

Public Relations Research

PBRL 4410-501

Fall 2017

MW 9:10-10:35 a.m.

Varnell-Jones 314

Instructor: Tori M. Cliff, M.A.

Office: Varnell-Jones 206

Office hours: TR 12:50-2:50 and by appointment

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COURSE REQUIREMENTS**CATALOG DESCRIPTION:**

Identifying, characterizing and evaluating stakeholder groups and alternative channels of communication; formal research procedures include sampling, instrument design, information gathering, data processing, analysis and reporting.

PREREQUISITES:

PBRL 3400 and PBRL 3421

TEXTBOOKS:

Fink, A. (2016). *How to conduct surveys: A step-by-step guide* (6th ed.). Los Angeles: Sage Publications.

COURSE WEBSITE ADDRESS:

1. Go to the University of Memphis home page: <http://www.memphis.edu>
2. Click on the "MyMemphis" link at the bottom of the left column menu.
3. Log in using your University of Memphis username and password.
4. Click on the "eCampus Resources" tab.
5. In the center column of the page, click on the blue UofM eCourseware link
6. Down on that page, in the course list available to you click on the link for PBRL 4410-501 to enter your course and read the instructions on the welcoming page.

CLASSROOM FORMAT:

The class will be presented in lecture and discussion format. It is a hybrid class, meaning work will be accomplished inside the classroom in a traditional format, and outside the classroom using various digital platforms.

ATTENDANCE:

Attendance is mandatory. Students who enter the classroom late are required to sit in the closest seat available near the front of the class by the door to minimize distraction. If a student is late more than four times, the professor may ask the student not to enter the classroom on any future days that they are late.

Students who miss more than three classes are subject to drop one letter grade per absence at the discretion of the professor. Students with more than two tardies are subject to have their final grade reduced by one percentage point per additional tardy.

Coming to class well prepared is equally important. This means reading the assigned chapters in the textbook and staying informed about current events.

The basic requirements for this course include these elements:

1. Complete assigned readings from the textbook each week;
2. Check campus email each weekday morning by 8 a.m.;
3. Arrive to each class punctually and prepared;
4. Complete any quizzes, exams, assignments, projects or portfolio requirements on deadline;
5. Pass class exams;
6. Be respectful of classmates and professor at all times;
7. Participate in meaningful class discussion;
8. Willingness to visit the organization being researched on at least one occasion.

GRADING:

Your grade will come from participation in class discussions, activities, assignments, projects and exams. (The group projects include a peer evaluation component.) This work must be submitted per instructions; no credit will be given outside of the proper submission guidelines.

Your success in this course will depend on your willingness to read the textual material, consistently participate, intellectually discuss textbook materials, successfully complete exams, and complete written work and projects as scheduled. Material on exams and most of our assignments come from our textbook, class discussions, articles, and videos.

There will be no re-submission of papers to increase the initial grade given. Submissions are final. You are required to ask questions via e-mail, or at the end of the class period when questions are addressed. It is your responsibility to ensure clarification of instructions.

All work submitted must reflect critical thinking and thorough knowledge of the material. All work should be crafted for professional use. I expect high quality work. Remember to use proper citation (APA) to document all sources. 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>. It is important to show initiative and try to find out information on your own. This is a skill you will use continually throughout your career. Resourcefulness is critical. However, if you have tried and are unsuccessful, or it is something that only I can answer, please ask for help. It is better to 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, but it is not always the best way to discuss difficulty understanding the course material. Due to the size of our class, we will have ample time to workshop ideas together. Please feel encouraged to ask questions in class. I look forward to working with you!

Grading Scale:

Tests = 25%

Activities/Homework/Participation/Assignments = 25%

Survey Project = 10%

Focus Group Project = 10%

Final Research Report = 25%

Portfolio = 5%

- A = 90-100
- B = 80-89
- C = 70-79
- D = 60-69
- F = 59 and fewer points

DEADLINES:

Meeting deadlines is essential for media professionals. Regular attendance is vital in class. Late work will not be accepted unless there is an unavoidable emergency and documentation is provided, for instance, a car accident that resulted in hospitalization. If a student knows about an absence in advance, arrangements may be made with the professor to turn in the work early at the professor's discretion.

TENTATIVE TIMETABLE:

Aug 28 Aug 30	Introduction / Review Syllabus Conducting Surveys
Sept 4 Sept 6	Labor Day: No Class The Survey Form / Intro to Qualtrics http://www.memphis.edu/umtech/solutions/qualtrics.php
Sept 11 Sept 13	Non-Profit Secondary Research Assignment Discussion (Client Overview: Conducting Secondary Research) Meet the Client / Tour
Sept 18 Sept 20	Getting It Together Test 1
Sept 25 Sept 27	Work Day: Non-Profit Research Assignment (Client Overview: Conducting Secondary Research) Google Analytics
Oct 2 Oct 4	Sampling & Survey Design Analyzing & Organizing Data / Non-Profit Research Assignment Due (Client Overview: Conducting Secondary Research)
Oct 9 Oct 11	Presenting Survey Results / Data Visualization Test 2
Oct 16 Oct 18	FALL BREAK: NO CLASS Team Work Day: Survey Instrument Design & Dissemination
Oct 23 Oct 25	Focus Group History, Theory, and Practice Group Dynamics & Research
Oct 30 Nov 1	Research Tools Team Work Day / Google Analytics Certification Due in Dropbox

Nov 6 Nov 8	Recruiting Participants Team Work Day / Draft of Client's Final Research Report Due in Dropbox by Midnight / Submit Current Portfolio for Review
Nov 13 Nov 15	Interview Design Test 3
Nov 20 Nov 22	Moderating Team Work Day: Focus Group Exercise
Nov 27 Nov 29	Team Work Day: Revise Test 4
Dec 4 Dec 6	Team Work Day: Polish & Prepare to Present Client Presentation / Research Report Final Draft Due / Last Day of Classes
Fri., Dec. 8 from 10:30-12:30	Final Exam Day: Portfolio Link & Peer Reviews Due in Dropbox by 12:30 p.m.

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:

Class attendance is mandatory in the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media. You may be assigned a failing grade for the semester for nonattendance, or habitual late arrival. No late work will be accepted without prior arrangements, which are acceptable to your professor. Students may not be permitted to make up any missing work unless it is for an absence because of illness or other catastrophic emergency such as a death in the family that can be documented (e.g. with a doctor's note or a copy of the newspaper obituary). This is a professional program for journalists who are expected to understand and comply with deadlines. If you have some 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.

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.