

Public Relations Research

JOUR4410-001

Fall 2014

Monday, Wednesday – 2:20-3:45 p.m., #112 Meeman

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COURSE REQUIREMENTS

CATALOGUE/COURSE DESCRIPTION: Identifying, characterizing and evaluating stakeholder groups and alternative channels of communication; formal research procedures including sampling, instrument design, information gathering, data processing, analysis and reporting.

PREREQUISITES: JOUR3400, 3421

TEXTBOOKS:

Greenbaum, T.L. (2000). *Moderating focus groups: A practical guide for group facilitation*. Los Angeles: Sage Publications.

Fink, A. (2009). *How to conduct surveys: A step-by-step guide* (4th ed.). Los Angeles: Sage Publications.

MEDIA DIET: As you know, the very nature of our profession requires us to stay on top of today's happenings. Our responsibility is to assess their relevance to – and their implications for – our clients and employers. Knowledge of current events, government, history and media is becoming more and more crucial. While your undergraduate education will provide a strong base of understanding in these areas, your proactive efforts to continue learning about them will greatly benefit your career. Continue to feed your media diet with a good mix of traditional, specialized and Internet news sources.

CLASSROOM FORMAT: The class will include lecture, discussion, and group assignments.

DEADLINES: Understanding and working with deadlines is a critical part of the public relations process. **No late assignments will be accepted.**

GRADING: Course work will be accomplished every week. There will be writing assignments, quizzes, and a final group research project. Each must be completed by its due date and time, which varies by assignment. Other parts of your grade will come from participating in class discussions and of course, class attendance. Written assignments will be graded on the basis of grammar, spelling, punctuation, and content.

Your success in this course will depend on your willingness to read the textual and supplemental learning materials, successfully complete assignments, participate in class discussions, and work well with a team of peers.

APPROXIMATE COURSE POINT VALUE

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| Quizzes (drop lowest score) | 100 points |
| Class participation | 10 points |
| Homework/assignments | 175 points |
| Midterm exam | 100 points |
| Presentation | 45 points |
| Final research project | 220 points |
| Total | 650 points |

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

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| Mon., Aug. 25 | Welcome to PR Research! | www.enwillis.com Public Relations > PR Research |
| Wed., Aug. 27 | What is public relations research? Research basics – secondary/primary, formal/informal, audiences, evaluation, definitions, uses and objectives Problem statement, situation analysis, developing the research plan | Reading: Ch. 5 Sage > problem statement; PR Research for Planning and Evaluation |
| Mon., Sept. 1 | No class | Labor Day holiday |
| Wed., Sept. 3 | Research methods – overview of tools available to practitioners | Reading: History of Methods (<i>optional, but recommended</i>), Introduction to Communication Research, PR Research Methods |
| Mon., Sept. 8 | Sampling | Reading: How to Conduct Surveys, Ch. 4, Sampling, pp. 79-98, Ch. 5, Survey Design, pp. 99-113 |
| Wed., Sept. 10 | Sampling | Reading: How to Conduct Surveys, Ch. 3, Getting It Together, pp. 57-78 Quiz 1 Homework: Prepare for client meeting – hard copy of client questions due Monday (8/15) in class |
| Mon., Sept. 15 | Meeting with client – Habitat for Humanity | Reading: Habitat for Humanity annual report Homework: Brief summary of client meeting due to the Dropbox (9/15) by midnight |
| Wed., Sept. 17 | Final research project, teams and deadlines | Reading: Belbin's Team Roles Homework: What are your (Belbin's) team's roles? due at the end of class |
| Mon., Sept. 22 | University of Memphis library tour and orientation | |
| Wed., Sept. 24 | In class activity: Habitat for Humanity in the news (national, local) | Quiz 2 Homework: Media audit on Habitat for Humanity due to the Dropbox Sun., Sept. 28 by midnight |

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| Mon., Sept. 29 | Survey research | Reading: How to Conduct Surveys, Ch. 2, Survey Form, pp. 29-55 |
| Wed., Oct. 1 | Survey research | Reading: Ch. 8 Sage > survey research Homework: Survey design, due to the Dropbox Sun., Oct. 5 by midnight |
| Mon., Oct. 6 | Focus groups and interviews | Reading: Moderating Focus Groups, Ch. 3, pp. 15-22, Chs. 7, 8, 9 pp. 61-105 Homework: Prepare for focus group Wednesday (Handouts: focus groups, focus group process) Topic: legalization of medical marijuana |
| Wed., Oct. 8 | In-class activity: conduct focus group | Quiz 3 Reading: Moderating Focus Groups, Chs. 4, 5, 6, pp. 23-60, Ch. 11, pp. 115-124 Homework: focus group questions due to the Dropbox Wed., Oct. 15 by midnight |
| Mon., Oct. 13 | No class | Fall break |
| Wed., Oct. 15 | Midterm exam | |
| Mon., Oct. 20 | Guest speaker | Reading: How to Conduct Surveys, Ch. 6, Analyzing and Organizing Data, pp. 115-143 Homework: Brief summary of guest speaker due to the Dropbox (10/20) by midnight |
| Wed., Oct. 22 | Collecting, analyzing, and reporting data | Reading: How to Conduct Surveys, Ch. 7, Presenting the Survey Results, pp. 145-167 |
| Mon., Oct. 27 | No class | Work on team projects Reading: The Five Dysfunctions of a Team I |
| Wed., Oct. 29 | No class | Work on team projects |
| Mon., Nov. 3 | No class | Work on team projects Reading: The Five Dysfunctions of a Team II |
| Wed., Nov. 5 | No class | Work on team projects |

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| Mon., Nov. 10 | No class | Work on team projects Reading: The Five Dysfunctions of a Team III |
| Wed., Nov. 12 | No class | Work on team projects |
| Mon., Nov. 17 | Presenting research to the client | Quiz 4 |
| Wed., Nov. 19 | Rehearse final presentation | |
| Mon., Nov. 24 | Rehearse final presentation | |
| Wed., Nov. 26 | No class | Thanksgiving |
| Mon., Dec. 1 | Rehearse final presentation | Rough draft due of final research report, due to the Dropbox by 6 p.m. |
| Wed., Dec. 3 | Rehearse final presentation | Quiz 5 (online) |
| Thurs., Dec. 4 | No class | Study day |
| Wed., Dec. 10 | Final exam | Client presentation 1 – 3 p.m. Final draft due to the Dropbox by 1 p.m. |

ASSESSMENT

PROFESSIONAL VALUES AND COMPETENCIES FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS RESEARCH:

- conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work;
- write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;
- critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;
- apply basic numerical and statistical concepts.

HOW PROFESSIONAL VALUES AND COMPETENCIES WILL BE MET:

Cognitive Objectives to be Mastered (Ability to Explain, Analyze, Understand, Think Critically):

Students will learn to:

- describe preliminary and detailed research procedures in the behavioral and communication sciences;
- describe environmental assessment processes and their use in strategic planning;
- describe how to organize, moderate, and use information obtained from a focus group;
- describe how to organize, moderate, and use information obtained from an interview;
- explain survey techniques, including sampling, interviewing, and instrument construction;
- describe the tools used to analyze the results of survey research;
- describe work groups and ways to make them effective.

Performance Standards to be Met (Demonstrate Skills, Abilities, Techniques, Applied Competencies):

At the end of the semester students should meet the following performance standards:

- select and apply appropriate research tools in support of public relations objectives;
- design and conduct preliminary research using libraries, company records, and computer databases;
- work effectively in a group;
- frame research questions;
- determine levels of significance for compared variables;
- analyze the results of survey research;
- communicate the results in a final report/presentation.

HOW ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING WILL BE MET FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS RESEARCH:

The class is designed to develop the skills necessary to design and execute public relations research for a client. During the class, students will work both independently and in teams.

Awareness: Learn about the important role of research in public relations.

Understanding: Understand how to conduct, analyze and present research findings.

Application: Conduct public relations research to include: interviewing clients to assess needs; writing research questions; develop strategies for research implementation; client relationship-building to gain input and approval; instrument design; conduct research; use standard methods for documentation; analyze data; draw conclusions based on data; write research report; and present research to client.

PROFESSIONAL VALUES AND COMPETENCIES FOR JOURNALISM PROGRAM:

The Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication requires that, irrespective of their particular specialization, all graduates should be aware of certain core values and competencies and be able to

- understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press, for the country in which the institution that invites ACEJMC is located, as well as receive instruction in and understand the range of systems of freedom of expression around the world, including the right to dissent, to monitor, to criticize power, and to assemble and petition for redress of grievances;
- demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications;
- demonstrate an understanding of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and as appropriate, other forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to mass communications;
- demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of people and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society;
- understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information;
- demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness, and diversity;
- think critically, creatively and independently;
- conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work;
- write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;
- critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;
- apply basic numerical and statistical concepts;
- apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.

ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING FOR JOURNALISM PROGRAM:

The Council seeks to promote student learning and encourages experimentation and innovation. Assessment is a system of evaluation of student learning at the course or unit level (as opposed to grading at the individual level). Three criteria should guide assessment of student learning:

Awareness: Familiarity with specific information, including facts, concepts, theories, laws and regulations, processes and effects.

Understanding: Assimilation and comprehension of information, concepts, theories, and ideas.

Application: Competence in relating and applying skills, information, concepts, theories, and ideas to the accomplishment of tasks.

DEPARTMENT POLICIES

EMAIL: You must have your UM email account activated. If you are using another provider such as Google, you are required to have your UM email forwarded to that account. Go to the <http://iam.memphis.edu> website to implement forwarding of UM email. You are required to check your email daily. You are responsible for complying with any email sent to you by your professor or the University.

CELL PHONES: No cell phones are permitted in class. You will be asked to leave if your cell phone is used during class. Be respectful and make professional choices.

ATTENDANCE: Class attendance is mandatory in the Department of Journalism. You may be assigned a failing grade for the semester for non-attendance or habitual late arrival. Students may not be permitted to make up any missing work unless it is for an absence due to illness or other catastrophic emergency such as death in the family that can be documented (e.g., doctor's note or copy of the newspaper obituary). This is a professional program for journalists who are expected to understand and comply with deadlines. If you have a problem making it to class on time, make arrangements to fix the problem or consider taking another class. You should consider this class your "job" in the educational process and be on time just as you would elsewhere.

You have **three** excused absences to use at your discretion. After the third absence, your grade will drop half a letter grade for each additional absence. Use your absences wisely. I don't care if you want to skip class to get your hair done or go hang out with friends, but if later something serious happens (even a job interview!) and you have no "free" absences left – too bad. Your grade will suffer. Attendance is directly correlated with your success in this class.

CHEATING: In addition to university-wide policies stated in the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities, the Department of Journalism considers making up quotes from sources, turning in substantially the same assignment for credit in two different courses, or a student receiving any assistance from others for work assigned to be done on his/her own, as acts of cheating punishable to the degree determined appropriate by the course instructor and department chair. That may include grade reductions or seeking dismissal of the student from the university.

“Your written work may be submitted to Turnitin.com, or a similar electronic detection method, for an evaluation of the originality of your ideas and proper use and attribution of sources. As part of this process, you may be required to submit electronic as well as hard copies of your written work, or be given other instructions to follow. By taking this course, you agree that all assignments may undergo this review process and that the assignment may be included as a source document in Turnitin.com’s restricted access database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism in such documents. Any assignment not submitted according to the procedures given by the instructor may be penalized or may not be accepted at all.” (Office of Legal Counsel, October 17, 2005).

ONLINE SETEs: You are urged to complete the SETEs evaluation of this course. Once your instructor has posted your grade, you can immediately see that grade, provided you completed a teacher evaluation for that class. How to access your evaluation forms: Log in using your UUID and email password; click on the gray “Student” tab; complete an evaluation for each course listed and hit the “Submit” button at the bottom of the form. It will only take a few minutes of your time. We take the evaluations very seriously and use them to improve courses and instructional quality. Your feedback is essential and will be appreciated.

DISABILITY: Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss your specific needs. Please contact the Office for Disability Services at (901) 678-2880 in #110 Wilder Tower Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.