Public Relations Research
PBRL 4410-M50
Spring 2020

Kim Marks Malone, APR
Office: 332 Meeman Journalism Building
Office hours: MW, 1 – 2 p.m.; TR 2:30 – 3:30 p.m. Other hours by appointment.
Phone: 619.316.5498 (prefer text)
Email: ksmarks@memphis.edu
Twitter: @ksmarks

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 and 3421

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

Other readings will be assigned and posted to eCourseware.

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.

Accessing the course website
1. Go to the University of Memphis eLearn home page: http://elearn.memphis.edu
2. Log in using your University of Memphis username and password.
3. In the Spring 2020 course list available to you, click on the link for PBRL 4410-M50 to enter

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Assignments. Course work will be completed every week. Each assignment must be completed by its due date and time (Central Standard Time), which will vary by assignment. Double check each due time to ensure that you post by the deadline.

Discussion forum. Despite being an online course, students are expected to have active class participation. Participation will be evaluated by your response and activity in eCourseware discussion forums, as well as your participation in the group project. Each week will include one or more group discussions about topics covered in the readings, the PR industry in general, or to generate ideas for your group project(s). Your responses should be well articulated and substantial. Clearly indicate your main idea or point of view and support it with facts, logic and references as appropriate. Simply stating, for example, "Yes," "No," "I agree," or "I don't think so" is not acceptable will not be considered participation. As a guideline, I recommend your original posts should be at least 150 words and replies to your peers should be at least 100 words. I expect regular participation and active students will demonstrate that by regular posts that meet the requirements and deadlines.

Portfolio. You will be required to update your online portfolio to showcase your work and to continue to build your professional online presence. Specific requirements will be provided separately.

Group project. Students will be divided into small groups for a semester-long project Each group will be required to develop a PR research report with all the requisite components. Details will be provided separately.

Quizzes. Quizzes will be given weekly to ensure that you are keeping up with the readings and other assignments. Quizzes must be completed by Sunday night at 11:59 p.m. (CST). Check the course schedule for specific dates. Quizzes are timed and you must complete the quiz in the time allotted. Missed quizzes cannot be made up.

Grading

There are 1,250 possible points in this class. At the end of the semester, your class points will be calculated and rounded up to the nearest whole number. Letter grades will be determined according to the scale below. If additional points are added or subtracted from this possible point total, students will be provided with an updated point to letter grade scale.

Individual Assignments

Quizzes (x6)	120 points (20 points each)
Syllabus quiz	10 points
Client media audit	100 points
Survey design	100 points
Focus group guide	100 points
Google Analytics Certification	75 points
Peer evaluation	25 points

Portfolio review	50 points
Interview with PR pro	50 points
Team Meeting (x2)	50 points (25 points each)
Discussion boards	105 points
Research report	75 points (individual contribution grade)

Team Assignments

Discussion boards	40 points
Draft research report	100 points
Final research report	250 points

Total

A = 1,124 – 1,250 points
B = 999 – 1,123 points
C = 873 – 998 points
D = 748 – 872 points
F = 747 and fewer points

Grading Philosophy

A=Professional quality work that could be use with little or no modification; B=Good to excellent work and exceeds requirement, but would require revision to be used professionally; C=Satisfactory work and adequately meets requirement, but would need significant revision; D=Barely satisfies minimum requirement and below average quality; F=Unsatisfactory work and does not meet minimum requirement.

Other issues

Contacting me. If you are not local/on campus and can't stop by my office hours, the best and quickest way to contact me is via email (ksmarks@memphis.edu). Do not use the email within eCourseware, use my Memphis.edu email. I will respond to email with 24 – 48 hours. If you have a problem, do not let it snowball. Contact me ASAP.

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

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1, Jan. 21 - 26: Role of research in the PR process

Readings:
- CH 5 Sage: Problem statement (eCourseware)
- PR research for planning and evaluation (eCourseware)
- Introduction to communication research (eCourseware)
- PR research methods (eCourseware)

Assignments:
- Introduction Discussion Post – DUE Jan. 26
- Syllabus quiz – DUE Jan. 26
- Google Analytics Certification – DUE March 29
- PR professional interview – DUE March 8
- Online Portfolio – DUE March 29

Week 2, Jan. 27 – Feb. 2: Role of research in the PR process

Readings:
- Exploring the roles of ethics in PR program evaluation (eCourseware)
- PR research for planning and evaluation (eCourseware)
- Introduction to communication research (eCourseware)
- PR research methods

Assignments:
- Discussion Post – DUE Feb. 2
- Quiz 1 – DUE Feb. 2

Week 3, Feb. 3 – 9: Data-driven PR

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

Assignments:
- Discussion Post – DUE Feb. 9

Week 4, Feb. 10 – 16: Teamwork in PR, research project, teams & deadlines

Readings:
- Teamwork in PR (eCourseware)
- Balbin's team roles (eCourseware)
- The five dysfunctions of a team (eCourseware)
- Team roles summary (eCourseware)

Assignments:
- Discussion Post – DUE Feb. 16
- Quiz 2– DUE Feb. 16
- Teams roles quiz – DUE Feb. 16
- Team discussion board – DUE Feb. 16
- Research report – DUE <u>Friday, April 17</u> (rough draft) & DUE <u>Wednesday, April 29</u> (final)

Week 5, Feb. 17 – 23: Developing a research plan & conducting secondary research

Readings:
- Conducting secondary research (eCourseware)

Assignments:
- Team Discussion Post Feedback – DUE Feb. 23
- Research plan – DUE March 1 (as Discussion Post)
- Client media audit – DUE March 8

Week 6, Feb. 24 – March 1: Sampling

Readings:
- CH3 Getting it Together (*How to Conduct Surveys*)
- CH4 Sampling (*How to Conduct Surveys*)
- CH5 Survey Design (*How to Conduct Surveys*)

Assignments:
- Quiz 3 – DUE March 1

DUE – Research plan (as Discussion post)

Week 7, March 2 – 8: Survey research

Readings:
- CH8 Sage, Survey Research (eCourseware)
- CH1 Conducting Surveys (*How to Conduct Surveys*)
- CH2 Survey Form, pp. 29 – 55 (*How to Conduct Surveys*)

Assignments:
- Quiz 4 – DUE March 8
- Survey Design – DUE March 22

DUE: Client media audit (in Dropbox)
DUE: Interview with PR professional (in Dropbox)

Week 8, Spring Break, March 9 – 15

Week 9, March 16 – 22: Focus groups & interviews

Readings:
- CH3 Focus Groups Versus Interviews (eCourseware)
- CH7 Recruiting Participants (eCourseware)
- CH9 The Discussion Guide (eCourseware)

Assignments:
- Quiz 5 – DUE March 22
- Focus group guide – DUE April 5
- Determine team meeting availability (for week of March 30 – April 5)

DUE: Survey design (in Dropbox)

Week 10, March 23 – 29: Analyzing data

Readings:
- Analysis and Interpretation of Qualitative Data (eCourseware)
- Conducting an online survey resources (eCourseware)

Assignments:
- Quiz 6 – DUE March 29

DUE: Client media audit (in Dropbox)
DUE: Google Analytics (in Dropbox)

DUE: Final portfolio (link in Dropbox)
- Add final research report to portfolio after edited and updated at end of semester

Week 11, March 30 – April 5: Conducting online survey & team meeting #1

Begin research execution
Readings:
- Review previous readings and assignments as required for fielding survey

Assignments:
- Finalize online survey in Qualtrics & send link for review – DUE <u>Wednesday, April 1</u>
- Field online survey (NLT Sunday April 5)
    - Survey should remain open at least 5 days
- Team meeting #1 (times TBD)

DUE: Focus group guide (in Dropbox)

Week 12, April 6 – 12: Presenting research findings

Conduct focus groups + interviews
Readings:
- CH7 Presenting the Survey Results, pp. 145-167 (*How to Conduct Surveys*)
- Review previous readings and assignments as required for conducting focus groups

Assignments:
- Finalize focus group guide and conduct 2 focus groups + 2 interviews
    - Focus groups and interviews should be conducted NLT Wednesday, April 15, to allow time for analyzing data for draft research report
- LinkedIn Learning: Visualizing and Documenting Your Research (Watch)
- Determine team meeting availability (for week of April 20 – 26)

Week 13, April 13 – 19: Draft research report due (Friday, April 17)
Readings:
- Review previous readings and assignments as required for draft research report

DUE <u>Friday, April 17</u>: Draft research report (in team Dropbox)

Week 14, April 20 – 26: Team meeting #2
Readings:
- Review previous readings and assignments as required for final research report

Assignments:
- Team meeting (Times TBD)
- Peer evaluation – DUE April 29

Week 15, April 27 – 29: Wrap-up (all assignments due Wednesday, April 29)
DUE: Final research report
DUE: Peer evaluation

ASSESSMENT AND OUTCOMES

Five Pillars in PBRL 4410

- *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.
- *Multimedia:* Students prepare a final client presentation of research findings from the semester.
- *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. 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.

Students may not use or submit work from a previous course, even if it is the same course being repeated, to fulfill requirements for assignments in another course. If students wish to substantially rework the original submission, or to work with the same general idea, that may be permissible upon discussion with and written approval from the professor of the current course. All written work will be checked for policy adherence via TurnItIn.com. All creative work will be checked for policy adherence by the professor, and judged against previous submissions. The only exception to this policy is the student's online portfolio and its attendant pieces (for example, the résumé and logo).

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 required 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 and accommodations
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 and inclusivity
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.