

PR 463: Strategic Public Relations Research, Analysis and Insights 4 Units

Fall 2019 — Thursdays — 2-5:20 p.m.

Section: 21290D

Location: ASC 240

Instructor: Laura Min Jackson, MSOD

Office: ASC classroom or lobby

Office Hours: 1-2 p.m. on Thursdays by appointment

*24 hours' notice required

Contact Info: laurajac@usc.edu; (714) 234-9267

I. Course Description

- This course is designed to provide a theoretical and applied understanding of the roles research can play in public relations and marketing. The course will cover research methodologies, techniques, design, and analysis with a focus on application. Course discussion and exercises will link the applied use of research to strategic direction, messaging and evaluation.

II. Overall Learning Objectives and Assessment

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

- Understand the role of research in public relations
- Develop research goals, strategies and tactics
- Use research for developing strategy
- Plan, design, execute and analyze qualitative and quantitative research
- Monitor organization reputation using a diverse array of tools
- Understand the role of social media in public relations research
- Use research to measure public relations' impact

III. Description of Assignments

During the semester, students will be participating in:

- Reading, research and writing assignments, including supplemental learning and secondary research through readings/multimedia formats beyond the text
- Presenting an individual Case of the Week (COW) that describes how research is being used in a public relations campaign by an organization of the student's choosing
- An in-class individual Midterm examination
- Class discussion and participation in a semester-long group project
- Designing and implementing primary qualitative and quantitative research projects, and conducting relevant secondary research, all of which will be utilized in a semester-long group project
- Preparing and presenting strategic PR recommendations for a specific organization based on the group's research, including a Mid-Semester Presentation of preliminary research findings, and a Final Group Presentation of all PR recommendations, which are supported by the group's primary and secondary qualitative and quantitative research findings
- Final reflection paper/blog post regarding the use of research in strategic public relations
- Peer evaluation of individual students' overall contributions to the semester-long project

IV. Grading Breakdown

A total of 1000 points is available in this class, allocated as follows:

Assignments	Points Possible	% of Grade
Class Assignments	100	10%
Individual Research COW	100	10%
Individual Primary Research Materials	100	10%
Midterm Group Presentation	100	10%
Midterm Individual Exam	100	10%
Final Group PR Program Recommendations/Presentation	200	20%
Peer Evaluation/Contribution	50	5%
Final Paper	100	10%
Individual Class Discussion/Participation	150	15%
TOTAL	1000	100%

a. 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

b. Grading Standards

Throughout the semester, students will be asked to complete written assignments. The specifics and due date of each assignment will be discussed during class. Submissions will earn points based on overall quality, encompassing: (1) proper organization, style and presentation; (2) appropriate research and citation of sources; (3) demonstration of sound PR judgment; (4) creativity; and (5) timely submission.

“A” projects have writing near professional quality; one or no mistakes; clearly proofread and edited material. All required elements included (catchy headline, solid lead, varied vocabulary; supporting facts/figures; quotes as required). Excellent organization and flow; original thinking. Showed creativity in packaging/distribution method. High end of scale: publishable today as is.

“B” projects have two to five spelling, grammar or AP Style mistakes. One or more required elements missing or poorly displayed (i.e., boring headline; confusing lead, etc.). Shows potential as a good writer. Adhered to inverted pyramid. High end of scale will have at least one extraordinary element such as astonishing lead or little-known facts or pithy quote. Some creativity shown. Publishable with medium editing.

“C” projects have more than five errors (spelling, grammar, AP style). Poorly edited and/or proofread. May have adhered to inverted pyramid but strayed at beginning or end. Hackneyed elements such as trite headline or uninteresting lead. Little or no facts/figures included. Passive rather than active verbs become the norm. Little or no creativity shown. Publishable with major editing.

“D” projects have more than 10 errors (spelling, grammar). Needs to be completely rewritten. Poorly organized with little or no understanding of journalistic style/standards. Needs to work with writing coach.

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

Class Assignments (10%): Throughout the semester, students will be asked to complete written assignments worth a combined total of 100 points. The specifics and due date of each assignment will be discussed during class. Submissions will earn points based on overall quality, encompassing: (1) proper organization, style and presentation; (2) appropriate research and citation of sources; (3) demonstration of sound PR judgment; (4) creativity; and (5) timely submission.

Research COW (10%): Students may earn up to 100 points based on the quality of an individual presentation of a unique “Research Case of the Week” (COW); details and the schedule for presentations will be discussed in class.

Midterm Presentations & Exam (10% each): Students will be required to provide a Midterm presentation on their semester-long project, including an overview of preliminary findings and insights likely to impact the overall scope of work. They also must complete an in-class Midterm examination that evaluates their understanding of key concepts and applications presented to date through course-related lectures and readings. Additional details will be discussed in class. Attendance at the Midterm presentation and examination are mandatory; there are no make-ups for this requirement.

Primary Research Materials - Focus Group Discussion Guide & Reflection and Quantitative Survey (10% in total): During the semester, students will apply knowledge gained from the course to develop and implement 2 primary research instruments: a Focus Group Discussion Guide, a Focus Group Reflection and an online Quantitative Survey, which are worth a combined total of 100 points. Additional details will be discussed in class.

Final PR Program Recommendations/Presentation (20%): Students will be expected to participate in a group project to develop PR Recommendations supported by research and evaluation elements. All teams will be required to develop a research plan and instrument, and conduct secondary as well as primary qualitative and quantitative research (outside of the classroom) to support their final recommendations. All team members must participate in presenting the final proposals, using rationale from the research to substantiate their recommendations. Additional details will be discussed in class.

Peer Evaluation/Contribution (5%): Students will be evaluated by their Final Group peer members on their overall contribution to the final PR Recommendations and in-class presentation, based on various criteria including adherence to consensual Operating Ground Rules and Values, responsiveness, written materials, critical thinking, and related elements. Additional details will be discussed in class.

Final Paper (10%): Students will be asked to submit a 1,000-word final paper or blog post that reflects their critical thinking, comprehension of key concepts presented during the course and synthesis of their learning and broader applicability to PR practices and the PR industry overall. Details will be discussed in class. As PR practitioners, we strive for impeccable quality, and all materials will be evaluated according to the same standards. All written materials should represent one’s best quality work, be error-free and meet the quality standards of this school, reflecting proper editing, grammar, spelling, and formatting. Students who struggle with language, grammar, spelling, or writing should speak with me about the Annenberg School’s designated Writing Coaches.

Class Discussion/Participation (15%): It is important to attend class and actively participate, since class activities and interaction with peers encourage creative dialogue and diversity of perspective, and enhance learning. It is expected that students will come to class having read the assignment(s) and prepared to join class discussions, contributing questions and comments about the materials. Classes begin promptly, so please arrive on time.

If a student is unable to attend class for some reason, please notify the instructor as soon as possible, and assume personal responsibility for gathering notes from other classmates. Unexcused absences, tardiness, and failure to meet deadlines will have a negative impact on the student's final grade. At the end of the semester, students will be allotted points based upon:

- Consistent demonstration that they have read the material for scheduled class discussion
- Contribution to class discussion; answering questions, asking relevant questions
- Demonstrating respect for fellow classmates and instructor
- Mature classroom behavior that supports learning

V. Assignment Submission Policy

A. Assignment Submission Policy

Students are expected to complete assignments at the beginning of class on the due date indicated in the course schedule. Late assignments will have an automatic 10% per day deducted. No written assignments will be accepted one week past the due date. The one-week mark is calculated from the beginning of the class on the date that the assignment is due. After one week, zero points will be assigned for any late assignment.

- B. Unless otherwise specified, assignments must be submitted as PDF documents via email to laurajac@usc.edu using the file naming convention of **Student Last Name. Assignment Name**

VI. Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

Required Reading: Stacks, D., & Michaelson, D. (2018). *A Practitioner's Guide to Public Relations Research, Measurement and Evaluation* (3rd edition). Business Expert Press.

Here's the link to the e-book in our library:

https://usc-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/primo-explore/fulldisplay?docid=01USC_ALMA51676219850003731&context=L&vid=01USC&search_scope=EVERYTHING&tab=everything&lang=en_US

Other readings will be posted on 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: 8/26/19 – 12/6/19)

Friday, September 13: Last day to register and add classes for Session 001

Friday, September 13: 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 17: Last day to drop a Monday-only class without a mark of "W" and receive a refund for Session 001

Friday, October 11: 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 11: 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 15: Last day to drop a class with a mark of “W” for Session 001

IX. Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

Following is a detailed course calendar that provides a thorough list of deliverables—readings, assignments, examinations, etc.

Important note: *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.*

<i>Session/Date</i>	<i>Title & Topic(s)</i>	<i>Readings/Assignments/Deliverables</i>
# 1 08-29	Course Overview Introductions; Common Research Types, Formal vs. Informal; Why Research Matters; The Research Conundrum; Data vs. Insight	None
# 2 09-05	Basic Concepts of Research Ethical Considerations; Setting Comm Goals & Objectives; Messaging Strategies; Rational vs. Emotional Appeals; Information Processing, Perceptions & Beliefs; Message Testing; Barcelona Principles	Michaelson: Ch. 1-2 Halfpenny Highlights (on BB)
# 3 09-12	Secondary Research and Qualitative Research Methods Levels of Secondary Research; Methodologies & Tools; Applications in PR: Content, Program Development, SWOTs; Principles of Netnography	Michaelson: Ch. 5 Other Readings: “Use of Barcelona Principles in Silver Anvil Winners” (on BB) Other Readings: NIELSEN’s “Latina Consumers” & “Multicultural Shoppers” (on BB) Assignment #1 DUE – Questioning Thinking (15 pts) <u>In-Class COW</u>
# 4 09-19	Qualitative Primary Research Methods Comparing Qualitative & Quantitative Methodologies: Purpose, Philosophy & Mechanics; Focus Groups & In-depth Interviews; Discussion Guide Development; Advanced Facilitation Technique; Applications in PR	Michaelson: Ch. 6 Halfpenny Highlights (on BB) Assignment #2 DUE – Segmentation Profile (15 pts) <u>In-Class COW</u>
# 5 09-26	Audience Segmentation & Sampling Segmentation Approaches & Methods: Demographic, Attitudinal, Geodemographic & Psychographic; Sampling Methodologies & Tools; Probability & Nonprobability Sampling; Size Guidelines & Calculators; Sampling Myths	Michaelson: Ch. 8 Other Readings: “State of Influencer Marketing 2018” (on BB) “Finding Your Audience Through Market Segmentation” (on BB) Assignment #3A DUE – Individual FG Discussion Guide <u>In-Class COW</u>

# 6 10-03	Quantitative Primary Research Methods Methodologies & Key Concepts in Instrument Design; Writing Quality Questions; Measurement Types & Scales; Applications in PR	Michaelson: Ch. 7 Other Resources: PEW "How to Write Survey Qs" video http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/03/21/how-do-you-write-survey-questions-that-accurately-measure-public-opinion/ Assignment #4 DUE – PESO Credibility Assessment <u>In-Class COW</u>
# 7 10-10	In-Class Focus Groups	<u>Final Group FG Discussion Guide DUE</u>
# 8 10-17	FALL BREAK – No class	Enjoy your Break!
# 9 10-24	Measurement & Evaluation of PR Creating Measurement Plans; Methods & Tools; Paine's "10 Questions" for Planning & Evaluation; LARA Model; 7 Steps to 'Perfect' Measurement; Measuring ROI vs Measuring Relationships; "4 Reasons for Bad Data"; Applications in PR	Michaelson: Ch. 4, 11 Halfpenny Highlights (on BB) Other Readings: PR Pros' Guide to Measurement "The Truth About Making Money on YouTube and Starting a Channel" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f7scGR52xR0
#10 10-31	Midterm Presentation & Exam	<u>Group Presentation DUE –</u> Preliminary Qualitative Findings
#11 11-07	Content Analysis (Traditional & Social Media) Qualitative & Quantitative Methodologies; Coding vs. Contextual Analyses; Applications in PR -- Outputs, Outtakes & Outcomes; PESO Metrics; Google Analytics; "8 Considerations for Measuring Blog Posts;" The Evolving World of DIY Tools GROUP PLANNING TIME	Michaelson: Ch. 8 Other Readings Assignment #3B DUE – Focus Group Reflection Assignment #5 DUE – Individual Quant Instrument <u>In-Class COW</u>
#12 11-14	Data Analysis Workshop Searching For Insights: Finding Meaning in Data; Quantitative and Qualitative Data Analysis Approaches; Confidence Levels and Projectability; Methods and Tools GROUP PLANNING TIME	Michaelson: Ch. 9 Other Readings Ongoing Primary Research / Data Analysis / Plan Development <u>In-Class COW</u>

#13 11-21	Telling Stories With Data Interpreting & Presenting Data; Effective Storytelling; Data Visualization Methodologies and Tools From Research to Actionable Insight Principles of Sense-Making; 360-degree Thinking; Developing Insight-Driven Strategies; the New World of Neural Marketing, Haptic Explorations, The Maker Economy, and More GROUP PLANNING TIME	<i>Other Readings</i> Ongoing Data Analysis / Plan Development <u>In-Class COW</u>
#14 11-28	THANKSGIVING BREAK – No class	
#15 12-05	FINAL PRESENTATIONS – Dry Run	<u>Final Group Presentations DUE</u>
12-12 2-4 p.m.	FINAL PRESENTATIONS - Summative Experience FINAL PAPER DUE	<u>Final Individual Paper DUE</u> via email 11:59 p.m. TT

X. Policies and Procedures

Use of Technology

Cell phones, PDAs, and other electronic equipment are to be turned off before class. Answering the phone, sending/receiving email or IMs, or any other form of electronic communication during class are a significant distraction from the learning process and should be avoided. The use of computers in class for any purpose other than taking notes and/or researching topics under discussion at the time, will result in a full grade reduction for the entire course.

Confidentiality

In this class, case studies or projects of a sensitive nature may be discussed; the information is considered confidential and should not be shared outside of the classroom without the explicit consent of the person(s) involved.

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 or public relations 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

USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-120 – 24/7 on call
dps.usc.edu

Non-emergency assistance or information.

Annenberg Student Success Fund

<https://annenberg.usc.edu/current-students/resources/additional-funding-resources>

The Annenberg Student Success Fund is a donor-funded financial aid account available to USC Annenberg undergraduate and graduate students for non-tuition expenses related to extra- and co-curricular programs and opportunities.

Breaking Bread Program [undergraduate students only]

<https://undergrad.usc.edu/faculty/bread/>

The Breaking Bread Program is designed to provide individual undergraduate students with an opportunity to meet and have scholarly discussions with faculty members outside of the normal classroom setting. Through this program, students and faculty enjoy good company and great conversation by literally “breaking bread” over a meal together and USC will pick up the tab! Your meal event can take place anywhere outside of the normal classroom setting. Your venue can be a restaurant or eatery on or off-campus.

XI. About Your Instructor

Laura Min Jackson is an award-winning communications pro who’s worked with global corporations, start-ups and nationally-ranked PR agencies. As an independent PR consultant, her clients have included Beckman Coulter; Miocean; Össur, and Sony Pictures Entertainment Corp.

Previously, she was VP/Global Communications for Baxter Healthcare and Edwards Lifesciences, overseeing all internal and external communications for the NYSE-traded firm, as well as the \$50 million nonprofit Edwards Lifesciences Fund. She also was SVP/West Coast Director of the national Healthcare practice at Porter/Novelli, and specialized in Healthcare and Crisis Communications as VP at PainePR. She began her agency career at Burson-Marsteller after working in the Government and Nonprofit sectors. Laura earned her M.S. in Organization Development from Pepperdine University, and her bachelor's in Communications/PR from Cal State Fullerton. In addition to teaching at USC, she’s been a consultant, guest speaker and facilitator for public health, educational and policy organizations worldwide.