

MEJO 379.02: Advertising and Public Relations Research Methods, Fall 2023

Days, time, & location: T/Th, 11am-12:15pm, Carroll 33
Some sessions are designated as independent or remote work days (see schedule)
Should the need arise to hold sessions remotely, we will use Zoom

Instructor: Dr. Maria Leonora (Nori) Comello (she/her)
comello@email.unc.edu (Best way to reach me)
(919) 928-2440 cell

Office hours & location: In office (Carroll 359) on Tuesdays, 1:30-2:30pm
On Zoom by arrangement <https://zoom.us/j/95477947680>

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

Course objectives: Upon course completion, you 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 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 your group project, please copy your group members on the e-mail. It is your responsibility to check your email and Canvas 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 Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies Julie Dixon-Green, 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. At the Hussman School, we are fortunate to have Carolyn Ebeling as the CAPS embedded counselor in-house. Carolyn offers a warm and non-judgmental space for undergraduate and graduate students to explore their thoughts and feelings. Email them at cebeling@email.unc.edu to get connected. You may also explore resources at the CAPS 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 (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 (gvsoc@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.

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 Canvas under Resources.

Canvas: I will use [Canvas](#) to post syllabus updates, announcements, PowerPoint slides (posted after class), assignments, and other important information. Updates will be frequent, so check back often. You are responsible for any course changes that may be made on Canvas, 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 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 Canvas for those who wish to write summaries.

If you are enrolled in other MEJO classes that have research requirements, your fulfillment of the 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 with each assignment. This will help you know exactly what you're being graded on for each specific assignment. We will cover three categories of research:

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

Your final project will synthesize these elements 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 Canvas. 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, to account for unexpected events or needs. 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 Canvas 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 Canvas under Assignments unless otherwise noted.

DATE	TOPIC	ACTION
Aug. 22	Course introduction	No readings due In class: Complete online survey to assess project preferences. Link posted on Canvas under Resources.
Aug. 24	Lecture: Needs for research, key definitions, designing research.	Ch. 1-4
Aug. 29	Lecture: Conducting background research. Team assignments, select client, set ground rules, introduce background research assignment.	Ch. 5-8
Aug. 31	(May be asynchronous) Using Park Library resources and search tools.	Library pre-assignment
Sep. 5	WELLNESS DAY – NO CLASS	
Sep. 7	Group work: Finalize background research report.	Group check-in DUE: Background research report (one per group, due Friday by 5pm).
Sep. 12	Lecture: Intro to qualitative research methods, research ethics.	Ch. 9, 37
Sep. 14	Lecture: Focus groups Group work: Plan for focus group and complete focus group moderator's guide worksheet in class.	Ch. 10
Sep. 19	DATA COLLECTION/in class: Conduct your focus groups in class! LOCATION TBD	
Sep. 21	Lecture: Focus group data analysis. Group work: Complete worksheet on focus group debrief + analysis.	Ch. 15
Sep. 26	Lecture: Interviews Prep for interviews and complete interview guide worksheet in class.	Ch. 12-13
Sep. 28	Remote data collection/independent work: Conduct your individual interviews. Finalize focus group assignment.	Optional drop-in via Zoom Due: Focus group assignment (one per group, due Friday by 5pm).

Oct. 3	(May be asynchronous) Lecture: Ethnographic observation/ wrap up of qual methods. Group work: Prep for observations.	Readings on Canvas under Resources/Readings/Ethnography
Oct. 5	Remote data collection/independent work: Conduct observations around campus or other locations. Finalize interview assignment on your own.	DUE: Interview assignment (individual, due Friday by 5pm).
Oct. 10	Survey research, sampling, instruments, question wording. Qualtrics tour.	Ch. 16-19
Oct. 12	UNIVERSITY DAY (NO CLASSES BETWEEN 10:45AM AND 12:30PM)	DUE: Observation assignment (individual, due Friday by 5pm).
Oct. 17	Lecture: Obtaining accurate responses and recruitment. Group work: Input survey questions into Qualtrics.	Ch. 21 Group worksheet. Submit Qualtrics link for feedback (ungraded). Peer evaluations on Canvas under Assignments.
Oct. 19	FALL BREAK – NO CLASS	
Oct. 24	Group consultations on surveys. Sign up for a time.	Revise survey with feedback
Oct. 26	Survey finishing touches. Pretest surveys in class. Delete test responses.	Incorporate feedback and launch surveys.
Oct. 31	Lecture: Data analysis, statistics, and Excel	Ch. 22, 32
Nov. 2	Remote group work: Data analysis	Group check-in + worksheet
Nov. 7	Lecture: Experimental research, guidelines for group presentations and final projects	Ch. 24-25
Nov. 9	Remote group work: write up survey assignment	DUE: Survey assignment (one per group, due Friday by 5pm).
Nov. 14	Exam prep, integrating concepts throughout the semester	Bring any questions you have about methods we've covered or research write-up.
Nov. 16	EXAM	
Nov. 21	WELLNESS DAY (OUR CLASS ONLY!)	
Nov. 23	NO CLASS - THANKSGIVING	

Nov. 28	Consultations	
Nov. 30	Final presentations (3 groups)	DUE: Presentation slide deck (one per group) by start of class.
Dec. 5	Final presentations (3 groups)	DUE: Presentation slide deck (one per group) by start of class. By Friday: If needed, submit alternate assignment in lieu of research participation.

FINAL PAPERS DUE SAT DEC 9 AT 11AM (END OF SCHEDULED FINAL EXAM PERIOD FOR THIS CLASS).
PEER EVALS ALSO DUE DEC 9.

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 Canvas.

THANK YOU FOR ALL YOUR HARD WORK!

HAVE A GREAT HOLIDAY BREAK!