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# Specialization Research Group Project (Includes Rubric)

Amber Hutchins

Trinity University, [amber.hutchins@trinity.edu](mailto:amber.hutchins@trinity.edu)

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## **COMM 3360 Principles of Public Relations Specialization Research Group Project**

**Due:** Part I Due: Dates posted on class schedule

**Worth:** 20% of your final grade

**Purpose:** This assignment is designed to provide students with experience in analyzing, synthesizing, and contextualizing professional and academic research relevant to public relations. Each group's work begins with a library workshop to assist them in learning how to access academic journals and trade publications, and will ultimately result in an in-depth class discussion and a comprehensive database that can be used by classmates in pursuing other research projects. In class, we will discuss how to evaluate sources and examine the methodology used in PR research. Students will learn to develop their skills as scholars beyond the introductory level, in preparation for Capstone research and graduate school.

**Description:** In groups of five, students will explore the existing research for a PR specialization. Groups will evaluate and compile sources into an annotated bibliography to be added to a class wiki and a social bookmarking page. Each group will report results in a class presentation and lead discussion. They will be considered experts in their assigned area and will be responsible for teaching classmates the material in preparation for the final exam.

Each group will provide a comprehensive review of the existing research in an assigned area of specialization (to be assigned). Specializations include:

- Social media
- Nonprofit
- Government and politics
- Crisis communication
- Global and multicultural communication

**Part 1: Introduction to PR Research:** Students will attend a library workshop and a class session will be dedicated to identifying top PR journals and trade publications, and will learn criteria for evaluating research. Understanding of the material will be assessed via a short take-home assignment and an in-class review activity.

**Part 2: Annotated Bibliography:** The annotated bibliography should explain why each source is significant. It should go beyond a summary, providing a thorough evaluation and analysis of each source. For example, how does the article fit within the context of the existing body of research? Does the research represent a major finding, a current trend, or a seminal work in the field? What kind of research methodology is used? How do the findings contribute to the existing body of research? Is the publication an academic journal or a professional/trade publication? Is it a credible source? (More criteria to be discussed in class).

The first section of the bibliography will consist of at least 25 sources.

- At least 10 from academic, peer-reviewed journals
- At least 10 from trade publications relevant to the field
- At least three should be books currently available at the library.
- At least two should be from interlibrary loan.

The second section should include at least 25 social bookmarking links relevant to the assigned topic. Each group should sign up for Delicious account (to be explained in class).

After the bibliography has been compiled, students will post their references and a link to the Delicious account in a class wiki a week prior to the introduction of the topic.

Students should work together as a group to select sources, and each group member will be responsible for evaluating and summarizing an equal share of the sources. Please indicate the author in parenthesis at the end of each entry.

**Part 3: Presentation:** During the class presentation, groups will present their findings about the topic including an in-depth discussion of three articles deemed by the group to be the most significant, based on class discussion of evaluating sources. The group will also pose questions to the class and lead discussion. Each member of the group should have an opportunity to contribute during the presentation. Students will be evaluated on their individual presentation and contribution, as well as the overall cohesion of the group.

<b>Part 1: Introduction to PR Research</b>	<b>Exemplary</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Needs Work</b>
<b>Individual: Attendance</b>	Students attends library workshop and class session dedicated to research, engages in full participation.	Student both sessions, some participation.	Student does not attend one or both sessions, is inattentive, disinterested, or unengaged.
<b>Individual: Assignment</b>	Completes assignment, demonstrates thorough understanding of using library resources and how to evaluate sources	Minor inaccuracies, indicates could benefit from more help before the project begins.	Fails to complete, or shows little effort or understanding.
<b>Individual: In-class activity</b>	Attends and participates fully, demonstrates understanding of project and expectations and ability to move forward and successfully complete the project.	Attends and participates, minor review needed to move forward and successfully complete the project.	Does not attend, is inattentive, disinterested, or unengaged, needs extensive review to move forward and successfully complete the project.
<b>Part 2: Annotated Bibliography</b>	<b>Exemplary</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Needs Work</b>
<b>Group: Selection of Sources</b>	Exceeds minimum expectations in terms of number of sources, sources chosen demonstrate understanding of the specialization as a whole.	Meets expectations for number of sources, appropriate choice of sources, might need one or two changes to make it a comprehensive view of existing body of knowledge.	Fails to meet minimum number of sources, poor selection of sources that do not reflect the breadth of the specialization or major findings.
<b>Group: Organization and Format</b>	Uses APA citations correctly and consistently, individual contributions are labeled. Sources are organized according to logic order as determined by the group's library research.	Minor APA mistakes, good organization .	Major APA mistakes or inconsistencies, poor organization that confuses or does not enlighten readers.
<b>Individual: Summaries and Evaluation of Sources</b>	Provides thorough descriptions of each source, goes beyond description and provides evaluation, analysis, and context within the body of research for each source. Evaluation includes examination of findings, methodology, and relationship to other research in the field.	Provides adequate description, analysis, and evaluation of each source, minor inaccuracies or typos.	Missing or inadequate description of sources, fails to evaluate sources in terms of significance in the field, uses inappropriate sources.
<b>Part 3: Presentation and Class Discussion</b>	<b>Exemplary</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Needs Work</b>
<b>Group: Presentation</b>	Information selected for presentation is representative of the information in Part 2. Information is organized into a logical order for presentation by group member. Group	Good but not excellent selection of sources or organization, minor issues with group interaction or organization.	Information selected is not representative of good work in Part 2. Disorganized or not presented in logical order. Overall unprofessional group interaction. <b>Group</b>

	members interact in a professional manner.		<b>members in attendance will not be penalized for others who are no-shows.</b>
<b>Individual: Presentation</b>	Participates equally in relation to other members in the group, clearly explains findings using PR and research terminology, Professional, scholarly demeanor. Ends on time. Visual aids (optional) are engaging and enhance presentation. Informative, engaging, and appropriate for audience.	Generally accurate and relevant presentation of information, shows understanding of the body of knowledge, minor inequality of participation. For the most part, keeps attention and presents info on an appropriate level for the audience.	Dominates or does not equal participation of group members, does not meet minimum requirements. Information is confusing, irrelevant, incomplete or disorganized, or does not take audience into consideration. Demeanor is unprofessional or does not show respect or interest in scholarly inquiry. <b>Students who do not attend presentation will fail Part 3 [excluding pre-arranged absence, wherein group member will create a video of their presentation].</b>
<b>Individual: Discussion</b>	Asks thought-provoking questions and leads robust class discussion, shows expertise in the area of specialization through solid answers to questions from classmates.	Generally good questions and facilitation of discussion, mostly solid answers, ends approximately on time	Is not equipped to answer questions from classmates, can't engage class in good discussion, appears bored, hostile, or unprepared.