



Instructor: Dr. Cynthia Nichols **Email:** Cynthia.Nichols@okstate.edu
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Office Hours: TR 2:30-3:30 pm. I am more than happy to meet with you to discuss any of your projects or answer any questions you may have. To schedule an appointment, you may call, tweet, e-mail or arrange for a meeting during class.

Required Text: Jugenheimer, D. W., Bradley, S. D., Kelley, L. D., & Hudson, J. C. (2010). *Advertising & Public Relations Research*. New York: M. E. Sharpe.

Recommended Text: Zhou, S. & Sloan W. D. (2009). *Research Methods in Communication*. Northport, AL: Vision Press**.

NOTES: ***Research Methods in Communication* will **NOT** be in the student bookstore. The chapters will be posted on D2L. If you would like to purchase the book, it can be ordered online. Possible additional readings may be announced.

***You will need a basic calculator for this course.

Prerequisites: To be enrolled in this course, you must have earned a "C" or above in MC 2003 and MC 2023 and SC 2013 or SC 2183, STAT 2013 or 2053, and a minimum grade of 70 on the Language Exam.

Course Goal & Description: The goal of this course is to have students understand the basic concepts and be able to apply the constructs of research methods from both an academic and practitioner point-of-view. This course provides an overview of strategic communication research, with an emphasis on its application to the development and evaluation of the strategic communication message. Audience and media research are studied, and primary and secondary information sources are employed. Procedures for conducting a research project are outlined, and students participate in the research planning process, the gathering of primary data and the analysis and presentation of results.

Course Objectives: At the conclusion of the course, students will be expected to: (1) Read research reports critically and accurately interpret research findings; (2) Understand how to calculate, read and interpret basic statistics; (3) Conduct, explain and understand qualitative and quantitative research methodologies; (4) Pinpoint advantages and disadvantages for various research methodologies; (5) Conduct basic hypothesis testing strategies; and (6) Present research in a concise, clear manner.

Assessment of Outcomes: Success in this course will be demonstrated by the following outcomes: (1) Assigned readings of research combined with participation in class discussion will provide opportunities to demonstrate critical reading of research; (2) Students will demonstrate on the final exam and research project papers their understanding of basic statistical procedures, (3) Group research projects and both exams will assess the student's comprehension of various research methodologies, (4) The discussion portion of the group research paper in combination with both exams will show the student's understanding of pros and cons for each methodology; (5) The final research project is an exercise in hypothesis testing; and (6) group presentations will showcase students' ability to synthesize and present their own research.

Portfolio Requirements: To comply with the assessment requirements of Oklahoma State University and the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, the School of Media and Strategic Communications requires all undergraduate students majoring in the School to develop and maintain a digital portfolio exhibiting specific and appropriate assignments or projects from SMSC classes and internships. **It is the responsibility of the students to assemble and update their portfolios during each semester's coursework.**

Capstone professors will review each graduating senior's portfolio during the student's capstone course, making sure each student complies with this requirement. Failure to turn in a digital portfolio to the capstone professor during the capstone class will result in an incomplete grade until the portfolio assignment is complete and turned in to the capstone professor. Students can ask capstone professors and industry professionals to evaluate these portfolios periodically and offer guidance and constructive criticism. Students will begin learning about their portfolios in all lower division courses. Students will begin creating their portfolios in Electronic Communications. All students should use the following websites to create a digital portfolio: www.visualcv.com and www.vimeo.com. It is expected that the digital portfolios will be helpful in showcasing students' talent, competencies and performance when they apply for internships or jobs.

Portfolios must include:

1. Current resume in digital format that can be sent and viewed online
2. Statement of goals
3. At least five of the following in digital format: class projects, assignments and internship work samples

Academic conduct: Credibility is VERY important in our business. Therefore, the class will operate according to standards of professional behavior. Oklahoma State University is committed to the maintenance of the highest standards of integrity and ethical conduct of its members. This level of ethical behavior and integrity will be maintained throughout this course. You will be expected to conduct yourself in an honest, ethical and courteous manner with your classmates as well as with me. Assignments may not be duplicated from work performed in another

* This syllabus is subject to change as the professor deems appropriate and necessary.

class. Any act of dishonesty in any work, including cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized use of copyright materials or misrepresentation or fabrication of material will constitute academic misconduct and will result in your being sanctioned.

1. Cheating – using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, study aids or computer-related information.
2. Plagiarism – representing the words, data, works, ideas, computer program or output or anything not generated in an authorized fashion, as one's own.
3. Fabrication – presenting as genuine any invented or falsified citation or material.
4. Misrepresentation – falsifying, altering or mistaking the contents of documents or other materials related to academic matters, including schedules, prerequisites and transcripts.

Students suspected of plagiarizing or any other form of academic misconduct and/or dishonesty **may receive a grade of zero for the assignment and/or the course.** Violations may subject you to disciplinary action including the following: receiving a failing grade on an assignment, examination or course, receiving a notation of a violation of academic integrity on your transcript, and being suspended from the University. You have the right to appeal the charge. Contact the Office of Academic Affairs, 101 Whitehurst, 405-744-5627, <http://osu.okstate.edu/acadaffr/aa/academicintegrity.htm>

Classroom Decorum: All students should behave in a manner that is conducive to a teaching/learning environment. Students who engage in behavior that is disruptive or obstructive to this environment will be subject to disciplinary sanctions outlined by Oklahoma State University. Disruptive/obstructive behavior is not limited to but may include the following: physical abuse, verbal abuse, threats, stalking, intimidation, harassment, hazing, possession of controlled substances and possession of alcoholic beverages. **Cell phones must be turned to silent at the start of class. Texting is NOT allowed in class. Remember: I CAN SEE YOU.**

Diversity: As Einstein said, "A university is a place where the diversity of the human experience manifests itself." I will embrace and respect diversity in all its forms, including perspectives and points of view. I expect you to extend the same courtesy to me and to your classmates.

Special Accommodations for Students: If anyone in class feels that he/she has a disability and needs special accommodations of any nature whatsoever, the instructor will work with you and the Office of Disabled Student Services, 326 Student Union, to provide accommodations to ensure you have a fair opportunity to perform in class. Please advise the instructor of such disability and the desired accommodations during the first week of class.

Class Attendance: You are expected to be in class at 3:30 p.m. sharp and ready to go. Classes will consist of lectures, discussions and assignments. As such, you are expected to attend each class and to do so on time. **No late assignments will be accepted, and no make-up quizzes, exams, etc. will be given except in cases of appropriate, documented excused absences.** Absences due to medical emergencies or University sponsored activities must be properly documented. If you are unable to attend class for any reason, you should let me know in advance via e-mail (Cynthia.Nichols@okstate.edu), and you must work with another class member to get any information you might miss. I will allow you **THREE** personal days, but I do not suggest that you use them. **Your final grade will be dropped ONE letter grade if you have more than three unexcused absences.** Arriving late to class is also discouraged. Every three arrivals after 3:45 p.m. will count as one unexcused absence.

Deadlines: The practice of public relations hinges on adherence to deadlines. Missing deadlines not only can damage a PR person's credibility, it can lead to dismissal. Thus, deadlines are treated seriously in this class. All assignments will be accompanied by a due date and time. **No assignment will be accepted if it is turned in late, and will be given a ZERO.** (Possible exceptions include cases involving documented medical emergencies or authorized university travel. However, these must be pre-arranged with the professor.)

APA Style: All students are expected to adhere to the citation and reference guidelines as detailed the APA Style Manual. Proper citation is expected for all research, including but not limited to situation analyses, historical analyses and timeline data. The APA Stylebook is available for purchase at all college bookstores. Additionally, visit The Owl at Purdue (<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>) for a quick, online guide to APA Style. If you are ever in doubt, cite!!

Grading & Evaluation: This course combines lectures, fieldwork and group. Thus, students should use class time as well as time outside of class wisely. All assignments must be typed, error free and follow AP style. Your work must be clean, concise and free of spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors. **Points will be taken off your grade for these errors.**

Individual Assignments (525+ points or 70%):

Research Participation (25 points). Students will be asked to participate in several research projects throughout the semester. You may opt out of the research project by writing a short report. The topic of the will be at the discretion of the professor.

Individual Proposal (25 points). You will be required to turn in a proposal regarding one research project for this class. Handouts detailing both the proposal will be given out in class. Due dates for the individual proposal will be confirmed in class.

Professionalism Evaluation (25 points). This grade will be based on my assessment of your interpersonal and group communication skills, attendance, professionalism and contributions to class discussions and exercises. A handout with guidelines for this will be given out in class.

Tests & Final (350 points). For the exams, students will be asked to apply information gained from the text, course lectures/discussions, and case studies. Exams may consist of short answer, fill-in-the blank and/or essay questions. Review discussion will occur during the course meeting prior to the exam date. You will be required to take two tests and a cumulative final exam this semester.

Quizzes & Assignments (100+ points). During the semester, you will be given quizzes and assignments based on the reading. If you read and are prepared for class, you should be fine.

Group Assignments (225 points or 30%):

Research Project (200 points) Throughout the semester you will work in groups on a research project. Your grade on the project has three components: a team research proposal (50 pts), a completed research project (100 pts) and an in-class presentation (50 pts). Your final paper will be 15-20 pages describing your project and findings. Handouts detailing both the project and the paper will be given out in class. We will spend some class time working on the projects. Due dates for research project portions and data will be confirmed in class.

Peer Evaluation (25 points). At the end of the semester, each student will be asked to evaluate the other team members by completing a short Likert scale evaluation of their team members. If you carry your share of the load, you should have no trouble receiving a good peer evaluation.

Final semester grades will be assigned as follows:

		Individual Grade (70%)	
Team Grade (30%)		Research Participation	25 points
Research Proposal	50 points	Individual Proposal	25 points
Final Research Paper	100 points	Professionalism Evaluation	25 points
Research Presentation	50 points	Test 1	100 points
Peer Evaluation	25 points	Test 2	100 points
		Final	150 points
		Quizzes & Assignments	100 points
		Total points	750 points

Extra Credit: Opportunities will be presented during the course of the semester. These will generally include professional development programs, as well as participation in research projects. Details will be posted on D2L or announced in class.

24-hour Rule: You are encouraged to talk with me if you have questions about your performance assignments. However, you **MUST** wait 24 hours after receiving your grade and focus on your strengths and weaknesses rather than the instructor's holistic judgment.

100-90%	A: Excellent; clearly outstanding in concept development and writing style
89-80%	B: Good; well above average
79-70%	C: Acceptable; fulfills minimum requirements
69-60%	D: Poor; does not meet minimum requirements
Below 60%	F: Fails to meet minimum requirements

If you would like to discuss your grade or your coursework, you are welcome at any time during the semester to make an appointment. To protect your privacy, I do not discuss grades via phone or email. Grades will be entered no later than Dec 20th. You can access them through D2L.

Tentative Schedule: The schedule and deadlines are subject to change at the professor's discretion based on the progress and pace of the class, as well as on the needs of the client. An effective public relations professional must learn to be flexible and keep up with dates and deadlines. **There is no excuse for a missed deadline.**

Course Syllabus (Tentative Calendar of Events)
PART 1: FUNDAMENTALS OF RESEARCH

- 8/23 Course Introduction
 8/25 Research Overview; *APRR* Ch. 1-4, Form groups for research project
- 8/30 Ethics of Research, *APRR* Ch. 30, 31, 33
 9/1 Library & Secondary Research, *APRR* Ch. 5-8
- 9/6 APA Style, Literature Review & Research Report Overview, *RMC* Ch. 6, *APRR* Ch. 32; Research Topics Brainstorming
 9/8 Observational Research Day
- 9/13 Data & Statistics; *APRR* Ch. 28-29 – **GUEST SPEAKER**
 9/15 Measurement, *RMC* Ch. 7, *APRR* Ch. 14
- 9/20 Sampling, *RMC* Ch. 8; *APRR* Ch. 13
 9/22 Catch-Up Day; Exam Review
- 9/27 **Exam 1**

PART 2: METHODS IN RESEARCH

- 9/29 Empirical Research; *APRR* Ch. 15-19 **INDIVIDUAL Research Proposals Due**
- 10/4 Survey Research, *RMC* Ch. 10, *APRR* Ch. 12, 27;
 10/6 Survey Research
- 10/11 Content Analysis, *RMC* Ch. 9, **GROUP Research Proposals are Due**
 10/13 Content Analysis
- 10/18 Experimental Research, *RMC* Ch. 11, *APRR* Ch. 20-23
 10/20 Experimental Research
- 10/25 Qualitative Methodologies: Case Studies & Field Observation, *APRR* Ch. 9-11, *RMC* Ch. 16 **Group Methods Section Due**
 10/27 Qualitative Methodologies: Focus Groups & Intensive Interviews, *RMC* Ch.18
- 11/1 Catch-Up Day; Exam Review
 11/3 **Exam 2**

PART 3: USING METHODS IN THE REAL WORLD

- 11/8 Media Research: PR & Advertising, *RMC* Ch 22 & 23 – **GUEST SPEAKER**
 11/10 Media Research: Print & New Technology, *RMC* Chapter 20 & 24
- 11/15 Media Research: Radio & Television, *RMC* Ch. 21
 11/17 Research Papers Work Day
- 11/22 Research Papers Work Day
 11/24 **THANKSGIVING BREAK – NO CLASS**
- 11/29 Research Papers Work Day
 12/1 Group Project Presentations **Group Research Papers DUE at BEGINNING of Class**
- 12/6 Group Project Presentations
 12/8 Final Exam Review
- 12/15 **FINAL EXAM: Thursday, Dec. 15th, 2:00-3:50 pm**
 NOTE: THIS SCHEDULE WILL CHANGE AS THE PROFESSOR DEEMS APPROPRIATE AND NECESSARY.