

Spring 2014 – PUR 3500, Section 3028 — Public Relations Research

<u>Instructor:</u>	Ms. Tiffany Schweickart Department of Public Relations College of Journalism and Communications
Office:	2034 Weimer Hall – tschweickart@ufl.edu
Class meets:	MWF 5 th period (11:45 p.m. – 12:35 p.m.)
Class location:	1076 Weimer Hall
Office hours:	MW: 12:40 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. Other times by appointment

(Whenever you write an email to me, please be sure to include the course number PUR3500 in the subject line. For class project related issues, include your team name as well.)

Online course administration — e-Learning in Canvas: <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, etc.) and grades. For instance, an electronic file of this document will be posted on Canvas. Students will be responsible for keeping up with the class assignments and materials and monitoring their progress via student records on Canvas. You can access the site by using your GatorLink username and password.

Students will use SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) for data analysis. You are responsible for accessing the software. You can access SPSS/PC for Windows in our Weimer Hall labs. A free SPSS trial version can also be downloaded online.

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 qualitative and 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.

Reading assignments: While there is **ONE** required textbooks 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 textbook:

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

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

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. Privately chatting in class and using electronic devices not for class purposes 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 on silent. 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. **Such actions can result in being asked to leave the classroom and will result in a lowering of your class participation grade**

Course evaluation: The course grade will be based on the following components minus any penalties incurred as a result of failing to follow class rules:

Percentage Allocation

Class attendance and active participation	10%
First Exam	10%
Second Exam	10%
First assignment (class project)	10%
Second assignment (class project)	5%
Third assignment (class project)	15%
Fourth assignment (class project)	5%
Final report (class project) including: #1 Quantitative research findings	15%
#2 Final executive summary	5%
Peer evaluation (class project)	5%
Final Exam	10%
Total:	100%

The primary outcomes of this course are written reports of a class research project developed by the different teams formed. Your participation in the team effort will be closely monitored, especially through peer evaluations. Each team member will complete and submit **a hard copy of his/her peer evaluations for each assignment at the end of the semester.** Thus, the members of a team 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 team performance and your individual grade. The quality of your participation in the class project 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 team. This is to emphasize the importance of your active participation in the team effort.

All grades will be based on the following 100-point scale:

Grading Scale:	A	92-100%
	A-	90-91%
	B+	87-89%
	B	82-86%
	B-	80-81%
	C+	77-79%
	C	72-76%
	C-	70-71%
	D+	67-69%
	D	62-66%
	D-	60-61%
	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>

Note: The instructor does **NOT round grades up** or provide extra credit other than participation in designated research opportunities. If you are concerned about a grade received on an exam or assignment, please make an appointment with the instructor. **Grades will not be discussed after class or via email.**

Attendance Policy. Because what we do in class meetings is so integral to the course, prompt attendance at all class meetings is mandatory. **More than two absences** during the semester will be considered “excessive absences” and may result in a lower letter grade. For further information on attendance policy, please consult: <http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationattendance.html>.

Excused absences include university sponsored events, medical emergency/illness, jury duty, and military service. Official documentation is needed for any and all absences to be excused.

Attendance and participation grades will be posted on Canvas at the end of the semester. The instructor will evaluate your class attendance and participation based on your attendance records and your level of engagement in class.

NO LATE ASSIGNMENT WILL BE ACCEPTED.

Final Exam: The final exam of the term will be held in our classroom during the regularly scheduled class periods. The exam is based on readings in the textbook, class lectures, and discussions, students’ presentations, videos, other assigned readings, and lectures by guest speakers (if any). Whether or not materials in the textbooks are discussed in class, students are responsible for all assigned readings. **Exam questions will come from all of these sources.** Exam questions will be in the form of true/false, multiple choices, etc. **Exam study guide and grades will be posted on Canvas.**

Students arriving late to an exam will NOT be permitted to take the exam; students will receive a grade of ZERO for the exam. Possible exceptions may include properly documented medical emergencies or university-related travel provided upon return to class.

NO MAKEUP EXAMS OR EARLY EXAMS WILL BE GIVEN.

Class Project: The class project will focus on the **Comprehensive Support for STEM Students with Learning Disability (CS3LD)** a team of faculty members that received a National Science Foundation grant. The CS3LD research project is creating, testing, and refining a model designed to bolster support for undergraduate students with learning disabilities (LD) in the STEM/SBE fields. The participants engage in monthly workshops and create LD awareness projects designed to facilitate the development of positive self-efficacy. The ultimate goal of the CS3LD research project is to broaden the participation and achievement of post-secondary students with LD in these fields.

Students will be divided into several teams (usually 4-5 students per team). Each team will be asked to complete and **submit both an electronic & a print copy of each assignment listed below**. Each team should come up with their own *team name in the form of a PR agency name*. *A team leader will be assigned for each team*. The team leader will be responsible for guiding, managing, monitoring, and reporting the team’s progress throughout the entire class project. The team leader will be responsible for reporting team performance and issues to the instructor as well as communicating the instructor’s notes and feedback to each team members. Remember the team leader will be the primary person that the instructor communicates with.

The instructor will provide instruction handouts, supplementary readings, and other needed resources for each project assignment. **Each assignment should follow the APA style 6th ed.:** <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>

All materials above will be posted on Canvas in advance. *Do make sure you check Canvas and read every email from the instructor and from Canvas carefully!*

- First Assignment:** **DUE 9/18/2015 – *Situation analysis*** (5-10 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 major 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 10/2/2015 – *Planning Phase of Qualitative Research Method*:** Design qualitative research methodology, which include purpose statement, description of the method (i.e., indepth interviews), 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 may 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 10/30/2015 – *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 11/6/2015 – *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 12/4/2015 – *Execution Phase and Writing of Quantitative Findings, and Final executive summary*:**
- #1: Report quantitative research findings and analysis, including method used and brief stages of the research process, sample description (demographics), analysis of quantitative data, summary report of findings, interpretation, and limitations/future research.
- #2 Final executive summary intended to **be presented to a Comprehensive Support for STEM Students with Learning Disabilities (CS3LD) team and public relations faculty** which includes highlights of the situation analysis, qualitative research findings, quantitative research findings, and recommendation for enhancing public relations techniques and efforts.
- Peer Evaluation:** **Due 12/4/2015** – Peer evaluation form will be posted on Canvas.

Honor Code: 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.

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 instructor reserves the right to make changes, if necessary, to the grading system, schedule, or other matters pertaining to the class.**
- The instructor can be reached via email, but please be aware that the instructor will not be able to respond immediately to your communication. As a rule, allow up to 24-48 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 use laptop computers for other than to take class notes or follow PowerPoint presentations. Cell phones are not allowed to use during class.
- Students are not permitted to bring guests to class unless special arrangements have been made with the instructor prior to class. Students are not allowed to record class lectures or place/distribute class materials online without the instructor's permission.
- 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.
- **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.** 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. Make sure you **follow APA style (6th edition) in all your written assignments.**
- 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*



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>

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE AND READINGS

Course schedule is subject to change, as the instructor deems appropriate and necessary. Students should complete the reading assignments listed below prior to class.

Date	Class Discussion	Readings	Assignment Due
Week 1			
Aug. 24 M	Class overview	Syllabus	Introduction handout
Aug. 26 W	Understanding Research, implications for PR; Management of research in PR	Chapters 1 and 2	Class Exercise Chapter 1, Class Exercise Chapter 2
Aug. 28 F	Guest speaker-CS3LD; team assignments	Chapters 1 and 2	Prepare questions for guest speaker; bring class/personal schedule for team meetings
Week 2			
Aug. 31 M	Measuring Outcomes	Chapter 3	
Sep. 2 W	Measuring Outcomes	Chapter 3	Class Exercise Chapter 3
Sep. 4 F	Project Workday	Project Workday	Project Workday
Week 3			
Sep. 7 M	No Class: Labor Day	No Class: Labor Day	No Class: Labor Day
Sep. 9 W	Descriptive Statistical Reasoning and Computer analysis	Chapter 4	
Sep. 11 F	Descriptive Statistical Reasoning and Computer analysis	Chapter 4	Class Exercise Chapter 4
Week 4			
Sep. 14 M	Ethical Concerns in Public Relations Research	Chapter 5	
Sep. 16 W	Client visit	Client visit	Client visit
Sep. 18 F	Ethical Concerns in Public Relations Research	Chapter 5	1st Class Project Assignment
Week 5			

Sep. 21 M	Exam 1: Chapters 1-5	Exam 1: Chapters 1-5	Exam 1: Chapters 1-5
Sep. 23 W	Qualitative Research Methodology: Content Analysis	Chapter 6	
Sep. 25 F	Qualitative Research Methodology: Content Analysis	Chapter 6	Class Exercise Chapter 6
Week 6			
Sep. 28 M	Qualitative Research Methodology: Historical and Secondary Research Methods	Chapter 7	
Sep. 30 W	Qualitative Research Methodology: Case Studies	Chapter 8	Class Exercise Chapter 8
Oct. 2 F	Qualitative Research Methodology: Case Studies	Chapter 8	2nd Class Project Assignment
Week 7			
Oct. 5 M	Qualitative Research Methodology: Methods of Observing People	Chapter 9	
Oct. 7 W	Qualitative Research Methodology: Methods of Observing People	Chapter 9	
Oct. 9 F	Qualitative Research Methodology: Methods of Observing People	Chapter 9	
Week 8			
Oct. 12 M	Work day	Work day	Work day
Oct. 14 W	Work day	Work day	Work day
Oct. 16 F	Exam 2: Chapters 6-9	Exam 2: Chapters 6-9	Exam 2: Chapters 6-9
Week 9			
Oct. 19 M	Quantitative Research Methodology: Sampling Messages and People	Chapter 10	
Oct. 21 W	Client visit	Client visit	Client visit
Oct. 23 F	Quantitative Research Methodology: Sampling Messages and People	Chapter 10	Class Exercise 10

Week 10			
Oct. 26 M	Quantitative Research Methodology: Survey and Poll Methods	Chapter 11	
Oct. 28 W	Quantitative Research Methodology: Survey and Poll Methods	Chapter 11	Class Exercise 11
Oct. 30 F	Work day	Work day	3rd Class Project Assignment
Week 11			
Nov. 2 M	Work day	Work day	Work day
Nov. 4 W	Work day	Work day	Work day
Nov. 6 F	Homecoming: No Class	Homecoming: No Class	4th Class Project Assignment
Week 12			
Nov. 9 M	Quantitative Research Methodology: Experimental Method	Chapter 12	
Nov. 11 W	Veterans Day: No Class	Veterans Day: No Class	Veterans Day: No Class
Nov. 13 F	Quantitative Research Methodology: Experimental Method	Chapter 12	Chapter 12 Exercise
Week 13			
Nov. 16 M	Work day	Work day	Work day
Nov. 18 W	Quantitative Research Methodology: Statistical Reasoning and Computer Analysis	Chapter 13	
Nov. 20 F	Quantitative Research Methodology: Statistical Reasoning and Computer Analysis	Chapter 13	Chapter 13 Exercise
Week 14			
Nov. 23 M	Thanksgiving: No Class	Thanksgiving: No Class	Thanksgiving: No Class
Nov. 25 W	Thanksgiving: No Class	Thanksgiving: No Class	Thanksgiving: No Class
Nov. 27 F	Thanksgiving: No Class	Thanksgiving: No Class	Thanksgiving: No Class
Week 15			
Nov. 30 M	Work day	Work day	Work day
Dec. 2 W	Work day	Work day	Work day

Dec. 4 F	Work day	Work day	Final Report and Peer Evaluation
Last Week: Final Exam and Presentations			
Dec. 7 M	Exam 3	Exam 3	Exam 3
Dec. 9 W	Presentation to Client	Presentation to Client	Presentation to Client