

MEJO 379: Advertising and Public Relations Research Methods

Instructor: Paige Ladisic

Meeting Times: 3:30-4:45 p.m. on Mondays and Wednesdays

Classroom: Carroll Hall 143

Email: ladisic@email.unc.edu

Phone: 910-448-2003 (this is my cell; texting is encouraged!)

Office hours and location: By appointment only. Text or email to set up a time to chat!

Final Exam: 4 p.m. on Tuesday, May 2

Note: As 379 is a required course for MEJO students, a grade of at least a "C" is required to avoid needing to retake the course.

COURSE OVERVIEW

The key to effective advertising and public relations is research. This course will teach you how to understand, evaluate, and conduct communication research. It will provide you with an understanding of the relationship between theory, data collection, analysis, and the communication of these results to clients. The course will also teach you how to design and execute various methodologies used for program assessment and evaluation in advertising and public relations.

Learning Objectives

After the student has completed this course, they should be able to:

- Describe quantitative and qualitative research methods in the area of public relations and advertising
- Differentiate the strengths and weaknesses of different research methods
- Apply qualitative and quantitative research methods and appropriate data collection, numerical concepts, and statistical procedures
- Determine research methods that are the most appropriate to answer specific client needs
- Design research, develop research instruments, and collect data using these methods
- Analyze and synthesize data obtained by these research methods
- Apply research findings to address real-world issues and client problems
- Examine publics/consumers and organizations/issues through primary and secondary research

TEXTBOOK

AVAILABLE ONLINE THROUGH THE PARK LIBRARY FOR FREE: 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.

COURSE POLICIES

Attendance & Classroom Policies

- **Make good decisions:** You're an adult, and you can decide to come to class (or not). I won't dock your grade for missing class. However, throughout the semester, we will have in-class activities, quizzes and "lab work," and this will contribute to 15% of your overall grade.
- **COVID & general sickness:** Please don't come to class sick! If you have COVID symptoms or just feel under the weather, err on the side of staying home – but let me know, so I can work with you to make up any assignments you might miss.
- **Missed work:** No, I won't let you make up an in-class assignment if you missed class, *unless* it was pre-approved or a UNC approved absence.
- **Zoom recordings:** I will record class and share recordings and slides on Sakai, but generally, this will be a synchronous course and conducted via live lecture each day.
- **Technology:** Make good decisions when it comes to distractions during lectures. We all get distracted, but do your best not to distract others if you really want to distract yourself.
- **Diversity and Inclusion:** I am fully committed to fostering a safe environment for all students at the Hussman School and enforcing all University policies for diversity and inclusion.

Communication

- **Contact information:** Email me at ladisic@email.unc.edu with *non-urgent needs*. If you have an *urgent* need (or want a faster response time!) please send me a text at 910-448-2003. This is the best way to get in touch with me.
- **Office hours:** By appointment only. Send me a text in order to set up an office hour appointment.
- **Class updates:** I will use Sakai and email to communicate changes and updates to the entire class. Assignments, due dates and lecture plans are always subject to change.

Assignments and Grading Policies

- **Submission guidelines:** Work should be submitted in PDF form on Sakai or via email. No other specifications.
- **Client-ready work:** All assignments should be submitted as if your *paying client* was going to view them. I will take points off for work that is sloppy or contains careless formatting, spelling, grammar or AP style errors.
- **Late work:** Late assignments will lose 10 points right off the bat, with an additional 2 points subtracted for every additional day it is late. HOWEVER, it is better to be late than to earn a 0!

- **Group work:** A majority of the projects in this class will be completed in groups. You will have time to work with your group on almost all projects in class, but sometimes, you may need to meet outside of class. Do your fair share of work, and don't ride on anyone's coattails. If you feel a group member isn't pulling their weight, come and talk to me early.
- **Grading:** Your grade is subjective to my expectations and standards. My expectations are high, and I expect you to think critically and go above and beyond. If you did not produce excellent work, you will not receive an A.
- **Grade concerns and questions:** If you have concerns about a grade, please inform me via email. I ask that you wait 24 hours after receiving your grade. Please outline your concerns and provide evidence to support your claim. NOTE: I do not discuss grades over email. So, after you contact me about a grade I will set-up a time to meet with me in person (online or by phone) so we can discuss the grade.
- **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.

Honor Code:

I expect that each student will conduct himself or herself 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. Using a set-up sound bite is a violation of the honor code. 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.

Seeking Help:

If you need individual assistance, it's your responsibility 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 – whether the problem is difficulty with course material, a disability, or an illness.

Diversity:

The University's policy on Prohibiting Harassment and Discrimination is outlined in the 2011-2012 Undergraduate Bulletin <http://www.unc.edu/ugradbulletin/>. 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.

Special Accommodations:

If you require special accommodations to attend or participate in this course, please let the instructor know as soon as possible. If you need information about disabilities visit the Department of Disability Services website at <http://disabilityservices.unc.edu/>

ACCREDITATION

The School of Journalism and Mass Communication's accrediting body outlines a number of values you should be aware of and competencies you should be able to demonstrate by the time you graduate from our program. Learn more about them here:
<http://www2.ku.edu/~acejmc/PROGRAM/PRINCIPLES.SHTML#vals&comps>

No single course could possibly give you all of these values and competencies; but collectively, our classes are designed to build your abilities in each of these areas. In this class, we will address a number of the values and competencies, with special emphasis on the last six bullet dots under "Professional values and competencies" in the link above.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

1. **Research proposal (15%):** Your group will put together a *written research proposal* as well as a *presentation* for the class. This will include an outline of your group's plans for the semester ahead, from your problem statement to research questions to hypothesis. *One submission per group.*
 - a. Report due: Jan. 25 at 11:59 p.m.
 - b. Presentations: Jan. 30 & Feb. 1
2. **Background research (15%):** Explore your problem statement deeper through background research. This project will require you to find appropriate secondary data (i.e., existing data) and other background information related to your problem. *Individual submissions.*
 - a. Report due: Feb. 8 at 11:59 p.m.
3. **Qualitative research (15%):** This phase of the project is divided into three assignments:
 - a. *Interview report:* This report will require each group member to interview three people for a minimum of 15 minutes each to get their thoughts on your problem. You will need to submit your interview questions, your interview recordings and your findings from your interviews in a report form. *Individual submissions.*
 - i. Report due: March 1 at 11:59 p.m.
 - b. *Focus group report:* This project will require you to plan for and host a focus group as a team. You will need to submit your focus group discussion guide, notes from the focus group and your findings. *One submission per group.*
 - i. Report due: March 22 at 11:59 p.m.
 - c. *Qualitative data group presentation:* This presentation should summarize your group's findings from the IDIs and focus group.
 - i. Presentations: March 27 & 29
4. **Empirical research (15%):** In this phase of the project, you will conduct quantitative research via a survey.
 - a. *Survey report:* You 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. Your group will then analyze the data and submit the findings. *One submission per group.*

- i. Report due: April 12 at 11:59 p.m.
 - b. *Quantitative data group presentation*: This presentation should summarize your survey methodology and your findings.
 - i. Presentations: April 17 & 19
5. **Final Report & Presentation (25%)**: This class will culminate in a final project report and presentation. Summarize what you have learned through the multi-step research project you have conducted and make recommendations for advertising and public relations strategies your client can implement. *One submission per group.*
 - a. Report due: May 4 at 4 p.m.
 - b. Presentations: May 4 from 4-6 p.m. (Note this is our final exam period)
6. **Miscellaneous Assignments (15%)**: This grade will include: in-class assignments; peer evaluation scores; individual reflections; and any other miscellaneous assignments we complete during this course.

Summary of Grading

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| Research proposal (research proposal + group presentation) | 15% |
| Background research | 15% |
| Qualitative research (interview report, focus group report + presentation) | 15% |
| Empirical research (survey report + presentation) | 15% |
| Final report and presentation | 25% |
| Misc. Assignments (Class participation, in-class assignments, peer evaluations, individual reflections) | 15% |
| Total | 100% |

Grading Scale

| PERCENT | GRADE | DESCRIPTION |
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| 93-100 | A | Outstanding. Mastery attainment. |
| 90-92.99 | A- | |
| 88-89.99 | B+ | |
| 83-87.99 | B | Strong performance; Solid attainment |
| 80-82.99 | B- | |
| 78-79.99 | C+ | Average performance; Basic attainment of the subject has been demonstrated |

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| 73-77.99 | C | |
| 70-72.99 | C- | |
| 68-69.99 | D+ | |
| 60-67.99 | D | Passing performance; Marginal attainment |
| <59.99 | F | Failed performance; Unacceptable attainment |

Note: I do not round up.

DAILY CLASS PLAN

| DATE | TOPIC OF DISCUSSION | ASSIGNMENTS AND READINGS |
|----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| Day 1 Monday, January 9 | Welcome to MEJO 379! <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class expectations • Why do we need research? • Key research definitions | N/A |
| Day 2 Wednesday, January 11 | Introduction to Research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning and using research • Designing research • How to conduct a SWOT analysis <p><i>Introduction to the research plan assignment. Groups will be assigned today.</i></p> | Ch. 1-4 In-class assignment: SWOT analysis |
| Monday, January 16 | NO CLASS - MLK JR. DAY | |
| Day 3 Wednesday, January 18 | Guest Speaker: Stephanie Brown of Park Library <i>Resources for MEJO 379 students:</i> http://guides.lib.unc.edu/mejo379 | Research assignment should be completed before class. |
| Day 4 Monday, January 23 | Introduction to Secondary Research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review what we learned on Thursday. • Secondary research + how to use it • Syndicated research • Online resources • Other resources for conducting research <p><i>Introduction to background research assignment.</i></p> | Ch. 5-8 |

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| Day 5 Wednesday, January 25 | WORK DAY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finish research plans. • Prepare for research plan presentations. • Begin work on background research assignment. | DUE at 11:59 p.m.: Research plan (one submission per group) |
| Day 6 Monday, January 30 | Group presentations: Research Plan 3 groups will present. | DUE at 11:59 p.m.: Peer evaluations for Research Plan |
| Day 7 Wednesday, February 1 | Group presentations: Research Plan 3 groups will present. | |
| Day 8 Monday, February 6 | NO CLASS – Paige is out | |
| Day 9 Wednesday, February 8 | Research Ethics & Intro to Qualitative Research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research ethics • Types of qualitative research | Ch. 9, 37 DUE at 11:59 p.m.: Background research report (individual submissions) |
| Monday, February 13 | WELLNESS DAY | |
| Day 10 Wednesday, February 15 | GUEST SPEAKER | |
| Day 11 Monday, February 20 | In-Depth Interviews <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing interview questions • Best practices for interviews • Interview training | Ch. 12, 20 |
| Day 12 Wednesday, February 22 | WORK DAY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview practice • Work on IDI report | In-class assignment: Interview practice |
| Day 13 Monday, February 27 | Focus Groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to conduct a focus group • The focus group guide | Ch. 10, Ch. 15 |

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| | <i>Introduction to focus group assignment.</i> | |
| Day 14 Wednesday, March 1 | WORK DAY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete interview report • Begin work on planning for focus group • Prepare for in-class focus group | DUE at 11:59 p.m.: In-depth interview report (individual submissions) |
| Day 15 Monday, March 6 | WORK DAY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host an in-class focus group with your classmates. | In-class assignment: Focus group |
| Day 16 Wednesday, March 8 | Qualitative Methods, continued <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to conduct other qualitative methods • How qualitative research enhances quantitative research | Ch. 11, 13, Ch. 14 |
| March 13 + 15 | SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS | |
| Day 17 Monday, March 20 | Introduction to Quantitative Research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empirical research and survey research • Applications of quantitative research • How to use Qualtrics <i>Introduction to survey report assignment.</i> | Ch. 16, 23 |
| Day 18 Wednesday, March 22 | WORK DAY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete focus group report • Prepare for qualitative research presentations | DUE at 11:59 p.m.: Focus group report (one submission per group) |
| Day 19 Monday, March 27 | Group presentation: Qualitative Research | DUE at 11:59 p.m.: Peer evaluations for Qualitative Research |
| Day 20 Wednesday, March 29 | Group presentation: Qualitative Research | |
| Day 21 Monday, April 3 | Survey Research, continued <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is sampling? • Measuring instruments • Question wording • Obtaining accurate responses | Ch. 17–19, 21 |
| Day 22 | Experimental Research | Ch. 24–27 |

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| Wednesday, April 5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is experimental research? • Experimental approaches • Quasi-experimental research • Applying experimental research | |
| Day 23 Monday, April 10 | Data Tabulation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to tabulate data • Handling your quantitative data • Scaling and mapping • Statistics and statistical tools • Excel | Ch. 22, 29–33 <i>Your survey should be closed by the end of today.</i> |
| Day 24 Wednesday, April 12 | WORK DAY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete quantitative research report • Prepare for quantitative research presentations | DUE at 11:59 p.m.: Survey reports (one submission per group) |
| Day 25 Monday, April 17 | Group Presentations: Survey Research | DUE at 11:59 p.m.: Peer evaluations for Survey Research |
| Day 26 Wednesday, April 19 | Group Presentations: Survey Research | |
| Day 27 Monday, April 24 | What comes next? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The research report • Moving forward after research | Ch. 36 |
| Day 28 Wednesday, April 26 | WORK DAY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete final reports <p>Happy last day of (this) class!</p> | |
| FINAL EXAM Tuesday, May 2 | From 4 p.m. to 6 p.m., we will do our FINAL PRESENTATIONS as a group. This is mandatory. | |