

**MEJO 379.005: Advertising and Public Relations Research Methods**  
Fall 2019

**Time:** Mondays and Wednesdays, 2 – 3:15pm

**Location:** Carroll Hall 143

**Instructor information:**

Jacob Rohde

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381 Carroll Hall

Office Hours: M/W 1 – 1:45pm / 3:30 – 4:30pm

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course will teach students how to understand, evaluate, and conduct communication research. It will provide students with an understanding of the relationship between theory, data collection, analysis, and the communication of these results to clients. The course will also teach students how to design and execute various methodologies used for assessment and evaluation in advertising and public relations. The class will work together to answer questions for local clients through research methods including focus groups, interviews, and experiments. At the end of the class, students will have data-driven answers and insights to offer their client.

**COURSE DESIGN**

Students will work with a client to conduct a number of research methods. Students will collect/produce data, learn how to analyze data, and write research reports. Students are expected to read all assigned course materials before class. For the assignments, students will mostly work in teams on seven assignments. A couple assignments, however, will be completed individually to demonstrate and improve students' writing and analytical skills.

**COURSE GOALS**

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Organize, execute, and evaluate a social science research project
- Understand the principles and processes of social scientific inquiry
- Differentiate between qualitative and quantitative research and the conditions in which they should be used
- Understand quantitative and qualitative methods of design, measurement, reasoning, and analysis
- Recognize the limitations in various methodologies and in specific research
- Discuss ethical considerations of the research process
- Understand how research helps organizations communicate with diverse publics

**COURSE GUIDELINES**

**Required text:** Jugenheimer, D. W., Kelley, L. D., Hudson, J., & Bradley, S. (2015). *Advertising and public relations research* (2 Ed). Armonk, NY: Routledge.

I may also assign additional readings to supplement certain class lectures. These readings will be accessible in Sakai at least one week prior to their assigned day.

**Attendance:** Students are expected to attend all classes. I recognize this may not be possible. As such, students are allowed to miss up to **four** classes without penalization. I do not need an excuse (e.g., sick, mental health day, etc.) for these absences. Absences past four will reduce your overall grade by 10%. Please be mindful when using an absence. Excused absences will be recognized for NCAA or similar events. If you believe your absence should be excused for a relevant event or religious holiday, please send me an email detailing the event.

**Participation:** Students are expected to complete the reading(s) prior to the beginning of class meetings. This is a discussion-heavy course. Students are asked to participate regularly in class by expressing their opinions and raising questions about the course material. Please be respectful and open to others' opinions and questions. In addition, students will be asked to post questions/general comments for at least three separate course readings. The specific dates and readings will be assigned by me in the first week of classes. Questions should be posted by 10am to Sakai the same day the readings are due. In all, participation in class and on Sakai will account for 10% of students' overall course grade.

**Email and Communication:** I check email regularly during the week but I cannot guarantee an immediate response. I will try my best to get back to emails within a reasonable time (24-48 hours). Please treat emails to the client and me as professional correspondence (i.e., no typos).

**Technology:** Technology will not be allowed during class lectures. I will make exceptions for those who may require technology for certain circumstances (family emergencies, etc.). Laptops and other devices will be permitted only during group work — usually the last 15-20 minutes of each class. Lastly, please silence cell phones and all other communication devices/applications during class.

**Student Accommodations:** If you require special accommodations to attend or participate in this course, please let me know as soon as possible. This includes physical needs as well as less apparent needs such as presentation anxiety. If you need information about accommodations visit the Accessibility Services website at [accessibility.unc.edu](http://accessibility.unc.edu) or the Learning Center website: <http://learningcenter.unc.edu/ldadhd-services/>

**Diversity:** UNC is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our community and does not discriminate in offering access to its educational programs and activities based on age, gender, race, color, national origin, religion, creed, disability, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. The School of Media and Journalism adopted Diversity and Inclusion Mission and Vision statements in spring 2016 with accompanying goals found here: <http://www.mj.unc.edu/diversity-and-inclusion>.

**Harassment:** The University does not tolerate harassment in any form. We may not always agree with one another, but we must be mindful and respect everyone's right to this policy. Harassment is a violation of the Honor Code, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act (1964), and Title IX. If you are harassed or feel threatened by another student in the course, please bring it to my attention or contact the Dean of Students (email: [dos@unc.edu](mailto:dos@unc.edu); phone: (919) 966-4042).

**Academic Integrity:** All UNC-CH students are expected to adhere to the University's Honor Code, which includes the following on Academic Dishonesty:

It shall be the responsibility of every student enrolled at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to support the principles of academic integrity and to refrain from all forms of academic dishonesty,

including but not limited to, the following:

1. Plagiarism in the form of deliberate or reckless representation of another's words, thoughts, or ideas as one's own without attribution in connection with submission of academic work, whether graded or otherwise.
2. Falsification, fabrication, or misrepresentation of data, other information, or citations in connection with an academic assignment, whether graded or otherwise.
3. Unauthorized assistance or unauthorized collaboration in connection with academic work, whether graded or otherwise.

My policy is to turn over any documents that appear to have content from other uncited sources than the author's to the University's Honor Committee. See here for the full text of the Honor Code:

<http://instrument.unc.edu/instrument.text.html>

**Accreditation:** The School of Media and Journalism's accrediting body outlines a number of values students should be aware of and competencies students should be able to demonstrate by the time you graduate from our program

(<http://www2.ku.edu/~acejmc/PROGRAM/PRINCIPLES.SHTML#vals&comps>). No single course can give you all of these values and competencies, but collectively our classes are designed to build abilities in each of these areas. In this class, we will address a number of the values and competencies, with special emphasis on:

- 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
- 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

### **ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING**

**General:** This course is structured around one semester-long research project to be conducted in a group of 4-5 students. All assignments will be related to this group project, and will culminate in a single research deliverable. Assignments will vary between individual and group submissions in hopes of allowing proper group work but also promoting individual accountability and more individualized grades. In-depth project requirements (and a respective grading rubric) will be issued when each part of the overall assignment is assigned. Groups will be composed by the second week of class. Groups will be graded on their written output and participation.

There will be three phases of research in this course:

1. Secondary research
2. Qualitative research
3. Quantitative research

Students will complete 7 assignments throughout the course. Below are the assignments, their respective due dates, and a brief description.

**Assignment summaries:**

Assignment 1: Selecting a group and client

- Due: 09/04 @ 11:59pm
- Group submission
- Students will have class time to discuss common interests and possible clients. After, groups will submit a single document listing group members' names, the client they will be researching for the semester, as well as some background information about the client.

Assignment 2: Secondary research

- Due: 09/18 @ 11:59pm
- Group submission
- Groups will be required to find appropriate secondary research about their client (or relevant) to facilitate their research project. Use discretion when selecting which secondary research will be important/relevant. Results should be written up into a single paper, including an introduction of the client, a methods section detailing where and why secondary resources were used, a results section synthesizing the findings from each resource, and a conclusion.

Assignment 3: Focus groups

- Due: 10/09 @ 11:59pm
- Group submission
- Groups will conduct a focus group with other students in the course. Students will be divided up into key roles (e.g., moderator, note-taker, etc.). Focus group questions should be designed to continue answering groups' research agenda for their client. Groups will turn in a single analysis of the focus group process, including a discussion of what could have been improved.

Assignment 4: In-depth interviews

- Due: 10/23 @ 11:59pm
- Individual submission
- This assignment will require individual group members to interview another student(s) from a separate groups about his/her respective clients. Individually, students will need to submit interview questions, as well as findings from the interview(s) (synthesized into a single written paper), such as what insights were gained from the process.

Assignment 5: Ethnographies/participant observations **OR** a content analysis

- Due: 11/06 @ 11:59pm
- Individual submission
- Students will have the option to choose from either a written report detailing an ethnographic observation related to their client (e.g., observing how customers behave at a local coffee shop) or a written content analysis of their choosing (related to their client). Students choosing the ethnographic assignment will be required to take detailed field notes, which will be organized

and turned in alongside their report. Students who choose a content analysis will be required to create and turn in their codebook alongside their written report.

**Assignment 6: General survey OR experimental survey**

- Due: 11/20 @ 11:59pm
- Group submission
- Groups will have the option to conduct either a general survey or an experiment. Both projects will require groups to conduct survey research, including assessing several demographic questions and client-related measures (e.g., attitudes about XYZ company). I am planning on distributing the surveys to students in another section of this course (and vice versa for their surveys). Groups will then analyze the data and submit findings, describing the key insights gained from the process. Groups will also be required to submit their questionnaire for this assignment.

**Assignment 7: Final presentation and written client report**

- In-class presentations 12/2 and 12/4; written client report due 12/6 @ 4pm (final exam period)
- Group submission
- We will discuss this the first day of class.

<b>Grade breakdown:</b>	<b>Point total</b>
Selecting a group and client	5
Secondary research	10
Focus groups	10
In-depth interviews	10
Ethnographies/participant observations/content analysis	10
General survey OR experimental survey	15
<i>Final project</i>	
Presentation component	5
Research report	20
Participation (including posting reading questions to Sakai)	10
MEJO student research pool	5
<b>Total = 100</b>	

**Grade Scale:** Your final grade will be calculated using the University’s grading scale: A, B, C, D, F with the plus or minus option for grades A–D. I follow the University’s grading standards detailed here:

	<b>Scale</b>
● A – Mastery of course content at the highest level of attainment that can reasonably be expected of students at a given stage of development. The A grade states clearly that the student has shown such outstanding promise in the aspect of the discipline under study.	A = 92 - 100
	A- = 90 - 91.99
	B+ = 87 - 89.99
● B – Strong performance demonstrating a high level of attainment for a student at a given stage of development. The B grade states that the student has shown solid promise in the discipline under study.	B = 83 - 86.99
	B- = 80 - 82.99
	C+ = 77 - 79.99
● C – An acceptable performance demonstrating an adequate level of attainment for a student at a given stage of development. The C grade states that while not yet showing any unusual promise, the student may continue to study in the discipline with reasonable hope of intellectual development.	C = 73 - 76.99
	C- = 70 - 72.99
	D+ = 67 - 69.99
● D – A marginal performance in the required exercises demonstrating a minimal	D = 60 - 66.99

passing level of attainment. A student has given no evidence of prospective growth in the discipline; an accumulation of D grades should be taken to mean that the student would be well advised not to continue in the academic field. F = < 60

- F – For whatever reasons, an unacceptable performance. The F grade indicates the student's performance has revealed little understanding of the course content. A grade of F should warrant an advisor's questioning whether the student may suitably register for further study in the discipline before remedial work is undertaken.

**Grade Questions:** Please contact me via email with any grade concerns for all major assignments; though, I recommend waiting at least 24 hours after receiving your grade before emailing me. Please detail your concerns with evidence to support your claim. You have two weeks after a grade has been posted to send a grade concern (this does not apply to the final). General feedback about a grade, however, can be requested at any time during the semester.

**Late Work:** Late assignments will not be accepted. If you miss class when a written assignment is due, you must submit your assignment through Sakai on time. If an emergency arises that is out of your control, please talk with me and we can work around this policy.

## SCHEDULE

Week	What we're covering	Readings and assignments due
<b>Developing research questions and conducting secondary research</b>		
First day of class (August 21)	Introductions, course overview and expectations, client discussion	Readings: None
August 26	The research process and the scientific method	Readings: Chapters, 1, 2, 34
August 28	Planning and using research, finalize groups by end of class	Readings: Chapters 3, 4, 35
Sept 2	No class — Labor Day holiday	N/A
Sept 4	Secondary research day 1	Readings: Chapters 5, 7 <b>Assignment 1 due</b>
Sept 9	Secondary research day 2	Readings: Chapters 6, 8
Sept 11	Guest lecture by UNC Park librarian Stephanie Brown	Readings: None Conduct research task provided by Stephanie
Sept 16	Secondary research wrap-up, ethics discussion, and work time on assignment 2	Readings: Chapter 36, 37
<b>Qualitative research methods</b>		
Sept 18	Introduction to qualitative research, focus groups day 1	Readings: Chapters 9, 10 <b>Assignment 2 due</b>
Sept 23	Focus groups day 2, finalize and pilot test questions	Readings: Chapter 15, 29
Sept 25	Conduct focus groups	Readings: None
Sept 30	Writing up qualitative research, in-depth interviews day 1	Readings: Chapter 12
Oct 2	In-depth interviews day 2 (finalize and pilot test questions)	Readings: None
Oct 7	Guest lecture by Serena Bronda, Communications Associate, Aria Marketing	Readings: TBD

Oct 9	Class day to conduct interviews	Readings: None <b>Assignment 3 due</b>
Oct 14	Ethnographic research and participant observations	Readings: Chapter 13
<b>Quantitative research methods</b>		
Oct 16	Introduction to quantitative research methods	Readings: Chapters 16, 17, 22, 23
Oct 21	Content analysis for media research	Readings: Chapter 11
Oct 23	Survey methodology day 1 (design, question writing, item responses)	Readings: Chapters 17, 18 <b>Assignment 4 due</b>
Oct 28	Survey methodology day 2 (sampling, programming, pilot testing), workshop a survey in Qualtrics	Readings: Chapters 19, 20, 21, 30
Oct 30	Writing up quantitative research results, quantitative data analysis, descriptive statistics	Readings:
Nov 4	Guest lecture — speaker TBD	Readings: TBD
Nov 6	Experimental design for media research	Readings: Chapters 24, 25, 26, 27 <b>Assignment 5 due</b>
Nov 11	Advanced quantitative statistics (significance testing)	Chapters 32, 33
Nov 13	Tabular data, data visualization	Readings: TBD
Nov 18	In-class quantitative workshop	Readings: None
Nov 20	Advanced methods for media research (i.e., social media analytics), class wrap-up	Readings: TBD <b>Assignment 6 due</b>
Nov 25	Mandatory group office hours	Readings: None
Nov 27	No class — Thanksgiving holiday	Readings: None
Dec 2	Final presentations (~3 groups @ 20 minutes each)	Readings: None

Dec 4	Final presentations (~3 groups @ 20 minutes each)	Readings: None
Dec 6	No class — Final research report due	Assignment 7 due (digital and written copy to be turned in @ 4pm)