

## **Public Relations Research**

PBRL 4410-001

112 Meeman Journalism

MW – 2:20 – 3:45 p.m.

Fall 2017

Instructor: Stephanie Madden, Ph.D.

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Office Hours: MW 11 a.m.- 2 p.m.; Th noon – 2 p.m., or by appointment

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## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

### **CATALOG 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:**

PBRL 3400, PBRL 3421

### **TEXTBOOKS:**

- Fink, A. (2016). *How to conduct surveys: A step-by-step guide* (6<sup>th</sup> 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, in-class activities and group assignments. I prefer to have a very casual and informal environment in which we can learn about public relations through group discussions and applications. We are fortunate this class is small enough that we will have the opportunity to get to know one another. There will be plenty of time in this class to converse with other students in group discussions.

I ask that you not talk during lectures, and please, unless we are using them for a class activity, **turn off all cell phones and put them away during class.** If I see you text-messaging, playing Angry Birds, or browsing on your phone during class, you may be asked to leave and be given an absence for the day. Please also refrain from checking your email and personal social media accounts during class.

**DEADLINES:**

Understanding and working with deadlines is a critical part of the public relations process. **No late assignments will be accepted except with a university-approved excuse and documentation.**

**QUALITY OF WORK:**

I expect your work to be good and to be yours. What is not yours should be fully cited. In documenting sources, you should use APA formatting (both internal and external). If you need help with writing and citing sources, please see me for resources. In addition, Purdue University's Online Writing Lab is an excellent resource, and can be found at <http://owl.english.purdue.edu>.

I am always willing to help you. Always ask for clarification(s) if you have any questions or doubts: the sooner the better. Email typically is not the best way to connect with me to discuss course material. Email is good for when you have administrative questions, not for when you are having difficulty understanding the course material. Hence, I strongly recommend that you make use of office hours. I look forward to working with you!

**GRADING:**

There will be writing assignments, quizzes, Google Analytics certification, 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**

Quizzes (drop lowest score)	50 points
Class participation/homework	100 points
Client media audit	75 points
Survey design	100 points
Focus group questionnaire	100 points
Google Analytics Certificate	75 points
Research project rough draft	50 points
Final Presentation	50 points
Final research project	250 points
Peer evaluation	50 points
Portfolio	50 points
Interview with PR professional	50 points
Total	1000 points

Grading will be on a 1000-point system, so the following grades will be given for the following total points at end of the semester:

967 – 1000 = A+	867 – 899 = B+	767 – 799 = C+	667 – 699 = D+
930 – 966 = A	830 – 866 = B	730 – 766 = C	630 – 666 = D
900 – 929 = A-	800 – 829 = B-	700 – 729 = C-	600 – 629 = D- below 600 = F

**ATTENDANCE:**

Class attendance is mandatory in the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media. 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, 10 points will be deducted from your class participation grade for each additional absence. Use your absences wisely. Attendance is directly correlated with your success in this class.

**TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE**

*\*Please note that this schedule is tentative and subject to change at the instructor’s discretion. Readings should be completed prior to the session they will be discussed. Articles and links are available on eCourseware.*

	Topics of Class	Readings	Deadlines
<b>Mon., Aug. 28</b>	Welcome to PR Research!		
<b>Wed., Aug. 30</b>	The Role of Research in Public Relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ch. 5 Sage: problem statement</li> <li>• PR Research for Planning and Evaluation</li> </ul>	
<b>Mon., Sept. 4</b>	<b>No class Labor Day</b>		
<b>Wed., Sept. 6</b>	The Process of PR Research: objectives, research questions to evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to Communication Research</li> <li>• PR Research Methods</li> </ul>	Quiz 1

<b>Mon., Sept. 11</b>	Final research project, teams and deadlines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Belbin's Team Roles</li> <li>• The Five Dysfunctions of a Team I</li> <li>• The Five Dysfunctions of a Team III</li> </ul>	<b>What are your (Belbin's) team's roles? due at the end of class</b>
<b>Wed., Sept. 13</b>	Meeting with client – Slave Haven Underground Railroad Museum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will meet at the museum for a tour starting at 2:30 826 N 2nd St, Memphis, TN 38107</li> </ul>	<b>What did you learn about the client? How will this inform your research process? Due by midnight on Sept. 15</b>
<b>Mon., Sept. 18</b>	Data-Driven Public Relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding Research</li> <li>• Management of Research in Public Relations</li> </ul>	
<b>Wed., Sept. 20</b>	Research Ethics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exploring the Role of Ethics in Public Relations Program Evaluation</li> </ul>	
<b>Mon., Sept. 25</b>	Developing a Research Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing a Research Plan</li> </ul>	Quiz 2
<b>Wed., Sept. 27</b>	Conducting Secondary Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conducting Secondary Research</li> </ul>	<b>Draft research plan due</b>
<b>Mon., Oct. 2</b>	Sampling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to Conduct Surveys, Ch. 4, Sampling</li> <li>• Ch. 5, Survey Design</li> </ul>	
<b>Wed., Oct. 4</b>	Sampling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to Conduct Surveys, Ch. 3, Getting It Together</li> </ul>	Quiz 3
<b>Mon., Oct. 9</b>	Survey Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ch. 8 Sage &gt; survey research</li> <li>• How to Conduct Surveys, Ch. 1, Conducting Surveys</li> </ul>	<b>Client Media audit due</b>
<b>Wed., Oct. 11</b>	Survey Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to Conduct Surveys, Ch. 2, Survey Form, pp. 29-55</li> </ul>	Quiz 4
<b>Mon., Oct. 16</b>	<b>No class</b>	<b>Fall break</b>	
<b>Wed., Oct. 18</b>	Focus groups and interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moderating Focus Groups, Chs. 3, 7, 9</li> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Online v. in-person interviews</li> </ul>	<b>Survey design, due to the Dropbox Fri., Oct. 21, by midnight</b>
<b>Mon., Oct. 23</b>	In-class activity: conduct focus group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How Do Focus Groups Work?</li> <li>• Moderating Focus Groups</li> </ul>	Quiz 5
<b>Wed., Oct. 25</b>	Customer NeuroInsights Research Laboratory tour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet in our classroom, we will walk over to Fogelman together</li> </ul>	

<b>Mon., Oct. 30</b>	Midterm portfolio review		<b>Focus group questions due to by midnight</b>
<b>Wed., Nov. 1</b>	Analyzing Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How to Conduct Surveys, Ch. 6, Analyzing and Organizing Data from Surveys, pp. 135-165</li> </ul>	
<b>Mon., Nov. 6</b>	Analyzing Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analysis and Interpretation of Qualitative Data</li> </ul>	Quiz 6
<b>Wed., Nov. 8</b>	<b>Group work time</b>		<b>Final research report rough draft due to Dropbox Fri., Nov. 10, by midnight.</b>
<b>Mon., Nov. 13</b>	Group Meetings with Dr. Madden		
<b>Wed., Nov. 15</b>	Group Meetings with Dr. Madden		
<b>Mon., Nov. 20</b>	<b>Group work time</b>		
<b>Wed., Nov. 22</b>	<b>No class</b>	<b>Thanksgiving break</b>	
<b>Mon., Nov. 27</b>	Reporting Data	How to Conduct Surveys, Ch. 7, Presenting the Survey Results, pp. 145-167	
<b>Wed., Nov. 29</b>	Presenting research to the client	<p>Structure Your Presentation Like A Story</p> <p>Visualizing and Documenting Your Research – available at Lynda.com (which you can access for free with a Memphis Public Library card)</p>	
<b>Mon., Dec. 4</b>	Rehearse final presentation		<b>Final Research Project</b>
<b>Wed., Dec. 6</b>	Client presentation		<b>Final Presentation Peer Evaluations</b>
<b>Wed. Dec. 13 (final exam day)</b>			<b>Portfolio due Google Analytics Certificate Due Interview due</b>

### **FIVE PILLARS OF PBRL4410**

- *Professionalism*: Students learn the professional standards and strategies of conducting research for public relations practice. Additionally, students understand the ethics involved in conducting human subject research.
- *Writing*: Student address writing skills related to conducting research, including instrument design and reporting results to the client.
- *Multimedia*: Students prepare a final client presentation of research findings from the semester.
- *Critical Thinking*: Students must demonstrate an understanding of the methods used to conduct research in public relations, including surveys, focus groups, interviews and observation.
- *Media Literacy*: Students develop the vocabulary and tools of the public relations industry. Students learn how to conduct research to solve a client's communication problem, gathering information beneficial for strategic campaign planning.

### **ASSESSMENT**

#### **PROFESSIONAL VALUES AND COMPETENCIES FOR PBRL4410:**

- 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 peoples 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 current tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work, and to understand the digital world.

## **HOW PROFESSIONAL VALUES AND COMPETENCIES WILL BE MET:**

### ***Cognitive objectives to be mastered (ability to explain, analyze, understand, think critically):***

- 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):***

- 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.
- Analyze the results of focus group research.
- Analyze the results of survey research.
- Communicate the results in a final report/presentation.

## **HOW ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING WILL BE MET:**

### *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
- Present research to client

## **DEPARTMENT POLICIES**

### **PORTFOLIO REQUIREMENT:**

All students in the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media are required to develop and maintain an active portfolio of their work. Undergraduate students are to begin the portfolio in JRSM 3900 and contribute to it from every course thereafter. The portfolio should contain samples of the student's work from his/her courses and/or professional experience and should develop as the student builds skills. Portfolios will undergo a final, external review while students are enrolled in the capstone course for their majors.

Students may use any type of web hosting for their portfolios, but it must have an independent and professional URL. The department requires students to use WordPress to build their portfolio sites. Students are encouraged to consider purchasing a URL and hosting if they plan to use the portfolio for a long term, but must keep the portfolio active for six months following graduation from the University of Memphis.

Students should have a professional email address they plan to use throughout their professional life, via a common email service, such as Gmail or Yahoo.

All portfolios must contain the following items:

- Samples of work from courses and/or professional activities. (Example: Broadcasting students must include a video reel)
- A current résumé
- A personal profile
- Contact information/means of contact
- Social media links

Students might wish to include a blog, video reels, photograph galleries, SoundSlides presentations, design PDFs, audio files, and Storify pieces as examples of professional work. The professional work should ultimately be tailored to the career the student seeks after graduation. Thus, each student's portfolio should show a unique blend of work.



**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.

**MOBILE PHONES AND LAPTOPS:**

Some classes require a tablet, laptop or a smartphone. Others do not. Your instructor will set the policy for her/her specific class.

**ATTENDANCE:**

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**CHEATING:**

In addition to university-wide policies stated in the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities, the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media 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.

Further, as this is a journalism/mass communication class, students are expected to comply with copyright law, and must have sufficient permission to use any copyrighted materials used in creative projects, unless otherwise informed in cases of exercises or reproduction.

"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.

**DEADLINES:**

Remember there's a reason "DEAD" makes up half the word "deadline." All deadlines are firm. This is journalism and strategic media. If you get into trouble, talk to your instructor. Exceptions will be made for reasonable circumstances if the student notifies the instructor prior to the due date.

**AP STYLE AND GRAMMAR:**

All written work in this class should follow the AP Stylebook and accepted rules of grammar and punctuation. If you don't know the style for a particular phrase, look it up or ask your classmates or the instructor.

**DISABILITY:**

Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact your instructor 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.

**DIVERSITY:**

Students are required to respect the differences of others and treat all persons with respect. Discriminatory, derogatory and threatening language or behavior will not be tolerated. Further, students are expected to consider their work through a diverse mind. Mass communications reach a mass audience, and students should be aware of how those messages are received by a diverse audience.

**WEATHER POLICY:**

Always check with local media and the University of Memphis website regarding inclement weather. If the university is closed or classes are canceled, this course will not meet. However, students will still be responsible for that day's work.