

MEJO 379.3: Advertising and Public Relations Research Methods

Fall 2021

Course Information

Course Days

Tuesdays / Thursdays

Course Time

11:00 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.

Meeting Location

Carroll Hall (CA), 058;
<https://unc.zoom.us/j/95456045550>

Instructor Information

Instructor

Meredith Collins, MA
Roy H. Park Fellow

Email

mrcollins@unc.edu

Office Location & Hours

Thursdays, 12:30 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.
Carroll Hall (CA), 371

General Information

Communication Policies

The best way to reach me is through e-mail. Communicating with each other is a part of each of our jobs, so I expect communication to be professional. Please do not expect that I understand texting language or any other type of shorthand. If you do not receive a response within **24 hours on weekdays**, then please assume I did not receive the e-mail and resend your message.

If your e-mail relates to the group project, then please remember to copy your group members on the e-mail. It is your responsibility to check e-mail and Sakai regularly for messages and updates.

I am always happy to set up a specific time to meet about any concerns.

Course Prerequisite

To take this course, you must have passed Principles of Ad/PR (MEJO 137).

Course Objectives

After students have completed this course, they will be able to:

1. Understand quantitative and qualitative research options in strategic communication (Advertising and public relations)
2. Understand the strengths and weaknesses of different research methods
3. Select methods that are most appropriate to respond to specific client needs
4. Plan and conduct research using these methods
5. Analyze data obtained by these methods
6. Apply findings to real-world issues
7. Expand knowledge of public/consumer/organizational issues through primary and secondary research

ACEJMC Core Competencies

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

1. Understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information;
2. Think critically, creatively, and independently;
3. Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work;
4. Apply basic numerical and statistical concepts

The full list of competencies is available [here](#) (see pages 44 - 45).

Course Text

E-book available (no cost) through UNC Libraries here: [UNC Chapel Hill Libraries](#)

Jugenheimer, D.W., Bradley, S.D., Kelley, L.D., & Hudson, J.C. (2015). *Advertising and Public Relations Research 2nd edition*. Routledge.

MEJO 379 Resource Guide: [Home - MEJO 379: Advertising & Public Relations Research - LibGuides at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill \(unc.edu\)](#)

Stephanie Willen Brown, the librarian at the Park Library, has put together this resource guide to help students in MEJO 379 complete their team assignments (see below). This link is also on our Sakai page.

Course Grading and Assignments

Individual Assignments (70 points; 50% of grade)

- **Quizzes (30 points):** There will be 5 unannounced quizzes throughout the semester, each worth 6 points. These are designed to make sure that you understand and master key concepts throughout the course and will be based on the content from the readings and the lectures. A quiz may have multiple choice, true/false, and/or short answer questions. *If attend the lectures and do the readings, these should be fairly straightforward.*
- **Class Participation Activities (25 points):** Throughout the semester, we will have various class participation activities. The majority of these activities will be unannounced and worth 2 points. All class participation activities will be graded for completeness, not correctness. **The following activities will also count toward this grade:**
 - **Searching @ the Library Activity:** 3 points
(due September 2, before class, via Sakai)
 - **Syndicated Research Scavenger Hunt:** 3 points
(due September 7, before class, via Sakai)
 - **Analyzing Quantitative Data:** 3 points
(due November 11, before class, via Sakai)
- **Interview & Ethnography Exercise (10 points):** In this assignment, you will select questions related to your team research topic best suited to interview and ethnographic methods. You will then individually conduct one-on-one interviews and write an ethnography. Your final report will describe (in detail) your interview and ethnographic methods and findings. Additional details will be on Sakai.
- **Research Participation (5 points):** You will complete either three hours of academic research studies in the Hussman School of Journalism and Media, or you will complete three two-page summaries and critiques of research articles. You may mix and match. Additional details will be posted to Sakai.

Team Assignments (70 points; 50% of grade)

In this course, we will form 6 teams of 5 people. Your team will work together throughout the semester. As a team, you will select a topic to research that is: A problem tied to **a specific organization** (e.g., how Company X can recover from a specific crisis, how a specific company can enter a new market or target a new audience, etc.). You'll want to select an organization and a problem that is relevant to people whom you'll be able to reach over the course of the semester (e.g., college students, middle-age adults, etc.)

- **Team and Topic Contract (5 points):** Your team will draw up a team contract to guide your work this semester. Your contract should include: Ground rules and functions for dealing with assignments as a team; procedures for participating in projects and meeting deadlines as a team; and, a procedure for dealing with problems as a team.

However, if the problem can't be resolved within the team, then *I should be notified in writing*. Failure to adhere to the team contract will be factored into the individual grade and could result in a team member receiving a lower grade than the rest of the team.

Your contract should also include the topic your team has selected to work on this semester. Any change to either the team or the topic portion of the contract **must be approved by the instructor in advance of the change being made**.

- **Firing Team Members:** Working with teammates can be difficult; yet, it can also be rewarding. And, as I am sure you have heard by now, you will be expected to work with teammates in "the real world".

In this class, if one particular team member consistently demonstrates a lack of dedication to the team (such as not attending meetings, not doing the required work, or turning in unacceptable contributions to the team reports), the other group members will have the ability to "fire" that team member up until the end of **Week 10 of classes (Week of Fall Break; deadline is October 19th)**.

Firing involves a three-step process:

- (1) **Team members must document in the team/topic contract what exact behavior** (such as # of missed meetings, what constitutes unacceptable work, etc.) would lead to the team initiating the firing process.
- (2) **The team (in consultation with the instructor) will give the team member a written warning.** The teammate must work with the group on how s/he/they will be a better teammate going forward.
- (3) **If the teammate continues to exhibit the dissatisfactory behavior, then the team members will "fire" the teammate.** *If you are fired, you will lose the privilege of completing assignments within the team. Thus, you will complete the remaining assignments individually, from the point of firing until the end of the semester.* Fired individuals will consult with the instructor to ensure anonymity during the final group presentation.

Important Note: Do **NOT** wait until October 19th (the last class before Fall Break) to contact me about firing someone. You **MUST** give a warning before firing a teammate, so please let the teammate know their behavior is unacceptable as soon as it begins to happen.

- **Secondary Research Report (15 points):** To understand the problem related to your research needs, you first must know what is already out there about your topic and/or your client. You will conduct secondary research and prepare a report. Additional details will be on Sakai.

- **Qualitative Research Report (15 points):** Some research questions are best answered through qualitative methods. In this assignment, you will select questions related to your research topic best suited to qualitative methods. As a group, you will facilitate a focus group with the target audience. Individually, you will conduct one-on-one interviews and write an ethnography. Your final report will describe (in detail) your focus group process and findings, as well as integrate your individual interviews and ethnographies into future research suggestions for your client. Additional details will be on Sakai.
- **Quantitative Research Report (15 points):** Some research questions are best answered through quantitative methods. In this assignment, you will select questions related to your research topic best suited to quantitative methods. As a group, you will conduct a survey **AND** an experiment with the target audience. Your final report will describe (in detail) your survey method and findings and your experimental method and findings. You will also integrate your findings into future research suggestions for your client. Additional details will be on Sakai.
- **Final Research Presentation (15 points):** The final research presentation will occur during our final exam time. Your team will construct one presentation deck from the secondary research report, qualitative research report, and quantitative research report; both your methods and findings should be included and your presentation should be professional and visually appealing. Each time will have 15 minutes to present, and each team member must present. Additional details will be on Sakai.
- **Team Member Peer Evaluations (5 points):** You will complete two sets of peer evaluations throughout the semester, once after the qualitative assignment and once after the quantitative assignment. You are expected to adequately and accurately evaluate your peers' adherence to the Team Contract throughout the assignment process. Issues arising in the peer evaluations will impact individual grades on the team assignments. Additional details will be posted on Sakai.

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 Hussman School of Journalism and Media. Participating is a valuable way for you to receive first-hand experience with basic mass communication research. You will be able to sign up online to participate in these studies.
- (2) Write three (3) two-page (double-spaced) summaries and critiques of academic research articles. Each review counts for one hour of research participation. Full instructions for the summaries will be posted to Sakai.

You may mix-and-match research participation and research article reviews. The point distribution will be as follows:

- 5 = Completing all 3 studies and/or article reviews
- 3.33 = Completing 2 studies and/or article reviews
- 1.65 = Completing 1 study or article review

If you are enrolled in other Hussman classes that have research requirements, your fulfillment of the three hours for 379 may satisfy the requirements for the other course(s), provided the other course(s) do not require more than three hours. If you have any questions about participation in the research pool, please contact me or Dr. Joe Bob Hester (hesterj@email.unc.edu).

Grading Scale

The grading scale below will be employed in this class. Rounding will occur to the nearest whole number based on the first number after the decimal point (e.g., 86.5 **will be rounded** up to 87; however, 86.49 **will not be rounded** up to 87). *We will have ONE extra credit opportunity, offered to the entire class (see Course Schedule for details). No individual extra credit assignments will be given, so please do not ask me individually for extra credit.*

Letter Grade	Percentage Range	Point Range (out of 140)	Interpretation
A	93 - 100	130 - 140	Highest level of attainment
A-	90 - 92	126 - 129	
B+	86 - 89	120 - 125	High level of attainment
B	83 - 85	116 - 119	
B-	80 - 82	112 - 115	
C+	76 - 79	106 - 111	Adequate level of attainment
C	73 - 75	102 - 105	<i>Must receive a "C" or better to avoid retaking course</i>
C-	70 - 72	98 - 101	
D+	66 - 69	92 - 97	Minimal passing level of attainment
D	63 - 65	88 - 91	
F	Below 62	Below 87	Failed; unacceptable performance

Course Schedule

We will try to be flexible this semester, so the course schedule may change. I reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus, including project deadlines and test dates. These changes will be announced as early as possible via Sakai, so please remember to check Sakai and/or make sure it is forwarding to your e-mail.

Week	Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment(s)
Week 1 Class 1	8/19	Course Overview		
Week 2 Class 2	8/24	Introduction to Research	Chapters 1 & 2	Due: Completed online project survey
Week 2 Class 3	8/26	Planning & Designing Research	Chapters 3 & 4	
Week 3 Class 4	8/31	Secondary Research	Chapters 5 & 6	Due: Team and Topic Contract (Group submission , 11:55 p.m. via Sakai)
Week 3 Class 5	9/02	Library Resources, Syndicated Research Demo	Library Resources	Due: Library Resource Worksheet (Individual submission , before class via Sakai)
Week 4 Class 6	9/07	Secondary Research Work Day		Due: Syndicated Research Scavenger Hunt (Individual submission , before class via Sakai)
Week 4 Class 7	9/09	Qualitative Research Overview, Research Ethics	Chapters 9 & 37	

Week	Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment(s)
Week 5 Class 8	9/14	Focus Groups	Chapter 10	Due: Secondary Research Report (Group submission , 11:55 p.m. via Sakai)
Week 5 Class 9	9/16	Interviews & Ethnography	Chapter 12 & 13	
Week 6 Class 11	9/21	Interview Day (In Class)		
Week 6 Class 12	9/23	Ethnography Day (In Class)		
Week 7 Class 13	9/28	Focus Groups Work Day (In Class)		
Week 7 Class 14	9/30	Focus Groups (In Class)		Due: Completed Interview & Ethnography Exercise (Individual submission , 11:55 p.m. via Sakai)
Week 8 Class 15	10/05	Qualitative Research Report Work Day (In-Class)		
Week 8 Class 16	10/07	Qualitative Research Report Work Day (In-Class)		
Week 9 Class 17	10/12	Quantitative Research Overview; Quantitative Sampling	Chapters 16 & 17	Due: Qualitative Research Report (Group submission , 11:55 p.m. via Sakai)
Week 9 Class 18	10/14	Questions and measurement	Chapters 18 & 19	
Week 10 Class 19	10/19	Survey Work Day (In Class)	LAST DAY TO "FIRE" A TEAMMATE	Due: Mid-Semester Peer Evaluations (Individual submission , 11:55 p.m. via Sakai)
Week 10	10/21	FALL BREAK - NO CLASS		
Week 11 Class 20	10/26	Qualtrics overview		
Week 11 Class 21	10/28	Collecting and analyzing survey data	Chapters 22 & 32	
Week 12 Class 22	11/2	Survey Exchange (In Class)	ELECTION DAY (GO VOTE!)	Bring your completed survey link to class
Week 12 Class 23	11/04	Experimental Research	Chapters 24 & 25	
Week 13 Class 24	11/09	Collecting and analyzing experimental data	(Review) Chapters 22 & 32	

Week	Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment(s)
Week 13 Class 25	11/11	Experiments Work Day (In Class)		Due: Analyzing Quant Data (Individual submission, before class via Sakai)
Week 14 Class 26	11/16	Experiments Exchange (In Class)		Bring your completed experiment link to class
Week 14 Class 27	11/18	Quantitative Research Report Work Day (In Class)		
Week 15 Class 28	11/23	Quantitative Research Report Work Day (In Class)		Due: Bonus Quiz by 12:15 p.m. (in person)
Week 15	11/25	*****NO CLASS -- THANKSGIVING*****		
Week 16 Class 29	11/30	Quantitative Research Report and Presentation Work Day (In Class)		Due: Quantitative Research Report (Group submission, 11:55 p.m. via Sakai)
Wednesday, December 1 - LDOC				
FINAL EXAM		Presentations 12/09 (Thursday) 12:00 - 3:00 p.m.		Due: Final Research Presentation (Group submission, 12:00 p.m. via Sakai) Due: Final Peer Evaluations (Individual submission, 12:00 p.m. via Sakai)

Additional Information and Resources

Attendance Policy

Your attendance is strongly encouraged because it is important to both your success in the course and our success as a collective learning community. I want you to be present to share your perspective!

The University has the following policy on attendance:

No right or privilege exists that permits a student to be absent from any class meetings, except for these University Approved Absences:

1. Authorized University activities
2. Disability/religious observance/pregnancy, as required by law and approved by Accessibility Resources and Service and/or the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office (EOC)
3. Significant health condition and/or personal/family emergency as approved by the Office of the Dean of Students, Gender Violence Service Coordinators, and/or the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office

Please be aware that you are bound by the Honor Code when making a request for a University approved absence.

Our class has the following policy on attendance:

It's worth repeating: Your attendance is strongly encouraged because it is important to both your success in the course and our success as a collective learning community. I want you to be present to share your perspective!

Since attendance is so important, I will track it via in-class activities. If you miss class, you will miss the chance to earn points. **There are 70 possible points tied directly to your attendance in this course.**

A note on grace for attendance and late work: The last year has been hard on all of us. I expect that this semester will be, too. I am happy to work with you on both absences and late work (i.e., deadlines), but **I need to know there's a problem before I can troubleshoot a solution.**

Thus, please reach out to me *as soon as you know* there's a problem that will prevent you from attending class and/or turning in work on time. We will work to develop a solution (although I can't guarantee it will be a perfect solution).

Please do not e-mail me at the end of the semester asking for grace on something that happened in September!

If you need accommodations for disabilities and/or chronic medical conditions, please see below on working with ARS.

Policy on Late Work

Late work is not accepted on the job, and it will be penalized here. Assignments submitted within 24 hours after the deadline will incur a one-point deduction. Assignments submitted within 48 hours after the deadline will incur a two-point deduction. Assignments submitted within 72 hours after the deadline will incur a three-point deduction, and so on (in other words, for each additional 24-hour period after the deadline that passes, one point will be deducted from the assignment grade).

Technology Policy

Please note that I expect that you silence all sound on both your laptop and your cell phone, and I reserve the right to ask you to put away any and all devices if I deem that your technology use has become problematic.

Laptops should be put away entirely during student and/or guest speaker presentations.

Mask Use

All students are required to wear a mask covering your mouth and nose at all times in our classroom. This requirement is to protect our educational community (both your classmates and me) as we learn together. If you choose not to wear a mask, or wear it improperly, I will ask you to leave immediately, and I will submit a report to the [Office of Student Conduct](#). At that point you will be disenrolled from this course for the protection of our educational community. Students who have an authorized accommodation from Accessibility Resources and Service have an exception.

For additional information, see the [University guidelines for facemask use](#).

Honor Code

I expect that each student will conduct themselves within the guidelines of the University honor system (<http://honor.unc.edu>). All academic work should be done with the high levels of honesty and integrity that this University demands. You are expected to produce your own work in this class. 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 Charlie Tuggle. You may also speak with a representative of the Student Attorney Office or the Office of the Dean of Students.

Diversity Statement

I value - and I expect you to do so as well - the perspectives of individuals from all backgrounds reflecting the diversity of our students. I broadly define diversity to include race, gender identity, national origin, ethnicity, religion, social class, age, sexual orientation, political background, and physical and learning ability. I strive to make this classroom an inclusive space for all students, and I

expect that you will treat classmates who differ from you on any of the above categories with respect and civility.

Please let me know if there is anything I can do to make our classroom a more inclusive space; I appreciate any suggestions.

More broadly, our school has adopted [diversity and inclusion mission and vision statements](#) with accompanying goals. These complement the University policy on [prohibiting harassment and discrimination](#).

In summary, 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. The Dean of Students (<http://odos.unc.edu>) has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the University's nondiscrimination policies.

Policy on Non-Discrimination

The University is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our community and to ensuring that educational and employment decisions are based on individuals' abilities and qualifications. Consistent with this principle and applicable laws, the University's [Policy Statement on Non-Discrimination](#) offers access to its educational programs and activities as well as employment terms and conditions without respect to race, color, gender, national origin, age, religion, creed, genetic information, disability, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. Such a policy ensures that only relevant factors are considered and that equitable and consistent standards of conduct and performance are applied.

If you are experiencing harassment or discrimination, you can seek assistance and file a report through the Report and Response Coordinators (see contact info at safe.unc.edu) or the [Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office](#), or online to the EOC at <https://eoc.unc.edu/report-an-incident/>.

Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office

Acts of discrimination, harassment, interpersonal (relationship) violence, sexual violence, sexual exploitation, stalking, and related retaliation are prohibited at UNC-Chapel Hill. If you have experienced these types of conduct, you are encouraged to report the incident and seek resources on campus or in the community. An online report can be made here: [Home - UNC-Chapel Hill Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office](#).

You can also contact the [University's Title IX Coordinator](#), [Report and Response Coordinators](#) in the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office, [Counseling and Psychological Services](#) (confidential), or the [Gender Violence Services Coordinators](#) (confidential) to discuss your specific needs. Additional resources are available at [Safe at UNC](#).

If you suspect these acts may have affected your grade in a course, you can submit an appeal by following the process outlined on the University Registrar's website: [Grade Changes and Appeals - Office of the University Registrar \(unc.edu\)](#).

Seeking Help and Special Accommodations

If you need individual assistance, it's your responsibility to make an appointment to meet with the instructor. If you are serious about wanting to improve your performance in the course, the time to seek help is as soon as you are aware of the problem, regardless of the nature of the problem (course material, disability, illness, etc.)

The Office of Accessibility Resources and Service (ARS)

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 barriers to fully accessing University courses, programs, and activities.

Accommodations are determined through the Office of Accessibility Resources and Service (ARS) for individuals with documented qualifying disabilities in accordance with applicable state and federal laws. See the ARS Website for contact information: <https://ars.unc.edu> or e-mail ars@unc.edu.

Although I aim to be understanding, please understand that, under University policies, disability-related accommodations are **not guaranteed without authorization from ARS**.

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)

[Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#) is strongly committed to addressing the mental health needs of a diverse student body through timely access to consultation and connection to clinically appropriate services, whether for short or long-term needs.

CAPS is open M - F from 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. Visit their facilities on the third floor of the Campus Health Services building for a walk-in evaluation or call their 24/7 support line (919-966-3658) to learn more.