

# Public Relations Research Method :: ADPR 3510

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Dr. Sweetser

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Office hours: Monday. 1:15-2:15 p.m., Wed. 8 – 9 a.m. or by appointment (just e-mail or call!)

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Class: Tues. and Thurs. from 12:20-1:10 p.m. in MLC 253

Prerequisite: completed ADPR 3850/3100 and STAT 2000 prior to enrolling in this class.

The syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the professor may be necessary. Class lectures are the property of the professor.

## > Objectives

To introduce/familiarize public relations majors with sound and effective social science research methods commonly used to identify and solve problems, to set measurable objectives, to inform strategic planning and message development, and to conduct evaluations in public relations / advertising practice to aid business decision-making. The course will cover formalizing research questions and testing hypotheses grounded in theory, conceptual and operational definitions, measurement, sampling, research design, interpretations of qualitative findings and computer bivariate and multivariate data analyses and report writing. Readings and assignments will be designed to enable students to conduct qualitative and quantitative research and to critically judge with confidence the value of research conducted by others.

## > Texts

Required:

- ◆ Frey, L.R., Botan, C.H., Kreps, G.L. (2000). Investigating Communication: An introduction to research methods (2<sup>nd</sup> edition). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- ◆ Research material samples supplemental course pack from Athens Blueprint

Recommended:

- ◆ Online resources for class: <http://delicious.com/kaye.sweetser/adpr3510>
- ◆ Statistics for People Who (Think They) Hate Statistics, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition by Neil J. Salkind
- ◆ Adventures in Social Science Research workbook by Earl Babbie, Fred Halley and Jeanne Zaino

## > Materials

Each student must have the following (there will be no exceptions!):

- ◆ **UGA computer account** with **UGA e-mail** access (check it often).
- ◆ Use of a **printer**. All products, unless otherwise noted, are required to be typed and printed.
- ◆ **Media storage drive** (ZIP, floppy, USB) to store project files.
- ◆ **Access to WebCT** for quizzes and grades – reconcile all missing grades from WebCT by Dec. 4

## > General Courtesy and Professional Behavior

Students are expected to treat one another and the professor with respect. Respect is conveyed in many forms, not all of which will be discussed in the syllabus. Refrain from bringing cell phones/pagers to class. If one is brought to class, it must be turned off. If a phone rings during class, that student will be asked to leave class for the day. Students should plan on staying the entire class session until the class is released when coming to class – it is not okay to get up in the middle of class and leave for anything other than an emergency. Don't instant message, text message, read the newspaper or talk to other people while the professor is lecturing during class. Be engaged, active and respectful. Inappropriate, vulgar, obscene, threatening or other negative discourse will not be tolerated. If such is used in the classroom, then the student will be asked to leave (and receive an unexcused absence).

As this is a top school in public relations, the ability to communicate in a professional and courteous manner via e-mail is important. Students are expected to display their top-level Grady PR communication skills each time they send an e-mail to the professor. Students who fail to use a professional greeting, sign one's full name or use proper AP Style in an e-mail will have 1 point deducted from the final (overall grade) for the course for each infraction. Ask the professor for examples of proper and improper e-mail communication so as to not make this mistake.

### > Students with Disabilities

Any student with a documented disability needing academic adjustments is requested to speak with the Disability Resource Center and the professor as early in the semester as possible. All discussions will remain confidential. More information about the University's policy and procedures can be found at <http://www.dissvcs.uga.edu>.

### > Academic Honesty

All academic work must meet the standards contained in "A Culture of Honesty." Students are responsible to inform themselves about UGA standards before performing any academic work. Students who break the university's honor code, are found to be cheating or fraudulently use another student's ideas/work will fail this course. Find out more about academic honesty at UGA at <http://www.uga.edu/ovpi/honesty/acadhon.htm>.

### > Attendance Policy

Students are expected to be an active part of the class. Arriving late to class can become a distraction. When running behind, get to class as quickly as possible, but please be quiet and courteous when entering the room.

Students are expected to be in class for the entire class session. Leaving class early is not accepted, and will result in an unexcused absence.

Assignments or other work to be turned in must be handed in at the time the work is collected. No exceptions.

Students are allowed 3 unexcused absences during the semester. Don't e-mail the professor to explain why you are there or ask if you can miss class – use an unexcused absence. Students may choose to use these unexcused absences because they are out of town, religious holiday, don't want to come to class, military duty, have to travel to be a bridesmaid, have a death in the family, jury duty – it doesn't matter and the professor doesn't need to know why. There are 3 and students should use them wisely. When a student must miss class (regardless of reason), it is that student's responsibility to get notes or other necessary information from a fellow student – not the professor. Late assignments or work turned in any place other than at the beginning of class, in the classroom, when it is due is never excepted. Ever.

For each unexcused absence beyond the 3 allowed in this course, a student will have 1 full point deducted from his or her final overall grade.

### > Late work or Make-ups

**Late assignments are not accepted.** All assignments must be turned in during class as directed by the professor in the location that the class is held. **DO NOT TURN IN WORK AT ANY OTHER LOCATION** – this means that **students should not turn in work by leaving it in the professor's office or her mailbox because such work will not be accepted.** Any work turned in after the professor collects it in class will not be accepted and is "late." This strictness is meant to introduce students to the deadlines of the real world. Late work can mean a missed public relations opportunity.

### > Grade

This class employs multiple forms of evaluation to maximize the learning and evaluation experience while allowing for differences among learning types for students. All work will be evaluated based on the ability to meet the assignment objectives, clarity, professionalism, technical skill and quality. The following breakdown explains how the grade is to be computed:

<u>Graded Item</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>% Grade</u>
Exam 1	Sep. 11	15%
Research Instrument <sup>a</sup>		10%
Exam 2	Oct. 16	15%
Exam 3	Nov. 20	15%
Research Paper <sup>a</sup>	Dec. 4	30%
Assignments	Ongoing	10%
Group Contribution	Ongoing	5%
		100%

<sup>a</sup> Indicates item is a part of a group project. All group members get the same grade for their collective work.

All grades on assignments, projects and quizzes are based on the following +/- grading scale:

100 – 97% = A	86 – 89% = B+	76 – 79% = C+	66 – 69% = D+	below 59% = F
96 – 90% = A-	83 – 85% = B	73 – 75% = C	63 – 65% = D	
	80 – 82% = B-	70 – 72% = C-	60 – 62% = D-	

Please note that the professor does not “round up.” A student who scores 89.99 earned a “B+”; it takes a full 90 earned points to earn an “A-” in this course. Graded items will not be dropped or weighted. Ever.

Grades are based on the final product and the students’ ability to meet the requirements set by the professor. Each product is graded against the same criteria and the students’ ability to show mastery of the objective. Please note that this professor does not inflate/weight grades. All graded materials must meet specific standards for professionalism and quality. Effort does not equal an “A.” Only those who show mastery of the graded material will earn such a grade for that item. No one is given grades; one earns the grade based on the quality of the product they output.

Exams are never given back – students can look at them during office hours the week after grades are distro’ed. Any student wishing to dispute a grade must have the graded material when pleading the case.

Students are to keep track of their own grades and progress in the course.

Grades will not be discussed via e-mail or the telephone. If a student has a question about a grade and would like to discuss it, then the student must meet with the professor in person. This policy protects the student.

If a student believes there is a mistake with a grade then the student has the right to dispute a grade within 1 week of the assignment/test/project being returned; after one week all grades are final. No grade changes will be considered after this deadline. The deadline to reconcile grades is Dec. 4.

### > Project

The capstone project in this class is for students to work in groups to design, execute and analyze data in a research study. Student groups will write a short introduction touching on rationale, purpose and relevant theory; state research questions and/or hypotheses; write a complete and descriptive methods section; analyze results; and discuss findings. This paper and project is to be supervised by the professor, but the student groups must actively seek her assistance for any roadblocks faced during the research journey. Graded items produced in the group mean that each student in that group gets the grade earned by that work. Students will have a chance to evaluate one another in the group, and this evaluation is a part of the calculation of the overall class grade. Students will have time to work on this throughout the semester, including during class. A project handout will provide further detail on the requirements. Students are required to present their project as a part of the project grade. The research paper is due Dec. 4 and presentations will occur Dec. 4 - 7 in class. Students should dress appropriately. All students are required to attend class these days and those missing class will lose 1 point off final grade and those missing their own presentation will earn a 0 for group contribution.

### > Research on Human Subjects & IRB

All research projects using human subjects is to be first approved by the professor and then sent to the UGA IRB prior to beginning data collection. Each team member must have completed the CITI training, indicating they understand research ethics. Students who wish to use human subjects should work ahead of the due dates on the syllabus. Human subjects project must have all IRB protocol approvals no later than October 16; groups using human subjects who fail to reach this deadline will receive a 0 on the research project.

**Tentative Reading Assignments & Schedule** (subject to change at professor's discretion)

<b>Day</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Aug 17 - 21	Role & Means of Inquiry	chapters 1-2	
Aug 24 - 28	Theory & Finding Research	chapter 3	.
Aug 31 – Sep 4	Ethics & Measurement	chapters 4, 6	CITI Training due Sep. 4
Sep 7 – 11	Design	chapter 5	No class Sep. 7 for Labor Day Exam 1 on Sep. 11
Sep 14 – 18	Web Metrics		Research proposal due Sep. 14
Sep 21 - 25	Experiments	chapter 7	
Sep 28 – Oct. 2	Survey	chapter 8	
Oct. 5 - 9	Textual Analysis	chapter 9	
Oct. 12 - 16	Naturalistic Analysis	chapter 10	Exam 2 on Oct. 16
Oct. 19 - 23	Data Analysis 1	chapter 11	
Oct. 26 - 30	Data Analysis 2	chapter 12	No class Oct. 30 for Fall Break
Nov. 2 - 6	SPSS 1		
Nov. 9 – 13	SPSS 2		
Nov. 16 - 20	SPSS 3		Exam 3 on Nov. 20
Nov. 23 - 27	Thanksgiving Break		No class all week for Thanksgiving
Nov. 30 – Dec. 4	Project		
Dec. 7	Last Day of Class		