 10/1- **Secondary Research (Internet Research) Presentation**

➤ *Secondary Research Project Report Due*

### Week 7:

T: 10/6- Survey Research/Discussion of Focus Group Project Chap.11

TH: 10/8-Survey Research (con't)/

### Week 8:

T: 10/13-Questionnaire Design

TH: 10/15-Introduction to Qualtrics

### Week 9:

T: 10/20-Content Analysis Chap.6

TH: 10/22-Catching up in lecture/Exam 2 Review

### Week 10:

T: 10/27- **Exam 2**

TH: 10/29-Experimental Research Chap.12

### Week 11:

T: 11/3- Experimental Research (con't)

TH: 11/5-**Focus Group Research Presentation**

➤ *Focus Group Project Report Due*

**Week 12:**

T: 11/10-Descriptive Statistics/Discussion of Survey Research Project

Chap.4

TH: 11/12-Statistical Reasoning and Data Analysis (SPSS)

➤ *Survey Data Due*

**Week 13:**

T: 11/17- Statistical Reasoning and Data Analysis (SPSS) (con't)

TH: 11/19-How to Write a Research Report

Chap.14 & 15

**Week 14:**

T: 11/24- Group Meeting Day

TH: 11/26- **No Class- Thanksgiving**

**Week 15:**

T: 12/1- Exam 3 Review/Project Q & A

TH: 12/3-**Exam 3**

**Week 16:**

T: 12/8- **Survey Research Presentation**

➤ *Survey Research Project Report Due*

➤ *Peer Evaluations Due in Class*