

Introduction to Public Relations and Government Relations
Course syllabus

Course description

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Course timeframe: 3rd module, 40 academic hours (20 hours of lectures; 20 hours of seminars)

Course introduction

This is an introductory course for students aiming to pursue International Affairs major. The course is designed to explore internationally recognized major theoretical concepts and applications of communication studies in subfields of Public Relations and Government Relations. Communication discipline borrows a lot of its theoretical base from psychology, sociology, anthropology, philosophy, critical theory, business management, economics, and linguistics. Hence, this course will address multidisciplinary theoretical issues related to the PR issues, echoing in a relationship development with stakeholders in organizational context. Coursework is designed to encourage students to give critical consideration to the place of theory within PR practice and to apply the theories on real case analysis.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the course students will be able to:

1. To understand the essence of PR as a practical discipline within the organization; be aware of its functions, strategies and particular techniques.
2. To understand how public relations theory and practice developed and how public relations is practiced in different countries.
3. Aware of different types of stakeholders involved in private and public organizations that use public relations strategies.
4. To understand, recognize, and examine the phenomenon of media transparency and its application for the public relations profession and practice in a global world.
5. To identify, analyze, and discuss actual case studies and/or strategic communication campaigns.
6. To examine how multiculturalism and diversity impact global public relations theory and practice.
7. To recognize and perform steps necessary for initial strategic communication campaign.

Course outline

	Lesson topic, planned activities and lesson outcomes
Lecture 1	<p>Defining Public Relations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Brief history of PR as profession (from 'hype' PR to relationship) ● 4 models of Public Relations ● Excellence theory ● Key definitions and classifications of PR: reactive/proactive, spin, PR skills and scope, etc. <p>First lecture is devoted to providing an understanding of PR as a practical field as well as it defines the place of PR in communication science. We discuss the major approaches to the PR, its role in organization and society from the utilitarian, functional perspective.</p>
Lecture 2	<p>Meta- and middle range PR theories</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Economic perspective / consensus oriented PR (as managerial technique) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Grunigiam Paradigm ● Reflective societal perspective on PR ● Social theories on PR (Constructivism, Systems theory, e.g. Luhmann, Latour, Berger) ● Critical PR studies (e.g. Habermas and Public sphere, Feminist scholarship) <p>The lecture covers the essentials of PR theories: the works of Gruning&Gruning, PR as a part of social theory, applying and underlying the importance and ethics of PR in practice and its role for society in general. We also cover the essence of the Critical Theory in the application to PR practice.</p>
Seminar 1	<p>For the first seminar we conduct an interactive discussion on the role and place of PR in organization. Students are asked to prepare cases and examples of how PR is practiced in different organization. The main objective of this seminar is to relate major theoretical approaches to the real life cases. This class would be conducted in a debate style: students are asked to provide arguments pro- and contra- for the critical role of PR in organization.</p>
Lecture 3	<p>Persuasion and message elaboration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Basics on building persuasive message ● Hierarchy of effects model ● Elaboration likelihood model and its implementation in PR campaigns <p>In this lecture we discuss the basics of rhetoric and persuasion in application to PR practice. Hence, student will learn the main approaches to persuasive message construction and the ways of the message delivery and elaboration by publics.</p>
Seminar 2	<p>In class essay on elaboration likelihood model, 700 words approximately.</p> <p>Use Elaboration likelihood model in any resonant public campaign analysis. What is the target audience for this campaign? How the messages are created in order to be effective on both peripheral and central routes? What are the formats used by PR practitioners? Does this campaign apply any peripheral cues for "not-very- interested" audience? Make sure to check on all possible sources of information: articles, tweets,</p>

	videos etc.
Seminar 3	During this seminar students will do an active research to outline key techniques of PR used by organizations. Based on the prior home reading, students identify main tools of practitioners to build stable relationships with publics.
Lecture 4	<p>Strategic public relations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Managing corporate identity through corporate communication ● Stakeholder communication ● Corporate social responsibility ● Fully functioning society theory <p>In this lecture students will learn the idea of stakeholders and the variety of the directions in which PR could be practiced. Here we are focusing at corporate communication and corporate identity maintenance through the prism of stakeholders approach. The key outcome for the students is the ability to correspond the diversity of stakeholders involved in relationships with organization and to choose appropriate techniques to address them.</p>
Seminar 4	Over the seminar students are asked to discuss the controversial issues of corporate social responsibility in action. As CSR appeared to be an essential tool, legitimizing company presence on the market, approaches to CSR vary from organization to organization. Throughout the discussion students clarify CSR strategies in different business fields.
Lecture 5	<p>Dialogic theory of PR</p> <p>The theory explains how public relations practitioners should ethically build quality relationships with publics by having a dialogue with them. This lecture is devoted to the theoretical approaches of relationship maintenance with strategic publics both offline and online.</p>
Seminar 5	Dialogic theory of PR: case analysis. Students are asked to read an article analysing the emergence and development of online relationships between strategic publics and
Lecture 6	<p>Managing relations with media:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Relationship management theory ● Functional perspective on PR ● Media relations ● New media and online reputation ● Fake news phenomenon <p>As PR originates mostly in the field of media relations, in this lecture we will focus on functional perspective on how and why should PR practitioners use different media techniques and tools. Here we also cover the topic of new technology and fake news phenomenon.</p>
Seminar 6	<p>Managing online reputation writing log</p> <p>The class is built to conduct an analysis of online presence of the company and its</p>

	<p>influence for branding and PR. For this class students are asked to write a number of PR materials adapted for the online format as a series of publications that appear online on different media platforms e.g. Twitter, FB, short notice on company web-site, Instagram, etc.</p>
Lecture 7	<p>Crisis communication and PR practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Situational crisis communication theory <p>Crisis communication relies heavily on PR practitioners. Hence, it is important to be aware of the variety of techniques and theoretical approaches to PR in crisis. This lecture introduces students to the main theoretical and applicable aspects of crisis communication and prepares for the further seminar.</p>
Seminar 7	<p>In class group work: crisis communication case</p> <p>Students are split into groups of 5 and present PR agency. They are given a brief crisis situation and asked to react and maintain their strategy while more information comes (e.g. case of American Airlines). During the activity, students will be asked to evaluate each step and action in accordance with theoretical framework. This is an interactive class</p>
Lecture 8	<p>Public Affairs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The interest groups ● Collective action problem ● Selective incentives ● Free-rider problem <p>From the perspective of Collective action theory (Mancur Olson) students will clarify the place and role of interest groups in public discourse and PR practice.</p>
Seminar 8	<p>The Taxi case: what happens with the taxi in different countries? How is Uber doing?</p> <p>The seminar involves the analysis of empirical materials (3 case studies) from the point of interest group theory and strategies of new providers to enter the “market” and disseminate the existing monopoly.</p>
Lecture 9	<p>Global PR: practicing Public Relations in intercultural context</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Theories & methods ● Comparative cultural metrics ● Structural comparison <p>Many types of organizations virtually and physically interact and communicate with publics and/or audiences outside their own country of origin to build a dynamic set of relationships. Global PR as a sub-discipline of PR in general is a particularly special dimension of the field. During this lecture students will learn the major aspects of global PR, recognize its difference in comparison with domestic practice. Lecture also highlights the main aspects of intercultural communication.</p>

Seminar 9	This seminar is about an active discussion about top Global PR practices, tools and techniques. Over the class students debate top cases and strategies of the PR practitioners across the globe. Students are asked to prepare brief presentations highlighting the differences of PR in contrasting cultures in accordance with given materials.
Lecture 10	Global PR and Public affairs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defining the difference between lobbying, advocacy and government relations <p>Lecture highlights essentials GR, provides the clarification of terms and techniques used in the field to maintain relations with governmental structures worldwide.</p>
Seminar 10	Final project presentations Teams each of 5-6 students select a multinational company which has recently launched a public campaign in one or more foreign countries. The key focus of the task to provide a solid explanation of the strengths and weaknesses of PR campaign using theoretical frameworks and practical tips on PR discussed in the class.

Course materials

Main readings and course textbooks:

The Public Relations Handbook, 2nd ed. (2001) by Alison Theaker, Routledge; PDF copy available

Global Public Relations: Spanning Borders, Spanning Cultures by Alan R. Freitag; PDFcopy available

Public Relations and Social Theory: Key Figures and Concepts (2007) by Øyvind Ihlen, Routledge Communication Series; PDF copy available

Online resources:

About PR in general: <https://apps.prsa.org/AboutPRSA/PublicRelationsDefined/>

Readings on Global PR: <http://www.instituteforpr.org/global-public-relations/>

Additional readings:

Broom, G., Casey, S., & Ritchey, J. (2000). Toward a concept and theory of organization–public relationships: An update. In J. A. Ledingham & S. D. Bruning (Eds.),

Public relations as relationship management: A relational approach to public relations (pp. 3–22). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

Grade breakdown

In-class participation 30%

In-class essay 10%

Managing online reputation writing log 10%

Crisis communication case 10%

Final project 20%

Final exam 20%

The strength of this course hinges, in large part, on the ability to have a constructive dialogue and learn from each other. Thus, active participation in the discussion is essential. You are expected to attend class, read the course materials, participate meaningfully in classroom activities, contribute to discussions, pose questions, and complete additional tasks as assigned.

Diversity Statement:

It is vital that you make thoughtful language choices in your speaking, writing, and interactions. Avoid any language or discourse that could be considered profane, racist, sexist, ageist, homophobic, and/or disrespectful to those with special needs.

Academic Integrity Statement:

Academic integrity is crucial in this and other courses. The use of another person's words, organization, or ideas (including published and unpublished materials) without crediting that person at the time of use is plagiarism and will not be tolerated. It will result in automatic failure of this course and will be reported to the Dean of Students Office. Be sure to give credit where credit is due – properly cite other people's published work, ideas, and materials. Do Not Cut-and-Paste information/text from the Internet—this is plagiarism and illegal.

Examples of academic dishonesty:

- Submitting a paper written by someone else;
- Submitting a paper that has already been submitted to another class; and
- Asking someone else to write a paper submitting it