

# MEJO 379.4: Advertising and Public Relations Research Methods

Spring 2022

## Course Information

### Course Days

Mondays/Wednesdays

### Course Time

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

### Meeting Location

Carroll Hall 283

<https://unc.zoom.us/j/97588070797?pwd=OWlTcjdhZkFnMkptUE4vcTJOenUvUT09>

## Instructor Information

### Instructor

Meredith Collins, MA  
Roy H. Park Fellow

### Email

mrcollins@unc.edu

### Office Location & Hours

Wednesdays, 9:30 a.m. - 10:45 a.m.  
Carroll Hall (CA), 371

## General Information

### 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).

### 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 Text

**Readings will be posted to Sakai**

**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 (108 points; 54.0% of grade)**

- **Quizzes (36 points):** There will be 7 announced 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 you attend the lectures and do the readings, these should be fairly straightforward.* **Your lowest quiz score will be dropped at the end of the semester.**
- **Individual Class Participation (25 points):** Throughout the semester, we will have various class participation activities. Class participation activities will be graded for completeness, not correctness. **The following activities in the course schedule count toward this grade:** Sorting Hat Activity (2 points); Library Resource Worksheet (5 points); Secondary Research Source Free Write (3 points); Interview Guide and Ethnographic Site Selection (5 points). The remaining points will be awarded based on your participation throughout the semester.
- **Interview & Ethnography Report (25 points):** In this assignment, you will individually conduct one-on-one interviews and an ethnography. These two activities will be in pursuit of your team's research question. Your individual report will describe (in detail) your interview and ethnographic methods and findings. Additional details will be on Sakai.
- **Method Debate (10 points):** Toward the end of the semester, we will debate the age-old research question: Are quantitative methods better than qualitative methods? Half of the class will be assigned quantitative methods and half assigned qualitative methods. You will turn in your preparation notes for the debate. Additional details will be on Sakai.
- **Team Member Peer Evaluations (6 points):** You will complete three sets of peer evaluations throughout the semester, once after the secondary research assignment, once after the qualitative unit, and once at the end of the semester. Completing each evaluation will earn you two points per evaluation. 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 participation grades.**
- **Research Participation (6 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 (92 points; 46.0% 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 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 your classmates, who will make up the majority of your research participants.

- **Team Contract (3 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.

- **Draft research questions, topic sentences, and annotated bibliography (12 points):** You will draft one or more research questions that you will answer this semester. You will also compile an annotated bibliography, and, finally, draft topic sentences for your secondary research report. Additional details will be on Sakai.

You will receive **2 completion points (of the 12 total points)** for turning in the text (PDF) of one scholarly research article that you could use in your annotated bibliography.

- **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. Based on my feedback, you'll revise your draft research questions and topic sentences and expand your annotated bibliography into your final report. Additional details will be on Sakai.
- **Focus Group Memo (12 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 your classmates. Then, you will write a two-page memo to the client detailing the findings of your focus group. Additional details will be on Sakai.

You will receive **2 completion points (of the 12 total points)** for turning in the Moderator's Guide for your Focus Group.

- **Quantitative Research Report (30 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 draft survey and draft experiment will each be worth **5 points (10 total points)** out of the 30 points total for this assignment). These will be mostly graded based on completeness, not correctness, but points will be deducted for lack of effort.

Based on my feedback, you'll revise both your survey and experiment, and conduct each with your classmates. Then, you will write a detailed report describing your methods and findings from both the survey and the experiment. Additional details will be on Sakai.

- **Final Research Presentation (20 points):** The final research presentation will occur during our final exam time. Your team will construct one presentation deck that recaps your key findings from your research throughout the semester. Your presentation should be professional and visually appealing. Each time will have approximately 15 minutes to present, and each team member must present. Additional details will be 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. In the first few weeks of the semester, I will submit your names to the research pool coordinator, Dr. Joe Bob Hester. You will be added to a Sakai site, on which the research studies you could participate in will be posted. Additional details about satisfying our requirement are on our Sakai page.

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.

## 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). *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
<b>C</b>	<b>73 - 75</b>	<b>102 - 105</b>	<b><i>Must receive a "C" or better to avoid retaking course</i></b>
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

## 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.

**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 February!

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](http://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](mailto: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.

## 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	1/10	Course Overview & Introduction to Research		
Week 1 Class 2	1/12	First Decisions & Research Ethics	Chapters 1 -3	Due: Completed online project survey ( <b>Individual submission</b> , 11:55 p.m. via Sakai)
Week 2	1/17	<b>***MLK DAY - NO CLASS***</b>		
Week 2 Class 3	1/19	Reading, Recording, & Reviewing Research and Research Results	Chapters 4 & 14	<b>Quiz #1: Chapters 1 - 3</b>
Week 3 Class 4	1/24	What you'll be doing this semester and team assignments		
Week 3 Class 5	1/26	Library Resources	MEJO 379 Library Guide	Due: Library Resource Worksheet ( <b>Individual submission</b> , before class via Sakai)
Week 4 Class 6	1/31	How to Write a Research Paper and Syndicated Research Demo	5-Minute APA Style Guide	Due: Team Contract ( <b>Group submission</b> , 11:55 p.m. via Sakai)  Due: Text of one scholarly source you might use in your annotated bibliography ( <b>Group submission</b> , 11:55 p.m. via Sakai)
Week 4 Class 7	2/2	Analyzing Sources	Your scholarly article Your assigned other teams' article	Due: Free write about your two articles ( <b>Individual submission</b> , before class via Sakai)
Week 5 Class 8	2/7	Secondary Research Work Day (In Class)		Due: Draft Research Question(s), Topic Sentences, and Annotated Bibliography ( <b>Group submission</b> , 11:55 p.m. via Sakai)
Week 5 Class 9	2/9	Team Research Questions Workshop		
Week 6 Class 10	2/14	Qualitative Research: Interviews, Focus Groups, and Ethnographies	Chapter 13	



Week	Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment(s)
Week 6 Class 11	2/16	Qualitative Research: Interviews, Focus Groups, and Ethnographies	Chapter 13	Due: Secondary Research Report ( <b>Group submission</b> , 11:55 p.m. via Sakai)
Week 7 Class 12	2/21	Analyzing real-world examples	Lazard et al., 2021 Penney, 2020 Pace et al., 2018 (read until page 106 "Phase 2" Methods)	<b>Quiz #2: Chapter 13</b> Due: Secondary Research Peer Evaluations ( <b>Individual submission</b> , 11:55 p.m. via Sakai)
Week 7 Class 13	2/23	Qualitative Research Work Day (In Class)		Due: Interview Guide & Ethnographic Site Selection ( <b>Individual submission</b> , before class via Sakai)
Week 8 Class 14	2/28	Interviews (In-Class)		Due: Moderator Guide ( <b>Group submission</b> , 11:55 p.m. via Sakai)
Week 8 Class 15	3/2	Conduct Focus Groups (In Class)		
Week 9 Class 16	3/7	Conduct Ethnography (In lieu of class)		
Week 9 Class 17	3/9	Using Numbers: Quantitative Questions and Measurement	Chapter 5	Due: Completed Interview & Ethnography Exercise ( <b>Individual submission</b> , 11:55 p.m. via Sakai)
Week 10	3/14	<b>***SPRING BREAK - NO CLASS***</b>		
Week 10	3/16			
Week 11 Class 18	3/21	Quantitative Sampling: Who, What, and How Many?	Chapter 6	
Week 11 Class 19	3/23	Summarizing & Generalizing from Research Results	Chapters 7 & 8	<b>Quiz #3: Chapter 5</b> Due: Focus Group Memo ( <b>Group submission</b> , 11:55 p.m. via Sakai)
Week 12 Class 20	3/28	Surveys	Chapter 9	Due: Qualitative Research Peer Evaluations ( <b>Individual submission</b> , 11:55 p.m. via Sakai)
Week 12 Class 21	3/30	Experiments	Chapter 10	<b>Quiz #4: Chapter 6</b>
Week 13 Class 22	4/4	Examples Discussion	Benedict et al., 2021 Kraus & Myrick, 2018	<b>Quiz #5: Chapters 7 &amp; 8</b>
Week 13 Class 23	4/6	Surveys and Experiments Work Day (In-Class)		Due: Draft survey link and codebook ( <b>Group submission</b> , 11:55 p.m. via Sakai)

Week	Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment(s)
Week 14 Class 24	4/11	Programming Surveys and Experiments in Qualtrics		<b>Quiz #6: Chapter 9</b> Due: Draft experiment link and codebook ( <b>Group submission</b> , 11:55 p.m. via Sakai)
Week 14 Class 25	4/13	Revising Surveys and Experiments		<b>Quiz #7: Chapter 10</b>
Week 15 Class 26	4/18	Surveys & Experiments Exchange		Due: Final survey link and final experiment link ( <b>Group submission</b> , before class via Sakai)
Week 15 Class 27	4/20	Methods Debate		Due: Methods Debate Preparation Notes ( <b>Individual submission</b> , before class, via Sakai)
Week 16 Class 28	4/25	Final Report & Presentation Work Day (In-Class)		Due: Quantitative Research Report ( <b>Group submission</b> , 11:55 p.m. via Sakai)
Week 16 Class 29	4/27	Research Methods Jeopardy	***LDOC**	
<b>FINAL EXAM</b>		Presentations Friday, 5/06 12:00 - 3:00 p.m.	CA 283 (our classroom)	Due: Final Research Presentation ( <b>Group submission</b> , 12:00 p.m. via Sakai) Due: Quantitative Peer Evaluations ( <b>Individual submission</b> , 12:00 p.m. via Sakai)