

# PUBLIC RELATIONS RESEARCH

PUR 3500 / Section 0908 / Spring 2013  
MWF 8:30 a.m. - 9:20 a.m.

## INSTRUCTOR

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Office Hours — T 4-5, F 3 and by appointment

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course introduces you to mass media research concepts and methods, particularly as they apply to public relations professionals.

*Prerequisites* — This course builds upon information introduced in introductory public relations and statistics courses. Thus, a minimum of a C in PUR 3000 and STA 2023 are required. If you do not meet these requirements, the departmental office may drop you from this course.

## COURSE OBJECTIVES

At the end of the semester, you will...

- Understand why research is an indispensable part of the public relations process.
- Know how to conduct basic research using social science methods, and know how to present your results in a professional manner.
- Have experience working in a team to solve public relations problems.

## TEXTBOOKS

**Mass Media Research [REQUIRED]**

*Roger D. Wimmer & Joseph R. Dominick* — 10th Edition / ISBN 978-1-133-30733-4

**SPSS Survival Manual [SUPPLEMENTAL]**

*Julie Pallant* — 4th Edition / ISBN 978-0-335-24239-9

Additional readings will be assigned. These will be made available through the course website in e-Learning. Please check the site before each class: <http://lss.at.ufl.edu>

## ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING SCALE

Assignment	% of Final Grade	Due Date
Research Project	[60% total]	
Background Research & Research Plan	15%	Feb. 22
Data Collection	10%	March 29
Research Report	25%	April 19
Final Presentation	10%	April 22 & April 24
Mid-Term Exam	20%	Feb. 27
Quizzes	10%	Ongoing
Attendance & Participation	10%	Ongoing
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>	

**Research Project (60%)** – You will work in teams—or agencies—to conduct research for a local non-profit organization. This project will require a considerable amount of work outside of class. Through this assignment you will have the opportunity to apply the concepts we talk about in class. You will learn valuable professional skills, which you will likely use regularly in your career as a public relations practitioner. The research project consists of four components:

- *Background Research & Research Plan*  
Your agency will conduct extensive background research about your organization and its publics. During this phase of the project, you should create a SWOT analysis of the problem to be investigated, describe a specific problem that can be addressed with research, articulate appropriate research questions, draft focus group scripts and survey questions, and more. You should also determine project milestones and deadlines, and draft a timeline.
- *Data Collection*  
During this part of the project, your agency will conduct focus groups and survey research. You should collect your findings into SPSS. **NOTE: Institutional Review Board approval is necessary to conduct research using human subjects. Each agency will work with the instructor to submit the necessary IRB paperwork. Please do not conduct research until you receive clearance from the instructor.**
- *Research Report*  
This report will include a review of the background research your agency conducted, a summary of your research findings, and a discussion of how the findings apply to the research questions. In this report, your agency should make recommendations (informed by your research findings) for how your organization can solve the problem introduced in the Research Plan. This report should be a high-quality, professional piece. Your organization's contact will submit an evaluation of your team's work, which will be used in determining your agency's grade for this portion of the Research Project.
- *Final Presentation*  
Each agency will present its research findings and recommendations to the class. You should use high-quality visual aids, and present your work clearly and professionally.

*Organizations* — The instructor will suggest several local non-profit organizations who have agreed to participate in this project. Your agency may select one of these organizations to work with. If you wish, your agency may suggest another local non-profit with whom you wish to work. Final selection and assignment will be made by the instructor.

*Group vs. Individual Grades* — For each of the four components of this project, your agency will receive a group grade. To determine individual team member grades, the group grades will be weighted according to team member and instructor evaluations. For example, if your group receives a 90% on the final presentation, but the average of your team members' evaluation of you is an 80%, your individual grade for the final presentation would be 72% (90 x 80%).

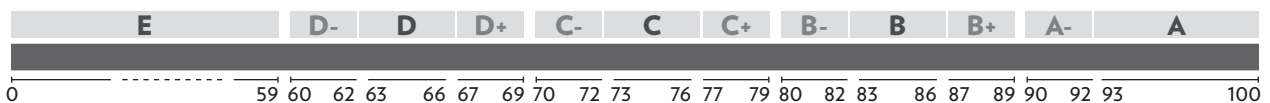
*Project Updates* — Your agency should meet at least once a week, and sometimes more often. After each meeting, a representative from your group should email the instructor (and copy all group members) a progress report from the meeting. These updates will be used to determine your group and individual performance.

**Mid-Term Exam (20%)** — The mid-term exam will consist of multiple choice questions. No make-up exams will be given. If you miss the exam, you will receive a zero. Documented exceptions for extreme circumstances will be considered, however, and so should be discussed with the instructor.

**Quizzes (10%)** — Throughout the semester, at least five quizzes will be given. These quizzes will be unannounced, and will cover material from the readings and lectures. No make-up quizzes will be given, but the lowest score will be dropped.

**Attendance & Participation (10%)** — You are expected to attend class. You should treat it as an appointment that can't be missed, except in the most extreme circumstances. Please arrive on time, fully prepared, and contribute meaningfully to the discussion.

### Grading Scale



For more information on current UF grading policies, visit <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

## **STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

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. Visit the Disability Resource Center in 001 Reid Hall or call 352-392-8565 for more information.

## **CLASS ETIQUETTE**

Please be fully present during class, and refrain from activities that distract yourself and those around you (reading the newspaper, checking email, surfing the Internet, texting, Facebooking, etc.).

## **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

All UF students are expected to adhere to the Student Honor Code:

*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. Student 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 Pledge:*

We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. 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."

**Plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated.** When you use information from any source, you should cite it appropriately. Academic integrity violations will result in a failing grade for the course, without exception.


## TENTATIVE CALENDAR JANUARY

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1	2	3	4	5
<b>WK 1</b>	7 Course Overview	8	9 Intro to Social Science Research	10	11 Research in Public Relations [CHAPTER 16]	12
<b>WK 2</b>	14 Science & Research [CHAPTER 1]	15	16 Conducting Background Research	17	18 SWOT Analysis & Agency Formation	19
<b>WK 3</b>	21 NO CLASS [MLK Day]	22	23 Elements of Research [CHAPTER 2]	24	25 Writing a Research Plan	26
<b>WK 4</b>	28 Research Ethics [CHAPTER 3]	29	30 Intro to the IRB	31		

## FEBRUARY

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
<b>WK 4</b>					1 Guest Lecture: Industry Perspective	2
<b>WK 5</b>	4 Sampling [CHAPTER 4]	5	6 TBA	7	8 Qualitative Research Methods [CHAPTER 5]	9
<b>WK 6</b>	11 Survey Research [CHAPTER 7]	12	13 Characteristics of Effective Surveys	14	15 Intro to Qualtrics	16
<b>WK 7</b>	18 Content Analysis [CHAPTER 6]	19	20 <i>Agency Day</i>	21	22 Collecting Data <b>BG Research &amp; Research Plan DUE</b>	23
<b>WK 8</b>	25 Summary and Review	26	27 <b>MIDTERM EXAM</b>	28		

## MARCH

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
<b>WK 8</b>					1 <i>Agency Day</i>	2
<b>WK 9</b>	4	5	6	7	8	9
 <b>SPRING BREAK</b>						
<b>WK 10</b>	11 Hypothesis Testing [CHAPTER 11]	12	13 <i>Agency Day</i>	14	15 <i>Agency Day</i>	16
<b>WK 11</b>	18 Introduction to Statistics [CHAPTER 10]	19	20 Intro to SPSS	21	22 Guest Lecture: Industry Perspective	23
<b>WK 12</b>	25 Basic Statistical Procedures [CHAPTER 12]	26	27 <i>Agency Day</i>	28	29 Analyzing Data <b>Data Collection DUE</b>	30

## APRIL

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
<b>WK 13</b>	1 Writing a Research Report	2	3 Presenting Research	4	5 Discussion of Preliminary Findings	6
<b>WK 14</b>	8 Making Research Relevant	9	10 Using Research to Influence	11	12 TBA	13
<b>WK 15</b>	15 Research in Other Areas of Mass Comm.	16	17 <i>Agency Day</i>	18	19 <b>Final Research Report DUE</b>	20
<b>WK 16</b>	22 <b>Final Presentations</b>	23	24 <b>Final Presentations</b>	25	26	27
	29	30				