

JMC 440: Research Methods in Public Relations
Dept. of Journalism and Mass Communication
Murray State University
Spring 2004

Instructor: Dr. Celia Wall
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Office Hours:

Monday	9:30 – 11:30 a.m. 12:30 – 1:30 p.m. 2:45 - 3:45 p.m.	
Tuesday	12 – 12:30 p.m.	
Wednesday	8 a.m. - 12 noon 12:30 – 1:30 p.m.	<i>By appointment as needed</i>
Thursday	12 – 12:30 p.m.	

Class Meets: Section 01: 12:30 - 1:45 p.m. TTh

Catalog Description: Use of social science research methods in public relations. Emphasis will be on survey techniques and focus groups, interpretation, application, and communication of research findings to the public.

Course Purpose: To acquaint the student with the concepts and procedures of the scientific method as it applies to contemporary mass communication and to qualitative and quantitative behavioral research.

Course Objectives: The student is expected to gain an appreciation and understanding of research methods employed in the field of public relations. At the end of the class, the student should be able:

1. to understand, explain, and use appropriately the basic terminology used by social science researchers;
2. to construct and administer a survey, analyze the data collected, and write a report discussing how the research was conducted and the results;
3. to explain what a focus group is, how one is conducted, and when it is appropriate to use this form of research in public relations;
4. to explain the difference between quantitative and qualitative research and know when to use each in public relations research; and
5. to understand what content analysis is, when and how to use it in public relations situations research situations.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of JMC 168 and JMC 330. Knowledge of statistics is helpful but not required.

Texts & References: Singletary, Michael. (1994). *Mass communication research; contemporary methods and applications*. New York: Longman Publishing Group.

Students will also be required to read pertinent articles in industry journals, which are available in the Dept. of Journalism and Mass Communication Reading Room and in Waterfield Library. Students are expected to do the reading assigned for each class. Questions from course readings may show up on exams even though they are not covered in class.

Resources: Textbook, lecture notes, copied handouts, reserve readings

Instructional Activities: Lecture, discussion, and participation in group research projects

Field and Clinical Experiences: N/A

Attendance Policy: Journalism and public relations are deadline-driven fields. It is *critical* to your professional success that you learn to meet deadlines. As you would be expected to be punctual and present on a professional job, you are expected to attend all classes and to arrive on time. A legitimate reason for being absent should be brought to the instructor's attention by notifying the instructor of an absence ahead of time...just as you would notify a professional employer. ***For record keeping purposes, it is required that such notification of an absence be in writing***, i.e., an e-mail, handwritten note, etc. While it is acceptable to phone the instructor to let her know you will not be in class, you also need to follow up with something in writing concerning the absence to make sure it does not count against you.

Missed work -- ***The student will receive NO credit for work turned in late. Work is late if not submitted on the due date at the beginning of class or at the time assigned by the instructor.*** Work missed due to an *excused* absence may be made up at the discretion of the instructor, with the exception of unannounced quizzes. These cannot be made up whether the absence is excused or not. ***Make-up work will not be accepted more than one class session after the absence.***

It is the student's responsibility to make arrangements with the instructor to make up any missed work resulting from an excused absence.

NOTE: The complete University-approved Attendance Policy can be found in the latest *Undergraduate Bulletin*. Refer to this policy for a discussion of *excused absences*.

Grading Policy:

The final grade for the semester will be determined by the following elements:

Final project	450 points		
Four exams	400 points		
Homework	150 points		
Attendance	100 points	=	1,125 points

Itemized Course Components:

Final Project (450 pts.) -- Students will be required to take the skills they are learning in class and apply them by actually conducting a research project. Details and requirements for this project will be handed out in class.

Examinations (400 pts.) -- Three tests will be given during the semester. A comprehensive final exam will also be given.

Homework (150 pts.) -- At various times during the semester, homework will be assigned to help students better understand a concept or topic that is being discussed in class. More details on the particular assignments will be given in class. Also, on occasion, pop quizzes may be given over assigned readings in the textbook. These quiz grades will be computed as homework.

Attendance (100 pts.) -- Attendance will be worth 100 points. This component of the final grade will be determined in the following manner: At the beginning of the semester, a student will be given 100 points for attendance. Each time the student misses class because of an unexcused absence, 10 points will be deducted from the 100 points.

Grading Scale for the Course:

A = 92 - 100 percent of total possible points	D = 65 - 73 percent
B = 83 - 91 percent	E = below 65 percent
C = 74 - 82 percent	

Academic Honesty:

Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty on an assignment in this class could result in a failing grade for the course as well as disciplinary action by the university. For the official university policy, see "Academic Honesty" on page 50-511 of the 2003-2005 Murray State University *Undergraduate Bulletin*.

Course Policies:

1. All assignments must be typed, double-spaced on 8 1/2" x 11" paper with 1" margins. Handwritten assignments will not be accepted unless so indicated at the time the assignment is made.
2. Papers written in a form other than that explained in class will not be accepted. If you do not understand an assignment, please do not hesitate to request clarification immediately.
3. As a future media professional, you must take the writing process seriously. Words are the tools of your chosen profession. You must learn to use and respect those tools. Thus, you must be concerned with both CONTENT (appropriate research elements and structure, including clear exposition of key ideas) and FORM. FORM is a function of writing carefulness including: proper use of English grammar; spelling and syntax; succinctness of presentation; and adherence to the mechanical fine points of copy preparation, presentation and style. Errors in these and other such are not acceptable and will negatively affect your grades.

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