

MSc Strategic Communication and Public Relations

University of Stirling – Universitat Pompeu Fabra

RESEARCH AND EVALUATION FOR PRACTICE

COURSE SYLLABUS

Course Title: Research and Evaluation for Practice

Course code: 31793

Number of credits: 5 ECTS

Student workload: 125 hours

Course instructor: Isabel Rodríguez de Dios, PhD (isabel.rodiguez@upf.edu)

1. Course description

One of the current research trends in strategic communication and public relations, in particular, and in the social sciences, in general, is the use of quantitative research techniques. The emergence of new forms of communication that allow much easier access to data of objects (messages) and subjects (audience), the large amount of data that we can process, and the dominance of quantitative over qualitative research in the vast majority of academic journals, makes it imperative that future professionals and scholars of strategic communication and public relations know the main data analysis techniques. This is precisely the aim of this course: to equip students with the knowledge that will allow them to conduct analyses that apply quantitative methods and draw conclusions from the results of such analyses. Focusing on the area of strategic communication and public relations, the student will be able to plan a research project with data analysis, perform such an analysis and draw relevant conclusions from it.

2. Content

1. Introduction to quantitative and experimental research

1. The scientific method
2. The quantitative vs. the qualitative approach
3. Ethical concerns in social sciences research

2. Planning a quantitative research project

1. Theoretical framework

- a. Literature Review
 - b. Scientific Papers
 - c. Research Databases
2. Object of study
 - a. Research Questions and Hypotheses
 3. Experiments
 - a. Variables
 - b. Experimental design
 - c. Conducting and experiment
 - d. Measures
 4. Data analysis with SPSS
 1. Descriptive Statistics
 2. Inferential Statistics
 - a. Correlations
 - b. Mean Comparisons
 3. Presentation of results: formal issues, dissemination

3. Assessment

1. Individual assignments: Class activities – 40%

Statistical analyses with SPSS, total of two, 20% each.

Deadlines: Fridays of Week 6 and Week 8

2. Group assignment: Final Project Report – 50%

Group (4-5 people) project (Object of study, RQ & Hypotheses, 10%– Experimental design & Variables, 10% – Measures, 10% – Procedure, 10% - Analysis and Results, Discussion - 10%).

3. Group assignment: Oral Presentation of the Final Project – 10%

Presentation: Tutorial Meeting Week 10

4. Calendar

Week 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intro Quantitative Research • Qualitative vs Quantitative approach • Principal Research Methods • Research Ethics
Week 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theoretical Framework, • Literature review, databases, scientific journals • Object of study • Research Questions & Hypotheses
Week 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to conduct experiments • Variables • Experimental designs
Week 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experimental Research Practice
Week 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SPSS and Data Analysis 1: Data transformation and descriptive statistics • Tutoring Final Project (see Final Project Timetable)
Week 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SPSS and Data Analysis 2: Correlation and Chi-square • Tutoring Final Project (see Final Project Timetable)
Week 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SPSS and Data Analysis 3: T-Test • Tutoring Final Project (see Final Project Timetable)
Week 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SPSS and Data Analysis 4: ANOVA • Tutoring Final Project (see Final Project Timetable)
Week 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SPSS and Data Analysis 5: Multiple Regression • Tutoring Final Project (see Final Project Timetable)
Week 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Project Presentation

5. Textbooks, readings and learning resources

- Allen, M., Titsworth, S., & Hunt S. K. (2009). *Quantitative Research in Communication*. London: Sage.
- Berger, A. A. (2000). *Media and Communication Research Methods: An Introduction to Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. London: Sage.
- Field, A. (2018). *Discovering statistics using IBM SPSS statistics* (5th edition).
- Griffith, A. (2009). *SPSS for Dummies*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Lewis-Beck, M. S. (1993). *Experimental design and methods*. London: Sage.
- Treadwell, D. & Davis, A. (2019). *Introducing Communication Research: Paths of Inquiry* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications
- Van Ruler, B., Vercic, A. T., & Vercic, D. (Eds.). (2008). *Public relations metrics: research and evaluation*. New York: Routledge.
- Wagner, W. E. (2011). *Using IBM SPSS Statistics for Social Statistics and Research Methods*. London: Sage.

Other readings

- Boynton, L., & Dougall, E. (2006). The methodical avoidance of experiments in public relations research. *PRism* 4(1).
<https://www.prismjournal.org/uploads/1/2/5/6/125661607/v4-no1-a1.pdf>
- Boukes, M. & LaMarre, H. L. (2021). Narrative persuasion by corporate CSR messages: The impact of narrative richness on attitudes and behavioral intentions via character identification, transportation, and message credibility. *Public Relations Review*, 47(5), 102107. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2021>.
- Denham, B. E. (2002). Advanced categorical statistics: Issues and applications in communication research. *Journal of Communication*, 52, 162–176.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2002.tb02537.x>
- Dilenschneider, R. L. (2010). *The AMA handbook of public relations: Leveraging PR in the digital world*. New York: Amacom.
- Gang, H., & Xiuli, W. (2015). From product-country image to national image: “Made in China” and integrated valence framing effects. *International Journal of Strategic Communication*, 9(1), 62-77. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1553118X.2014.960082>

- Hameleers, M., Bos, L., Fawzi, N., Reinemann, C., Andreadis, I., Corbu, N., Schemer, C., Schulz, A., Shaefer, T., Aalberg, T., Axelsson, S., Berganza, R., Cremonesi, C., Dahlberg, S., de Vreese, C. H., Hess, A., Kartsounidou, E., Kasprowicz, D., Matthes, J., ... Weiss-Yaniv, N. (2018). Start spreading the news: A comparative experiment on the effects of populist communication on political engagement in sixteen European countries. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 23(4), 517–538. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1940161218786786>
- Heath, R.L. (2013). *The encyclopedia of public relations*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Kim, J., Kim, H. J., & Cameron, G. T. (2012). Finding primary publics: A test of the third-person perception in corporate crisis situations. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 24(5), 391-408. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1062726X.2012.723275>
- Kim, Y., & Choi, Y. (2012). College students' perception of Philip Morris's tobacco-related smoking prevention and tobacco-unrelated social responsibility. *Journal Of Public Relations Research*, 24(2), 184-199. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1062726X.2012.626138>
- Koniak, P. & Cwalina, W. (2021). Does it pay to avoid speaking straight about controversial issues? Impact of argumentative ambiguity on the perception of the speaker. *Journal of Communication Management*. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JCOM-11-2020-0154>
- Lecheler, S., de Vreese, C., & Slothuus, R. (2009). Issue Importance as a Moderator of Framing Effects. *Communication Research*, 36(3), 400-425. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0093650209333028>
- Sriramesh, K. & Verčič, D. (2009). *The global public relations handbook: Theory, research and practice*. New York: Routledge.
- Theaker, A. (2004). *The public relations handbook (2nd edition)*. London: Routledge.
- Tormala, Z. R., Briñol, P., & Petty, E. P. (2006). When credibility attacks: The reverse impact of source credibility on persuasion. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 42, 684–691. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2005.10.005>
- Schouten, A. P., Janssen, L. & Verspaget, M. (2020). Celebrity vs. Influencer endorsements in advertising: the role of identification, credibility, and Product-

Endorser fit. *International Journal of Advertising*, 39(2), 258-281.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/02650487.2019.1634898>

Utz, S., Schultz, F., & Glocka, S. (2013). Crisis communication online: How medium, crisis type and emotions affected public reactions in the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster. *Public Relations Review*, 39(1), 40-46.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2012.09.010>.

Ye, L., & Ki, E. (2012). The status of online public relations research: An analysis of published articles in 1992–2009. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 24(5), 409-434. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1062726X.2012.723277>

Web resources

- Laerd Statistics: <https://statistics.laerd.com/>
- Web Center for Social Research Methods: <http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/>

Communication Research Journals

- Communication Monographs: <https://www.tandfonline.com/toc/rcmm20/current>
- Communication Research: <https://journals.sagepub.com/home/crx>
- Communication Theory: <https://academic.oup.com/ct>
- European Journal of Communication: <http://ejc.sagepub.com/>
- Journal of Applied Communication Research:
<https://www.tandfonline.com/toc/rjac20/current>
- Journal of Communication: <https://academic.oup.com/joc>
- Media Culture & Society: <http://mcs.sagepub.com/>
- Political Communication: <http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/titles/10584609.asp>
- Profesional de la Información:
<http://profesionaldelainformacion.com/index.html>

Public Relations & Strategic Communication Research Journals

- Corporate Communications: An International Journal:
<https://www.emerald.com/insight/publication/issn/1356-3289>
- Corporate Reputation Review: <https://link.springer.com/journal/41299/volumes-and-issues>
- International Journal of Advertising:
<https://www.tandfonline.com/toc/rina20/current>

- International Journal of Strategic Communication:
<https://www.tandfonline.com/toc/hstc20/current>
- Journal of Communication Management:
<https://www.emerald.com/insight/publication/issn/1363-254X>
- Journal of Marketing Communications:
<https://www.tandfonline.com/toc/rjmc20/current>
- Journal of Public Affairs: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/14791854>
- Journal of Public Relations Research:
<http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/hpr20/current>
- Public Relations Inquiry: <https://journals.sagepub.com/home/pri>
- Public Relations Journal: <https://prjournal.instituteforpr.org/>
- Public Relations Review: <http://www.journals.elsevier.com/public-relations-review/>

Research centres and associations

- International Public Relations Association (IPRA): <http://www.ipra.org>
- The International Association for Media and Communication Research:
<http://iamcr.org>
- International Communication Association: <http://www.icahdq.org>
- Asociación Española de Investigación de la Comunicación: <http://www.ae-ic.org/esp/home.asp>
- European Communication Research and Education Association (ECREA):
<http://www.ecrea.eu>

Journal databases, directories and ranking

- JCR. Journal Citation Reports: <http://www.accesowok.fecyt.es/jcr>
- WOS. Web of Science (SCI, SSCI, A&HCI): <https://mjl.clarivate.com/home>
- SCOPUS: <http://www.scopus.com/home.url>
- Google Academic /Scholar: <http://scholar.google.es/>
- EBSCOhost: <http://search.ebscohost.com/>

6. Teaching and learning methods

- Lectures
- Seminars
- Self-learning



- Tutorials
- Individual assignments
- Group assignments