JOUR 3200:
Mass Communication
Research Methods
Fall 2015
T/TH, 5:00 – 6:20 PM
in BLB 010

Professor: Sara Champlin, PhD
Office: 102 G
Email: sara.champlin@unt.edu
Office Hours: T/TH 11:00a – 12p; 2:00-4:00p, and by appointment

Teaching Assistant: Rita Wilson Unogwu, RitaUnogwu@my.unt.edu

Being able to conduct research and interpret findings are essential skills for many occupations in the field of communications and have increased in desirability among employers in recent years. In this course you will learn about aspects of the research process from start to finish. You will be asked to explore questions pertinent to the field and perform a variety of data collection and analysis techniques to justify a decision you might make if you were at a public relations firm, advertising agency, or other occupation.

Objectives:

1. Develop research questions relevant to the field and justify the contribution of these inquiries to the brand/company (the infamous “so what” question)
2. Employ data collection strategies to determine innovative insight aimed at solving research questions
3. Interpret findings from both primary data collected and from existing research in the fields of public relations and advertising and understand how this research contributes to our knowledge in these fields

Prerequisites: You should already be a JOUR major and completed the Mayborn School of Journalism’s Foundational Courses.

Required Reading: Available at bookstore; however, you are not required to buy the book from the bookstore, this book is available through online vendors and other bookstores:


Suggested Materials: For this class you may find it useful to have access to some edition of Microsoft Excel and to an audio recording program (many are free).

Email: This is the best way to reach me (see email address above). Please do not email me less than 24 hours before something is due, as I won’t be able to 100% guarantee a response before the deadline. Note that FERPA guidelines require that I only reply to your my.unt email address.

Blackboard Issues? For the most part, Blackboard is a great resource for students. But, if you encounter any issues, you can send an email (helpdesk@unt.edu), make a call (940.565.2324), or visit 130 Sage Hall.

FYI: If you foresee any event compromising your ability to complete work for this class, please let me know as soon as possible. Please schedule an appointment or visit my office hours to discuss. I expect you to be present in class and complete all assignments on time.

Late Work: The world is run by deadlines. Turn assignments in on time. Post deadline submissions will receive a 10-point deduction for each day that passes unless stated otherwise.
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<td>Presentations</td>
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Readings: Readings assigned on a given day should be read prior to coming class on that date. For example, please read B&B chapter 2 before coming to class on September 1st.

Assignments:

Quizzes (20%): On some weeks (as indicated by the star symbols in the course schedule above) you will be asked to complete a multiple-choice and true/false quiz. The quiz will cover the readings and lecture material covered on the day of the quiz and earlier. As such, the quizzes are cumulative (but so is the content of the class). Plan accordingly! Make-up quizzes will not be offered. However, as you can see, there are a total of 7 dates marked for quizzes. I will only count 5 of your quizzes. Therefore, if you take all 7 quizzes, I will drop your two lowest quiz grades at the end of the semester. Or, if you miss two class periods on which we have quizzes, you will be able to drop those two quizzes. I will drop no more than a total of 2 quizzes.

In Class Participation (15%): In this class we will be conducting numerous “practice” rounds of data collection and analysis (see days with “Practice” in the schedule above). I expect you to be in class and to complete the assignments to the best of your ability. If I notice that you are consistently absent, not involved, or not on task, this portion of your grade will be reduced. You will be expected to turn in your responses to the practice questions and feedback will be provided so that you can hone the skills of that day.

Research Methodology Portfolio Piece (15%): There is an increasing desire from employers for you to have an online portfolio of some kind (Tumblr, Word Press, etc.). The purpose of this assignment is to submit a polished version of one of the “Practice” pieces we complete during the semester. You may turn this in at any point during the semester. Keep in mind that at the end of the semester your final course project is due and you will be busy with that. Plan a due date for yourself for this assignment and stick to the date you set for yourself. All methodology portfolio pieces are due by 5 PM on the last day of class, December 3rd. Because you have the entire semester to submit this assignment, no late assignments will be accepted, no exceptions.
Long-Term Course Project: Good research takes time. Over the course of the semester you will work in teams to complete a final report that advises what a company/brand should do in a certain situation, based on research your group conducted throughout the year. At the beginning of the semester, we, as a class, will pick four brands or companies of interest and will break into corresponding research groups. The pieces below add to a total of 30% due throughout the semester. Each piece is due at the beginning of class and the late work penalty will be applied to any work submitted after 5:15 PM on the due date.

Literature Review Bibliography (5%): To get you started on thinking about your research question, a first step in all research is to determine what is already known about that topic. You are asked to turn in an initial bibliography containing at least 15 citations (in APA format) that are relevant for your project. These can be a combination of online articles/resources and academic peer-reviewed journal articles. You are not required to keep all of the citations in your final paper (your line of research may shift over time) but it should get you thinking about the type of research you want to conduct to answer your brand’s research question.

Qualitative Rough Draft (5%): A rough draft of the qualitative component of your paper is due on October 13th at the beginning of class deadline. This will be submitted electronically through Blackboard. We will discuss this further in class but your qualitative rough should include a methods and results section using at least two of the three qualitative methods introduced (interview, textual analysis, consumer observation). For each of the two methods you choose, you should include analysis of at least 5 subjects (e.g., five interviews or five texts or five consumers). Keep in mind that this is a rough draft. Whatever you give me is what I will look at and provide feedback.

Quantitative Rough Draft (5%): A rough draft of the quantitative component of your paper is due on November 19th at the beginning of class deadline. This will be submitted electronically through Blackboard. We will discuss this further in class but your quantitative rough should include a methods and results section using one of the quantitative methods introduced in class. This will likely be a survey but you are welcome do to an experiment.

Presentation (15%): Each group is expected to present their qualitative and quantitative findings in a 10 minute research presentation during the final week of classes (the week after Thanksgiving). Plan accordingly. We will discuss what should be included in the presentation throughout the semester and a rubric will be provided.

Final Research Paper (20%): At the end of the semester your group will be responsible for submitting one final research paper. A good part of this paper will already be completed by the time you have turned in the qualitative and quantitative rough drafts. The purpose of the final paper is to incorporate feedback I have given you on the rough drafts and polish anything that could be done a little bit better. Additionally, for the final research paper you should have an introduction and conclusion, which introduce and offer a solution to your research question, respectively. We will discuss the final research paper in class in further and you will be given more detailed instructions as well as a rubric.
JOURNALISM REQUIREMENTS & GUIDELINES

JOURNALISM COURSE REGISTRATION

- Registration will begin on the dates noted in the schedule of classes each semester. The system is a live, first come/first serve program.

- By registering for this course, you are stating that you have taken the required prerequisites according to your catalog year and major/minor status. If the instructor later determines that you haven’t taken and passed these requirements, then you may be dropped at any point in the semester. If you have questions about your prerequisites, please see an advisor.

- A journalism major enrolled in any restricted 3000 and 4000 level classes must have taken and passed the GSP test, all foundational courses, and Math 1680/1681. Students must earn and maintain a 2.5 UNT and/or overall GPA (depending upon catalog year) to be eligible for major-level courses.

RE-TAKING FAILED JOURNALISM CLASSES

Students will not be allowed to automatically take a failed journalism course more than two times. Once you have failed a journalism course twice, you will not be allowed to enroll in that course for 12 months. Once you have waited 12 months after failing a course twice, you may make an appeal to the professor teaching the course to be allowed to enroll a third time.

TEXTBOOK POLICY

The Mayborn School of Journalism doesn’t require students to purchase textbooks from the University Bookstore. Many are available through other bookstores or online.

FIRST CLASS DAY ATTENDANCE

Journalism instructors reserve the right to drop any student who does not attend the first class day of the semester.

OFFICE HOURS

I have office hours available on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11:00 AM-Noon and from 2:00-4:00 PM. If you have a complicated question, office hours are best.

ATTENDANCE

This is a small class. I will be taking attendance. I allow one excused absence before missing class starts impacting your final grade. Coming to class late or leaving early may be counted as an “absence.”
FINANCIAL AID SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS (SAP) UNDERGRADUATES
A student must maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) to continue to receive financial aid. Students must maintain a minimum 2.0 cumulative GPA in addition to successfully completing a required number of credit hours based on total registered hours per semester. Students cannot exceed attempted credit hours above 150% of their required degree plan. If a student does not maintain the required standards, the student may lose financial aid eligibility.

If at any point you consider dropping this or any other course, please be advised that the decision to do so has the potential to affect your current and future financial aid eligibility. Please visit http://financial.aid.unt.edu/satisfactory-academic-progress-requirements for more information about financial aid Satisfactory Academic Progress. It may be wise for you to schedule a meeting with your MSOJ academic advisor or visit the Student Financial Aid and Scholarships office to discuss dropping a course before doing so.

ACADEMIC ADVISING
All first-time-in-college students at UNT are required to schedule an appointment with their Academic Advisor and receive an advising code to register for classes both fall and spring semesters of the first year in college. ALL students should meet with their Academic Advisor at least one time per long semester (Fall & Spring). It is important to update your degree plan on a regular basis to ensure that you are on track for a timely graduation.

• It is imperative that students have paid for all enrolled classes. Please check your online schedule daily through late registration to ensure you have not been dropped for non-payment of any amount. Students unknowingly have been dropped from classes for various reasons such as financial aid, schedule change fees, parking fees, etc. MSOJ will not be able to reinstate students for any reason after late registration, regardless of situation. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure all payments have been made.

IMPORTANT FALL 2015 DATES

FALL 2015

August 24 2015 First Class Day

September 7, 2015 Labor Day

September 8, 2015 Beginning this date, students may drop a course only with written consent of instructor.

October 2, 2015 Last day for student to receive automatic grade of W for nonattendance.

Last day for change in pass/no pass status.

Last day to drop a course or withdraw from the university with a grade of W for courses a student is not passing. After this date a grade of WF may be recorded.

October 3, 2015 Beginning this date, instructors may drop students with a grade of WF for nonattendance.
November 2, 2015  Last day to drop with either W or WF.

Last day for a student to drop a course with consent of the instructor.

November 9, 2015  Beginning this date a student who qualifies may request an Incomplete, with a grade of I.

November 26 – 29, 2015  Thanksgiving Break (no classes; university closed).

December 3, 2015  Last Class Day

December 4, 2015  Reading Day (no classes).

December 5 – 11, 2015  Final Exams.

ACADEMIC ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Understanding the academic organizational structure and appropriate Chain of Command is important when resolving class-related or advising issues. When you need problems resolved, please follow the step outlined below:

Individual Faculty Member/Advisor

Director, Mayborn School of Journalism

Dean, Mayborn School of Journalism
OFFICE OF DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS

The University of North Texas and the Mayborn School of Journalism make reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information see the Office of Disability Accommodation website at http://www.unt.edu/oda. You may also contact them by phone at 940.565.4323.

COURSE SAFETY STATEMENTS

Students in the Mayborn School of Journalism are urged to use proper safety procedures and guidelines. While working in laboratory sessions, students are expected and required to identify and use property safety guidelines in all activities requiring lifting, climbing, walking on slippery surfaces, using equipment and tools, handling chemical solutions and hot and cold products. Students should be aware that the University of North Texas is not liable for injuries incurred while students are participating in class activities. All students are encouraged to secure adequate insurance coverage in the event of accidental injury. Students who do not have insurance coverage should consider obtaining Student Health Insurance for this insurance program. Brochures for this insurance are available in the UNT Health and Wellness Center on campus. Students who are injured during class activities may seek medical attention at the UNT Health and Wellness Center at rates that are reduced compared to other medical facilities. If you have an insurance plan other than Student Health Insurance at UNT, please be sure that your plan covers treatment at this facility. If you choose not to go to the UNT Health and Wellness Center, you may be transported to an emergency room at a local hospital. You are responsible for expenses incurred there.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the use of any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, or exams; dependence upon the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor, the acquisition of tests or other material belonging to a faculty member, dual submission of a paper or project, resubmission of a paper or project to a different class without express permission from the instructors, or any other act designed to give a student an unfair advantage. Plagiarism includes the paraphrase or direct quotation of published or unpublished works without full and clear acknowledgment of the author/source. Academic dishonesty will bring about disciplinary action, which may include expulsion from the university. This is explained in the UNT Student Handbook. For any project for which academic dishonesty is determined, including assignments, papers, etc. (everything you get a grade for), you will receive a zero for that assignment and, in some cases, further grade reductions (such as an F in the course) will be administered on a case-by-case basis, depending on the severity. We will discuss cheating and plagiarism in class to see if you have any questions about this.
MSOJ ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

The codes of ethics from the Society of Professional Journalists, American Advertising Federation and Public Relations Society of America address truth and honesty. The Mayborn School of Journalism embraces these tenets and believes that academic dishonesty of any kind – including plagiarism and fabrication – is incongruent with all areas of journalism. The school’s policy aligns with UNT Policy 18.1.16 and requires reporting any act of academic dishonesty to the Office for Academic Integrity for investigation. If the student has a previous confirmed offense (whether the first offense was in the journalism school or another university department) and the student is found to have committed another offense, the department will request the additional sanction of removing the student from the Mayborn School of Journalism. The student may appeal to the Office for Academic Integrity, which ensures due process and allows the student to remain in class pending the appeal.

CLASSROOM POLICIES

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor’s ability to conduct a class or other students’ opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom, and the instructor may refer the student to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities to consider whether the student’s conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The University’s expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including university and electronic classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at http://www.unt.edu/csrr/student_conduct/index.html.

The Mayborn School of Journalism requires that students respect and maintain all university property. Students will be held accountable through disciplinary action for any intentional damages they cause in classrooms. (e.g., writing on tables). Disruptive behavior is not tolerated (e.g., arriving late, leaving early, sleeping, talking on the phone, texting or game playing, making inappropriate comments, ringing cellular phones/beepers, dressing inappropriately).

STUDENT EVALUATION OF TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS (SETE)

The Student Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness (SETE) is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. This short survey will be made available at the end of the semester to provide students a chance to comment on how this class is taught. Student feedback is important and an essential part of participation in this course.

FINAL EXAM POLICY

Final exams will be administered at the designated times during the final week of each long semester and during the specified day of each summer term. Please check the course calendar early in the semester to avoid any schedule conflicts.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

As you know, your access point for business and academic services at UNT occurs within the my.unt.edu site www.my.unt.edu. If you do not regularly check EagleConnect or link it to your favorite e-mail account, please so do, as this is where you learn about job and internship opportunities, MSOJ events, scholarships, and other important information. The website that explains Eagle Connect and how to forward your email: http://eagleconnect.unt.edu/
COURSES IN A BOX

Any MSOJ equivalent course from another university must receive prior approval from the MSOJ academic advisor to insure that all MSOJ degree plan requirements are met. For example, courses that are taken online or from a program that offers course material via CD, booklet, or other manner of correspondence must have prior advisor approval.

IMPORTANT NOTICE FOR F-1 STUDENTS TAKING DISTANCE EDUCATION COURSES

To comply with immigration regulations, an F-1 visa holder within the United States may need to engage in an on-campus experiential component for this course. This component (which must be approved in advance by the instructor) can include activities such as taking an on-campus exam, participating in multiple on-campus lecture or lab activity, or other on-campus experience integral to the completion of this course.

If such an on-campus activity is required, it is the student’s responsibility to do the following:

(1) Submit a written request to the instructor for an on-campus experiential component within one week of the start of the course.

(2) Ensure that the activity on campus takes place and the instructor documents it in writing with a notice sent to the International Advising Office. The UNT International Advising Office has a form available that you may use for this purpose.

Because the decision may have serious immigration consequences, if an F-1 student is unsure about his or her need to participate in an on-campus experiential component for this course, students should contact the UNT International Advising Office (telephone 940-565-2195 or email international@unt.edu) to get clarification before the one-week deadline.

DROPPING AN ONLINE COURSE

A student needing to drop an online course should send their instructor an email with their name, student ID#, reason for dropping a course, and date you are sending the email. This must be done prior to the UNT deadline to drop a course.

If approved, the instructor will contact the MSOJ Undergraduate Office in GAB 102 where you may obtain a signed drop form. It is your responsibility to turn in the completed drop slip to the UNT Registrar’s office before the deadline to make sure you have been dropped from the course with a “W”. If you are taking only online courses and your instructor approves the drop, please contact the MSOJ Director of Advising for instructions.

EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION & PROCEDURES

UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify you with critical information in an event of emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). The system sends voice messages (and text messages upon permission) to the phones of all active faculty staff, and students. Please make certain to update your phone numbers at www.my.unt.edu. Some helpful emergency preparedness actions include: 1) ensuring you know the evacuation routes and severe weather shelter areas, determining how you will contact family and friends if phones are temporarily unavailable, and identifying where you will go if you need to evacuate the Denton area suddenly. In the event of a university closure, your instructor will communicate with you through Blackboard regarding assignments, exams, field trips, and other items that may be impacted by the closure.
Statement of Student Learning Outcomes

Statement of Student Learning Outcomes, UNT Mayborn School of Journalism

Since 1969, the UNT Department of Journalism (Mayborn School of Journalism effective September 1, 2009) has been accredited by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. This national accreditation also extends to the Mayborn Graduate Institute of Journalism, the only accredited professional master’s program in Texas. About one-fourth of all journalism and mass communication programs in the United States are accredited by ACEJMC. National accreditation enhances your education here, because it certifies that the department and graduate institute adhere to many standards established by the council. Among these standards are student learning outcomes, covered by journalism courses in all sequences.

This course, JOUR 3200, will help to meet the student learning outcomes that have been checked by your professor, Dr. Sara Champlin.

Each graduate must:

- Think critically, creatively and independently.
- Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work.
- Apply basic numerical and statistical concepts.
- Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve.