

Journ 61-472
Research in Strategic Communication
Fall 2008

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Office Hours: 1 to 2 p.m., Monday - Thursday
By appointment on Friday

Please note: Assignments and other specifications listed below may change during the course of the semester. If a student misses a class, it is that student's responsibility to determine what announcements he or she may have missed.

1. Course Description.

This course includes a survey of current research methods used in a variety of mass communication fields, including advertising, public relations, and news. The course draws heavily on research methods developed in the social sciences, such as political science, sociology, and psychology. **Prerequisites:** A grade of "C" or better in Introduction to Journalism and Mass Communication - 61-141, Media Writing - 61-221, Editing - 61-224, or consent of instructor.

2. Course Objectives.

This course enables the student to obtain:

- 1) an understanding of the role of research in the process of problem-solving in advertising, public relations, and media organizations.
- 2) experience in conducting a research study and summarizing the results in a relevant and appropriate manner

3. Readings:

Required: Research in Mass Communication: A Practical Guide
Paula Poindexter and M.E. McCombs.

Recommended: Public Relations Tactics (monthly)
PR Week

These and other public relations trade publications are available in the Journalism Reading Room.

4. Academic Integrity:

The University of Wisconsin Oshkosh is committed to a standard of academic integrity for all students. The system guidelines state: “Students are responsible for the honest completion and representation of their work, for **the appropriate citation of sources**, and for respect of others’ academic endeavors.” (s. UWS 14.01, Wis. Adm. Code).

Students are subject to disciplinary action for academic misconduct, which is defined in s. UWS 14.03, Wis. Adm. Code. ***Students on the UW Oshkosh campus have been suspended from the University for academic misconduct.***

Students are encouraged to review the procedures related to violations of academic honesty as outlined in Chapter UWS 14, Wisconsin Administrative Code. The system guidelines and local procedures are printed in the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh Student Discipline Code.

Specific questions regarding the provisions in Chapter UWS 14 (and institutional procedures approved to implement Chapter UWS 14) should be directed to the Dean of Students Office.

5. Approach.

This course meets four hours per week. Class time will be used for lectures, assignments, and the group project.

6. Attendance.

Attendance is extremely important in both the lecture and laboratory sessions. Assignments may be required to be completed during the lab sessions.

7. Grading.

Final grades will be based on:

Short paper assignments – about 100 points

Exams -- 200 points

Final Group Projects -- 150 points

Individual Final Project -- 50 points.

Grades will be distributed on this basis:*

A 90 - 100%

AB 88 - 89%

B 80 - 87%

BC 78 - 79%

C 70 - 77%

CD 68 - 69%

D 60 - 67%

F Less than 60%

***Please note. Percentages will NOT be rounded up. To earn a BC, for example, you must earn at least 78% of the points. Total points of 77.999999% will not be sufficient.**

Short paper Assignments

Short assignments will be required as appropriate. Each assignment will be worth 20 points and will receive a letter grade of A, B, C, D, or F. These assignments will be presented during class, and will also be available on the Journalism Server.

Many of these assignments will be helpful to the completion of the Final Project. For example, one assignment will require each student to supply sample questions for a survey.

Exams

Exams will emphasize comprehension of the reading assignments, lectures and discussions. There will be two exams: at midterm and a final.

Final Group Project

More information regarding this will be distributed early in the semester once clients have been determined. Students in this class will prepare, in groups, a final research report for a client. Among the possible clients are The Century Council, Distillers Fighting Drunk Driving and Underage Drinking (NSAC), College Bound Aid (Bateman), and organ donor (PRSSA). Students are welcome to suggest others ideas. Research as relevant to the news/editorial sequence is certainly appropriate.

Extra Credit

Four times during the semester, students will have the opportunity to earn up to 10 extra points by answering the Question of the Week.

The purpose is to give students more experience in how to find specific information that is credible. In each case, students will be expected to answer the question, and cite the research sources used. This should typically result in one page or less. For example:

Question #1: The airwaves are filled with political commercials right now. Somewhere in many television or radio spots, you will hear the candidate say "I am ___ and I approved this ad." Why is this comment included (legal, political, economic reasons)? Why does the statement not appear on print ads?

Respond in one page or less. Include research sources.

Note on Deadlines.

Projects will not be accepted after the deadline.

- No exceptions.
- Resulting grade will be a 0, which is worse than an *F*.

8. About Using the Computer Lab.

SAVE EARLY AND OFTEN – SAVE EARLY AND OFTEN

1. The first thing you should do each day when beginning to work on your computer is close all applications. The more that are open, the slower your computer will run.

2. In general, avoid using Zip disks. If you are going to use a Zip disk, it seems to work better if you do not use one that you also use on a PC. You need a separate one for work on a Mac.
3. **Do not use lab time or lecture time to check on or respond to your e-mail, to surf the Internet, or to scan Facebook or MySpace. This is inappropriate and very rude. Any student caught doing so will automatically lose 10 points each time.**
4. If you are going to use the computer to take notes during lectures, you must print out those notes and turn them into me at the end of the class period.
5. Do not use the printer as a copy machine. If you need multiple copies of something, print one original, then make additional copies on the Xerox machine.
6. You may use the color printer **but only** to print your final copy. Do not use it until you are sure there are no errors. **Do not** use the color printer to print drafts. Abuse of this privilege will mean you can no longer use the color printer.
7. The Wasteland site on the Student Server is erased the 1st and 15th of each month.
8. **Do not use lab time to do assignments for other classes. If you find yourself with time on your hands, I will be happy to add more assignments.**
9. A word about computer programs: if you are going to use a specific program (such as PhotoShop, Illustrator, etc.), be sure you know how. I cannot answer questions about every program. Likewise, do not assume that I can fix a problem with transferring images via e-mail or among programs. Inability to get a file to print is not considered a legitimate excuse for being late with a project.

9. Schedule

Week #1.

Sept. 4 *Introduction to class*

INTRODUCTION TO SURVEY CONSTRUCTION

Week #2.

Sept. 9 Reading Assignment: Chapters 1-2 -- *Research Process*
Decision on project topic due.

Sept. 11 Reading Assignment: Chapter 3 -- *Research Process*

Week #3

Sept. 16 Reading Assignment: Chapter 4 – *Questionnaire Design*

Sept. 18 Reading Assignment: Chapter 5 – *Selecting Respondents*

Week #4.

Sept. 23 Reading Assignment: Chapter 6 – *Data Collection*

Sept. 25 Reading Assignment: Chapter 7 – *Coding Data*

Week #5.

Sept. 30 Class discussion: setting research objectives

ADDITIONAL RESEARCH METHODS

Oct. 2 Lab

Week #6.

Oct. 7 Reading Assignment: Chapter 13 – *Focus Groups*

Oct. 9 Lab

Week #7.

Oct. 14 Reading Assignment: Chapter 14 – *Other Methods*

Oct. 16 Lab

Week #8.

Oct. 21 **MIDTERM**

Oct. 23 Lab

Week #9

Oct. 28

Oct. 30

During this week, your professor will be participating in the International Public Relations Conference in Detroit. Class periods should be used to conduct surveys.

Week #10.

Nov. 4

Reading Assignment: Chapter 11 – 12 – *Content analysis and experiments.*

Nov. 6

Lab.

REPORTING RESEARCH FINDINGS

Week #11.

Nov. 11

Reading Assignment: Chapter 8 -- *Analysis of data*

Nov. 13

Lab.

Week #12.

Nov. 18

Reading Assignment: Chapter 9-10 – *Reporting your findings.*

Nov. 20

Lab

ISSUES IN RESEARCH

Week #13

Nov. 25

Reading Assignment: Chapter 15 – *Racial and Ethnic Minorities*

Nov. 27

Thanksgiving break, no class.



Week #14.

Dec. 3

Reading Assignment: Chapters 16-17 – *Academic research; the future*

Dec. 5

Final Exam

Week #15.

Dec. 10

Work on Final Presentations

Dec. 12

Final Presentations

Final Projects Due (Group and Individual)

