

Public Relations Research

JOUR 4410-001

112 Meeman Journalism

MW – 2:20 – 3:45 p.m.

Fall 2015

Instructor: Kim Marks, APR

Office: Meeman Journalism Building, Room 314

Office Hours: MW 10-11:15 a.m.; TR 9-10:15 a.m. or by appointment

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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. (2013). *How to conduct surveys: A step-by-step guide* (5th 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

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
Portfolio	50 points
Total	700 points

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.

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

Mon., Aug. 24	Welcome to PR Research!	Public Relations > PR Research
Wed., Aug. 26	What is public relations research? Research basics – secondary/primary, formal/informal, audiences, evaluation, definitions, uses and objectives Problem statement, situation analysis, developing the	Reading: Ch. 5 Sage > problem statement; PR Research for Planning and Evaluation

	research plan	
Mon., Sept. 7	No class	Labor Day holiday
Wed., Sept. 9	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. 14	Sampling	Reading: How to Conduct Surveys, Ch. 4, Sampling, pp. 79-98, Ch. 5, Survey Design, pp. 99-113
Wed., Sept. 16	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 (9/21) in class
Mon., Sept. 21	Meeting with client – TBD	Reading: TBD Background on client (annual report, etc.) Homework: Brief summary of client meeting due to the Dropbox (9/21) by midnight
Wed., Sept. 23	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. 28	In class activity: Client in the news (national, local)	Quiz 2 Homework: Client Media audit due to the Dropbox Sun., Oct. 4, by midnight
Wed., Sept. 30	University of Memphis library tour and orientation	
Mon., Oct. 5	Access Insight Visit (T)	Homework: Brief summary of your visit to Access Insight due to Dropbox Fri., Oct. 9, by midnight.
Wed., Oct. 7	Access Insight Visit (T)	Homework: Brief summary of your visit to Access Insight due to Dropbox Fri., Oct. 9, by midnight.
Mon., Oct. 12	No class	Fall Break
Wed., Oct. 14	Guest speaker	Homework: Brief guest speaker summary due to

		Dropbox by midnight
Mon., Oct. 19	Survey research	Reading: How to Conduct Surveys, Ch. 2, Survey Form, pp. 29-55 Homework: Survey design, due to the Dropbox Sun., Oct. 25, by midnight
Wed., Oct. 21	Survey research	Reading: Ch. 8 Sage > survey research
Mon., Oct. 26	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: TBD
Wed., Oct. 28	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. 28, by midnight
Mon., Nov. 2	Midterm exam Collecting, analyzing, and reporting data	Reading: How to Conduct Surveys, Ch. 7, Presenting the Survey Results, pp. 145-167
Wed., Nov. 4	No class	Work on team projects Reading: The Five Dysfunctions of a Team I
Wed., Nov. 11	No class	Work on team projects
Mon., Nov. 16	No class	Work on team projects Reading: The Five Dysfunctions of a Team III
Wed., Nov. 18	No class	Work on team projects
Mon., Nov. 23	Presenting research to the client	Final research report rough draft due to Dropbox Tues., Nov. 24, by midnight. Quiz 4
Wed., Nov. 25	No class	Thanksgiving

Mon., Nov. 30	Rehearse final presentation	
Wed., Dec. 2	Rehearse final presentation	Quiz 5 / (online)
Thurs., Dec. 3	No class	Study day
Wed., Dec. 9	Client presentation 1 – 3 p.m.	Final draft due to the Dropbox by 1 p.m.

FIVE PILLARS FOR JOUR4410

- *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*: JOUR4410 addresses writing skills related to conducting research, including instrument design and reporting results to the client.
- *Multimedia*: Students prepare a Storify of interview quotes from local professionals regarding research as a step in the public relations process.
- *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*: JOUR4410 addresses media literacy by exposing students to 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 JOUR4410:

- 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 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.

HOW PROFESSIONAL VALUES AND COMPETENCIES WILL BE MET:

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

Students will:

- 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):

Students will:

- 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 JOUR4410:

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 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 and 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 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 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

PORTFOLIO REQUIREMENT:

All Department of Journalism undergraduate students are required to develop and maintain an active portfolio of their work. Students are to begin the portfolio in JOUR 2121 and contribute to it during every skills course thereafter. The portfolio should contain samples of the student's work from courses and/or professional experience and should develop as the student builds skills. Portfolios will undergo a final review while students are enrolled in the capstone course for their concentrations.

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 <http://iam.memphis.edu> 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 to be used during class or to complete class assignments. Others do not allow them. Your instructor will set the policy for her/her specific class.

ATTENDANCE:

Class attendance is mandatory in the Department of Journalism. You may be assigned a failing grade for the semester for nonattendance, or habitual late arrival. Students are permitted three total unexcused absences without penalty. After three absences, the student's final grade will be deducted one letter grade for each absence. After seven unexcused absences, the student will fail the course. Absences for illness and other catastrophic emergencies, such as a death in the family, must be documented (e.g. doctor's note or obituary) to be excused from the total absence count. Students with excessive unexcused absences are encouraged to withdraw from the course prior to the drop deadline.

DEADLINES:

All deadlines are firm. This is journalism and mass communications. Assignments turned in late will NOT be graded. Late work is not accepted unless prior arrangements have been made with the instructor. Students are NOT permitted to make up assignments, quizzes, tests, etc. that occurred during an unexcused absence. Students who will miss class and/or a deadline because of an excused absence are expected to notify the instructor immediately upon knowing the absence will occur; exceptions will be made for reasonable circumstances. Students who are absent during the final exam are not permitted to make up the exam and will earn a grade of 0, which might result in failure of the course.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

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, a student receiving any assistance from others for work assigned to be done on his/her own, and violations of copyright law as acts of academic dishonesty punishable to the degree determined appropriate by the course instructor and department chair. Penalties might include grade reductions or 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)

Intellectual property and copyright guidelines

1. Ideas cannot be copyrighted, but the way they are described can.
2. Anything set down in a tangible form, i.e., written, is by law copyrighted.
3. If, in a paraphrase, your work is “substantially similar” to a copyrighted work, you are guilty of copyright infringement.
4. A citation indicates where you got material. However, that portion you do not show as a direct quote must be “substantially original” to you. In other words, you can’t just paste in something from another’s work, put a citation at the bottom and call it your own. You need a full rewrite in your own words and syntax so the unquoted material is “substantially original” to you.

Plagiarism: From UM Student Handbook: The term “plagiarism” includes, but is not limited to, the use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work of another person without full or clear acknowledgement. It also includes the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials.

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 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:

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.

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.