

# Advertising and Public Relations Research Methods

MEJO 379.001 | Summer 2021

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**Instructor:** Jacob Thompson, M.A.  
[jacobthompson@unc.edu](mailto:jacobthompson@unc.edu)

**Office hours:** Tu/Th 10:00am - 12:00pm  
And by appointment

## Course Overview

**Prerequisite:** You must have passed Principles of Ad/PR to take this course.

**Objectives:** After the student has completed this course, she/he should be able to:

- Understand quantitative and qualitative research options in the area of strategic communication (PR and advertising)
- Understand the strengths and weaknesses of different research methods
- Select methods that are most appropriate to answer specific client needs
- Plan and conduct research using these methods
- Analyze data obtained by these research methods and apply findings to real-world issues
- Expand knowledge of publics/consumers/organizations/issues through primary and secondary research

**ACEJMC Core Competencies:** The Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (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:

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

## Course Policies

**Communication policy:** You are encouraged to email me with any questions or comments you have throughout the semester. I will do my best to answer within 24 hours. If your email relates to a group project, please copy your group members on the e-mail. It is your responsibility to check your email and Sakai regularly for messages and updates.

**The Honor Code:** It is my duty to report any and all suspected Honor Code violations to the Student Attorney General. If you are not familiar with the Honor Code, please review it at <http://instrument.unc.edu>. As stated in the Honor Code, “It shall be the responsibility of every student at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to obey and support the enforcement of the Honor Code, which prohibits lying, cheating, or stealing when these actions involve academic process or University student or academic personnel acting in an official capacity.”

A special note about plagiarism: the Instrument of Student Governance at UNC defines plagiarism as “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.” Copying-and-pasting from online sources without citing the source from which you obtained the content is clearly an instance of plagiarism. However, it may also be plagiarism if you rely too heavily on the structure and reasoning of another piece (for example, if you rely too much on swapping out synonyms or making only very superficial changes to content that is not yours). This type of extensive paraphrasing is not acceptable in this course, which requires you to demonstrate original thinking and analysis. 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 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.

**Students with Disabilities:** If you have a diagnosed or suspected disability that you think might affect your performance in this course, you should contact Accessibility Resources & Service to determine whether and to what extent services or accommodations are available. If you think this might apply to you, please contact Accessibility Resources & Service at 962-8300 or visit the department’s Website at <https://accessibility.unc.edu/>. Please understand that I’m not qualified or permitted under University policies to provide any disability-related accommodations without authorization from ARS.

**Diversity and Inclusion:** The School of Media and Journalism adopted [diversity and inclusion mission and vision statements](#) in spring 2016 with accompanying goals. It complements 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 (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.

**Readings:** We will rely primarily on the textbook *Advertising and Public Relations Research* by Jugenheimer and associates (see citation below). It is available at no extra cost to you as an e-book via our library system. You may also purchase the text if you prefer a hard copy. In addition, there will be readings outside of the text that will be made available within the weekly lesson pages on Sakai.

[Jugenheimer, D.W., Bradley, S.D., Kelly, L.D., & Hudson, J.C. \(2015\). \*Advertising and Public Relations Research\*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe.](#)

**Sakai:** Sakai will serve as the main hub for our online course this semester. Weekly modules will be posted to Sakai with overviews of our work for the week, links to forums, required readings and videos for each day, and additional materials that you may find useful as you learn about new research methods. I will also post syllabus updates, announcements, assignments, and other important information. The UNC Sakai service can be found at <http://sakai.unc.edu>. Updates will be frequent, so check back often. You are responsible for any course changes that may be made on Sakai, including changes to the syllabus or assignments.

**Attendance and Engagement:** In the professional world, there's no such thing as not attending a meeting or workday "just because." I expect you to keep up with course modules and attend meetings scheduled with your team – please do not disrespect your classmates by agreeing to a meeting time and failing to show up. You will also demonstrate your engagement with the course through "blog" posts, as outlined below.

That said, I understand that life happens and that family issues, health issues, interview opportunities, etc., may arise. If circumstances arise that will prevent you from keeping up with course modules or result in late assignments, please contact me in advance or as soon as possible to determine an appropriate course of action.

**Participation and Professionalism:** You are expected to keep up with course modules and assignments. In addition, you should make sure you have completed necessary readings before meeting with your team so that you can contribute meaningfully to group work. Please act professionally. This means being fully engaged in discussions, team meetings, and presentations. If you show a consistent pattern of disengagement or disrespect, whether in group work or discussion forums, this will be addressed with verbal and/or written warnings. Failure to improve behavior will negatively influence your final grade.

**Use of Laptops and Other Technology:** Technology is an essential component of engaging in an online course and can be an asset to you both as a student and professionally. That being said, please minimize use of your laptop for non-class purposes during group meetings for this course. It's important to be respectful of your classmates and treat this as preparation for work in a professional setting. Please behave accordingly.

**Library Resources:** Our unit on secondary research covers finding and using existing data. Director of Park Library, Stephanie Brown, has put together a [course site](#) that will help introduce you to secondary research. Please make use of this fantastic resource.

## Grading and Assignments

This class is structured around an ongoing client-based group project. Some are individual assignments whereas others are group assignments. This arrangement allows for collaboration and teamwork while also promoting individual learning, individual accountability, and individualized grades. You will be assigned to a group at the beginning of the semester based on the surveys you turn in during the first week. Your group will then select the brand or organization that you will focus on for the semester.

**Grading rubrics and project requirements will be issued when each part of the overall assignment is assigned.** This helps students know exactly what they're being graded on for each specific assignment. There are three phases of research assignments:

- 1) Secondary Data (background research project)
- 2) Primary Data: Qualitative (in-depth interview, participant observation/ethnography)
- 3) Primary Data: Quantitative (survey, experiment)

Your Final Project includes synthesis of all the above assignments with additional components.

## Summary of Graded Items

- 1) **[Team Charter](#)** (Group; 25 points) and **[Client/Issue Choice](#)** (Group; 25 points): You will be assigned to teams for the semester based on your responses to the project preferences survey. Together you will develop a charter for how you want to work together and how you will address any problems should they arise. Then, you will choose three clients (and relevant issues) that you would like to work on this semester.
- 2) **[Secondary data/background research](#)** (Group; 100 points): This project will require your group to find appropriate secondary data (i.e., existing data) and other background information related to your problem or brand. Your group will create a written report that will be turned in on Sakai. You will need to coordinate with each other and share individual findings so that all group members see the “big picture.”
- 3) **[In-depth interviews](#)** (Individual; 100 points): This project will require you to interview two individuals to get their thoughts on your product or problem. You will need to submit your interview questions and your findings from your interview.
- 4) **[Participant observation and ethnography](#)** (Individual; 100 points): This project will require you to take field notes on your observations of people/situations around a problem that you define. You will then write up your field notes and share them with your peers. You will write-up an analysis of your own notes and of the ethnography process.
- 5) **[Survey](#)** (Group; 100 points): 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 and will be taken by everyone in our class. The group will then analyze the data and submit the findings. Grades will be based on the group-submitted report.
- 6) **[Split run experiment](#)** (Group; 100 points): This project will require your group to come up with two versions of an ad, PSA, persuasive message, visual, or other stimulus that would apply to your client/issue. The experiment will be administered via a Qualtrics online instrument and will be

taken by everyone in our class. The group will then analyze the data and report the results.

**7) [Final project and presentation](#) (Group; 150 points):** The final group project is a culmination of your previous assignments. You can use the data already collected for your problem or client, but it is expected that the final project will be an improved and consolidated version of what you have already turned in and researched. A detailed grading rubric of final project expectations will be given out mid-semester and may be slightly tailored, depending on groups. All groups will submit a presentation of their findings to Sakai at the end of the semester.

**8) Peer evaluations at mid-semester (Individual; 50 points) and end of semester (Individual; 50 points):** Your teammates will be evaluating your contributions to the group, and the average of these scores across your teammates will constitute your grade. Mid-semester evaluations are a good opportunity to revisit group work expectations to ensure effective work for the remainder of the class.

**9) Participation (Individual; 50 points):** In addition to following the guidelines for attendance outlined above, you will demonstrate your continued engagement with the course through “blog” posts on the forums, addressing ideas or questions from the week’s topic. To receive full credit, you will need to make 10 posts during the semester, with a maximum of one post per week counting toward this total. Most weeks will have 3 opportunities to post, and all posts must be made by Sunday at 11:55 pm to count for that week.

**10) Quizzes (Individual; 100 points):** As we progress through the semester, some modules will include short quizzes. These quizzes are not timed, and you have full access to course materials - their purpose is to help ensure that you understand key points from the modules. You should be able to answer quiz questions with confidence before moving on to subsequent modules. Your quiz score’s average (dropping your lowest score) will count for 100 points, or 10% of your final grade.

**11) [Reflection](#) (Individual; 50 points):** You will write or video record responses to questions that ask you to evaluate the knowledge you have found valuable throughout the semester, relate key concepts to your personal/professional/academic journey, and inquire about aspects of the course material that need further clarification.

500 points from individual assignments  
+ 500 points from group assignments

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1000 points TOTAL

## Additional Grading Policies

### Grade Scale:

Letter grade	Range of points Scores falling in between point ranges will be rounded to the nearest whole number.	Interpretation
A A-	95-100 90-94	Highest level of attainment
B+ B B-	87-89 83-86 80-82	High level of attainment
C+ C C-	77-79 73-76 70-72	Adequate level of attainment
D+ D	67-69 63-66	Minimal passing level of attainment
F	Below 63	Failed, unacceptable performance

**Late assignments:** Assignments submitted within 24 hours after the submission site closes will incur a 10% penalty, based on the overall point value of that assignment (e.g., one point off for an assignment worth 10 points). An additional 10% will be deducted for assignments submitted within each additional 24-hour period of lateness.

**Extra credit:** 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 class-wide, so please don't ask for individual extra credit assignments.





## Course Schedule

As we navigate this semester and the challenges of responding to Covid-19, the syllabus and schedule may change based on the progress of our class. Changes will be announced on Sakai. Please be sure to refer to the most recent version of the syllabus, which can be accessed from the course site.

Chapter Readings refer to [\*Advertising and Public Relations Research\*](#) by Jugenheimer, Kelley, Hudson, and Bradley. You may download the entire book or individual chapters based on your preference (I will also provide links on Sakai to each chapter as it comes up). Supplemental readings and/or videos will be available each week in Sakai and are chosen to help you as you progress through learning each research method.

WEEK	DATE	TOPIC	READINGS/ASSIGNMENTS
INTRODUCTION			
1	6/28	Course Introduction	<i>Project Preference Survey Due</i>
1	6/29	Need For Research and Key Concepts	Chapter 1, 2
1	6/30	Planning, Designing, Using Research	Chapter 3,4
1	7/1	Introduction to Research Ethics	Chapter 37
1	7/2	Case Studies in Research Ethics	Two of Three Sections on Sakai  <i>Team Charter &amp; Client/Issue Choice Due</i>
SECONDARY RESEARCH			
2	7/5	Holiday: NO CLASS	
2	7/6	Introduction to Secondary Research	Chapter 5,6

2	7/7	Syndicated, Online, and Other Resources	Chapter 7, 8 Additional Content on Sakai
2	7/8	Accessing Secondary Sources	<i>Park Library Module (on Sakai)</i> <i>“How to Use Simmons” (Optional)</i>
2	7/9	Synthesizing Secondary Research	
QUALITATIVE RESEARCH			
3	7/12	Introduction to Qualitative Research	Chapter 9 <i>Secondary Research Assignment Due</i>
3	7/13	Interviews	Chapter 12, 20 Additional Content on Sakai
3	7/14	Analyzing Qualitative Research	Chapter 15 <i>Peer Evaluation Due</i>

3	7/15	Ethnography	Chapter 13 Additional Content on Sakai (Case Studies)
3	7/16	Focus Groups	Chapter 10 Additional Content on Sakai (Case Study)
QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH			
4	7/19	Quantitative Research and Sampling	Chapter 17  <i><u><a href="#">Interview Report</a></u> Due</i>
4	7/20	Surveys	Chapter 16  Additional Reading
4	7/21	Quantitative Measurement and Questions	Chapters 18, 19, 21  Additional Reading  <i><u><a href="#">Ethnography Worksheet</a></u> Due</i>

4	7/22	Experiments	Chapter 24, 25 Additional Reading <a href="#">Survey Draft</a> due
4	7/23	Analyzing Quantitative Data	Chapter 22, 32 Additional Reading
SYNTHESIZING RESEARCH AND WRAP-UP			
5	7/26	Mixed-Methods Research	<a href="#">Survey Report</a> Due
5	7/27	Synthesizing Findings	<a href="#">Experiment Draft</a> Due
5	7/28	Reporting Results and Recommendations	
5	7/29	Wrap-up (Review and Additional Methods)	<a href="#">Experiment Worksheet</a> Due
EXAM	8/2	3:00-6:00 pm EST	<i>Final Projects &amp; Presentations Due</i> <i>Reflection Due</i>

			<i>Peer Evaluation #2 Due</i>
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