

MEJO 379.002: Advertising and Public Relations Research Methods
Spring 2020

Time: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2 – 3:15pm

Location: Carroll Hall 0011

Instructor information:

Jacob Rohde

jrohde@unc.edu

381 Carroll Hall

Office Hours: T/TH 1 – 2pm (or by appt)

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 among 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 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 being penalized. 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 beforehand.

Participation: Students are expected to complete all readings 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.

Student Research Participation: Students are required to complete research outside of the course during the semester. This can be completed by either **a)** participating in three hours worth of research studies distributed via the MEJO student research pool, or **b)** by completing three separate 2-page research-related written assignments. Students who choose **option a** will be able to sign up for research studies at various times during the semester. Those who wish to complete **option b** should talk with me early in the semester about assignment-specific guidelines. Students may also complete a mix of **options a and b**. In total, all research participation activities will account for 5% of students' overall course grade and must be completed by the final exam period (May 4 @ 12pm).

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 me as professional correspondence (i.e., no typos).

Technology: Laptops and tablets will be allowed during class lectures for note-taking purposes only. Students who are caught using a device for purposes outside of our class will be penalized as I see fit (up to 10% of a student's grade). Lastly, please silence cell phones/devices 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 or the Learning Center website:

<http://learningcenter.unc.edu/ladhd-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 Hussman School of Journalism and Media 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; 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 Hussman School of Journalism and Media'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 approximately 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 the following seven assignments throughout the course:

Assignment 1: Selecting a group and client

- Due: 01/16 @ 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: 01/30 @ 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 SWOT analysis, a key academic concept, and a summary section that synthesizes findings and discusses potential areas for future primary research.

Assignment 3: Focus groups

- Due: 02/20 @ 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, research results, and a discussion of what could be improved.

Assignment 4: In-depth interviews

- Due: 03/05 @ 11:59pm
- Individual submission
- This assignment will require group members to interview students from separate groups about their respective clients. Individually, students will need to submit a single report containing interview questions, key findings from the interviews, and a discussion of what insights were gained from the process as well as what could be improved in future interviews.

Assignment 5: Ethnographic observations **OR** a content analysis

- Due: 03/26 @ 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 content analysis of their client's social media account (or relevant). 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 a codebook of variables alongside their report.

Assignment 6: Experimental survey

- Due: 04/16 @ 11:59pm
- Group submission
- Groups will create experimental stimuli and evaluate their effects in an online survey. This assignment will require students to assess several demographic questions and client-related measures (e.g., attitudes about XYZ company). I will distribute the final version of each survey to students in other sections of this course (and vice versa for their surveys). Groups will then quantitatively analyze the data and submit findings, describing the key insights gained from the process. Groups will also be required to submit their survey questionnaire for this assignment.

Assignment 7: Final presentation and written client report

- In-class presentations 04/21 and 04/23; written client report due 05/4 @ 12pm (final exam period)
- Group submission
- We will discuss this the first day of class.

Grade breakdown:	Point total
Selecting a group and client	2
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
Peer evaluation	5
Research report	18
Class participation (including posting reading questions to Sakai)	10
MEJO student research pool	5

Total = 100

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:

- 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.

- 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.
- 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.
- D – A marginal performance in the required exercises demonstrating a minimal 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 – 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.

Scale	
A	= 93 - 100
A-	= 90 - 92.99
B+	= 87 - 89.99
B	= 83 - 86.99
B-	= 80 - 82.99
C+	= 77 - 79.99
C	= 73 - 76.99
C-	= 70 - 72.99
D+	= 67 - 69.99
D	= 60 - 66.99
F	= < 60

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 will be covering	Readings and assignments due
Developing research questions and conducting secondary research		
Jan 9	Introductions, course overview and expectations, client discussion	Readings: None
Jan 14	Research basics, research questions, and hypotheses	Readings: Chapters, 1, 2, 34
Jan 16	Planning and using research, finalize groups by end of class	Readings: Chapters 3, 4, 35 Assignment 1 due
Jan 21	Secondary research day 1	Readings: Chapters 5, 7
Jan 23	Secondary research day 2	Readings: Chapters 6, 8
Jan 28	Guest lecture by UNC Park librarian Stephanie Brown	Readings: None Conduct research task provided by Stephanie
Jan 30	Secondary research wrap-up, ethics discussion, and work time on Assignment 2	Readings: Chapter 36, 37 Assignment 2 due
Qualitative research methods		
Feb 4	Introduction to qualitative research, focus groups day 1	Readings: Chapters 9, 10
Feb 6	Focus groups day 2 (finalize and pilot test questions)	Readings: Chapter 15, 29
Feb 11	Conduct focus groups	Readings: None
Feb 13	Writing up qualitative research, in-depth interviews day 1	Readings: Chapter 12
Feb 18	In-depth interviews day 2 (finalize and pilot test questions)	Readings: None
Feb 20	Class day to conduct interviews	Readings: None Assignment 3 due

Feb 25	Guest lecture TBD	Readings: TBD
Feb 27	Ethnographic research	Readings: Chapter 13
Quantitative research methods		
Mar 3	Introduction to quantitative research methods	Readings: Chapters 16, 17, 22, 23
Mar 5	Content analysis for media research	Readings: Chapter 11 Assignment 4 due
Mar 10	No class — Spring break	Readings: None
Mar 12	No class — Spring break	Readings: None
Mar 17	Class day to conduct ethnography/content analysis	Readings: None
Mar 19	Survey methodology day 1 (design, question writing, item responses)	Readings: Chapters 17, 18
Mar 24	Survey methodology day 2 (sampling, programming)	Readings: Chapters 19, 20, 21, 30
Mar 26	Experimental design for media research	Readings: Chapters 24, 25, 26, 27 Assignment 5 due
Mar 31	In-class survey workshop	Readings: TBD
Apr 2	Finalize surveys, pilot test	Readings: None
Apr 7	Writing up quantitative research results, quantitative data analysis, basic statistics	Readings: None
Apr 9	In-class statistical workshop (tabular data, advanced quantitative statistics, etc.)	Chapters 32, 33
Apr 14	Advanced methods for media research (i.e., social media analytics), class wrap-up	Readings: TBD
Apr 16	Mandatory office hours	Readings: None Assignment 6 due
Apr 21	Final presentations (~3 groups @ 20 minutes	Readings: None

	each)	
Apr 23	Final presentations (~3 groups @ 20 minutes each)	Readings: None
May 4	No class — Final research report due	Assignment 7 due (digital and written copy to be turned in @ 12pm)