

**SENECA COLLEGE OF APPLIED ARTS AND TECHNOLOGY
ENGLISH AND GENERAL EDUCATION
FACULTY OF TECHNOLOGY**

SUBJECT OUTLINE

SUBJECT TITLE: Public Relations Research Project

SUBJECT CODE: CCM 741

PROFESSOR: Janet Symmons: Room 2095; Ext. XXX
E-mail: XXXX

CREDIT STATUS: Essential subject credit for all students registered in the Corporate Communications Program

PREREQUISITES: Students must be registered in the Corporate Communications Program

SEMESTER: Summer 2004

APPROVED BY: _____

**John McIntyre, Chair
English and General Education**

SUBJECT DESCRIPTION

Students will apply the tools and methods of research acquired in CCM 747 to investigate, in depth, a specific aspect of public relations practice.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of this subject the student will be able to:

- Function as a member of an investigative team;
- Conduct public relations research from problem statement to finished report using quantitative or qualitative methods; and
- Exhibit a positive professional attitude as demonstrated by involvement (courtesy, attentiveness and substantial participation in team activities) and effective time management (punctual attendance in class and completion of assigned tasks).

Marking Scheme

Problem Statement	10%
Progress Reports, draft report & mid-term presentation	30%
Final Research Report	40%
News release	10%
Presentation of Findings	10%

All participants in a group receive the same grade for each assignment. To be eligible to pass the course, each member of a team must evaluate his or her team mates individually and submit confidential, comprehensive evaluations (see attached evaluation form) to the Academic Advisor with the Final Report. In addition, the Professor will take into account the Peer Evaluations when determining each participant's final mark; a participant's final mark may be adjusted by up to two grades (PLUS or MINUS) on the basis of the Peer Evaluation. **Assignments will not be accepted after the due date.**

The professor and the coordinator of the corporate communications program must approve research proposals before the research project begins.

Learners must employ the highest degree of ethics when conducting their research and writing their report.

Final reports must be written in APA style and have a professional appearance. Reports that do not strictly adhere to the APA style will not be accepted for marking. One grade will be deducted for every three typographical, grammatical, punctuation, stylistic or spelling errors. You must have an APA proofreader review your report before submitting it to the professor. Be sure to allow approximately eight days turnaround for this review. Budget approximately \$150 for proofreading and submit a copy of the paid invoice with your report. Book your proof-reader several weeks in advance to ensure that he or she can meet your deadline.

What is required is a REPORT -- not an essay or thesis. The report should be comprised of a critical survey of the literature and research methods and findings, together with clearly drawn and well-supported conclusions. Learners should indicate what values these findings have to current and future public relations practice.

One cerlox-bound, professionally presented copy of the report, with a clear plastic front cover, is to be presented to the professor in your assigned classroom during the first hour of the last class of the semester. Late reports will not be accepted.

Learners are responsible for getting **all** information about arrangements and assignments given in the class. If you are absent, get this information from another student. **Be sure to work on the buddy system.**

This subject is an individual investigation or analysis of contemporary public relations practice. Your professor will supervise and guide you during the preparation of the project. Be sure all members of your group attend each appointment. Come to the meetings prepared -- a short agenda will ensure that you maximize your time. Your mark for Progress Reports will be determined largely by your systematic progress in research methods and in your work plan. This

means you must meet your deadlines, and provide a professional, business-like presentation at each meeting. If you are running into problems, bring a list of questions to the meetings.

Due Dates

Assignments will not be accepted after the due date.

Presentational Aids/Audio Equipment

Students are required to make their own arrangements for presentational aids or audio equipment. Prepare a back-up plan in case of non-delivery of equipment or equipment failure.

Required Text:

Gray, G. and Guppy, N. (1999) *Successful Surveys*. (2nd ed.). Toronto: Harcourt Canada.

Resource Texts

Abbey-Livingston, D., & Abbey, D.S. (1982). *Enjoying Research? A 'How to' Manual on Needs Assessment*. Toronto: Queen's Printer for Ontario. (Available online: <http://www.lin.ca/lin/resource/html/sp0070%5B1%5D.pdf>)

Cutlip, M.S., Center, A.H. and Broom, G.M. (2000). *Effective Public Relations*. (8th Edition). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, Inc.

Also, learners should refer to their copy of the CCM 747 subject outline for a list of helpful books.

GRADING POLICY

		<u>GPA</u>
A+	90% - 100%	4.0
A	80% - 89%	4.0
B+	75% - 79%	3.5
B	70% - 74%	3.0
C+	65% - 69%	2.5
C	60% - 64%	2.0
D	55% - 59%	1.0
F	0% - 54%	0

ATTENDANCE

Consistent attendance is important for success in this course. If you are absent from class, you are still responsible for the material and assignments.

DROPPING A SUBJECT

It is the responsibility of the student wishing to drop this subject to notify the professor and the Office of the Registrar on/or before the deadline stated in the Student Handbook. A "**Timetable Change Form**" must be completed and signed by an administrator of English and General Education and delivered by the student to the Registrar by the deadline.

STUDENT/FACULTY CONSULTATION OUTSIDE CLASSROOM HOURS

Students are encouraged to consult the professor with subject-related questions outside class time. To arrange a consultation at a mutually agreeable time, students should speak with the professor during regularly scheduled classes or in the professor's office or via telephone.

ACADEMIC REGULATIONS

Students are responsible for being aware of college regulations in the Academic Policy Handbook.

CHEATING AND/OR PLAGIARISM

Section 8.9 - Seneca College Academic Policy

Cheating and/or plagiarism are offences that will not be tolerated by the College. Such offences occur when a student violates the procedures governing the administration of examinations, tests or other means of evaluating student achievement in a subject or program.

STUDENT APPEALS

Section 11 - Seneca College Academic Policy

You have the right to appeal academic decisions of the College. The procedures for informal and formal appeals are outlined in the College Academic Policy.

Students must keep all assignments (including drafts and outlines) and exercises until they receive their final grade. No appeal will be considered unless a **complete** file is submitted at the time of the appeal. **A lost assignment is no excuse.**

If a student disagrees with the evaluation of an assignment or with a final grade, **the student must first discuss the matter with the professor** in an attempt to resolve the disagreement. If the matter is not resolved, the student should discuss the problem with the chair of English and General Education.

For further information on appeals, please consult the Academic Policy Handbook.

As a student at Seneca College, you are expected to read the College Academic Policy and your College Student Handbook. Please note that this information is very important.

STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Students should be aware of their rights and responsibilities. They should consult the Student Handbook.

DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT

All students and employees have the right to study and work in an environment that is free from discrimination and/or harassment. Language or activities that defeat this objective violate the College Policy on Discrimination/Harassment and shall not be tolerated. Information and assistance are available from The Centre for Equity and Human Rights. For more information on Student Rights and Responsibilities, please consult the Student Handbook.

**CCM 741
Class Schedule**

WEEK:	TOPIC:
May. 13	Introduction & housekeeping
May. 22	Team Meetings; problem statements due
Jan. 29	Team Meetings
Feb. 4	Team Meetings; literature review due
Feb. 12	Team Meetings
Feb. 18	Team Meetings
Feb 25	Team Progress Presentations: Highlight the process, problems anticipated, effectiveness of research method(s) and preliminary results.
Mar. 4	READING WEEK: No Classes
Mar. 11	Team Meetings
Mar. 18	Team Meetings; draft research reports due
Mar. 25	Team Meetings
Apr. 1	Team Meetings
Apr. 8	Team Meetings
Apr. 15	Final Presentations; final reports, peer evaluations and news release due

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NOTES:

1. These are suggested headings only. Each paper will require different headings.
2. This TOC is for both qualitative and quantitative research. You will not need all of these headings/topics for your paper unless you use both methods.
3. Some headings are duplicated in different chapters, but only needed once in the paper
4. The chapter headings will be the same for every paper.

Guidelines for Evaluating and Writing Qualitative Research

To understand qualitative research, you must read the entire report. This is how you are able to identify with the investigators and understand how they have come to their conclusions. The process by which this occurs is important, and to understand this process you have to read the entire report from beginning to end. Similar to quantitative studies, there are certain questions that the reader should ask about the report to judge its quality.

This guideline will not only help you in school but also in the workplace when you are asked your opinion on a piece of qualitative research. Remember, this is how professional public relations practitioners, who work with other decision-makers, write and judge the merits of research.

Introduction (to the Report/Paper/Article):

Questions to ask yourself as you read/critique or write the Introduction section:

1. Is the focus, purpose, or topic of the report/paper stated clearly?
2. Does the researcher outline the situations or problems which led to the focus of the report/paper? Does she outline the rationale for the study? Is the importance of the report/paper clear to the reader?
3. Does the researcher refine the research problem/question by describing her background research and theory?
4. Does the introduction to the report/paper contain an overview of the design of the research?

Methodology (described or used by the researcher in the Report/Paper/Article):

Questions to ask yourself as you read/critique or write the Methodology section:

1. Does the researcher describe the place(s) or site(s) where the research took place? Does the researcher mention whether the place(s) or site(s) are typical or unique for the respondent?
2. Does the researcher describe how he became interested in studying the respondent(s) and how he introduced himself to the respondent(s)?
3. How did the researcher explain his presence in the field to respondents? What was the role of the researcher?
4. Did the researcher explain who was observed? How long were they observed? How much time did the researcher spend collecting data?
5. Did the researcher report any limitations to access to pertinent data?
6. Are the data representative of naturally occurring behavior of the respondents?
7. Are any limitations of the research design acknowledged by the researcher?

Findings and Interpretations (outlined by the researcher in the Report/Paper/Article)

Questions to ask yourself as you read/critique or write the Findings and Interpretations section:

1. Are the perspectives of the different respondents/participants clearly presented?
2. Is background information for respondents/participants provided by the researcher?
3. Is more than one perspective presented by the researcher?
4. Are the results well documented by the researcher? Are assertions and interpretations illustrated by the researcher's results?
5. Is it clear that the researcher believes what she has been told (the data)? Are the researcher's personal beliefs kept separate from the data?
6. Are the researcher's interpretations reasonable? Did the researcher acknowledge her preconceptions and biases?

Conclusions (outlined by the researcher in the Report/Paper/Article)

Questions to ask yourself as you read/critique or write the Conclusions section:

1. Are the researcher's conclusions logically consistent with his findings?
2. Are the limitations of the research design and focus clearly outlined by the researcher?
3. Are the implications of the researcher's findings adequately outlined?

Guidelines for Evaluating and Writing Quantitative Research

There is no agreed-upon method or approach to reading research articles or papers. Some readers begin with the conclusion, and others follow the written sequence. My experience suggests that a reader should begin with the abstract, then scan the introduction, research problem, and conclusion sections. If, after reading these sections, you are still interested in the article or paper, you should start at the beginning and read the entire article or paper more carefully. Whenever reading research, you should keep in mind the practical or meaningful significance of the study. Research is significant if there are no serious weaknesses in the design and the differences obtained between groups or individuals are large enough to suggest changes in theory or practice.

Other questions should be kept in mind when reading research. While you need to become acquainted with the following considerations now, a full understanding and application of the questions will follow with increased experience and knowledge of the quantitative methodology. The following questions, organized according to each major section of a research article, constitute a guideline for evaluating and writing quantitative research.

This guideline will not only help you in school but also in the workplace when you are asked your opinion on a piece of quantitative research. Remember, this is how professional public relations practitioners, who work with other decision-makers, write and judge the merits of research.

Research Problem (of the research Report/Paper/Article)

Questions you should ask when reading/critiquing or writing this section):

1. Has the researcher clearly and succinctly stated the research problem?
2. Is the problem sufficiently delineated so as to be amenable to investigation? Does the problem have sufficient practical value to warrant study?
3. Possibly with the exception of some descriptive research, is the problem stated in such a way that it expresses the relationship of two or more variables?
4. Has the researcher clearly outlined the rationale for the research problem? Has the researcher indicated that the problem has been studied before? If so, has the researcher explained why it should be studied again? Will the current study provide additional knowledge?
5. Has the researcher indicated that the anticipated findings will give rise to further hypotheses and so add to existing knowledge?

Review of Literature (in the Report/Paper/Article)

Questions you should ask yourself when reading/critiquing or writing this section:

1. How adequately has the researcher surveyed the literature.
2. Does the researcher present pertinent material in the review or is it just filler material?
3. Does the researcher critically evaluate previous research finding and studies, or is the review only a summary of what is known without pointing out any possible deficiencies of previous research or alternative explanations for previous findings?
4. Does the researcher's review support the need for studying the problem?
5. Does the researcher's review develop and establish a theoretical framework for the problem?

Hypothesis or Questions (in the Report/Paper/Article)

Questions you should ask yourself when reading/critiquing or writing this section:

1. Does the researcher advance any assumptions with respect to her hypothesis or questions? If she does, are they explicitly stated (they should be), or are they implied?
2. Are the researcher's hypotheses consistent with theory in the body of knowledge and known facts? Are the hypotheses testable? Do they provide a suggested answer to the stated research problem?
3. Are all the terms used by the researcher adequately defined in operational fashion?

Methodology (in the Report/Paper/Article)

Questions you should ask yourself when reading/critiquing or writing this section:

1. Does the researcher describe the procedures, design and instruments used to gather the data with sufficient clarity so as to permit another research to replicate the study?
2. Did the researcher describe the total subject population fully? Did the researcher use the total population or did he use a sample from it? If a sample is used, is it representative of the total population from which it was selected? Note: The method of sampling is very important.
3. Does the researcher present evidence about the validity and reliability of the instruments she used?
4. Did the researcher use a pretest? Did the researcher conduct a pilot study? If so why and are they described? What were the results? Was the problem or question or procedure changed as a result of the pretest or pilot study, and if so, was this modification justifiable or desirable in your opinion?
5. Has the researcher pointed out any obvious weaknesses in the overall design of the study in your opinion?

Results (in the Report/Paper/Article)

Questions you should ask when reading/critiquing or writing this section:

1. In your opinion, are statistical techniques needed to analyze the data? If so, do you think the most appropriate and meaningful statistical techniques were used?
2. Did the researcher present the results adequately? Are all the questions employed in the survey? reprinted? Has the researcher used tables, figures and charts appropriately?

Discussion, Implications, Conclusions (in the Report/Paper/Article)

Questions you should ask yourself when reading/critiquing or writing this section:

1. Do you think the researcher's conclusions and generalizations are consistent with the results (Findings)? What are the implications of the findings? Has the researcher over generalized her findings?
2. Does the researcher discuss the limitations of her study?
3. Are there, in your opinion, any extraneous factors that might have affected the findings? Did the researcher consider them?
4. Did the researcher present conclusions consistent with the theory or known facts?
5. Did the researchers present and discuss the conclusions (both those relevant to the original hypothesis and any serendipitous findings) adequately?

Seneca College
Corporate Communications Program
School of English and General Education
Grading Criteria
For
Research Reports

<p style="text-align: center;">90 – 100 A+</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exceptional writing in all respects • Contains original creative thoughts • Very well organized and expressed • Sound critical evaluation • Clear command of techniques and principles of the discipline • Publishable where applicable • Consistently exceeds expectations • High level of synthesis • New understandings • Extension of content • Adheres to CP style in all respects 	<p style="text-align: center;">80 – 89 A</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very good writing • Well organized with few errors • Shows clear understanding of concepts and evidence of critical thought • Ability to differentiate and interpret relevant issues • Analytic treatment of content • Application of ideas • Synthesis: able to make connections among disparate details or ideas • Evaluation of ideas and contents • Manipulation and interpretation of data • Concepts and understandings grounded in real applications
<p style="text-align: center;">75 – 79 B+</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good writing • Meets some of the above criteria • Shows basic competence in synthesis and critical thinking • Shows competent grasp of writing and reference styles • Adheres to proper references and grammatical styles • Logically organized 	<p style="text-align: center;">70 – 74 B</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequate writing • Constitutes baseline for PR writing • Shows comprehension of course content and pulls together information in a coherent, understandable fashion • Descriptive treatment of content • Identification of key elements recognition of basic facts knowledge and recall • Retrieval of information • Grammatically correct writing • Little integration of concepts

**SENECA COLLEGE
PEER EVALUATION FORM*
CCM 741**

*Please complete one form for each team member. You may use a separate sheet of paper to record your comments on each section. Insert the appraisal form and the sheets in an envelope, sign the **outside**, and return it by the due date to your Professor.*

Team Member's Name: _____

Please rate your team member in each category using the five-point scale.

A. CREATIVITY/INITIATIVE:

1	2	3	4	5
Offered comments which were not pertinent to the discussion. Comments focussed on own area of interest.		Although willing to explore new ideas, limited success in including them in discussion.		Often suggested new ideas or creative solutions. Encouraged and built on the input and expertise of other team members.

COMMENTS: _____

B. FACILITATION:

1	2	3	4	5
Little sensitivity to the team's process or to team members' needs.		Occasionally attended to the process and others' needs.		Consistently aware and concerned with process and others' needs.

COMMENTS: _____

* Adapted from the University of Toronto, Department of Health *Team Contribution Appraisal Form* Fall 1995.

C. TASK ORIENTATION:

1	2	3	4	5
Impeded the team's problem-solving activities through non-constructive comments and behaviours.		Demonstrated use of some aspects of problem-solving in addressing the task.		Constantly used and understood approach for solving the assigned task and/or problem.

COMMENTS: _____

D. ADVANCE PREPARATION:

1	2	3	4	5
Has not come to all team sessions with the advance work completed and prepared to work on the team task.		Demonstrated completion of the advance work prior to all sessions and attended all team sessions fully prepared to complete the team task.		Completed all advance work and consistently showed evidence of pursuing new ideas and information to assist in completing the team task.

COMMENTS: _____

E. Please rate your team member's overall contribution to the team.

1	2	3	4	5
Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent

COMMENTS: _____

