

61-472 (fall, 2006)

Research in Strategic Communication

T & Th: 3:00-5:10 p.m.

Room: 128 Clow

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. James C. Tsao

OFFICE: 126B Clow

TEL: 424-0352

E-mail: TSAO@UWOSH.edu; Fax: 424-7146

OFFICE HOURS: M & W: 10:30-11:30 a.m. and also by appointment.

Descriptions:

Research in Strategic Communication is an upper-level journalism course from which you will learn the foundation and process of empirical research as an integral part of the decision-making in advertising, public relations, media business, and visual journalism. The course includes two parts featuring with a knowledge-base component during the first half of the semester, immediately followed by a team-process component in the second half of the semester.

Activities of the knowledge-base component include lectures, guest speakers, in-class/take-home activities, exams, learning Excel and SPSS, and most importantly, your reading assignments. Your learning in the knowledge-base component prepares you to complete the next phase, team process, which is focused on research applications and team efforts. Your mission during the team-process component is to work with several other students as a team to complete a highly demanding research study. Both components require your full commitment, enthusiasm, and hardwork.

Overall course objectives:

- Understanding the purposes of empirical research in solving problems in advertising, public relations, and media institutions.

- Studying how to design and conduct scientific and empirical research projects as well as how to analyze and interpret research results.
- Learning how to solve research issues with the applied and deductive approach.

Specific objectives:

For Ad/PR students:

- Discovering how to apply research to understand consumers in order to create effective ad campaigns.
- Using empirical research to better understand the public and media perception of the client.

For News/Editorial students:

- Exploring how to apply research to conducting a poll that may be reported in newspapers or any other media news outlets.

Required text:

Research in Mass Communication: A practical guide, P. M. Poindexter and M. E. McCombs, Boston: St. Martin's, 2000.

Hitting the Sweet Spot, Lisa Fortini-Campbell, Chicago: The Copy Workshop, 1991.

Extra readings:

Articles in various journals will be assigned including Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly, Journal of Advertising, Journal of Advertising Research, PR Review, etc.

Assignments:

- Short-to-medium exams:

Two short-to-medium exams will be given during the first half of the semester. Each exam includes questions such as short essays, definitions, fill-in-blanks, and multiple choices.

- Comprehensive exam:

The comprehensive exam is held when the knowledge-base component ends. It is a 90-minute exam that covers questions from selected chapters, lectures, and other relevant activities. Essays will be the major format of the exam.

- In-class/take-home exercises:

The exercises allow you to use the hands-on approach to understand topics in the text as well as the knowledge learned from the lectures. Some activities are listed in the end of chapters of the text, while others will be announced in class.

- Team research project:

The project is a complete set of empirical study including the sections of research proposal, research design, data gathering, data analysis, report and presentation. You will be working with three other students to form a research team before choosing a study topic. For Ad/PR students, you are encouraged, but not limited, to the use of the National Students Advertising or the Bateman Competition project as your study topic. For students in the News/Editorial emphasis, you are encouraged to conduct a readership study for media institutions or media usage in relations with the social-impact perspective. Any other topics are acceptable as

long as they are original that can be empirically studied to resolve a media problem.

Each team can have a consultation with your instructor at any point after the team process begins. However, you are required to consult with your instructor at least four critical stages listed below:

- 1) when you have finalized the research design for your study,
- 2) when you have drafted the measurement instrument,
- 3) when you have collected the data, and
- 4) when you have written the first draft of the written report.

The class time during the team process will be used for team meetings, productions, as well as consultations. Any activities unrelated to your project are not allowed. All teams are expected to check in at the beginning of class for announcements and questions that would benefit everyone. After the announcements, you can begin working in your teams or meet with your instructor for consultation. In the end of the semester, you will have an opportunity to assess your teammates in a classified evaluation. Your assessment will be factored into individual final grades on the research project.

Grades:

Each assignment is graded on a scale from 0 to 100. Only Arabic scores are given on your assignments. The accumulative score from different assignments will be converted to a letter grade when tabulating the final score. The weight and grading structure of your assignments/exercises are listed in the following

- Weight

- Exams/exercises

Short-to-medium exams (2)	20%
Comprehensive exam	15%

Class/take home exercises/quizzes	5%
Projects: Secondary research*	
Theories, concepts & background	5%
Company & product analysis	5%
Competitive analysis	5%
Target market analysis	5%
Projects: Primary research*	
Qualitative team research	10%
Quantitative team research	15%
Team project presentation	10%
<hr/>	
Total	100%

* Individual performance reviewed by your peers will be factored into the score of team project.

- Grading structure
93 or above=A; 89-92=B+; 83-88=B; 79-82=B-; 73-78=C+;
69-72=C; 63-68=C-; 59-62=D+; 53-58=D; 49-52=D-;
48 or below=F

Policies:

1. Assignments/exercises:

Assignments or exercises are due at the beginning of class. If an assignment or exercise is not ready at the beginning of class, it is considered late. There will be no late assignments/exercises accepted after 1 day beyond the due date has passed. Late assignments and exercises will lose 20 points of 100. It is your responsibility to check with your teacher for getting assignments after legitimate absences.

2. Attendance:

Attendance is mandatory. Excessive absences (more than 4 absences or 10% of the class meetings) will lower your final grade by two full letters. Over 6 absences (20% of the class meeting) will lower your final grade to an “F”, no matter what grades you receive in any of the assignments. There will be no

make-ups to all the exams and assignments in this class unless you can provide with written proof of one of the following:

- A. An illness serious enough to require a visit to a physician.
- B. A death in the family within one week of the scheduled exam.
- C. An approved University field trip with an official document.

3. Lab or production hours:

Because many exercises and team project will be completed during the lab hours, time management and project concentration become the essential criteria to increase productivity. During the lab/production hours, you are absolutely not allowed to do any work unrelated to the assignments of this class, such as preparing a test for the next class or typing a resume for job interviews, etc. If you have completed a required assignment during the production hours, then spend the remaining hours reviewing new chapters or practicing the computer programs such as Excel and SPSS. Violation to this rule reduces 20 points from the assignment you completed on the day.

4. Incomplete:

Due to the nature of the assignments and instructional methodology, it is impossible for you to take out an "incomplete" grade. If you cannot complete the course within the semester for one reason or another, you are strongly advised to see the instructor as soon as the situation arises, and to withdraw from the class.

5. AAF policy on NSAC project presenters:

The UW-Oshkosh NSAC team follows the policies of the American Advertising Federation, described as the

following.

Presentation Team Requirements:

“You must be a dues-paid 2005-20056 AAF college chapter member to be on a presentation team. AAF student memberships are not transferable.” “2006-2007” means the terms from fall '06 to spring '07. Check with the UW-Oshkosh ad club for the due day of membership applications. For more information on the policies and procedure statement of NSAC, go to www.aaf.org.

6. Peer review:

Each member will be reviewed by your peers for your individual performance. The score of peer review on each team project will be factored into your final score. Your score from peer review accounts for 30% of the score of team project.

NOTE: We will adhere as closely as possible to the outline listed below. However, there are situations, which sometimes prompt us to move ahead, lag behind or be diverted. As a result, from time to time we will review the status of the outline and schedule.

