

Research in Strategic Communication – Journalism 61-472
Fall 2009

Department of Journalism
University of Wisconsin Oshkosh

- Class: 3 p.m. to 5:10 p.m., Monday & Wednesday, at C148
- Instructor: Sara Steffes Hansen, MBA, Ph.D.
Office: C106D
E-mail: hansen@uwosh.edu
Phone: Mobile number will be provided to class – you can call or text me
- Office Hours: 1 to 3 p.m. Monday & Wednesday
11 to 11:30 a.m. Tuesday & Thursday & by appointment
***You are welcome to visit my office at any time to discuss anything of importance to you!
- Required Textbook: *Research in Mass Communication – A Practical Guide*
Paula M. Poindexter & Maxwell E. McCombs
- Related Readings: Trade publications are in the Journalism Reading Room, including -
Advertising Age
Public Relations Tactics
PR Week
- Other Info on D2L: Excerpts from the following texts and other sources will be provided on D2L in course content – these readings will be announced and previewed prior to assignment to students.
Mail and Internet Surveys – The Tailored Design Method
Don A. Dillman
Social Research Methods – Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches
W. Lawrence Neuman

Read and refer to this syllabus, keeping in mind that this information may change at any time. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to determine what announced changes you may have missed.

Prerequisites

This course requires that students have received a grade of “C” or better in Introduction to Journalism and Mass Communication 61-141, Media Writing 61-211, Editing 61-224 or instructor consent.

Course Description

This course provides a survey of qualitative and quantitative research methods of use in mass communication fields, including advertising, public relations and news. These methods reflect social research – from social sciences like political science, sociology and psychology – demonstrated through professional and academic research.

Course Objectives

This course enables students to:

- Gain an understanding of how research contributes to problem-solving and decision-making issues for organizations related to advertising, public relations and media.
- Creatively develop, execute and present a research study pertinent to strategic communication.
- Expand critical thinking in regard to research uses and impacts in media professions, academics and broader society from theoretical and practical perspectives.

Readings and Research

You will be assigned readings from the required text, and outside sources as provided by the instructor. Your work on writing assignments and final group project will entail research through Polk Library, Journalism Department Reading Room and Internet.

Approach

For each class, a topic is explored through assigned reading, and, at times, brief presentations from students from writing assignments. Typically, a discussion-oriented lecture regarding the readings and a related in-class group activity (during lab time) will be on the agenda. Toward the second half of the semester, class time will be less geared toward formal lecture everyday and more focused on development of the final group project during open lab time.

Attendance

Attendance is extremely important. You are expected to attend class. Unexcused absences will adversely affect grades. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to obtain the information covered.

Academic Integrity

Do not cheat. I have zero tolerance for cheating or plagiarizing in class. Always be mindful that you must accurately and appropriately cite your sources. Here is the official statement:

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.

Grading

Final grades will be based on the following 500 points possible for the course. The instructor also may adjust borderline grades based on student effort, class participation and attendance:

Mid-term & final exams / 100 points each (Multiple choice / short answer)	200 points
Final group project	150 points
Writing assignments / 25 points each	100 points
Professional interview experience project	50 points

Grades will be distributed on this basis:

A	92-100%
A -	90-91%
B+	88-89%
B	80-87%
B -	78-79%
C+	76-77%
C	70-75%
C-	68-69%
D+	66-67%
D	62-65%
D -	60-61%
F	Less than 60%

Exams

The instructor will conduct a study review during the week prior to an exam. Each exam will cover information from the prior seven weeks of readings, lecture and discussion.

You may not make up missed exams. In the case of an emergency, notify me before the exam by calling me at my mobile number.

Final Group Project

Students will prepare, in small groups, a final research report for a client that demonstrates learning from the course. Possible clients related to competitions are State Farm Insurance (NSAC) and United States Census 2010 (Bateman) case studies. A campaigns case study for a “real client” of a regional advertising agency also will be provided. Students may suggest other clients or research ideas. Research projects related to news/editorial students also are welcome.

Grading criteria for final group projects – paper and presentation – will be provided during the first few weeks of class. Components include formation of research questions to address a case study, literature review, methods (survey and one other qualitative form of data gathering) and findings.

Writing Assignments

Students will prepare four writing assignments during the semester, of which some will relate directly to the final group project. Writing assignments are due at the start of class. Students should post their assignments to D2L and print them before class. During class time, when these assignments are due, students will be expected to briefly present their papers during class discussion. Assignments are not accepted after the deadline and will receive a zero!

Specific guidelines will be provided prior to each assignment deadline. Grading criteria for writing assignments are:

- Writing pertinent to the assignment directions provided in class
- Creative insights – demonstrate critical thinking about research issues in mass communication from different perspectives (corporate, institutional, political, societal, etc.)
- Proper use and citation of two credible examples / sources (I'm not as concerned with MLA or a particular style, as with proper mention of the source in your writing and identification of the source at the end of your writing – full publication info and web link – I will show you an example in class) – this does not apply to the two survey assignments
- No grammatical, spelling or factual errors
- Format guidelines: one-inch margins, 1.5 line spacing and two-page maximum length

Professional Interview Experience

Students will participate in mock job interviews. In October, Career Services will provide guidelines for cover letters, interviewing and other aspects of job interviews. You will be scheduled to interview with two employers, based on your interests – this is required, from 2-5 p.m. on Tuesday, 17 November 2009. Prior to the interviews, you will prepare a cover letters, resume and portfolio. See me ASAP if you have a conflict with the interview date.

Grading criteria for the professional interview experience – participation and quality of work – will be provided during the first few weeks of class.

Computer Lab Use

1. **Save early and often! Save early and often! Save early and often!**
2. Always close applications when you start working on the computer – less apps open, faster speed.
3. Avoid using Zip disks. If you must, use separate Zip disks for Mac and PC.
4. Do not use the printer to make copies. If you need multiple copies, print an original and then make additional copies on a copy machine.
5. Only use the color printer to print your final copy of the final group project. Do not use it until it is error-free – you may not print drafts on the color printer! If this privilege is abused, color printer rights will be revoked.
6. The Wasteland site on the Student Server is erased on the first and 15th of each month.

Lab Time Expectations

You are expected to be working on projects related to this class during lab time. If I find that you are not meeting this expectation, I will require additional course work from you.

Schedule of Course and Assignments

- Wed 9 Sept** Introduction to Course
Sample review of academic and professional research
Survey for professional interview experience project
- Mon 14 Sept** Topic: Research Process & Questions, Qualitative / Quantitative Study
Reading assignment: Chapter 1
Writing assignment #1: Research in latest news, posted to D2L & printed
Lab: Each student verbally presents his /her paper about research issues in news article (show article online as possible) for discussion
- Wed 16 Sept** Topic: Research Process & Research Expert
Reading assignment: Chapters 2 & 3
Lab: Applying process to scenarios
- Mon 21 Sept** Topic: Survey Questionnaires – Design
Reading assignment: Chapter 4
Lab: Drafting surveys in small groups & critique
- Wed 23 Sept** Topic: Survey Questionnaires – Selecting Respondents
Reading assignment: Chapter 5
Writing assignment #2: Design a survey, posted to D2L & printed
Lab: Constructive critique of surveys & creation of respondent selections in small groups
- Mon 28 Sept** Topic: Interviewer Training & Survey Data Collection
Reading assignment: Chapter 6
Lab: Applying interview and collection techniques to scenarios
- Wed 30 Sept** Topic: Coding & Processing Survey Data
Reading assignment: Chapter 7
Writing assignment #3: Industry survey data, posted to D2L & printed
Lab: Coding in SPSS (statistical software) example
- Mon 5 Oct** Topic: Focus Groups
Reading assignment: Chapter 13
Project assignment: Decision on final project topic (nothing to hand in)
Lab: Focus group research design
- Wed 7 Oct** Topic: More Research Methods – Qualitative & Quantitative
Reading assignment: Chapter 14
Lab: Research designs for different methods

- Mon 12 Oct** Topic: Application of research methods to research questions
Writing assignment #4: Design survey for final project, posted to D2L & printed
Lab: Critique surveys
- Wed 14 Oct** Topic: Preparation for professional interview experience project
***Guest speaker from Career Services to prepare for mock interviews
Lab: Work on surveys for final project
- Mon 19 Oct** **Mid-Term Exam**
- Wed 21 Oct** Lab
- Mon 26 Oct** Topic: Content analysis & experiments
Reading assignment: Chapters 11 & 12
Lab
- Wed 28 Oct** Lab
- Mon 2 Nov** Topic: Analysis of data & professional applications
Reading assignment: Chapter 8
***Guest speaker: Molly Juers, Nielsen
- Wed 4 Nov** Lab
- Mon 9 Nov** Topic: Reporting findings
Reading assignment: Chapters 9 & 10
Professional interview experience assignment: Cover letters to employers
- Wed 11 Nov** Lab
- Mon 16 Nov** Topic: Racial & ethnic minorities
Reading assignment: Chapter 15
Lab
- Tues 17 Nov** *****Students required to attend the Professional Interview Experience
2 – 5 p.m. at Gruenhagen Conference Center**
- Wed 18 Nov** Lab
- Mon 23 Nov** Topic: Social research in practice
***Guest speaker: Vincent Filak, University of Wisconsin Oshkosh
- Wed 25 Nov** *****No Class for Thanksgiving Break – Enjoy!**

Mon 30 Nov Topic: Academic research, ethics & the future
Reading assignment: Chapters 16 & 17

Wed 2 Dec Lab

Mon 7 Dec Lab

Wed 9 Dec Final Exam

Mon 14 Dec Lab

Wed 16 Dec Group presentations of projects
Final group projects due to instructor