# Spring 2020 – MEJO 379.2: Advertising and Public Relations Research Methods

**Instructor:** Paige Ladisic

**Meeting Times:** 3:30-4:45 p.m. on Mondays and Wednesdays

**Classroom:** Carroll 33

**Email:** [ladisic@email.unc.edu](mailto:ladisic@email.unc.edu)

**Phone:** 910-448-2003 (cell; text and call are fine during normal business hours, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.)

**Office hours and location:** 4:45-5:15 p.m. on Mondays and Wednesdays or by appointment on Fridays. Kindly use my Calendly link to set up an appointment: [bit.ly/paige379officehours](http://bit.ly/paige379officehours)

**Final Exam:** Monday, May 4 at 4 p.m.

# COURSE OVERVIEW

​The key to effective advertising and public relations is research. This course will teach you how to understand, evaluate, and conduct communication research. It will provide you with an understanding of the relationship between theory, data collection, analysis, and the communication of these results to clients. The course will also teach you how to design and execute various methodologies used for program assessment and evaluation in advertising and public relations.

At the beginning of the course, you will be broken up into groups. Each group will be assigned a sector of our Chapel Hill community. You will spend the semester exploring that sector, identifying its key problem(s) and developing recommendations to solve that problem.

In this class, you will operate as a small market research firm within your group. You will be responsible for a number of tasks and will deliver research to appropriate stakeholders at the end of the semester. You will learn how to conduct and analyze research, as well as how to present findings to a client and pair findings with advertising, PR and marketing concepts.

**Learning Objectives**

After the student has completed this course, they should be able to:

* Describe quantitative and qualitative research methods in the area of public relations and advertising
* Differentiate the strengths and weaknesses of different research methods
* Apply qualitative and quantitative research methods and appropriate data collection, numerical concepts, and statistical procedures
* Determine research methods that are the most appropriate to answer specific client needs
* Design research, develop research instruments, and collect data using these methods
* Analyze and synthesize data obtained by these research methods
* Apply research findings to address real-world issues and client problems
* Examine publics/consumers and organizations/issues through primary and secondary research

**TEXTBOOK**

Jugenheimer, D.W., Bradley, S.D., Kelly, L.D., & Hudson, J.C. (2014). *Advertising and Public Relations Research,* ***2nd Edition***. Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe. ***AVAILABLE ONLINE THROUGH THE PARK LIBRARY FOR FREE!***

**COURSE POLICIES**

**Attendance and Tardiness**

Consider my class less of a lecture and more of a workspace. Mondays will be learning days and Wednesdays will be execution days.

**Attendance:** The University’s attendance policy can be found [here](http://here). Outside of University-excused absences, I allow five absences for any reason with no penalty. After five absences, I will lower your final grade by one full letter grade (10 points). Your peer assessment grades will also likely be impacted.

**Tardiness:** If you’re going to be late to class, you might as well not attend at all. Anything beyond five minutes is considered late and an interruption to me and to the class. Chronic tardiness (more than 5 tardies) will result in a half an absence for every additional tardy.

**Remember: I do not teach full-time at the University and I do have a full-time job that is my main priority.** Therefore, I will not be able to catch you up on material you missed due to unexcused absences or tardiness unless you are able to come to office hours or make an appointment to meet with me.

**Communication and Correspondence**

Err on the side of more communication, not less. You have my phone number and work email, and you can set up a time to meet with me outside of class and office hours here: [bit.ly/paige379officehours](http://bit.ly/paige379officehours). If you are struggling in class for any reason, come and talk to me.

In addition to this syllabus, I will keep important information up to date on Sakai and through email. Updates will be frequent. Assignments, readings, due dates and beyond may change at any time, and you are responsible for any course changes made.

**Lectures**

Make good decisions when it comes to distractions during lecture. If you prefer to take notes on your computer, that’s up to you. If I feel that technology is becoming a distraction in the classroom, I will begin to require closed laptops during lecture.

**Submission of Work and Quality Control**

I do not expect perfect grammar, spelling or AP style all the time, especially in email correspondence, but I do expect all of your work to be client-ready. Laziness and carelessness are not acceptable.

Work should be submitted to me on Sakai in Word or PDF form. No font, size, or margin specifications. If you have a technical issue with Sakai, submit your work to me via email.

**Late work:** I don’t recommend it.

**Group work:** Some work will be done in groups. I will provide ample time to work on assignments with your group in class, but you may find that you need to meet with your group outside of class. I expect you to identify this need on your own, but I am happy to consult on best group management practices.

**Assignments & Grading**

**Deadlines are deadlines.** If you are concerned about a due date or an assignment, please speak to me well in advance. All assignments will be due at the date and time listed on the syllabus. I will accept physical copies as well as Sakai submissions.

**Grading is subjective to my expectations and standards.** I will treat you like I would if you were working for me at my agency and performing work for my clients. Your work reflects on my reputation as an instructor.

**​If you have concerns about a grade, please inform me in writing so we can set up a meeting to discuss in person.** I ask that you wait 24 hours after receiving your grade. Please outline your concerns and provide evidence to support your claim. You have two weeks to challenge a grade after it has been posted on Sakai (this does not apply to grades posted during finals). NOTE: I do not discuss grades over email. So, after you contact me about a grade I will set-up a time to meet with me in person so we can discuss the grade. I do this to protect your grade information.

**It’s unlikely you will receive any extra credit opportunities in this course.** In the rare and unlikely event that they occur, they will be classwide, so please don’t ask for individual extra credit assignments.

**ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING**

**Assignments**

Rubrics will be provided for all assignments in this class. Your work will be divided into four phases:

1. Secondary Data (Research plan, background research project)
2. Primary Data: Qualitative (Focus group, in-depth interviews)
3. Primary Data: Quantitative (Survey)
4. Data Analysis (Final presentation, final report)

Some work will be individual, and some will be group work.

Deadlines are subject to change due to inclement weather, etc.

**Research plan (5%):** In your group, you will put together a proposal of sorts for the sector you’ve been assigned. You will pull together a plan for the problem statement you’re going to solve, the question(s) you are going to ask, who you will target and what you hope to discover. This can be in the form of a written report or a PowerPoint presentation. *One submission per group*. **Due date: January 29**

**Background research (10%):** Explore your problem statement deeper. This project will require you to find appropriate secondary data (i.e., existing data) and other background information related to your problem or brand. You will need to coordinate with each other and share individual findings so that all group members see the “big picture.” *Individual submissions.* **Due date: February 5**

**Interviews and report (10%):** This project will require you to interview three people for a minimum of 5 minutes each to get their thoughts on your problem. You will need to submit both your interview questions, your interview recordings and your findings from your interviews in a report form. *Individual submissions.* **Due date: February 26**

**Focus group and report (10%):** Your group will hold a 30-minute focus group outside of class to explore your problem statement. You will deliver your focus group script, recordings and notes in addition to your focus group report. *One submission per group*. **Due date: March 25**

**Survey and report (10%):** Your group will develop a survey that will apply to your problem. Use findings from your earlier projects to help inform question development. The survey will be an online survey administered by Qualtrics. Your group will then analyze the data and submit the findings. *One submission per group*. **Due date: April 8**

**Final report (20%):** In your final group project, you should summarize the work that you did in the three phases of your research, from methodology to findings. You should also provide concrete insights and recommendations for the sector that you are focusing on. Your report should answer the question: How does this research help the businesses/organizations in my sector? *Individual submissions*. **Due date: May 4 at noon**

**Final presentation (20%):** In place of a final examination, all groups will summarize their individual reports in the form of a group presentation, delivering their findings, methodology and recommendations to parties of interest. This will take place during **the final exam period on May 4 at 4 p.m**. *One presentation per group.* Attendance is mandatory.

**Peer evaluations (5%):** Your teammates will be evaluating your contributions to the group, and the average of these scores across your teammates will constitute your grade. *Individual submissions*. **Due date: May 4 at noon.**

**Research participation (5%):** Students in all sections of MEJO 379 are required to complete three hours of research over the course of the semester. There are two ways you can fulfill this requirement: 1) participate in three hours of academic research studies in the School of Media and Journalism or 2) write three two-page summaries and critiques of academic research articles.

The first option, participating in studies, is a valuable way for you to receive first-hand experience with basic research. You will be able to sign up online to participate in these studies. If you are enrolled in another MEJO class that has a research requirement, it will also satisfy the research requirement for this course. If you have any questions about the participant pool participation, please contact me; or Professor Joe Bob Hester at joe.bob.hester@unc.edu who manages the pool.

The second way to fulfill your research participation requirement is to write three two-page (double-spaced) summaries and critiques of academic research articles. Each review counts for one hour of research participation, and you may combine participation in the studies with article reviews to fulfill the research requirement. To receive credit, your summary must comply with each of the following:

* Summarize an article from the last two years from the Journal of Advertising, the Journal of Public Relations Research, Public Relations Review, or the Journal of Consumer Marketing.
* List, at the top of page the APA style citation for the article (see https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/10/ for a refresher on APA style).
* Articles from these journals are available online through the UNC library website, and hard copies of many articles are available in the Park and Davis libraries.

Article summaries are due by the end of class on **the last class day (April 22)**.

**Summary of Grading**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| In-class assignments (SWOT analysis, content analysis, etc.) | 5% |
| Research plan | 5% |
| Background research | 10% |
| Interview report | 10% |
| Focus group report | 10% |
| Survey report | 10% |
| Final report | 20% |
| Final presentation | 20% |
| Peer evaluations | 5% |
| Research participation | 5% |
| **Total** | **100%** |

**Grading Scale**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **PERCENT** | **GRADE** | **DESCRIPTION** |
| 93-100 | A | Outstanding. Mastery attainment. |
| 90-92.99 | A- |  |
| 88-89.99 | B+ |  |
| 83-87.99 | B | Strong performance; Solid attainment |
| 80-82.99 | B- |  |
| 78-79.99 | C+ | Average performance; Basic attainment of the subject has been demonstrated |
| 73-77.99 | C |  |
| 70-72.99 | C- |  |
| 68-69.99 | D+ |  |
| 60-67.99 | D | Passing performance; Marginal attainment |
| <59.99 | F | Failed performance; Unacceptable attainment |

**CLASS SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **DATE** | **TOPIC OF DISCUSSION** | **ASSIGNMENTS AND READINGS** |
| **January 8** | Course introduction. Syllabus review. |  |
| **January 13** | **Lecture: Why do we need research?**   * Key concepts and definitions of research. * How to plan, use and design research. | Ch. 1-4 |
| **January 15** | **Work day: Group assignments.**   * Groups will be assigned. * Introduction to research plan assignment. |  |
| **January 20** | NO CLASS - MLK Jr. Day |  |
| **January 22** | **Lecture: Secondary and Syndicated Research**   * Intro to secondary research. * Intro to syndicated research. * Other resources for research. * SWOT analysis. | Ch. 5-8 |
| **January 27** | **Lecture: Secondary and Syndicated Research, Continued**   * Intro to secondary research. * Intro to syndicated research. * Other resources for research. * SWOT analysis. |  |
| **January 29** | **Work day: Background research assignments.**   * Introduction to background research assignments. * How will we use our background research to shape our research projects. * Work on assignments individually. | DUE at the end of class: Research plan + SWOT analysis assignment |
| **February 3** | **Lecture: Qualitative research methods**   * What is qualitative research? * Research ethics. * Intro to focus groups, interviews. * Other qualitative research methods. | Ch. 9, 13-15 |
| **February 5** | **Work day: Background research assignments.**   * Finish up background research assignments. * Introduction to focus group, interview and survey assignments. | DUE at the end of class: Background research assignment (one per person) |
| **February 10** | **Lecture: In-Depth Interviews**   * Intro to interviews. * Training your interviewers. | Ch. 12, 2o |
| **February 12** | **Work day: In-Depth Interview Practice**   * Introduction to interview assignments. * Practice interviewing your classmates. * Conduct a “person on the street” interview and report back with findings. |  |
| **February 17** | **Guest Speaker: Mary Tyler March, news editor at WAMU in Washington, D.C.**   * Interviewing best practices. * Active listening strategies. |  |
| **February 19** | **Work day: In-Depth Interview Assignment**   * Take today to conduct in-depth interviews. * Work on in-depth interview report. |  |
| **February 24** | **Lecture: Content Analysis and Communication Audits**   * Intro to content analysis. * Intro to communication audits. | Ch. 11 |
| **February 26** | **Work day: In-Depth Interviews and Content Analysis**   * Finish in-depth interview report. * Intro to content analysis and communication audit assignments. | DUE at the end of class: In-depth interview report |
| **March 2** | **Lecture: Focus Groups**   * Intro to focus groups. * How to design a focus group. | Ch. 10 |
| **March 4** | **Work day: Focus groups**   * Intro to focus group assignment. * Practice a focus group in class. * Prepare plan for focus group. | DUE at the end of class: Content analysis assignment |
| **March 9-13** | **SPRING BREAK** |  |
| **March 16** | **Lecture: Focus groups**   * Best practices for focus groups. * How to facilitate discussions. * Focus group techniques. * Using your qualitative findings. |  |
| **March 18** | **Work day: Focus groups**   * Continue planning and conducting your focus group. * Work on focus group report. |  |
| **March 23** | **Lecture: Quantitative data**   * Intro to surveys. * Writing survey questions. | Ch. 16-19, 21 |
| **March 25** | **Work day: Survey**   * Write your survey and put it into Qualtrics. * Share link with class. * Take all classmates’ surveys. | DUE at the end of class: Focus group report  DUE at the end of class: Completed survey |
| **March 30** | **Lecture: Surveys**   * Obtaining accurate results. * Measuring your survey data. |  |
| **April 1** | **Work day: Survey**     * Take time today to implement survey. |  |
| **April 6** | **Lecture: Analysis of data** | Ch. 22, 32 |
| **April 8** | **Work day: Survey**   * Finish survey report. | DUE at the end of class: Survey report |
| **April 13** | **LECTURE: Analysis of data** |  |
| **April 15** | **Work day: Final project**   * Discuss final project rubric. * Begin work on final project. |  |
| **April 20** | **LECTURE: Now what?** | CH. 34-37 |
| **April 22** | **Work day: Final project**   * Discuss final project rubric. * Begin work on final project. | DUE at the end of class: Research participation (if completing article summaries) |
| **May 4** | **Presentations during Final Exam Period: 4 p.m. in CA 33**  Final report due on Monday, May 4 at noon.  Peer evaluations due on Monday, May 4 at noon. | |

**Classroom Collegiality & Diversity Policy**

The University is committed to fostering a diverse and inclusive academic community and prohibiting discrimination and harassment. Please review the University policy statements on diversity and inclusivity, and prohibited harassment and discrimination, both in The Undergraduate Bulletin 2014-2015 at http://www.unc.edu/ugradbulletin/. Please know that I am fully committed to fostering and enforcing these policies.

**UNC-CH Honor Code**

The Honor Code (https://catalog.unc.edu/policies-procedures/honor-code/) forms a bond of trust among students, faculty, and administrators. The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill operates under a system of self-governance, as students are responsible for governing themselves. As such, our University is transformed into a powerful community of inquiry and learning. The Honor Code embodies the ideals of academic honesty, integrity, and responsible citizenship, and governs the performance of all academic work a student conducts at the University. Acceptance of an offer of admission to Carolina presupposes a commitment to the principles embodied in our century-old tradition of honor and integrity.

**Accreditation**

The Hussman School of Journalism and Media’s accrediting body outlines a number of values you should be aware of and competencies you should be able to demonstrate by the time you graduate from our program. Learn more about them here: <http://hussman.unc.edu/accreditation>. No single course could possibly give you all of these values and competencies; but collectively, our classes are designed to build your abilities in each of these areas.

No single course could possibly give you all of these values and competencies; but collectively, our classes are designed to build your 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.

**Special Accomodations**

If you require special accommodations to attend or participate in this course, please let the instructor know as soon as possible. If you need information about disabilities visit the Accessibility Resources & Services site at https://ars.unc.edu/.

**Diversity**

The University’s policy on Prohibiting Harassment and Discrimination is outlined on the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office’s webpage (https://eoc.unc.edu/our-policies/ppdhrm/). 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 on the basis of age, gender, race, color, national origin, religion, creed, disability, veteran’s status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.