Public Relations Research

PBRL 4410-M51

Summer 2019

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COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Catalog Description

Identifying, characterizing and evaluating stakeholder groups and alternative channels of communication; formal research procedures include sampling, instrument design, information gathering, data processing, analysis and reporting.

Prerequisites

PBRL 3400, PBRL 3421

Textbook

Fink, A. (2016). *How to conduct surveys: A step-by-step guide* (6th ed.). Los Angeles: Sage Publications. (ISBN: 9781-483378480)

Accessing the course website

1. Go to the University of Memphis home page: http://www.memphis.edu
2. Click on the "MyMemphis" link at the bottom of the left column menu.
3. Log in using your University of Memphis username and password.
4. Click on the "eCampus Resources" tab.
5. In the center column of the page, click on the blue UofM eCourseware link
6. Down on that page, in the Summer 2019 course list available to you, click on the link for PBRL 4410 - M50 to enter your course and read the instructions on the welcoming page

Media Diet

As you know, the very nature of our profession requires us to stay on top of today's happenings. Our responsibility is to assess their relevance to – and their implications for – our clients and employers. Knowledge of current events, government, history and media is becoming more and more crucial. While your undergraduate education will provide a strong base of understanding in these areas, your proactive efforts to continue learning about them will greatly benefit your career. Continue to feed your media diet with a good mix of traditional, specialized and Internet news sources.

Classroom format

This course is delivered online in an asynchronous format. You must have Internet access and Microsoft Word or other word processing software that generates a ".doc" extension.

You must have Microsoft Word software. I must be able to open your work to grade it. Work submitted in a software package not noted as acceptable in this syllabus (Microsoft Word) may result in point deductions being assessed to your work.

Deadlines

Understanding and working with deadlines is a critical part of the public relations process. **No late assignments will be accepted.**

Quality of work

I expect your work to be good and to be yours. What is not yours should be fully cited. In documenting sources, you should use APA formatting (both internal and external). If you need help with writing and citing sources, please see me for resources. In addition, Purdue University's Online Writing Lab is an excellent resource, and can be found at http://owl.english.purdue.edu.

I am always willing to help you. Always ask for clarification(s) if you have any questions or doubts: the sooner the better. You may email me, schedule a phone call or Skype or Google chat or, if you are local in Memphis, come by during office hours.

Grading

Testing Procedures

Course work will be accomplished each week. Six quizzes will be part of your final grade. Quizzes will cover reading assignments and material in presentations. Each must be completed by its due date and time (Central Standard Time), which varies by exam. Check each due time to ensure that you post by the deadline. Quizzes will have a time limit. Desire2Learn will cut you off at the end of the prescribed time period, regardless of whether you have completed all questions. You may use your textbooks to confirm an answer but be aware that time limits will not allow you to spend much time flipping through them. You should read and be familiar with each section before taking its exam.

Other parts of your grade will come from participation in weekly online discussions and group projects. (The group projects include a peer evaluation component.) This work must be submitted per instructions; no credit will be given outside of the proper submission guidelines.

Grading Procedures

***ONLINE SUCCESS: Your success in this online course will depend on your willingness to read the textual material, successfully complete exams, and complete written work and group projects as scheduled.

All work submitted will be considered final, as each student has unlimited access to the course to ask questions. There will be no re-submission of papers to increase the initial grade given. You are required to ask via e-mail, set up an appointment in the chat room, or call me with your questions

as to the proper completion of coursework. It is your responsibility to ensure clarification of instructions.

All work submitted must reflect critical thinking and knowledge of the material; that is, examples found within or outside of class, along with elaboration, are required to achieve an "A" grade. Material on all exams and most of our assignments come from our textbooks; check these resources first for your material.

No work will be accepted after the final day of class.

Individual Grades

Quizzes	100 points (20 points each)
Discussion posts	100 points (20 points each)
Client media audit	75 points
Survey design	100 points
Focus group questionnaire	100 points
Google Analytics Certificate	75 points
Total	**550 points**

Your **final grade** in the course will be calculated as follows:
A = 495 - 550 points
B = 440 - 494 points
C = 385 - 439 points
D = 330 - 384 points
F = 383 and fewer points

COURSE SCHEDULE

This is a basic schedule for topics and major assignments over the course of the semester. Although every effort will be made to stick with this schedule, please understand that some material may require more or less discussion and class time. Thus, changes to the schedule may occur. All changes will be announced in class.

Week 1, June 3-9: The role of research in PR & the process of PR research: objectives, research questions & evaluation
Reading assignments (eCourseware)
- Ch. 5 Sage: problem statement
- PR Research for planning and evaluation
- Introduction to communication research
- PR research methods

Assignments
- Handwashing Q Discussion post (due June 14)
- Research approach Discussion post (due June 14)
- Google Analytics Certification (due Aug. 8)
- Quiz 1 (open until Aug. 8)

Week 2, June 10-16: Research ethics.

Reading assignments (eCourseware)
- Exploring the roles of ethics in PR program evaluation

Assignments
- Ethics Discussion post (due June 16)

Week 3, June 17-23: Data-driven PR.

Reading assignments (eCourseware)
- Understanding research & management of research in PR
- Guidelines for measuring the effectiveness of PR programs and activities

Assignments
- Quiz 2 (open until Aug. 8)

Week 4, June 24-30: Developing a research plan & conducting secondary research.

Reading assignments (eCourseware)
- Conducting secondary research

Assignments
- Draft research plan Discussion post (due June 30)
- Client media audit (due July 7)

Week 5, July 1-7: Sampling.

Reading assignments
- How to Conduct Surveys, CH3, Getting it Together
- How to Conduct Surveys, CH4, Sampling
- How to Conduct Surveys, CH5, Survey Design

Assignments
- Sampling method Discussion post (due July 7)
- Quiz 3 (open until Aug. 8)

DUE: Client Media Audit

Week 6, July 8-14: Survey research.

Reading assignments
- CH8 Sage, Survey Research (eCourseware)
- How to Conduct Surveys, CH1, Conducting Surveys
- How to Conduct Surveys, CH2, Survey Form (pp. 29-55)

Quiz 4 (open until Aug. 8)

Assignment
- Survey design (due July 21)

Week 7, July 15-21: Focus groups & interviews.

Reading assignments (eCourseware)
- Moderating Focus Groups, CH3, Focus Groups Versus Interviews (eCourseware)
- Moderating Focus Groups, CH7, Recruiting Participants (eCourseware)
- Moderating Focus Groups, CH9, The Discussion Guide

Assignments
- Focus group guide (due March 24)

- Quiz 5 (open until Aug. 8)

DUE: Survey design

Week 8, July 22-28: Analyzing data.

Reading assignment
- Analysis and Interpretation of Qualitative Data (eCourseware)

DUE: Focus group guide

Week 9, July 29-August 4: Reporting and presenting data.

Reading assignment
- How to Conduct Surveys, CH7, Presenting the Survey Results, pp. 145-167

Assignments:
- Review optional resources (Watch)

Week 10, August 5-8: Wrapping Up & Looking Ahead to Next Semester!

Reading assignment
- Review last semester's final research reports

DUE: Google Analytics

ASSESSMENT

Five Pillars in PBRL 4410
- *Professionalism:* Students learn the professional standards and strategies of conducting research for public relations practice. Additionally, students understand the ethics involved in conducting human subject research.
- *Writing:* Student address writing skills related to conducting research, including instrument design and reporting results to the client.
- *Multimedia:* Students prepare a final client presentation of research findings from the semester.
- *Critical Thinking:* Students must demonstrate an understanding of the methods used to conduct research in public relations, including surveys, focus groups, interviews and observation.
- *Media Literacy:* Students develop the vocabulary and tools of the public relations industry. Students learn how to conduct research to solve a client's communication problem, gathering information beneficial for strategic campaign planning.

Professional values and competencies for PBRL 4410
- Demonstrate an understanding of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and as appropriate, other forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to mass communications.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society.
- 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.
- Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness.
- Apply basic numerical and statistical concepts.
- Apply current tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work, and to understand the digital world.

How professional values and competencies will be met
Cognitive objectives to be mastered (ability to explain, analyze, understand, think critically)
- Describe preliminary and detailed research procedures in the behavioral and communication sciences.
- Describe environmental assessment processes and their use in strategic planning.
- Describe how to organize, moderate, and use information obtained from a focus group.
- Describe how to organize, moderate, and use information obtained from an interview.
- Explain survey techniques, including sampling, interviewing, and instrument construction.
- Describe the tools used to analyze the results of survey research.
- Describe work groups and ways to make them effective.

Performance standards to be met (demonstrable skills, abilities, techniques, applied competencies)
- Select and apply appropriate research tools in support of public relations objectives.
- Design and conduct preliminary research using libraries, company records, and computer databases.
- Work effectively in a group.
- Frame research questions.
- Analyze the results of focus group research.
- Analyze the results of survey research.
- Communicate the results in a final report/presentation.

How assessment of student learning will be met
Awareness
- Learn about the important role of research in public relations
Understanding
- Understand how to conduct, analyze and present research findings
Application
- Conduct public relations research to include: interviewing clients to assess needs; writing research questions
- Develop strategies for research implementation
- Client relationship-building to gain input and approval
- Instrument design, conduct research
- Use standard methods for documentation

- Analyze data
- Draw conclusions based on data
- Write research report
- Present research to client

JOURNALISM AND STRATEGIC MEDIA POLICIES

Portfolio requirement

All students in the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media are required to develop and maintain an active portfolio of their work. Undergraduate students are to begin the portfolio in JRSM 3900 and graduate students are to begin in JRSM 7002. Students are to contribute to it in every skills course thereafter. The portfolio should contain samples of the student's work from courses and/or professional experiences and should develop as the student builds skills. Portfolios will undergo a final, external review while students are enrolled in their capstone courses.

Students may use any type of web hosting for their portfolios, but it must have an independent and professional URL. Students may use any content management system, but students are encouraged to use WordPress, Wix or SquareSpace. Students are encouraged to consider purchasing a URL and hosting if they plan to use the portfolio for a long term, but they must keep the portfolio active for six months following graduation from the University of Memphis.

Students should have a professional email address they plan to use throughout their professional lives, via a common email service, such as Gmail.

All portfolios must contain the following items:
- Samples of work from courses and/or professional activities. (Example: Broadcasting students must include a video reel)
- A current résumé
- A personal profile
- Contact information/means of contact
- Social media links

Students might wish to include a blog, video reels, photograph galleries, SoundSlides presentations, design PDFs, audio files and writing pieces as examples of professional work. The professional work should ultimately be tailored to the career the student seeks after graduation. Thus, each student's portfolio should show a unique blend of work.

Email

Students must have their UofM email accounts activated. Students using another provider, such as Google, are required to have all UofM email forwarded to that account. Students should go to the http://iam.memphis.edu website to implement forwarding of UofM email. Students are required to check their email daily. They are responsible for complying with any email sent to by professors or others in the University.

Electronic devices

Some classes require a tablet, laptop or a smartphone. Others do not. Instructors will set the policy for

their specific classes.

Attendance

Class attendance is mandatory in Journalism and Strategic Media. Students may be assigned a failing grade for the semester for nonattendance or habitual late arrival. No late work will be accepted without prior arrangements with the class professor. Students may not be permitted to make up any missing work unless it is for an absence because of illness or other catastrophic emergency, such as a death in the family that can be documented (e.g. with a doctor's note or a copy of the newspaper obituary). Journalism and Strategic Media is a professional program, and students are expected to understand and comply with deadlines. Students who have some problem making it to class on time should make arrangements to correct the problem or consider taking another class. Students should consider this class as a "job" in the educational process and be on time just as they would elsewhere.

Course repetition

Majors and minors who fail to earn the minimum passing grade ("C-") in a class required by their program of study in Journalism and Strategic Media more than three times will be dropped from the program.

Academic integrity

In addition to University-wide policies stated in the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities, the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media considers making up quotes from sources, turning in substantially the same assignment for credit in two different courses or students receiving any assistance from others for work assigned to be done on their own, as acts of cheating punishable to the degree determined appropriate by the course instructor and department chair. Punishment may include grade reductions or seeking dismissal of the student from the University.

Further, as this is a journalism and strategic media class, students are expected to comply with copyright law and must have sufficient permission to use any copyrighted materials used in creative projects, unless otherwise informed in cases of exercises or reproduction.

Your written work may be submitted to Turnitin.com, or a similar electronic detection method, for rating originality of your ideas. Also to evaluate proper use and assignment of sources. As part of this process, you may require to submit electronic as well as hard copies of your work. Other instructions to follow may also be given. By taking this course, you agree that all assignments may undergo this review process. The assignment may be included as a source document in Turnitin.com's restricted access database. It is solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism in such documents. Assignments not submitted according to the instructor's procedures may be penalized or may not be accepted at all. *(Office of Legal Counsel, October 11, 2018)*

ONLINE SETEs

Students are urged to complete the SETEs evaluation of this course. Once the instructor has posted grades, student can immediately see that grade, provided they have completed a the SETE for that class. To access evaluation forms, students should log in to MyMemphis using their UUIDs and email passwords; click on the gray "Student" tab; complete an evaluation for each course listed and hit the "Submit" button at the bottom of the form. Completing the SETE will only take a few minutes. Faculty take the evaluations very seriously and use them to improve courses and instructional quality. Student feedback is essential and is appreciated.

DEADLINES

All deadlines are firm. This is journalism and strategic media. Students needing an extension on an assignment must receive approval from the instructor. Exceptions will be made for reasonable circumstances if the student notifies the instructor prior to the due date.

AP STYLE AND GRAMMAR

All written work in this class must follow the AP Stylebook and accepted rules of grammar and punctuation. Students are responsible for learning these rules and checking their work for errors.

DISABILITY

Students who need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the Office for Disability Resources for Students at 901-678-2880 in 110 Wilder Tower Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

DIVERSITY

Students are required to respect the differences of others and treat all persons with respect. Discriminatory, derogatory and threatening language or behavior will not be tolerated. Further, students are expected to consider their work through a diverse mind. Media reach a mass audience, and students should be aware of how those messages are received by a diverse audience.

WEATHER POLICY

Always check with local media and the University of Memphis website regarding inclement weather. If the University is closed or classes are canceled, this course will not meet. However, students will still be responsible for that day's work.

STUDENT SUPPORT

Student who are experiencing personal or academic challenges including, but not limited to food or housing issues, family needs, or other stressors, should visit the Office of Student Accountability, Outreach & Support page to learn about resources that can help: https://www.memphis.edu/saos/sos/crisis-resources.php. Any student who faces personal challenges including, but not limited to securing their food or housing and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact the Office of Student Accountability, Outreach & Support (901-678-2187) located in the University Center, Suite 359 for assistance. Students may also talk with course instructors about the challenges they are experiencing. Instructors may be able to assist in connecting with campus or community support.