

MEJO 379: Advertising and Public Relations Research Methods, Fall 2022

Days, time, & location:	(379.001) T/Th, 8-9:15am, Curtis Media Center Rm 201 Some sessions are designated as independent or remote work days (see schedule)
Instructor:	Dr. Maria Leonora (Nori) Comello (she/her) comello@email.unc.edu (Best way to reach me) (919) 928-2440 cell
Office hours & location:	Tuesdays, 9:30-10:30am, Carroll Rm 359 By appointment at other times

Course prerequisite: You must have passed Principles of Ad/PR to take this course.

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

The full list of competencies is available here:

<http://www2.ku.edu/~acejmc/PROGRAM/PRINCIPLES.SHTML#vals&comps>

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

Honor code: I expect that all students will conduct themselves within the guidelines of the University honor system (<https://studentconduct.unc.edu/about-us/forms-documents/instrument/>). 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 C. A. Tuggle, or you may speak with a representative of the Student Attorney Office or the Office of the Dean of Students.

Accessibility resources and services: 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.

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. Also visit the Heels Care Network for additional mental-health and self-care resources: <https://care.unc.edu/>.

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/>. Please contact the University's Title IX Coordinator (Elizabeth Hall, interim – titleixcoordinator@unc.edu), Report and Response Coordinators in the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office (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.

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/>.

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 non-discrimination policy described above, as well as [broader university goals](#) for diversity. 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.

COVID-19: The indoor mask requirement was lifted for most of the campus on March 7, 2022. We will follow the guidelines set forth by the [University COVID-19 Community Standards](#), which include:

- Stay Up to Date with your COVID-19 Vaccines
- Optional Mask Use
- Practice Healthy Habits and Be Respectful

Readings: We will rely primarily on the textbook *Advertising and Public Relations Research* by Jugenheimer and associates:

Jugenheimer, D.W., Bradley, S.D., Kelly, L.D., & Hudson, J.C. (2015). *Advertising and Public Relations Research*, 2nd edition. Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe. AVAILABLE ELECTRONICALLY THROUGH UNC LIBRARY: <http://www.tandfebooks.com.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/isbn/9781315716565>

It is available at no extra cost to you as an e-book via our library system. You may also purchase the text through the publisher or Amazon if you prefer hard copy. In addition, there will be readings outside of the text that will be made available on Sakai under Resources.

Sakai: I will use Sakai to post syllabus updates, announcements, PowerPoint slides (posted after class), 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.

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. The first way is to participate in three hours of academic research studies in the school. Participating in studies 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.

The second way to fulfill your research participation requirement is to write three one-page (single-spaced) summaries and critiques of academic research articles. Each review counts for one hour of research participation, and you may combine participation in the studies with article reviews to fulfill the research requirement. I will post full instructions on Sakai for those who wish to write summaries.

If you are enrolled in other MEJO 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 the subject pool participation, please contact me or Professor Joe Bob Hester at joe.bob.hester@unc.edu.

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).

If you need to miss class for any of these reasons, you may submit a request for a University Approved Absence at the [University Approved Absence Office](#).

Class Policy:

I take roll for each class where there is a scheduled meeting (lecture or group check-in). In the professional world, there's no such thing as not attending a meeting or workday "just because." So, treat attendance as a requirement (in line with university policy above). That said, I understand that life happens. If you need to miss class but are not able to seek a University Approved Absence, the class policy is that everyone will get THREE absences with no penalty. They can be for any reason. Use them wisely because anything beyond these absences – whether there is a good reason or not, and whether you tell me in advance or not – will result in point deductions. For every class beyond three absences, you will lose 2 points or 2% of your overall grade! If you are late to class, there is no guarantee that you will be marked as present. If you are absent, it is important to coordinate with your group so you can contribute to any group work.

Participation and professionalism: I expect you to come to each class having completed assigned readings and being ready to discuss them. In the interest of hearing everyone's perspectives, I may call on individuals who do not regularly participate on their own. Please act professionally in the classroom. This means being fully engaged in class discussions, team meetings, presentations, and client interactions. If you show a consistent pattern of disengagement or disrespect, this will be addressed with verbal and/or written warnings. Failure to improve behavior will negatively influence your final grade.

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 in the second week of class, based on the surveys you turn in after the first day. 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 will help you know exactly what you're being graded on for each specific assignment. There are three categories of research we will cover:

1. Secondary Data (background research project)
2. Primary Data: Qualitative (focus group, 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. **Secondary data/background research (10 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." ONE SUBMISSION PER GROUP
2. **Focus group (10 points):** Your group will conduct an online focus group and participate in focus groups for other groups. When it is your group's turn to facilitate, one of you will act as a moderator while the others will serve as note-takers and observers. Your group will turn in an analysis of the findings from the focus group conducted by your group. ONE SUBMISSION PER GROUP
3. **In-depth interviews (10 points):** This project will require you to interview people to get their thoughts on your client's product or problem. You will need to submit your interview questions and your findings from your interview. INDIVIDUAL SUBMISSION
4. **Participant observation and ethnography (10 points):** This project will require you to take field notes around campus 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. INDIVIDUAL SUBMISSION
5. **Survey (10 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 class. The group will then analyze the data and submit the findings. Grades will be based on the group-submitted report. ONE SUBMISSION PER GROUP
6. **Final project (10 points) and presentation (5 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 present their projects to the class at the end of the semester. If you cannot make a presentation date, please alert me and your group members at least three weeks before that date! ONE SUBMISSION PER GROUP

7. **Peer evaluations mid-semester (5 points) and end of semester (5 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.
8. **Research participation requirement (5 points):** See description provided above. You must fulfill the three hours (or equivalent) to earn full points. Partial completion of the three hours will result in partial points.
9. **Exam (20 points):** Multiple choice and short answer exam to review key concepts throughout the semester.

TOTAL: 100 POINTS = 55 points from individually graded items + 45 points from group assignments

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. No exceptions.

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.

Syllabus changes: I reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus, including project due dates and test dates. These changes will be announced as early as possible.

Summary of grading

Assignment	Type	Points
Secondary data/background research	Group grade	10
Focus group	Group grade	10
Interview	Individual grade	10
Participant observation/ethnography	Individual grade	10
Survey	Group grade	10
Final project: written (10) & presentation (5)	Group grade	15
Peer evals (mid-semester and end; 5 points each)	Individual grade	10
Research participation through participant pool	Individual grade	5
Exam	Individual grade	20
TOTAL		100

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

Course Schedule

- This schedule represents a good faith effort to outline our work over the course of the semester. However, because our needs may change, the timeline and assignments are subject to change. I will alert you via e-mail and Sakai of any changes in readings, assignments, due dates, etc., over the course of the semester. Thank you for your flexibility.
- Submission of assignments is on Sakai under Assignments unless otherwise noted.

DATE	TOPIC	ACTION
Aug. 16	Course introduction	No readings due DUE Friday: Complete online survey to assess project preferences. Link posted on Sakai under Resources.
Aug. 18	Lecture: Needs for research, key definitions, designing research.	Ch. 1-4
Aug. 23	Lecture: Conducting background research. Team assignments, select client, set ground rules, introduce background research assignment.	Ch. 5-8
Aug. 25	GUEST LECTURE: Park Library staff on using library resources.	Library pre-assignment
Aug. 30	Lecture: Intro to qualitative research methods, research ethics, introduce focus group assignment.	Ch. 9, 37
Sep. 1	Remote group work: Complete background research report. Plan for focus group assignment.	Group check-ins via Zoom DUE: Background research reports (one per group, due by 5pm).
Sep. 6	Well-being day	
Sep. 8	Lecture: Focus groups, handling qual data	Ch. 10, 15
Sep. 13	DATA COLLECTION/in class: Conduct your focus groups in class!	
Sep. 15	Remote group work: Analyze and write up focus group	Group check-ins via Zoom
Sep. 20	GUEST LECTURE TBD: Interviews Prep for interviews	Ch. 12-13 Submit interview worksheet for feedback (ungraded)
Sep. 22	DATA COLLECTION/Remote independent work: Conduct your interviews in the field.	Optional drop-in via Zoom DUE: Focus group assignment (one per group, due by 5pm).

Sep. 27	Lecture: Ethnographic observation/ wrap up of qual methods Group work: Prep for observations	Readings on Sakai under Resources/Readings: Why Big Data Needs Thick Data, Anthropology Inc.
Sep. 29	DATA COLLECTION/Remote independent work: Observations around campus or other locations	Optional drop-in via Zoom
Oct. 4	Lecture: Survey research, sampling, instruments, question wording	Ch. 16-19 DUE: Interview assignment (individual) by 5pm.
Oct. 6	Remote group work: Brainstorm survey questions, put questions in Qualtrics	Group check-in via Zoom Submit Qualtrics preview link by end of class for feedback (ungraded)
Oct. 11	Lecture: Obtaining accurate responses, recruitment Group work: Refine/pilot test survey	Ch. 21 DUE: Observation assignment (individual) by 5pm.
Oct. 13	Remote group work: Finalize and launch survey	Group check-in via Zoom Submit link to finalized survey link (one per group); I will post links to all. Take all surveys by Oct 25.
Oct. 18	Lecture: Are you a savvy consumer of research?	DUE: Peer evaluations on Sakai under Assignments
Oct. 20	Fall break	
Oct. 25	Lecture: Data analysis, statistics, and Excel	Ch. 22, 32 Make sure you have taken all surveys
Oct. 27	Remote group work: Data analysis, write up survey results	Group check-ins via Zoom
Nov. 1	Lecture: Experimental research, guidelines for group presentations and final projects	Ch. 24-25 DUE: Survey assignment (one per group) by 5pm.
Nov. 3	Remote group work: Worksheet for designing a simple experiment	Group check-ins via Zoom
Nov. 8	Guest lecture: Professor Joe Czabovsky on research in action	
Nov. 10	EXAM	
Nov. 15	Well-being day	
Nov. 17	Plan for presentations and final paper, etc. Course recap	

Nov. 22	Final presentations (last day of class)	DUE: Presentation slide deck (one per group) by start of class. If needed, submit alternate assignment in lieu of research participation.
Nov. 24	Thanksgiving recess	

FINAL PAPERS DUE AT END OF SCHEDULED FINAL EXAM PERIOD FOR THIS CLASS. PEER EVALS ALSO DUE.

Although we are not having a traditional final exam during this period, we are required to have a scheduled meeting per university policy. I will have our Zoom classroom open so you can meet with your group to self-assess your work. Read through your final report as a group; edit for flow, clarity, and adherence to rubric. Submit by end of allotted final exam period on Sakai.

THANK YOU FOR ALL YOUR HARD WORK!

HAVE A GREAT HOLIDAY BREAK!