



PR 463: Research, Analysis and Insight
4 Units

Fall 2018 – Wednesdays – 6-9:20 p.m.

Section: 21291D

Location: ANN 405

Instructor: Dave Quast

Office: ANN 415

Office Hours: Wednesdays, 5-6 p.m.

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I. Course Description

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.

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

Classes will generally consist of the following components:

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

Note that full engagement during class, and participation in class discussions and presentations, is essential and can significantly influence your final grade. This is particularly true when we have guest lecturers, some of which fly in from the other side of the country just to speak with you. You owe them your full engagement, and you should get as much out of them as you can by picking their brains.

II. Overall Learning Objectives and Assessment

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

III. Description of Assignments

Short written assignments

Throughout the course, you will be assigned three relatively short written assignments designed to evaluate your understanding of course content. You'll receive a 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.

Quiz

There will be one in-class quiz on statistical reasoning given during the second half of the semester.

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. This project includes several components: 1) A short in-class presentation including research objectives and ongoing individual contribution updates (see due dates marked below); 2) a professional-quality persuasive group presentation recommending a course of action based on insights developed from research and 3) a sophisticated and much more details 15-20 page persuasive group research report advocating for a course of action for a "client" based on your group's primary and secondary research. The presentation and report will contain your group's research objective, research results, analysis and recommendations.

Both the in-class presentation and the written parts of the assignment that will be graded both on the quality and thoroughness of information and thought presented as well as innovation and quality in presentation style (e.g., use of multimedia, PowerPoint/ Keynote/Prezi, clarity, visual impact). You will receive a single group grade for the project, however your individual grade on the project will factor-in evaluations of your individual contribution to the final projects. You will have an opportunity to evaluate your group members— each group member is expected to make a strong contribution.

IV. Grading

a. Breakdown of Grade

Assignment	Points	% of Grade
Class participation	100	10
Written Assignment #1 – Situation Analysis & Objectives	150	10
Written Assignment #2 – Secondary Research – Deeper Dive	100	15
Written Assignment #3 – Survey Design	50	5
Midterm Exam	250	25
Quiz (in class) – Statistical Analysis	50	5
Final Written Research Report	200	20
Final Group Presentation	100	10
TOTAL	1000	100%

b. Grading Scale

95% to 100%: A	80% to 83%: B-	67% to 69%: D+
90% to 94%: A-	77% to 79%: C+	64% to 66%: D
87% to 89%: B+	74% to 76%: C	60% to 63%: D-
84% to 86%: B	70% to 73%: C-	0% to 59%: F

c. Grading Standards

“A” projects present a sound, thought provoking analysis grounded in research directly responsive to the assignment prompt and featuring original insight. Writing near professional quality; one or no mistakes; clearly proofread and edited material. Persuasive, well-organized and publishable/client-ready as is.

“B” projects present a sound, if not thought-provoking, analysis grounded in research directly responsive to the assignment prompt. Little or no original insight. Writing of high-to-good quality, two to five spelling or grammar mistakes. One or more required elements missing or poorly displayed. Reveals a basic understanding of the subject matter. Shows potential as a good writer. At least one extraordinary element — either excellent presentation/writing or excellent grasp of the material. (Both would merit an “A.”) Publishable/client-ready with medium editing.

“C” projects reveal some confusion about the material, are not wholly responsive to the prompt and/or demonstrate inadequate research. Little to no engagement with the relevant data. No original insight. More than five spelling/grammatical errors. Poorly edited and/or proofread. Hackneyed elements such as trite headline, uninteresting lead or platitudes in place of thought. Publishable/client-ready only with extensive editing.

“D” projects show a lack of understanding of the course material and the assignment prompt. More than 10 errors (spelling, grammar). Needs to be completely rewritten. Poorly organized with little or no understanding of journalistic style/standards. Needs to meet with professor about course material and work with writing coach.

“F” projects are not rewritable, late or not turned in.

While each student will get an individual grade on the Final Project, you will be working in groups and turning in only one written report and doing only one final presentation. As such, there are elements of the project that will be evaluated on a “group” basis, while taking into account personal contributions.

Final Group Project Grading: Criteria	Grade
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Group produces sound, thought-provoking analysis grounded in research on a singular organizational area of interest.• Thoroughly examines all pertinent aspects of a given organization with a singular, clear purpose.• Formulates innovative, valid conclusions grounded in empirical evidence.• Effectively delivers engaging, informative multimedia presentation on research findings.• Provides defensible implementation plan for the organization, including themes, messages, channels, sources etc.• Optimally structures and organizes content in written product and presentation.• Delivers professional quality paper and presentation, without	A

grammatical errors, typos, etc. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accurately cites all source material • Meets all posted deadlines for project deliverables. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group produces sound, interesting analysis grounded in research on a singular organizational area of interest. • Examines all pertinent aspects of a given organization with a singular, clear purpose. • Formulates innovative conclusions grounded in sound empirical evidence. • Delivers engaging, informative presentation on research findings. • Effectively structures and organizes content in the written product and the presentation. • Delivers professional quality paper and presentation, with few grammatical errors, typos, etc. • Little original insight • Accurately cites all source material • Meets all posted deadlines for project deliverables. 	B
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group produces interesting analysis grounded in research on a singular organizational area of interest. • Examines some pertinent aspects of a given organization without identifying a singular, clear purpose or clear objectives • No original insight • Paper/presentation lacks in the professional quality and standards expected of today's PR professionals. • Meets all posted deadlines for project deliverables. 	C

V. Assignment Submission Policy

- All assignments are due on the dates specified. ***Lacking prior discussion and agreement with the instructor, late assignments will automatically be given a grade of F. This includes the final project.***
- Assignments – with the exception of the final group report -- must be submitted via email.
- 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 ***must include citations (in parentheses) for source material.***
- 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. As noted in the previous section of this syllabus, typos or writing quality that makes reading the work difficult will result in a lower grade.

VI. Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

Course Text: Stacks, D., & Michaelson, D. (2nd Edition). *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 current events in the news. Additional readings will be posted to Blackboard.

VII. Laptop Policy

All undergraduate and graduate Annenberg majors and minors are required to have a PC or Apple laptop that can be used in Annenberg classes. Please refer to the [Annenberg Virtual Commons](#) for more information. To connect to USC's Secure Wireless network, please visit USC's [Information Technology Services](#) website.

VIII. Add/Drop Dates for Session 001 (15 weeks: 8/20/18 – 11/30/18)

Friday, September 7: Last day to register and add classes for Session 001

Friday, September 7: Last day to drop a class without a mark of “W,” except for Monday-only classes, and receive a refund for Session 001

Tuesday, September 11: Last day to drop a Monday-only class without a mark of “W” and receive a refund for Session 001

Friday, October 5: Last day to drop a course without a mark of “W” on the transcript for Session 001. [Please drop any course by the end of week three (or the 20 percent mark of the session) to avoid tuition charges.]

Friday, October 5: Last day to change pass/no pass to letter grade for Session 001. [All major and minor courses must be taken for a letter grade.]

Friday, November 9: Last day to drop a class with a mark of “W” for Session 001

IX. Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

Important note to students: Be advised that this syllabus is subject to change - and probably will change - based on the progress of the class, news events, and/or guest speaker availability.

	Topics/Daily Activities	Readings and Homework	Deliverable/Due Dates
Week 1 Date: 8/22	Overview of course, readings and syllabus. Personal introductions Introduction to data and research: Why do we do research in public relations? “Data” and “Insights” Introduction to determining business, PR and research objectives. We will also do in-class exercises. <i>NOTE: We will spend half of next week’s class with a USC research librarian reviewing research strategies.</i> Attendance is necessary for you to successfully complete your first assignment.	Text: Chapters 1, 4-5 Next Wednesday 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 not have input into your group’s client. Think about potential “clients” for final project. Product, institution, political cause, etc.	

Week 2 Date: 8/29	<p>Introduction to Secondary Research</p> <p>Foreign Direct Investment case study and class discussion</p> <p>Situation and SWOT analyses</p> <p>Goals vs. objectives</p> <p>Final Project: Group Assignments and First Meeting</p> <p>Competitive analysis</p> <p>Revisiting objectives, measuring business outcomes</p>	<p>Guest speaker: Chimene Tucker, USC Research Librarian</p>	<p>Assignment #1 (handout) – Situation Analysis & Objectives - DUE: 9/12, beginning of class</p> <p>Bring one data-related item from the news to share with the class – this and every week. <i>If it is something to be shown on the projector, please email it to me at least one hour before class begin</i></p>
Week 3 Date: 9/5	<p>Competitive analysis</p> <p>Objectives and setting measurable goals (continued)</p> <p>Short video: what is the strategy and objective?</p> <p>Introduction quantitative analysis</p> <p>Introduction to survey methodology</p>	<p>Text: Part III Intro., Chapter 8</p> <p>Sign-up for a Qualtrics account (free for USC students)</p>	<p>Assignment #2 (handout): Secondary Research – Deeper Dive – DUE 2/7, beginning of class</p> <p>Bring one data-related item from the news to share with the class – this and every week. <i>If it is something to be shown on the projector, please email it to me at least one hour before class begins.</i></p>
Week 4 Date: 9/12	<p>Surveys, cont.</p> <p>Qualtrics Introduction</p> <p>Sampling</p> <p>Content analysis</p> <p>Audience segmentation</p>	<p>Text: Chapters 7 and 10, review Chapter 8</p> <p>Guest speaker: TBD</p>	<p>Assignment #1 DUE.</p> <p>Bring one data-related item from the news to share with the class – this and every week. <i>If it is something to be shown on the projector, please email it to me at least one hour before class begin</i></p>
Week 5 Date: 9/19	<p>Review surveys, sampling</p>	<p>Text: Chapter 6</p>	<p>Assignment #2 DUE.</p> <p>Assignment #3 (handout) – Survey (in Qualtrics) – Due: 10/4 via email</p>

	<p>Introduction to focus groups</p> <p>In-class focus group assignments</p> <p>Field trip preview/rides</p>	<p>(Handout) Prepare group presentation for next week.</p> <p>Prepare for specific focus group role, if given one</p>	<p>Bring one data-related item from the news to share with the class – this and every week. <i>If it is something to be shown on the projector, please email it to me at least one hour before class begins</i></p> <p>Develop Group survey</p>
<p>Week 6 Date: 9/26</p>	<p>In-class focus group!</p> <p>Midterm preview and study guide</p>	<p>Text: Chapter 7</p> <p>Other readings will be posted on Blackboard</p> <p>Begin drafting survey with your group</p> <p>Survey must be approved by professor before going “into the field.”</p> <p>Put survey in the field (if not already done)</p> <p>Study for Midterm</p>	<p>Bring one data-related item from the news to share with the class – this and every week. <i>If it is something to be shown on the projector, please email it to me at least one hour before class begins</i></p>
<p>Week 7 Date: 10/3</p>	<p>Data in Public Affairs Campaigns and Public Service</p> <p>Guest speakers: Julianne Hines VP, Public and External Affairs, Planned Parenthood of Pasadena & the San Gabriel Valley</p> <p>Kristi Lopez District Director, State Senator Anthony Portantino</p>	<p>Text: Review Chapter 9</p> <p>Conduct qualitative research</p> <p>Gather/analyze survey data</p> <p>Group work - Design surveys, focus group scripts, conduct individual interviews, etc.</p> <p>Study for Midterm</p>	<p>Assignment #3 DUE via email before class begins.</p> <p>Bring one data-related item from the news to share with the class – this and every week. <i>If it is something to be shown on the projector, please email it to me at least one hour before class begins</i></p> <p>Your group’s quantitative and qualitative data should be flowing in at this point!</p>
<p>Week 8 Date: 10/10</p>	<p>MIDTERM EXAM</p>		
<p>Week 9 Date: 10/17</p>	<p>Data in the entertainment industry</p> <p>Guest speaker:</p>	<p>Groups: Keep collecting data</p>	<p>Bring one data-related item from the news to share with the class – this and every week. <i>If it is something to be shown on the projector, please email it to me at least one hour before class begins</i></p>

	Sandy Padula, SVP. Research, Turner Entertainment		Your group's quantitative and qualitative data should be flowing in at this point!
Week 10 Date: 10/24	Guest speaker: Matthew Leveque, USC Annenberg Social media content analysis Traditional content analysis	Text: Review Chapter 9 Conduct qualitative research Gather/analyze survey data	Bring one data-related item from the news to share with the class – this and every week. <i>If it is something to be shown on the projector, please email it to me at least one hour before class begins</i>
Week 11 Date: 10/31	Statistical analysis Data workshop Making your own Infographics Guest speakers: Aimee Yang, USC Annenberg In-class quiz (50 points) Sign-up for extra credit presentations	Bring your group's data to class – very important! If selected to do presentation for extra credit, prepare. REMEMBER TO VOTE ON NOVEMBER 6!!!	DUE: Quiz (in-class) Bring one data-related item from the news to share with the class – this and every week. <i>If it is something to be shown on the projector, please email it to me at least one hour before class begins</i>
Week 12 Date: 11/7	A look at data and the 2018 Midterm Election	Text: Review Chapter 9 Work in groups	
Week 13 Date: 11/14	Data in Politics/Opposition Research Guest speaker: Jason Stanford, SVP, Global Communications, Hill & Knowlton (Austin, TX) Data in Crises Guest speaker: Ellen Barry, SVP Global Corporate Communication, Cardinal Health (Columbus, OH)	Work in groups	

Week 14 Date: 11/21	THANKSGIVING BREAK		
Week 15 Date: 11/28	Course Evaluations Applying data, analysis and insight in different career environments Presentation training	Work in groups	Extra Credit Presentations
FINAL EXAMS Date: 12/5, 7-9 p.m.	Final Thoughts Final Group Presentations!		Group Written Research Reports due by 7 p.m. (hard copy in class and email to quast@usc.edu)

X. Policies and Procedures

Additional Policies

- This course will feature robust 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 be well prepared for each class meeting and to provide value to the class discussion.
- Students having any doubt or questions regarding assignments, schedules, etc. should consult this syllabus first, then check with fellow students and only then contact the professor if something remains unclear.

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 1 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 into the instructor by the last day of class. Note: The internship must be unpaid and can only be applied to one journalism class.

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

a. Academic Conduct

Plagiarism

Presenting someone else's ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words - is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Section 11, *Behavior Violating University Standards* (<https://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b/>). Other forms of

academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct (<http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct/>).

USC School of Journalism Policy on Academic Integrity

The following is the USC Annenberg School of Journalism's policy on academic integrity and repeated in the syllabus for every course in the school:

"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."

In addition, it is assumed that the work you submit for this course is work you have produced entirely by yourself, and has not been previously produced by you for submission in another course or Learning Lab, without approval of the instructor.

b. Support Systems

Student Counseling Services (SCS) – (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention. engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline – 1 (800) 273-8255

Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) – (213) 740-4900 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm. engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp

Sexual Assault Resource Center

For more information about how to get help or help a survivor, rights, reporting options, and additional resources, visit the website: sarc.usc.edu

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)/Title IX Compliance – (213) 740-5086

Works with faculty, staff, visitors, applicants, and students around issues of protected class. equity.usc.edu

Bias Assessment Response and Support

Incidents of bias, hate crimes and microaggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response. studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support

The Office of Disability Services and Programs

Provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange relevant accommodations. dsp.usc.edu

Student Support and Advocacy – (213) 821-4710

Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely affecting their success as a student EX: personal, financial, and academic. studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa

Diversity at USC

Information on events, programs and training, the Diversity Task Force (including representatives for each school), chronology, participation, and various resources for students. diversity.usc.edu

USC Emergency Information

Provides safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible. emergency.usc.edu

USC Department of Public Safety – UPC: (213) 740-4321 – HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24-hour emergency or to report a crime. Provides overall safety to USC community. dps.usc.edu

XI. About Your Instructor

I am an adjunct professor at USC Annenberg with 25 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 am currently a senior vice president in the Los Angeles office of FTI Consulting. 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, an education and research campaign focused on correcting misinformation about oil and gas development in California, particularly on the issue of hydraulic fracturing (“fracking”).

In addition to work, teaching, and being a father of four (including triplets), I also serve on the Board of Directors of both Planned Parenthood of Pasadena and the San Gabriel Valley, Planned Parenthood Advocates, and Planned Parenthood Affiliates of California.

As a working public relations practitioner who has worked in almost every environment (corporate, agency, politics, government, etc.) on challenging and often-controversial assignments, I try to bring a “real world” perspective to my classes so that students understand how the concepts we discuss and skills we develop will apply after graduation.

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 I attended the Georgetown University Law Center.

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! Please feel free to track me down on Twitter @davequast or on LinkedIn.