

Public Relations Research

PBRL 4410-001

Fall 2019

Class meeting: MW 2:20-3:45 p.m., MJ 112

Dr. Teri Del Rosso

Office: 326 Meeman Journalism Building

Office Hours: Tuesdays 3-4 and Wednesdays 1-2; 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, Software and Required Materials

- Fink, A. (2016). *How to conduct surveys: A step-by-step guide* (6th ed.). Los Angeles: Sage Publications.
- Additional readings will be posted to our class's eCourseware page.

Classroom format and expectations

This class will include lecture, discussion, in-class activities, and group assignments. Students will write and submit assignments to eCourseware, which will be returned with feedback meant to encourage student improvement over the course of the semester. Access to a computer or mobile electronic device (tablet or smartphone) with internet access is required to complete many (if not all) of your assignments. Please let me know if you need information on computers available for use on campus.

I see this learning environment as one in which I can guide you—a budding public relations professional and researcher—through the coursework without holding your hand. Because this class is halfway through your PR major, with Survey and Writing firmly under your belt, I feel that provides us the opportunity for me to empower you to make smart decisions as it comes to your success in this class.

Since this is an empowered learning environment, I expect that you show up ready to engage with myself and your classmates. It's important to ask questions when you're lost, and pay

attention so you don't get lost on purpose.

It is my hope that you know and believe that I am always willing to help you. Always ask for clarification(s) if you have any questions or doubts: the sooner the better. It's important to be proactive. If you're having an issue, let's work together to make sure you are doing what you can, when you can. Recognize that there's a difference between reasons and excuses. I'm always willing to work with you if you've got a good reason—see a few examples below.

Accessing the course website

1. Go to the University of Memphis eLearn home page: <http://elearn.memphis.edu>
2. Log in using your University of Memphis username and password.
3. In the Term Year course list available to you, click on the link for JRSM 4410 - 001 to enter your course and read the instructions on the welcoming page

Course Requirements

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. You 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.

Your physical (or virtual) body showing up is not the same as *you* showing up. Physically coming to class and not engaging will result in an average (C) score for engagement and participation. We will decide a class attendance policy on day one.

Students with disabilities and accommodations

If you will need accommodations to meet any of the requirements of this course, please let me know as soon as possible. Remember, this does not mean you are incapable or receiving special treatment. We all have specific tools we use to do our best work. I encourage you to consider which tools you need to be your best in this class.

Trauma & emotional needs

This class is just one component of your life. It is important, but sometimes we experience trauma and crisis, and we need to reprioritize. As your instructor, I feel your health and well-being is more important than this class. If completing this course or an assignment to the best of your abilities is challenging, please let me know as soon as possible. I am here for you and want to work with you. More student resources posted to eCourseware.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING:

Please access eCourseware for detailed guidelines on each assignment. Deadlines are also listed in the class schedule. All work should be turned in as a Word document via Dropbox in eCourseware unless otherwise noted (submitting as a Word document helps me provide feedback with track changes, which is easier for me!). All work is due at 11:59 p.m. CT on the assigned Sunday, unless otherwise noted.

Grading Scale

Assignment categories and points or percentage weights.

A+= 100-97, A= 96-93, A-=92-90
B+= 89-87, B= 86-83, B-=82-80
C+= 79-77, C= 76-73, C-=72-70
D+= 69-67, D= 66-63, D-=62-60
F = 59 and below

Plagiarism policy

First offense: Redo for 50%, plus meet with Teri

Second offense: Automatic 0, no redo

Third offense: Automatic class fail

Final assignment, regardless of which offense: Automatic 0 on assignment

Citation policy

For this class, we'll use [AP style](#) and [APA style](#).

Late policy

<24 hours late: -10%

24-48 hours late: -20%

>48 hours: Feedback only

Emailed assignment policy

I will not accept assignments via email unless I *te//* you to email it to me.

Your deliverables

Assignments	Team (T)/Individual (I)	Points
Client media audit	T	5 points
Survey design	I	10 points
Focus group questionnaire	I	10 points
Interview with PR professional	I	5 points
Google Analytics certificate	I	5 points
Research project rough draft	T	10 points
Final Presentation	T	15 points
Final research project	T	15 points
Peer/self-evaluation	I	5 points
Mock interview: presenting your work	I	5 points
Online portfolio (final)	I	5 points
Participation/engagement/quizzes	I	10 points
Total		100 points

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1: Introduction

8/26: Welcome to PR research

Readings: No assigned readings

8/28: The role of research in public relations

Readings: See eCourseware

Assignment: No assignment

Week 2

9/2: No class, Labor Day

9/4: The process of PR research

Readings: See eCourseware

Week 3

9/9: Final research project, teams, and deadlines: What to expect

Readings: No assigned readings

9/11: Meeting the client

Readings: Read up on your client (website, social media, news articles)

Assignments: Come prepared to gather information

Week 4

9/16: Data-driven PR

Readings: See eCourseware

9/18: Research Ethics

Readings: See eCourseware

Assignments: Google Analytics certificate due (9/22)

Week 5

9/23: Developing a research plan

Readings: See eCourseware

9/25: Conducting secondary research

Readings: See eCourseware

Assignments: Client audit due (9/29)

Week 6

9/30: Sampling

Readings: Chapter 1

10/2: Sampling

Readings: Chapter 4 cont.

Assignments: Research rough draft (10/6)

Week 7

10/7: Survey research

Readings: Chapter 2-3

10/9: Survey research cont.

Readings: Chapter 5

Week 8

10/14: No class, fall break

Readings: No assigned readings

10/16: Focus groups and interviews

Readings: See eCourseware

Assignments: Survey questionnaire due (10/20)

Week 9

10/21: Work day (Teri will be in San Diego with PRSSA)

Readings: No assigned readings

10/23: Customer NeuroInsights Research Lab tour

Readings: No assigned readings

Assignments: Focus group questionnaire (10/27)

Week 10

10/28: Focus group prep

Readings: See eCourseware

10/30: Conducting your focus group

Readings: See eCourseware

Week 11

11/4: Analyzing data

Readings: Chapter 6

11/6: Analyzing data

Readings: Chapter 7

Assignments: Interview with PR professional due (11/10)

Week 12

11/11: Group meetings with Teri

Readings: No assigned readings

Assignments: Come prepared for your scheduled meeting time

11/13: Group meetings with Teri

Readings: No assigned readings

Assignments: Come prepared for your scheduled meeting time

Week 13

11/18: Final presentation prep

Readings: No assigned readings

Assignments: Come prepared to talk through your presentation

11/20: Final presentations

Readings: No assigned readings

Assignments: Submit final presentations before class (11/20 at 2 p.m.)

Week 14: Thanksgiving Break

11/25 & 11/27

Enjoy one full week doing the things you enjoy.

Readings: No assigned readings

Assignments: No assignments

Week 15: Mock interviews

12/2: Presenting your work individually

For this week you will present your work in a mock interview format.

Readings: No assigned readings

Assignments: Come prepared for your mock interview with completed portfolio

12/4: Presenting your work individually

Readings: No assigned readings

Assignments: Come prepared for your mock interview with completed portfolio

Week 16: Finals week

12/11: We done

Readings: No assigned readings

Assignments: Final project due at 3 p.m.

Peer/self-evaluation due at 3 p.m.

ASSESSMENT AND OUTCOMES

Five Pillars in PBRL 4410

- *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.
- *Multimedia:* Students prepare a final client presentation of research findings from the semester.
- *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.

Professional values and competencies for PBRL 4410

- 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 (demonstrable 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

JOURNALISM AND STRATEGIC MEDIA 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 graduate students are to begin in JRSM 7002. Students are to contribute to it in every skills course thereafter. The portfolio should contain samples of the student's work from courses and/or professional experiences and should develop as the student builds skills. Portfolios will undergo a final, external review while students are enrolled in their capstone courses.

Students may use any type of web hosting for their portfolios, but it must have an independent and professional URL. Students may use any content management system, but students are encouraged to use WordPress, Wix or Squarespace. Students are encouraged to consider purchasing a URL and hosting if they plan to use the portfolio for a long term, but they 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 lives, via a common email service, such as Gmail.

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 writing 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

Students must have their UofM email accounts activated. Students using another provider, such as Google, are required to have all UofM email forwarded to that account. Students should go to the <http://iam.memphis.edu> website to implement forwarding of UofM email. Students are required to check their email daily. They are responsible for complying with any email sent to by professors or others in the University.

Electronic devices

Some classes require a tablet, laptop or a smartphone. Others do not. Instructors will set the policy for their specific classes.

Attendance

Class attendance is mandatory in Journalism and Strategic Media. Students may be assigned a failing grade for the semester for nonattendance or habitual late arrival. No late work will be accepted without prior arrangements with the class 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). Journalism and Strategic Media is a professional program, and students are expected to understand and comply with deadlines. Students who have some problem making it to class on time should make arrangements to correct the problem or consider taking another class. Students should consider this class as a "job" in the educational process and be on time just as they would elsewhere.

Course repetition

Majors and minors who fail to earn the minimum passing grade ("C-") in a class required by their program of study in Journalism and Strategic Media more than three times will be dropped from the program.

Students may not use or submit work from a previous course, even if it is the same course being repeated, to fulfill requirements for assignments in another course. If students wish to substantially rework the original submission, or to work with the same general idea, that may be permissible upon discussion with and written approval from the professor of the current course. All written work will be checked for policy adherence via TurnItIn.com. All creative work will be checked for policy adherence by the professor, and judged against previous submissions. The only exception to this policy is the student's online portfolio and its attendant pieces (for example, the résumé and logo).

Academic integrity

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 students receiving any assistance from others for work assigned to be done on their own, as acts of cheating punishable to the degree determined appropriate by the course instructor and department chair. Punishment may include grade reductions or seeking dismissal of the student from the University.

Further, as this is a journalism and strategic media 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 rating originality of your ideas. Also to evaluate proper use and assignment of sources. As part of this process, you may require to submit electronic as well as hard copies of your work. Other instructions to follow may also be given. By taking this course, you agree that all assignments may undergo this review process. The assignment may be included as a source document in Turnitin.com's restricted access database. It is solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism in such documents. Assignments not submitted according to the instructor's procedures may be penalized or may not be accepted at all. (*Office of Legal Counsel, October 11, 2018*)

Online SETEs

Students are urged to complete the SETEs evaluation of this course. Once the instructor has posted grades, student can immediately see that grade, provided they have completed a the SETE for that class. To access evaluation forms, students should log in to MyMemphis using their UUIDs and email passwords; click on the gray "Student" tab; complete an evaluation for each course listed and hit the "Submit" button at the bottom of the form. Completing the SETE will only take a few minutes. Faculty take the evaluations very seriously and use them to improve courses and instructional quality. Student feedback is essential and is appreciated.

Deadlines

All deadlines are firm. This is journalism and strategic media. Students needing an extension on an assignment must receive approval from the 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 must follow the AP Stylebook and accepted rules of grammar and punctuation. Students are responsible for learning these rules and checking their work for errors.

Disability and accommodations

Students who need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the Office for Disability Resources for Students at 901-678-2880 in 110 Wilder Tower Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

Diversity and inclusivity

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. Media 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.

Student support

Student who are experiencing personal or academic challenges including, but not limited to food or housing issues, family needs, or other stressors, should visit the Office of Student Accountability,

Outreach & Support page to learn about resources that can help: <https://www.memphis.edu/saos/sos/crisis-resources.php>. Any student who faces personal challenges including, but not limited to securing their food or housing and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact the Office of Student Accountability, Outreach & Support (901-678-2187) located in the University Center, Suite 359 for assistance. Students may also talk with course instructors about the challenges they are experiencing. Instructors may be able to assist in connecting with campus or community support.