

USC ANNENBERG SCHOOL FOR COMMUNICATION AND JOURNALISM
SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM

JOUR 463: Research, Analysis and Insight
Fall 2013 4 Units

Schedule/Syllabus

Day/Time: Wednesdays, 6:00-9:20pm
Classroom: ASC 228
Class Number: 21332
Professor: Dave Quast
Phone: 213.452.6348
Email: quast@usc.edu
Office Hours: Wednesdays, 5:00-6:00pm or by appointment

Prerequisite: None

About the Course

A major component of the public relations practitioner's work is to find and utilize facts, figures and opinions in a thoughtful and productive manner. Successful practitioners can observe and examine an array of information ranging from consumer perceptions to voting trends to spending habits and, most importantly, can draw useful and actionable conclusions based on those data. This course is designed to introduce students to the research and evaluation tools available to them as well as to the ways in which practitioners use these tools to draw appropriate and useful insights.

The goals of the class are twofold. The first goal is to produce professionals who understand the need to measure and evaluate data to inform communications strategies and to be able to use data analysis and insight to inform the evaluation of communications efforts. Students will leave the course prepared to evaluate assignments they encounter as professionals; find, interpret, synthesize and present research, to direct a research project, and to package and present research.

The second goal of the class is to develop in students an "eye for data;" to understand that we are surrounded (if not bombarded) by information every day – online and offline -- that, when viewed through the eye of a researcher, can provide actionable information for a professional communicator.

In the first part of the course, you will gain a toolkit of research methodologies and analysis techniques that you can apply in a variety of professional contexts. We will then apply that toolkit to a series of real-world data collections, culminating in the presentation of a semester-long project that includes team and individual components.

Goals

At the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Understand the basic tenets of public relations research
- Demystify research and data analysis for various stakeholders
- Match research/findings to an organization's business objectives
- Identify an array of target audiences and create appropriate research design/questions to analyze them
- Provide accurate and quantifiable evaluation of public relations techniques/campaigns
- Investigate and use social media monitoring tools
- Conduct a thorough competitive analysis

- Package and present research findings for an array of stakeholders

Required Text

Stacks, D., & Michaelson, D. (2010). *A Practitioner's Guide to Public Relations Research, Measurement and Evaluation*.

You are expected to read a daily newspaper (online is fine) or otherwise keep up on the news of the day.

Other readings as assigned (files will be posted on Blackboard)

Classes will generally consist of the following components:

- Lectures (including guest lectures)
- Discussion
- Student presentations

Note that full engagement during class, and participation in class discussions and presentations, is essential and can significantly influence your final grade. Making the class aware of interesting and relevant research-oriented information from the news is particularly encouraged. The professor, at his discretion, may engage in the Socratic method, so being prepared is essential.

Assignment summaries

Short written assignments

Throughout the course, you will be assigned relatively short written assignments designed to evaluate your understanding of course content. Some of these assignments will be completed in class while others you'll need to do outside of class time. You'll receive an assignment handout describing the details of the task and a grading rubric that will explain how the assignment will be evaluated. In addition, quizzes and in-class projects will affect your participation grade.

Group research project, presentation and report

The final project in this course is a group research project. Together with your group, you will produce your own empirical study of some aspect related to a product, brand, issue, or political issue or candidate. This project includes several components:

1. A 4-6 page project management plan including research objectives, ongoing work streams and responsibilities. We will cover project management best practices, and do exercises, in class.
- 2) A professional-quality group presentation
- 3) A sophisticated 15-20 page written presentation of your research objective, research results, analysis and recommendations
- 4) A 4-6 page individual analysis of one element of the project, to be divided among group members. Each group member will receive an individual grade for this aspect of the final.

Both the in-class presentation and the written parts of the assignment that will be graded both on thoroughness of information presented as well as innovation and quality in presentation style (e.g., use of multimedia, Powerpoint or Prezi, clarity, visual impact). You will receive a single group grade for the data collection, analysis and presentation. You will receive an individual grade for your individual written analysis. (You will also have an opportunity to evaluate your group members—I expect each group member to make a strong contribution and this contribution will figure into your class participation grade.)

Note: All students will be asked to submit emails detailing their individual contributions to the project work at various points during the semester.

Course Requirements/Grading

- **Class attendance and participation (see above) – 15%**
- **Written assignments*– 30%**
- **Midterm – 25%**
- **Final project: Group research, presentation and individual paper – 30%**

*Four assignments (three individual, one group) make up this portion of your grade. The weighting is as follows: #1: 35%, #2: 25%, #3: 25%, #4: 15%

Course Ground Rules

- This course will feature lots of in-class discussion, debate, simulations, and student presentations. The class will get to know each other as the semester progresses and a sense of camaraderie will hopefully emerge. You are encouraged to embrace the opportunity to share your professional goals and ambitions, as the class will be tailored to these needs as much as possible, particularly in the context of the final project.
- Expect to discuss a wide range of issues in class including those that are controversial and about which students (and the professor) may have strongly held, and possibly differing, views. There are virtually no topics off-limits as long as they advance understanding of the course material and as long as discussions are characterized by civility and mutual respect. You are expected to act as adults at all times, being courteous and sensitive to the interests of your fellow classmates.
- You are expected to arrive early to each class meeting, to be well prepared and to provide value to the class discussion.
- Unless otherwise specified, hard copies of all written assignments are to be submitted at the **beginning** of the class in which they are due. Papers turned in at the end of class, or emailed during class, will be deemed late.
- All written assignments should be double-spaced in 12-point font. At the top of every paper must appear your name, the due date of assignment, and the topic/title. Pages numbers must appear at the bottom of each page.
- Written assignments will be graded for content (a demonstrated understanding of the material) and for quality of writing. Proofread your written work before handing it in. **More than three typos or writing quality that makes reading the work difficult will result in a lower grade.**
- This syllabus is subject to change and adjustment throughout the semester in order to accommodate timely, late-breaking topics and events, the unique needs of each student and groups of students, etc. Students having any doubt or questions regarding assignments, schedules, etc. should immediately check with their fellow students and/or the professor.

USC Statement on Academic Integrity

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one's own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another's work as one's own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. SCampus, the Student Guidebook, contains the Student Conduct Code in Section 11.00, while the recommended sanctions are located at <http://scampus.usc.edu/university-governance>. Students will be referred to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards for further review, should there be any suspicion of academic dishonesty. The review process can be found at <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS>

USC School of Journalism Policy on Academic Integrity:

Plagiarism is defined as taking ideas or content from another and presenting them as one's own. The following is the School of Journalism's policy on academic integrity as published in the University catalogue:

"Since its founding, the USC School of Journalism has maintained a commitment to the highest standards of ethical conduct and academic excellence. Any student found plagiarizing, fabricating, cheating on examinations, and/or purchasing papers or other assignments faces sanctions ranging from an "F" on the assignment to dismissal from the School of Journalism." *All academic integrity violations will be reported to the office of Student Judicial Affairs & Community Standards (SJACS), as per university policy, as well as journalism school administrators and the school's academic integrity committee.*

Statement for Students with Disabilities

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me by the third week of class. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is 213/740-0776.

Professional Conduct/Use of Electronic Devices

Attendance is required for all classes. If you expect to miss class due to a family emergency, a medical problem, or a religious holiday, please contact me beforehand (either send me an email or give me a call). Tardiness is unacceptable. If you find you're going to be more than 15 minutes late to class, please stay home.

Students are expected engage with class content at all times. While the use of laptops for note taking is permitted, students should refrain from using the Internet unless for a specific class-related purpose. Emailing, personal use of social media, etc. are not appropriate during class. Given the subject matter of the class, we will explore things online from time to time, including on social media, so bringing a laptop is encouraged though not required. For reasons of courtesy, students are not permitted to use electronics of any kind during guest lectures except to take notes.

Internships

The value of professional internships as part of the overall educational experience of our students has long been recognized by the School of Journalism. Accordingly, while internships are not required for successful completion of this course, any student enrolled in this course that undertakes and completes an approved, non-paid internship during this semester shall earn academic extra credit herein of an amount equal to one percent of the total available semester points for this course. To receive instructor approval, a student must request an internship letter from the Annenberg Career Development Office and bring it to the instructor to sign by the end of the third week of classes. The student must submit the signed letter to the media organization, along with the evaluation form provided by the Career Development Office. The form should be filled out by the intern supervisor and returned to the instructor at the end of the semester. No credit will be given if an evaluation form is not turned in to the instructor by the last day of class. Note: The internship must be unpaid and can only be applied to one journalism class.

About the Instructor

I am an adjunct professor at USC Annenberg with more than 20 years of experience as a public relations practitioner counseling clients in the corporate, legal and political arenas. My expertise includes corporate communications; corporate positioning and messaging; issues, crisis and reputation management; litigation support, and media and presentation coaching. I have worked in some of the

most challenging communications environments of the past two decades including efforts related to tobacco regulation, reproductive health care, oil and gas development and political scandal.

Currently a senior vice president in the Los Angeles office of FTI Consulting (www.fticonsulting.com), I have led engagements in a variety of sectors including energy, industrials, professional services, financial services, health care, technology and non-profit. Notable among current activities, I serve as California Director of Energy in Depth (www.eidcalifornia.org), an education and research campaign focused on correcting misinformation about oil and gas development in California, particularly on the issue of hydraulic fracturing.

Before moving to Los Angeles, I lived in New York City for many years (and I pine for it). I ran a mid-sized agency, and worked in-house at a national law firm and managed media relations on state and federal legislative and regulatory issues for a Fortune 10 company. Prior to that, I was in Washington, D.C. where I served as director of public affairs at a major think tank and as press secretary to the Chairman of the House Financial Services Committee.

I hold a B.A. in politics and government from the University of Puget Sound, an M.A. in British Government from the University of Essex (U.K.) and attended the Georgetown University Law Center. I am a father of four, including triplets.

You can find me online professionally here: www.fticonsulting.com, www.eidcalifornia.org, @EIDCalif

Other: LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/in/davequast/ (as we will discuss, I highly recommend using LinkedIn – feel free to connect with me), Twitter: @davequast, Facebook: After final grades are submitted...maybe!

I am committed to being readily available to my students. My goal is to ensure that you learn the course material -- and have fun doing it -- and I encourage you to talk to me if you have questions at any time. Please write (quast@usc.edu) or call (213.452.6348) and if I cannot respond immediately, I promise to get back to you within 24 hours; it will usually be much sooner!

Course Schedule

Note: Assignments are in preparation for the *following* week unless otherwise specified.

Session 1 – August 28: The necessity of research

Overview of course, readings and syllabus. Personal introductions (professional interests, etc.)

Introduction to research tools, goals and objectives. Exercise: thinking about data. [.\]](#)

Assignments:

- Email professor a brief bio (optional), **due by Tuesday, September 3** – quast@usc.edu
- Course text, Chapters 1-3
- Next Wednesday please bring to class one example of a data- related article you've discovered. It can be from a newspaper, radio, TV, online, magazine, etc. We will discuss these examples in class.

Session 2 – September 4: PR and business outcomes; setting objectives; achieving measurable goals

This session will discuss the strategies and procedure for conducting even the most elementary original research project. We'll discuss how you determine what you're looking for and how to determine what your various objectives – business objectives, public relations objectives, etc. -- should be. Introduction to final project.

Assignments:

- Course text, Chapter 4
- Think about potential "clients" for final project. Product, institution, political candidate/cause, etc.
- "Situation Analysis and Objectives" assignment (#1) (handed out in class)

Note: Next Wednesday, September 11, we will form groups for the final project and you will start a discussion of potential "clients" (internal or external) from a list provided and the nature of your research. If you miss this class session, you will automatically be assigned to a group.

Session 3 – September 11: Qualitative research: Secondary research; introduction to primary research; assignment of project teams; secondary research training (Leavey Library)

During this class session, we will examine various ways to conduct secondary research. We will examine effective – and not so effective – methods for creating *insights* from a variety of sources. You will learn how to begin developing these insights about a client or any given topic. You will be assigned to your final project teams and, as your first team project, you will start a group exercise (due next class session) testing your ability to develop such insights. *We will spend the second half of class in Leavey Library Learning Room B reviewing research strategies. **If you miss this class session, you will be marked down on your overall participation in the group project.***

Assignments:

- Course text, Chapter 5
- Discuss final project topics with your team and be ready to present three potential ideas (client, the public relations "problem" that you propose to solve via research, potential conclusions). Can be for three potential clients or three different ideas for same client.
- "Situation Analysis and Objectives" assignment **due today**
- "Secondary Research" assignment (#2) (handed out in class) – *Teams will be called upon to discuss their findings in class next Wednesday. Be prepared.*

Session 4 – September 18: Qualitative research: Secondary research in practice; marrying secondary and primary research -- Guest Lecturer: John Watts, Ph.D., Managing Director, FTI Consulting (Chicago); presentation of final project ideas (to discuss with professor/class); research ethics

Assignments

- Course text, Chapter 3 (review), Chapter 7 and Chapter 9
- “Secondary Research” assignment **due today**
- Each team to suggest three project ideas - **due today** (client, “problem,” research methodology, potential outcome)
- Team project plan and final objectives (handed out in class, due in two weeks)

Session 5 – September 25: Qualitative Research: Using data for decision-making; Guest Lecturer: Dana Chinn, USC Annenberg; Surveys; sampling: Who do we want to hear from?; midterm exam preview

Our guest lecturer will provide an overview of digital analytics and using data for decision-making. Then, we’ll talk about one of the biggest tools in the researcher’s arsenal: the survey. Class time will focus on how to write great questions. We will also drill down into sampling. How do you decide whom to interview? Who to survey? How about which Tweets to analyze? Today we’ll talk about sampling decisions and why they matter for research.

Assignments

- Sign up for a Qualtrics account
- “Survey” assignment (#3) handed out in class
- Read “The Power of Like”
- Read Paine, How to Measure Social Media Relations pp. 1-11
- Read Petouhoff, The ROI of Social Media
- Individual team members’ personal contribution email to quast@usc.edu **due by beginning of next class.**

Session 6 – October 2: Focus on social media– Guest Lecturer: Kjerstin Thorson, USC Annenberg; review surveys

Whether you’re a rich researcher or a poor one, there are all sorts of online tools available to help you map and monitor your publics. But what do you do with all those data? We will review survey and sampling, as well as assign focus group participants.

Assignments:

- Presentation (Powerpoint) of group project plans and final objectives **due today** (assignment #4)
- Read Chapter 1, Krueger & Casey, “Focus Groups” (2009), pp. 1-25
- Course text, Chapter 5 (review – focus groups)

Session 7 – October 9: Qualitative research: Focus groups and interviews – Guest Lecturer: Sara Howard, (fmr.) VP of Communications, Planned Parenthood of Pasadena and the San Gabriel Valley

Today we’ll learn about qualitative approaches to public relations research using focus groups and interviews. Selected students will participate in a focus group simulation. Pizza will be served. ☺

Assignments:

- “Survey” assignment **due today**
- Prepare for the midterm exam. Study guide to be handed out.

Session 8 – October 16: Midterm exam

The midterm will test what you've learned in the first seven weeks. More details will be provided the week before the exam along with a brief study guide.

Assignment for next week:

- Course text, Chapter 6
- Individual team members' personal contribution email to quast@usc.edu **due by beginning of next class.**
- Each group to present group team project update (Powerpoint) **in class on October 23**

Session 9 – October 23: Content analysis; project updates and group work

We'll discuss how to develop deep insights from media coverage of your organization using content analysis as a qualitative research tool.

Assignments:

- Team project updates (Powerpoint) **due today**
- Read Jeffrey et al., "Exploring the Link between Share of Media Coverage and Business Outcomes," pp. 1-17
- Read Phillips, M.R., & Paine, K.D. "Doing measurement right: One organization's experience creating a best in class measurement program from scratch," pp. 1-21

Session 11 – October 30: Competitive analysis; "Real world" research project overview -- Guest Lecturer: Audra Priluck, Vice President, Media Industry Group – GfK

The first part of our class will be very interesting, as we will be joined by an entertainment public relations expert who now works as a company that describes itself thusly: *"Our people are the best in the world at **converting data into insights**. And we work with our clients to **convert those insights into opportunities**."* We will also discuss the class members' interest in additional "real world" public relations scenarios that the professor will cover in the next class. An exercise in competitive analysis will be done during this class session.

Assignments:

- Course text, Chapters 8 and 10
- Read Paine (2008), Using Public Relations Research to Drive Business Results, pp. 1-13

Session 12 – November 6: Best practices in measurement and research; data analysis workshop (Note: DATA COLLECTION TO BE COMPLETED BY NOVEMBER 13) – Guest Speaker: Kjerstin Thorson, USC Annenberg

We will review modes of statistical analysis, and we will work together to analyze your data and start making sense of what you've discovered. We'll bring the pieces together and talk about how various research methods work together for use across a program of research, and how programmatic research can drive strategic planning. We will also assign certain students roles in next week's presentation training sessions.

Assignments:

- Bring your group's data to class

Session 13 – November 13: Presentation training; draft presentations; Guest trainer: Eric Miller, Senior Vice President, Financial Profiles

Today's we'll learn how to give effective client presentations. Aside from volunteers, don't be surprised if the rest of you have active roles in the class as well! We will work together in groups on our draft presentations.

Assignments:

- Bring your group's data to class

Session 14 – November 20: Review of course material, open discussion; Guest Lecturer: Jeremy Hildreth, Principal, Where Brands (London)

Assignments:

- Final team presentations **due December 4**
- Bring your data to class
- Individual team members' personal contribution email to quast@usc.edu **due by beginning of next class.**

Wednesday, November 27 – No Class Session: THANKSGIVING BREAK!!!

Session 15 – December 4: Final team presentations

Each team will give a sophisticated, professional "pitch" to its client (represented by the rest of the class). Workshop sessions for final written assignment.

Assignments:

- Prepare final written client pitch/paper. **Due December 11.**

Session 16 - Finals Week

- Written portion of final projects and group evaluation due by **Wednesday, December 11 at 5 p.m.** in **hard copy** to professor's Annenberg mailbox (#222) *and* via email to quast@usc.edu.