

## Strategic Communications Research Methods: MEJO 701

Fall 2021

**Class Time: 9:30am to 10:45am; Mondays and Wednesdays**

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

Office Hours: 11:00am-12:15pm on Mondays and Wednesdays, or by appointment - Room 223

Email: [cabosky@live.unc.edu](mailto:cabosky@live.unc.edu)

### 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 Saka: <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.

### Attendance

#### University Policy

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 (EOC).

### **Class Policy**

For situations when an absence is not University approved (e.g., a job interview or club activity), instructors determine their own approach to missed classes and make-up assessments and assignments: <http://catalog.unc.edu/policies-procedures/attendance-grading-examination/>

### **Honor Code**

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. 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.

### **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 email [ars@unc.edu](mailto:ars@unc.edu).

### **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. Go to their website: <https://caps.unc.edu/> or visit their facilities on the third floor of the Campus Health Services building for a walk-in evaluation to learn more.

### ***Title IX***

Any student who is impacted by discrimination, harassment, interpersonal (relationship) violence, sexual violence, sexual exploitation, or stalking is encouraged to seek resources on campus or in the community. Reports can be made online to the EOC at <https://eoc.unc.edu/report-an-incident/>. Please contact the University's Title IX Coordinator (Elizabeth Hall, interim – [titleixcoordinator@unc.edu](mailto:titleixcoordinator@unc.edu)), Report and Response Coordinators in the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office ([reportandresponse@unc.edu](mailto:reportandresponse@unc.edu)), Counseling and Psychological Services (confidential), or the Gender Violence Services Coordinators

(gvsc@unc.edu; confidential) to discuss your specific needs. Additional resources are available at [safe.unc.edu](https://safe.unc.edu).

### **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](https://safe.unc.edu)) or the [Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office](#), or online to the EOC at <https://eoc.unc.edu/report-an-incident/>.

### **Diversity Statement**

I strive to make this classroom an inclusive space for all students. Please let me know if there is anything I can do to improve; 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](#). 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.

### **Mask Use**

All enrolled 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. 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 <https://carolinatogether.unc.edu/university-guidelines-for-facemasks/>.

### **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: <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 10%**

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 course is available online here:

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

## **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 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 “H” in the participation section just by doing nothing wrong. You have to ***earn*** an “H” in participation, just as you would by studying for the exams in other courses.

***Asynchronous:*** In a potentially 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 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 class. To count for attendance and participation, you must post your thoughts **within 48 hours after that regularly scheduled class period**. 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 2021, 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 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 within 48 hours of that class period.

For every class beyond three that you don’t attend and/or post via forum, you will lose 20 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 be posted on Sakai a couple weeks in advance of a class. So, always make sure to check additional readings there.**

Aug 18: Intro

*Readings or Assignments Due: None*

Aug 23: The Research Process

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

Aug 25: Planning and Using Research; Designing Research; Applying Research

*Readings or Assignments Due: Chapters 3, 4, 35*

Aug 30: Secondary and Syndicated Research: Intro; Syndicated; Other Useful Resources

*Readings or Assignments Due: Chapters 5, 6, 8*

Step 1: Secondary and Syndicated Cont'd: Online Resources; Analytics

*Readings or Assignments Due: Chapter 7*

Sept 8: Analytics In-Class Work Day; Short Lecture on How to Write Up Insights

*Readings or Assignments Due: None*

***IRB Certification Due***

Sept 13: 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*

Sept 15: Focus Group Day 1: Focus Groups; Handling Data

*Readings or Assignments Due: Chapters 10, 29*

***Turn in Analytics Assignment***

Sept 20: Focus Group Day 2: Review Focus Group Maps

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

Sept 22: In-depth Interviews

*Readings or Assignments Due: Chapter 12*

Sept 27: In-class Interview Day

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

Sept 29: Discuss Interviews

*Readings or Assignments Due*

Oct 4: Participant Observation

*Readings or Assignments Due: Chapter 13*

Oct. 6: 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 11: Measuring Instruments; Variate Analysis

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

Oct 13: Question Wording; Interviewer Training

*Readings or Assignments Due: Chapters 19, 20*

Oct 18: Reviewing Your Survey Questions

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

Oct 20: Survey Research; Obtaining Accurate Responses

*Readings or Assignments Due: Chapters 16, 21*

Oct 25: Scaling Techniques; Statistics

*Readings or Assignments Due: Chapters 30, 32*

Oct 27: Statistics Review; Microsoft Excel and Qualtrics Analysis + Work Day

*Readings or Assignments Due: None*

Nov. 1: Experiments: Research and Approaches

*Readings or Assignments Due: Chapters 24, 25*

Nov 3: Applying Research to your Careers

*Readings or Assignments Due: None*



Nov 8: Content Analysis

*Readings or Assignments Due: No book reading*

***Submit Survey Assignment***

Nov 10: Research Ethics (Law/Critical/Historical)

*Readings or Assignments Due: Chapters 28, 30*

Nov 15: Research Case Studies

*Readings or Assignments Due: See Sakai*

Nov 17: Research Case Studies II

*Readings or Assignments Due: See Sakai*

Nov 22: Final Group Meet Required - Summary of Course and Final Overview

*Readings or Assignments Due: See Sakai*

Nov 29: Open Office Hours for Final Project

*Readings or Assignments Due: See Sakai*

Dec 1: Open Office Hours for Final Project

*Readings or Assignments Due: See Sakai*

Dec 9: Finals - 8:00am-11:00am

Readings or Assignments Due: **Final due at 11:00am**