

Strategic Communications Research Methods: MEJO 701.1

Fall 2020

Class Time: 11:30am to 12:45pm; Mondays and Wednesdays

Instructor: Joseph Czabovsky, J.D., Ph.D.

Office Hours: 3:00 to 4:30pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays, or by appointment

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Course Objectives:

After you have completed this course, you should be able to:

- Understand many different methods of quantitative and qualitative research options in the area of strategic communication (PR and Advertising);
- Understand the strengths and weaknesses of these research methods and when best to apply them to client problems;
- Explain when and how methods will answer certain client research problems and needs;
- Develop research initiatives and plans using these methods;
- Critically analyze data that results from these research methods with the goal of ultimately gaining actionable consumer, individual and/or group insights;
- Problem solve and develop actionable plans using the data obtained from one's research process;
- Better understand the diversity of people, consumers, voters, and publics.

Main Text:

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. (**Make sure you have the 2nd Edition of the book.**)

Sakai

Other than this syllabus, important information can be found on Sakai. The UNC Sakai service can be found at <http://sakai.unc.edu>. Updates will be frequent, so check back often for important course information. You are responsible for any course changes that may be made on Sakai, including changes to the syllabus or assignments.

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 on the basis of age, gender, race, color, national origin, religion, creed, disability, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. Please see more about

our MJ Diversity and Inclusion plan here: <http://mj.unc.edu/diversity-and-inclusion>.

Honor Code

All students must follow University Honor Code policies. Information, including your responsibilities as a student, is outlined in the Instrument of Student Judicial Governance (<http://instrument.unc.edu>).

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 is available at <https://ars.unc.edu/accommodations>.

Accreditation

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 is particularly relevant to the following competencies:

- 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; and,
 - Apply basic numerical and statistical concepts.

The full list of competencies is available here:
<http://www.acejmc.org/policies-process/nine-standards>.

Grading Scale

Graduate grades are H, P, L, F. Your grade is determined by active participation in class, the quality of your assignments, and your work in relation to others.

Grade Description

H Mastery of course content at highest level;

Outstanding attainment and truly outstanding performance in the class and on assignments

P Strong performance overall in the class and on assignments; Solid attainment

L Marginal attainment; Performance in the class and on assignments below the acceptable level for graduate students. Able to apply the material and extrapolate ideas in only some instances. May not be participating or handing in assignments on time.

F Failed performance; Unacceptable attainment. May be missing class, failing to read or engage with the material, or unwilling to apply the material.

Grades and Assignments

Note: More detailed Rubrics will be posted for each assignment a few weeks before they're due.

IRB 5%

All students will complete the IRB certification process. This means that you will do the CITI Program Ethics IRB Training course linked from UNC IRB's website and upload a copy of the certification to the course's Sakai site. This certification may take some time, so it may be helpful to do it in stages. **The certification must be completed by Sept. 2nd.** The course is available online here:

<http://research.unc.edu/human-research-ethics/getting-started/training>

Library 5%

A small assignment will be given out to you on Wednesday, August 12th. It will help you prepare for our meeting with Stephanie Brown from the Park Library. It is due on Monday, August 17th and will be graded for completion.

Participation and Attendance 15%

This is a discussion-based course. To promote interesting and insightful discussion, you must be prepared to discuss the assigned reading.

Synchronous: The 150 points will be based on live, online class discussion and attendance. Class discussion points will be based on voluntary actions, such as offering your thoughts or asking questions. You will also be graded on me asking you questions in class. I will call on you and ask you questions about the reading and about your thoughts beyond the reading. So, do the reading and be prepared to answer questions.

Negative participation, i.e., non-active participation, distracting others, or not treating the course or others with respect will result in a loss of points.

NOTE: Unlike some courses, do not think participation points are a cushion or a pad to your grade. You will not get an “A” in the participation section just by doing nothing wrong. You have to *earn* an “A” in participation, just as you would by studying for the exams in other courses.

Asynchronous: In an online environment, I know not all of you will always be able to attend class live. To help accommodate any issues you may have, if you do not attend live online class, you can participate via forums for that day’s class.

To earn your participation points in an async fashion, you can post a 200-word post showing critical thought about that day’s cases. To count for attendance and participation, you must post your thoughts **before** the start of class for that day. An additional rubric will be posted for this option.

Attendance: I consider this a professional environment. In the professional world, attendance is a requirement.

That said, I understand that life happens, and, especially in 2020, family issues, health issues, and other concerns may, and do, occur. So, everyone will get *THREE* absences with no penalty. They can be excused or unexcused.

Sync Attendance: I’ll take attendance for live online classes, so all you need to do is show up.

Async Attendance: If unable to attend a class live, you can also attend via your 200-word forum post for that day’s class, as long as it’s posted before class starts.

For every class beyond three that you don’t attend and/or post via forum, you will lose 10 points from your grade.

Late Assignments: Assignments that are turned in after their assigned time can still be turned in late, but 10% will be subtracted from your grade for every 24 hour period that they are tardy.

Assignments

Survey Design and Analysis 15%

This assignment will allow you to design your own survey. You will also be given a dataset and asked to analyze it to generate insights.

Analytics 15%

You will be tasked with examining the social media data of a client of your choosing. The goal of this assignment is to better understand digital analytics.

Interview 15%

You will do a 30-minute interview with a person of your choosing. These interviews can be done digitally. You will be asked to develop an interview map, then analyze your data to pull out meaningful insights.

Research Design Final 30%

The final in this class will require you to pull together all you have learned to develop a research plan. The client will be of your choosing, and you will be asked to demonstrate your knowledge of every primary and secondary method we have learned.

Schedule

Note: Additional readings may often be posted on Sakai a couple weeks in advance of a class. So, always make sure to check additional readings there.

Aug 10: Intro

Readings or Assignments Due: None

Aug 12: The Research Process

Readings or Assignments Due: Chapters 1, 2, 30, 34

Aug 17: Library Day

*Readings or Assignments Due: **Turn in Small Library Assignment***

Aug 19: Planning and Using Research; Designing Research; Applying Research

Readings or Assignments Due: Chapters 3, 4, 35

Aug 24: Secondary and Syndicated Research: Intro; Syndicated; Other Useful Resources

Readings or Assignments Due: Chapters 5, 6, 8

Aug 26: Secondary and Syndicated Cont'd: Online Resources; Analytics

Readings or Assignments Due: Chapter 7

Aug 31: Analytics In-Class Work Day; Short Lecture on How to Write Up Insights

Readings or Assignments Due: None

Sept 2: The Wonderful World of Qualitative Research: Use of Qualitative Research; How Qualitative Research Can Enhance Quantitative Research; Handling Qualitative Findings; Content Analysis

Readings or Assignments Due: Chapters 9, 11, 14, 15

IRB Certification Due

Sept 9: Focus Group Day 1: Focus Groups; Handling Data

Readings or Assignments Due: Chapters 10, 29

Turn in Analytics Assignment

Sept 14: Focus Group Day 2: Review Focus Group Maps

Readings or Assignments Due: Post before class a focus group map

Sept 16: In-depth Interviews

Readings or Assignments Due: Chapter 12

Sept 21: In-class Interview Day

Readings or Assignments Due: Be prepared to do your 30-minute interview

Sept 23: Discuss Interviews

Readings or Assignments Due

Sept 28: Participant Observation

Readings or Assignments Due: Chapter 13

Sept 30: The Wonderful World of Quantitative Research: Intro; Sampling; Qualitative Debrief; Applications of Quantitative Research

Readings or Assignments Due: Chapters 17, 23

Turn in Interview Assignment

Oct 5: Measuring Instruments; Variate Analysis

Readings or Assignments Due: Chapter 18; Pages 194-199 of Chapter 22

Oct 7: Question Wording; Interviewer Training

Readings or Assignments Due: Chapters 19, 20

Oct 12: University Day - No Class

Oct 14: Reviewing Your Survey Questions

Readings or Assignments Due: Come prepared w/a draft of your survey

Oct 19: Survey Research; Obtaining Accurate Responses

Readings or Assignments Due: Chapters 16, 21

Oct 21: Scaling Techniques; Statistics

Readings or Assignments Due: Chapters 30, 32

Oct 26: Statistics Review; Microsoft Excel and Qualtrics Analysis + Work Day

Readings or Assignments Due: None

Oct 28: Experiments: Research and Approaches

Readings or Assignments Due: Chapters 24, 25

Nov 2: Applying Research to your Careers

Readings or Assignments Due: None

Nov 4: Content Analysis

Readings or Assignments Due: No book reading

Submit Survey Assignment

Nov 9: Research Ethics (Law/Critical/Historical)

Readings or Assignments Due: Chapters 28, 30

Nov 11: Class wrap-up and debrief

Readings or Assignments Due

Nov 16: Open office hours for finals

Readings or Assignments Due: Nothing

Finals: Saturday, November 21st - 4:00-7:00pm

Readings or Assignments Due: Your final project is due at 7:00pm.