**MEJO 379.4: ADVERTISING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS RESEARCH METHODS**

**Spring Semester 2020**

**University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill**

**Schedule:** M/W 11-12:15 p.m. | **Location:** Carroll 283 | **Final Exam:** Tuesday, May 5, 12-3 p.m.  
**Instructor:** Cate Doty| **Phone:** 917.627.6705 | **E-mail:** doty@email.unc.edu  
**Office Hours:** 12:30-1:30 M/W, or by appointment. Please use my [Calendly](https://calendly.com/mcdoty) to set an appointment.

**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.

Over the course of this semester, you will examine a sector of our Triangle community: exploring its strengths and challenges, identifying its key problems and roadblocks, and developing recommendations to solve that problem. We will break the class into teams on the first or second day of class, and each member of each team will assume a role that they will play for the duration of the project. Teams will operate as small market research firms and will be responsible for a number of tasks, as well as delivering research to stakeholders at the end of the semester.

At the end of the semester, each student should understand the role of research in advertising and public relations and apply qualitative and quantitative methods, as well as how to present findings to clients and stakeholders.

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

• Describe quantitative and qualitative research options 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 AND READING ASSIGNMENTS** Jugenheimer, D. W., Bradley, S. D., Kelly, L. D., & Hudson, J. C. (2014). *Advertising and Public Relations Research*, 2nd edition. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe.

Book is available through the Park Library for [free](http://libproxy.lib.unc.edu/login?url=http://www.tandfebooks.com/isbn/9781315716565).

Supplemental readings will be assigned during the semester. Readings will be made available through Sakai.

Any public relations or advertising professional is expected to be knowledgeable about the news and events that shape our world, which means you should be consuming news from reputable publications and organizations, including The Daily Tar Heel. Expect to discuss current events in class.

**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)

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

**Research plan (5%):** In your group, you will assemble 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 5 at 12 p.m.**

**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 5 at 12 p.m**. *One presentation per group.* Attendance is mandatory.

**Peer/instructor 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. I will also be assessing your contribution. *Peer individual submissions*. **Due date: May 5 at 9 a.m.**

**Research Participation Requirement:** 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 start of class on the last class day (April 22)**.

**Course policies**

Mondays will be learning/lecture days and Wednesdays will be execution days. Your attendance is expected at both.

**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.

**I do not teach full-time at the University and have many professional demands on my time.** I will not be able to catch you up on material you missed because of unexcused absences or tardiness unless you are able to come to office hours or make an appointment to meet with me.

**COMMUNICATION AND CORRESPONDENCE** More is better. Please feel free to email me with any questions you may have at any time. I will gladly respond to calls and texts between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, and will be fully available during the week before your final presentations are due. You can set up a time to meet with me outside of class and office hours [here](https://calendly.com/mcdoty). If you are struggling in class for any reason, please 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** You are welcome to take notes on your computer during lectures. However, if I feel that technology is becoming a distraction in the classroom, I will require closed laptops during lecture.

**SUBMISSION OF WORK AND QUALITY CONTROL** Please treat emails to me and with your team members as professional correspondence. I do not expect perfect grammar, spelling or AP style all the time, especially in email correspondence, but I do expect all of your submitted work to be client-ready. Work should be submitted to me on Sakai in Word or PDF form. I have no formatting specifications. If you have a technical issue with Sakai, submit your work to me via email. The best projects will meet all the objectives and requirements of the assignment, and data must be accurate and not falsified.

**LATE WORK** I don’t recommend it. That said, talk to me if you have a challenge with a deadline **before** that deadline has passed. Any work submitted 72 hours after the deadline without prior discussion with me will receive a grade of zero.

**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.

**PROFESSIONAL COURTESY** Demonstrate courtesy toward your fellow classmates and me. Respect diverse backgrounds and opinions so that we may all gain insights from one another. Avoid disruptive classroom behaviors. Turn off all communication devices during class. I have little patience for students who pay more attention to devices than to the classroom discussion, and even less for those who cannot tolerate opinions that differ from their own. Please treat each other with humanity and understand that our time is equally valuable.

**Assignments and grading**

**Deadlines are firm.** 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 (subject to changes from inclement weather, etc.) I will accept physical copies as well as Sakai submissions.

**Grading is subject to my expectations and standards.** This is a professional school. I will treat you like I would if you were working for me at my agency and performing work for my clients.

**If you have concerns about a grade, please inform me in writing so we can set up a meeting to discuss in person.** Please wait 24 hours after receiving your grade, and 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). **I will only discuss grades in person.**

**Opportunities for extra credit in this course are rare.** However, should they occur, they will be open to the entire class. Do not ask for individual extra credit assignments.

**Summary of Grading**

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

\***Schedule is subject to change; always use the updated version on Sakai**. Any revisions to the following outline will be discussed in class and posted on Sakai. Additional readings may be added. Note: readings should be read by the date listed. For example, Chapters 1-4 should be read by the time you come to class on Jan. 13.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **DATE** | **TOPIC OF DISCUSSION** | **ASSIGNMENTS AND READINGS** |
| **January 8** | Course and class introduction; syllabus review. Why are you here? |  |
| **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: Kathleen Hunter, politics editor, Bloomberg News**   * 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; guest speaker: Jeremy Guterl, consultant, Ketchum Analytics**   * 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 5** | **Presentations during Final Exam Period: 12 p.m. in CA 283**  Final report due on Monday, May 5 at noon.  Peer evaluations due on Monday, May 5 at 9 a.m. | |

**MEJO AND UNIVERSITY POLICIES**

**ACEJMC CORE COMPETENCIES** The Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC) requires that, irrespective of their particular specialization, all graduates should be aware of certain core values and competencies. This course, MEJO 379, is particularly relevant to the following competencies:

• 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; and,

• Apply basic numerical and statistical concepts. The full list of competencies is available [here](http://www.acejmc.org/policies-process/nine-standards.).

**HONOR CODE All students are expected to be familiar with and abide by the Honor Code.** The student-led Honor System is responsible for adjudicating any suspected violations of the Honor Code and all suspected instances of academic dishonesty will be reported to the honor system. Information, including your responsibilities as a student is outlined in the [Instrument of Student Judicial Governance](http://instrument.unc.edu). Your full participation and observance of the Honor Code is expected. If you have any questions about your responsibility or your instructor’s responsibility as a faculty member under the Honor Code, please see the course instructor or Senior Associate Dean C. A. Tuggle, or you may speak with a representative of the Student Attorney Office or the Office of the Dean of Students.

All work submitted for this course **must be your own work**. All sources used for information must be properly cited. The ideas and content within your materials must be original and not copied from others. In our industry, we are expected to be original and creative all of the time. If you have any questions about whether your use of reference material is appropriate, please see me. If any part of your work is judged by me and an independent faculty member or plagiarism software to reflect inappropriate use of reference material, I reserve the right to adjust assignment and course grades downwards, in addition to reporting suspected violations as described in the preceding paragraph.

**RELIGIOUS HOLIDAY OBSERVANCE** Per university policy, students are authorized up to two excused absences each academic year for religious observances required by their faith. Students who wish to request more than two excused absences in an academic year for religious observances required by their faith will need to contact the professor to request the additional absence, which will only be granted with the course instructor’s permission. Students are responsible for providing a written notice for an excused absence for a religious observance two weeks in advance of the date requested or as soon as possible if the date occurs within the first two weeks of the semester and making up the course content missed. This policy does not apply during the final examination period.

**STUDENT ACCOMMODATIONS** The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill facilitates the implementation of reasonable accommodations, including resources and services, for students with disabilities, chronic medical conditions, a temporary disability or pregnancy complications resulting in difficulties with accessing learning opportunities. All accommodations are coordinated through the Accessibility Resources and Service Office (919-962-8300 or accessibility@unc.edu). Detailed information about the registration process and policies are available [here](https://ars.unc.edu/about-ars/policies). Please understand that I am not qualified or permitted under University policies to provide any disability-related accommodations without authorization from ARS.

**DIVERSITY** The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill is committed to equality of educational opportunity. The University 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. The Dean of Students (Suite 1106, Student Academic Services Building, CB# 5100, 450 Ridge Road, Chapel Hill, NC 27599-5100 or [919] 966-4042) has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the university’s nondiscrimination policies.

**HARASSMENT** We all have the right to our opinions. In the classroom, everyone should feel comfortable expressing his or her opinions. We do not need to agree but we do need to respect others’ thoughts. The University does not tolerate harassment, and neither do I. Please support your classmates’ and others’ right to worship, act, look, and think, in their own way. 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, please bring it to my attention at an appropriate time or contact the Dean of Students (dos@unc.edu, 919-966-4042). The University’s policy on Prohibiting Harassment and Discrimination is outlined in the Academic Catalog: https://unc.policystat.com/policy/4514917/latest.

**TECHNOLOGY POLICY** Turn off cell phones and other communication devices/applications during class. Use of these devices can distract you, others around you, and the professor. Use of cell phones in class, except in the event of emergency situations in which you have notified me prior, may affect your final grade. Computers are acceptable for note-taking, searching the web for class-related information, and participating in class activities. Your use of the technology in the classroom is a privilege, please use it accordingly. If I find that, as a class, laptops are becoming too distracting for holding meaningful dialogue, this privilege may be revoked. Using your computer for non-class-related activities may affect your final grade.