

**College of Journalism and Communications – Department of Public Relations
Fall 2012 – PUR 3500, Section 7298 — Public Relations Research**

<u>Instructor:</u>	Sarab Kochhar Doctoral Student, Department of Public Relations
Office:	G 031 Weimer Hall – skkochhar@ufl.edu
Class meets:	MWF 5 th period (11:45 a.m. – 12:50 p.m.)
Class location:	<i>AHA! Innovation CoLab</i> – Third floor of Weimer Hall, Flanagan Wing
Office hours:	Monday: 10.30 am to 11.45 am; other times by appointment

Course description: PUR 3500 provides an introduction to and experience with social science research methods used in public relations. This course is designed to introduce the role research can play in public relations, with a particular focus on how to collect, analyze, and present quantitative data. We will cover research methodologies, techniques, design, and analysis with a focus on the utility of data in Public Relations. This will provide opportunities to discuss the applied use of research and evaluation. 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 learner-centered course will primarily use class discussions, applied research exercises and final project, presentations, and hands-on instructions to engage in the learning process. We will rarely simply recount what is stated in the readings, but rather use them as a springboard for expanded discussion. We will emphasize *interactivity* and *collaboration* and classes will move in a seminar format much like the collaborations that operate in the professional world. 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**. It is essential that you keep up with the reading schedule and come to class with the assigned reading’s concepts in your memory and in your written notes. Not all of the materials that you read will be discussed or explained in class, therefore, if you need further explanations or clarifications please take advantage of the posted office hours. If you have a problem, see the professor sooner, not later.

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 American history

tarnished BP's reputation in the US, and to date, BP is still making efforts to repair its brand image. The project includes two parts: part I focuses on BP's responses and other parties' reactions to BP during the actual 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.

Reading assignments: While there is one required textbook with designated readings, additional required readings may be assigned, as needed. A specific reading schedule related to the publications is provided to students in this syllabus.

Students may quickly fall behind and, therefore, are strongly advised to stay current with the reading assignments. Assigned readings should be completed prior to class; students should come to class with the assigned readings' concepts both in memory and in written notes, i.e., prepared to discuss them intelligently in class.

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. (2011). *Mass Media Research: An introduction (9th ed.)*. Boston, MA: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning.

Additional required readings: As and when assigned and made available on Sakai

Online course administration — e-Learning in Sakai: <http://lss.at.ufl.edu/> will be used to administer the course communication, materials (e.g., PowerPoint files, additional readings, handouts, assignment guidelines, evaluation forms) and grades. For instance, an electronic file of this document will be posted on Sakai. You can access the site by using your GatorLink username and password. Please check the site for announcements and/or threads of comments from classmates, and the professor.

Course professionalism: The College of Journalism and Communications is a professional school and professional decorum is expected at all times. Therefore, **the students and the professor adhere to workplace norms for collegial and 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; manner mode or vibrate is not considered off. In the event of an emergency situation, notify the professor at the start of class. Laptops may be used only as a note-taking device. Surfing the Internet, checking or creating email, playing games, and other activities not related to class are strictly prohibited.

Course evaluation: The evaluation of coursework will be based on the student's performance in four major areas, each of which constitutes a proportion of the final grade. These include weekly attendance and active participation, two exams, three assignments, and 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 primary outcomes of this course are oral and written reports of a research project developed by the different groups formed. Your participation in the group effort will be closely monitored, especially through peer evaluations (for each assignment, each group member will complete peer evaluations). Thus, the members of a group may receive a different grade at the end of the course. Be aware that investing a comparable time and effort in the development of the research project will impact your group performance and your individual grade. The quality of your participation in-group projects will determine your individual grade. If your peers evaluate you poorly, your individual grade will be lesser by 10 percent or more 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 of the term will be held during the regularly scheduled class periods. Exams are designed to test the student's knowledge of the main ideas covered in each of the readings, handouts, guest speakers, and class discussions as specified in the syllabus. The exams will be multiple-choice and **non-cumulative**. Exam grades will be posted 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.

Assignments

- First Assignment:** **DUE 9/10/2012** – *Situation analysis* (minimum 15 double-spaced pages, Times Roman 12, margins 1”) supported by secondary research and a brief conversation analysis using an online application of your choice. The analysis 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 9/26/2012** – *Planning Phase of Qualitative Research Method*: Design qualitative research methodology, which include purpose statement, description of the method (e.g., focus group, 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 and analysis. We 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 10/17/2012** – *Execution & Reporting Phase of Qualitative Research Method*: Report qualitative research findings and 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 10/31/2012** – *Planning Phase of Quantitative Research Method*: Design quantitative research methodology, which include purpose statement, description of the method (i.e., 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 and analysis.
- Final Report:** **DUE 12/03/2012** – *Execution Phase and Writing of Quantitative Findings, and Summarizing*: Final executive summary intended to be presented to a fictitious client (in this BP), which includes highlights of the situation analysis, qualitative research findings, quantitative research findings, and recommendation for enhancing public relations techniques and efforts. We would advise to see Bateman team’s executive summaries (only the research component) as examples of what we expect for this final assignment at the Department of Public Relations. Also with this final assignment each team member must submit evaluations for their peers.

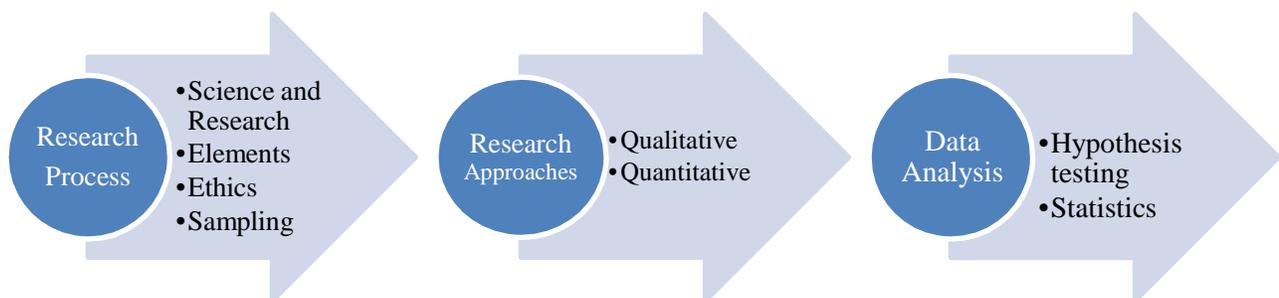
Policies and assignments: The University of Florida Honor Code applies to all work related to this class (complete code on page 7). All students are expected to be honorable and to observe standards of conduct appropriate to a community of scholars. Students are expected to attend every class, arrive 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 exceptional (as defined by the professor) circumstances 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.

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 also be reached via e-mail and the telephone, but please be aware that the professor will not be able to respond immediately to your communication. As a rule, allow up to 48 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 you.
- Students are not to consume food or beverages in the classroom or to use laptop computers for other than to take class notes or follow PowerPoint presentations. Mobile telephones are not allowed to use during class.
- 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 in 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.
- **Attendance policy:** Attendance is mandatory. Absences count from the first class meeting. After due warning, I may prohibit further attendance and subsequently assign a lower or failing grade for excessive absences; more than two 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 (for further information on attendance policy, please consult: <http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationattendance.html>).
- 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 passed 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. *Figure 1: Outline of the research process in public relations*



TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE AND READINGS

Date	Class Discussion	Readings	Assignment Due
Aug. 22 W	Introduction and Discussion of Syllabus		
Aug. 24 F	Science and Research	Chapter 1	
Aug. 27M	Formation of teams and explaining the class project		
Aug 29W	Elements of Research	Chapter 2	
Aug 31F	Work on Team Project		
Sept. 3M	No Class (Labor Day)		
Sep. 5W	Research Ethics	Chapter 3	
Sep. 7F	Work on Team Project		
Sep. 10M	Qualitative Research Methods	Chapter 5	First Assignment Due
Sep. 12 W	Qualitative Research Methods		
Sep. 14 F	Work on Team Project		
Sep. 17M	Sampling Messages and People	Chapter 4	
Sept. 19 W	Theory of Measurement (validity, reliability, levels of measurement)	Reading as assigned	
Sept. 21F	Work on Team Project		
Sept. 24 M	First Exam	Chapters 1-5	
Sept. 26 W	Content Analysis	Chapter 6	Second assignment due
Sept. 28 F	Work on Team Project		
Oct. 1 M	Survey Research	Chapter 7	
Oct. 3 W	Scales and Indexes	Reading as assigned	
Oct. 5 F	Work on Team Project		
Oct.8 M	Longitudinal Research	Chapter 8	
Oct. 10 W	Research Applications in Public Relations	Chapter 16	
Oct. 12 F	Work on Team Project		
Oct. 15 M	Experimental Research	Chapter 9	
Oct. 17 W	Introduction to Statistics	Chapter 10	Third Assignment Due
Oct. 19 F	Work on Team Project		
Oct. 22 M	Hypothesis Testing	Chapter 11	
Oct. 24W	Hypothesis Testing continued		
Oct. 26F	Work on Team Project		
Oct. 29M	Basic Statistical Procedures	Chapter 12	
Oct. 31W	Revision of the chapters 7-12		Fourth Assignment Due
Nov. 2F	Work on team project/exam preparation		
Nov. 5M	Second Exam	Chapters 7-12	
Nov. 7W	Writing and presenting the final	Reading as	

	research report	assigned	
Nov. 9F	No class (Home coming)		
Nov. 12M	No class (Veterans Day)		
Nov. 14W	Data Preparation	Reading as assigned	
Nov. 16F	Descriptive Statistics	Reading as assigned	
Nov. 19M	Work on Team Project		
Nov. 21W	No class (Thanksgiving)		
Nov. 23F	No class (Thanksgiving)		
Nov. 26M	SPSS		
Nov. 28W	SPSS		
Nov. 30F	Work on team project		
Dec. 3M	FINAL REPORT DUE by 10 am		

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>