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**National Research University Higher School of Economics  
School of World Economy and International Affairs**



**Undergraduate Programme  
in International Relations**  
(Parallel Degree from HSE and UoL)

**Introduction to Public Relations**

**Course Syllabus**  
(ex. Fall 2019)

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Department of Integrated Communication HSE

# Name of the Course

## Course Syllabus

### Course Description

#### Abstract

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 Communication theory. 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.

#### Aims and Objectives

The course aims to:

1. To create an understanding of the essence of PR as a practical discipline within the organization;
2. To get familiar with major theories in communication field, related to PR, including theories of micro-, meta- and macro level;
3. To learn and apply modern tools and techniques in PR campaign research;
4. To develop skills necessary for strategic planning in PR.

#### Learning Outcomes

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

1. To be aware of functions, strategies and particular techniques of PR.
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, analyse, and discuss actual case studies and/or strategic communication and PR 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.

#### Methods of Instruction

Lectures and seminars, home readings, group and individual assignments. All introduced below in the lesson plan.

## Office hours:

Scheduled meetings upon a request.

## Grading System

The total number of points to be received during this class is 170: 15 points for each seminar, 20 points for an essay, 30 points for final project and 30 points for final test. Points will be transferred to the 10<sup>th</sup> scale system in a following way:

70-89 points – 4 (satisfactory)  
90-114 points – 5 (satisfactory)  
115-129 points – 6 (good)  
129-139 points – 7 (good)  
140-148 points - 8 (excellent)  
149-159 points – 9 (excellent)  
160-170 points – 10 (excellent)

Students accumulated 122-134 points during the course are dismissed from the final exam and gain the final grade of 9 automatically. Students accumulated 135-140 points during the course are dismissed from the final exam and gain the final grade of 10 automatically. All the other students are obligated to take an exam.

Students accumulated less than 50 points during the course are dismissed from the final tests and should pass an exam with commission and answer 3 questions out of the pool of 20 on topics relevant to the course program. The grade for these students will be assigned by commission.

## Examination Type

Students are taking written final test in the end of the course. The test consists of 50 open and closed questions related to the topics of seminars.

## Main Readings

### **Main readings and course textbooks (all available at library.hse.ru for partial and full temporary download):**

Smith, Ronald D. *Becoming a Public Relations Writer : Strategic Writing for Emerging and Established Media*, 5th Edition

ProQuest Ebook

Central: <http://proxylibrary.hse.ru:2048/login?url=https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/hselibrary-ebooks/detail.action?docID=4626269>

Smith, Ronald D. *Strategic Planning for Public Relations*

ProQuest Ebook

Central: <http://proxylibrary.hse.ru:2048/login?url=https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/hselibrary-ebooks/detail.action?docID=4862851>

Stacks, Don W. *Primer of Public Relations Research*, 3rd Edition

ProQuest Ebook

Central: <http://proxylibrary.hse.ru:2048/login?url=https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/hselibrary-ebooks/detail.action?docID=4715214>

**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.

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

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

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

**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 be reported to the 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.

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

## Course Plan

	<b>Lesson topic, planned activities and lesson outcomes and evaluation criterion</b>
<b>Lecture 1</b>	<p><b>Defining Public Relations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Brief history of PR as profession (from ‘hype’ PR to relationship building)</li> <li>● 4 models of Public Relations</li> <li>● Excellence theory</li> <li>● Key definitions and classifications of PR: reactive/proactive, spin, PR skills and scope, etc.</li> <li>● Fully functioning society theory</li> </ul> <p>First lecture is devoted to 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> <p><b>Homework 1:</b> Look for the cases in PR, that show different perspectives on the way this practice influences and challenges the society. Reading a chapter from Smith, Ronald D. Strategic Planning for Public Relations.</p>
<b>Seminar 1</b>	<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> <p><b>Evaluation and grading</b></p> <p>Each student may earn up to 15 points for participation in the discussion and during the debate. 3 points are received upon the warm-up group discussion on the main issues, directions and understanding of PR as a discipline and profession. Later on, students are expected to break into groups for 3 rounds of debate. The rest of 12 points is split between students’ peer-assessment (6 points) and instructors’ (6 points) for the debate of 3 rounds. First round arguments pro and contra PR as an industry advantage bringing the financial profit. Second is devoted to organizational issues (in crisis communication for example). Third – on societal function of PR, being the one challenging the public sphere, clarifying values, etc. In the end students have a group discussion summarising the role of PR as a management function.</p> <p>For successful results in the debate students are expected to provide solid arguments based on real cases and broader generalizations, linked to the theory. Evaluation criteria will be provided prior the class.</p>

<p><b>Lecture 2</b></p>	<p><b>Strategic communication and the role of PR</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Steps of building strategic communication</li> <li>● Managing corporate identity through corporate communication</li> <li>● Stakeholder communication</li> <li>● Corporate social responsibility</li> </ul> <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>
<p><b>Seminar 2</b></p>	<p>During this class, students try to prepare a brief of PR campaign based on the strategic communication lecture materials. This assignment is designed to culminate students' learning in this class. Students assume they are working for a public relations agency charged with creating a public relations campaign, which must include a realistic strategy and communicative goals for a real-life organization's product, service or NGO issue/cause. Each group must build a campaign in accordance with one of the models of public relations. Therefore, to broaden the knowledge of various PR functions, students may choose one of the dimensions of PR activities: corporate PR, branding PR activities, personal PR.</p> <p>A campaign proposal for the client must include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Executive Summary</li> <li>(2) Situation Analysis</li> <li>(3) Target Audience and key stakeholders</li> <li>(4) Goal</li> <li>(5) Objectives</li> <li>(6) Key Messages</li> <li>(7) Strategies</li> <li>(8) Tactics</li> <li>(9) Risk Analysis NO TIME</li> <li>(10) Budget NO TIME</li> <li>(11) Monitoring and evaluating NO TIME</li> </ol> <p>Students should illustrate good knowledge of public relations theories and how they can be applied. Critical skills in planning and execution of a public relations campaign also must be showed.</p> <p><b>Evaluation and grading</b></p> <p>Students may receive up to 15 points for group presentations. Please, manage the timing – 40 min for preparation and 40 min for group presentations. Students get up to 3 extra points for active participation in discussion and questions.</p>

<p><b>Lecture 3</b></p>	<p><b>Research in PR</b>  This lecture outlines key strategies and the importance of the research in PR and strategic communication. Students are expected to revise well-known research methods used in the general practice, such as surveys, focus-groups, content-analysis. After the lecture students are able to correspond the research methods with needs and requests of PR function within the organization.</p> <p><b>Homework:</b> To be done in pairs or groups of 3-4 people. Read an article about the relationship management theory (<a href="https://www.instituteforpr.org/wp-content/uploads/Guidelines_Measuring_Relationships.pdf">https://www.instituteforpr.org/wp-content/uploads/Guidelines_Measuring_Relationships.pdf</a> ). Based on the survey on the page 28 of the article, conduct a research about consumers' relationships with any well-known company. Analyse and interpret the results. What do the results mean for the company? What practical recommendation can you give to the company? Prepare an executive summary for the HQ of your organization. Make sure your presentation takes no longer than 5 min and you have the handouts.</p> <p>Students also can develop their own research program and conduct content analysis of any organization media presence, etc. To be confirmed with the course instructor.</p>
<p><b>Seminar 3</b></p>	<p>Students are presenting the results of their research. For this task, each group can earn up to 15 points, based on the presentation criteria evaluation. Last 5 minutes of the class are devoted to the discussion of the role of research in PR.</p>
<p><b>Lecture 4</b></p>	<p><b>Tools and means of PR</b>  Now students are familiar with the most important cornerstones of PR and this lecture is taking them closer to the means of strategic communication. During this lecture, we discuss such tools as press releases, communication strategies, developing practices for the creative collaborations.</p> <p><b>Homework:</b> no homework is assigned for this class.</p>
<p><b>Seminar 4</b></p>	<p><b>Press-release writing workshop</b>  During this class students are working in pairs (or groups) and writing own press-releases which are evaluated by means of peer- and instructors assessment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sharpening the correct style and voice</li> <li>Identification of most common mistakes</li> <li>Looking for the value of the message</li> <li>Fitting up to social media</li> <li>Trying it on SEO</li> <li>Thinking about the visuals</li> </ul> <p><b>Evaluation and grading</b></p> <p>For this seminar students receive 15 points.</p>

**Lecture 5****Managing relations with media:**

- Relationship management theory
- Functional perspective on PR
- Media relations
- New media and online reputation
- Fake news phenomenon

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.

**Homework:** Here we introduce of the writing tasks during this course, which will be an essay. It will be really great to learn some of first-hand experience directly from the PR practitioner. I also ask you to reflect on theoretical grounds you've learned (for example, excellence theory) and overall strategic communication practices. You are expected to use examples from the interview to provide arguments for your thoughts and findings. Your paper must include:

- Introduction - Explain your purpose in the paper and what you are covering in the paper.
- Explanation of the Elements of the Theory - You do not need to explain the entire theory, but you need to include an explanation of the specific parts of the theory that you are using in the paper.
- Description of the Person Interviewed and the Public Relations Activities/Responsibilities of the person.
- Reflection on PR profession in Russia - In this section you will use examples from your interview to illustrate special features and challenges of the job.
- Conclusion – Summarize what you learned about the public relations profession in this assignment.

Here are the instructions to conduct the interview [https://drive.google.com/open?id=1pDCZzLiTGg7cXd0bctpd0Yw9t5A\\_AttC](https://drive.google.com/open?id=1pDCZzLiTGg7cXd0bctpd0Yw9t5A_AttC)

Here is an article to help you <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Yz6A6kormYuyEfGUhTwu8qHj499QhVNw/view?usp=sharing>

The extended essay criterion is provided below. Total number of points for this assignment is 30.

**Seminar 5****Managing online reputation writing log**

The class is built to conduct an analysis of online presence of the company and its 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.

The class finalises with the short presentation upon which students may earn up to



	15 points.
<b>Lecture 6</b>	<p><b>Crisis communication and PR practice</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Situational crisis communication theory</li> </ul> <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 applied aspects of crisis communication and prepares for the further seminar.</p>
<b>Seminar 6</b>	<p><b>In class group work: crisis communication case</b></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. 15 points for this class.</p>
<b>Seminar 7</b>	<p><b>Global PR: practicing Public Relations in intercultural context</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Theories &amp; methods</li> <li>• Comparative cultural metrics</li> <li>• Structural comparison</li> </ul> <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>
<b>Seminar 10</b>	<p><b>Final project presentations</b></p> <p>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.</p> <p>Alternatively, students are preparing a campaign of an organization, bringing its business to the new market.</p> <p>The guidelines for the final project can be found below. The assignment is worth 30 points in total.</p>

## Essay grading

Any borrowed pieces of information without a proper citation are considered as plagiarism and your grade would be 0 points.

Your essay must have 3 main parts, 1000-1200 words:

- Introduction
- Main Body
- Conclusion

### EVALUATION CRITERION:

Introduction should:

- Contain a definition of the key concepts and state the essay problem
- Introduce the structure of the essay (e.g. XYZ dimensions)

Main body should:

- Contain all the points mentioned in introduction
- Have statement-argument-conclusion structure for each argument
- Have references to academic writings to support authors opinion
- Contain the reference to theoretical background: brief description and application of relevant theory
- Contain facts beyond the common knowledge
- Have critical evaluation of the given problem instead of pure description
- Be relevant to the essay problem

Conclusion should:

- Restate the main problem of the essay
- Include the final statement (overall conclusion)
- Be free of new information (not mentioned above)

Language should:

- Be free from language mistakes (grammar, vocabulary, punctuation)
- Be free from emotive language, publicist style
- Comply with academic standards (huge, pretty much, thing, people)
- Avoid repetition

Structure should:

- Be logical and consequent
- Theoretical grounds should be linked to the cases presented and described

## GRADING

Introduction - 3 points

Main Body – 10 points

Conclusion – 3 points

Language – 2 points

Structure – 2 points

Total of 20 points.

### **Final group project guidelines**

The purpose of the project is to document and analyze global public relations practices by any type of corporation/organization (i.e., private, governmental, non-governmental, not-for-profit, activist).

The main objective is to understand how these corporations or organizations are addressing international, global, or intercultural issues in their communications efforts. As well, to provide a clarification of the way how such practices are being adapted due to the various cultural environments.

The presentation should be prepared by groups of 5-6 students (no more than 5 presentations from one group). Timing for the presentation is 12 min + 3 min for Q&A.

The outline is the following:

#### 1. Situation analysis

- Problem, issue or opportunity faced by the organization
- Internal factors: mission, vision, and values; brief background of the organization
- External factors: brief overview of the history, political, economic, cultural and media environment as well as government regulations of the host country
- Describe Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions in relationship to this campaign

#### 2. Primary Stakeholders (and publics)

- Description of affected or involved primary and secondary publics/audiences
- If any communication/negotiation with officials is required to run such campaign, please think through what are the strategies (after the lecture on GR)
- Examination of the appropriate and unique approaches taken to reach the specified target audiences

#### 3. Overview of the Campaign

- Campaign theme as well as its key and supporting messages
- Goals, objectives, strategies, and tactics (keep in mind everything should be SMART)
- Timetable and budget (if information is available)
- What kind of PR is that: two-way symmetrical or not? Do publics get a chance to provide organization with the feedback? If yes, then how?

#### 4. Implementation/use of messages and communication tools

- Analysis of web pages; electronic/interactive media kit (i.e., news releases, photographs, glossaries, fact sheets, FAQs, executive profiles, videos); brochures; other online resources (e.g., blogs, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.); other print (e.g., posters, fliers), audiovisual, or online publications (e.g., newsletter, magazine); events or trade show booth; and other promotional materials and elements

Please outline the whole range of the tools used by PR practitioners to maintain this campaign. Support your presentation with visuals.

- Environmental, current events and other influences that affect how public relations is practiced in the host country and how these aspects are managed to facilitate reaching target audiences.

- Explanation of how the Circuit of Culture is demonstrated in this campaign. (You will find it out through the following lecture)

#### 5. Evaluation – analysis, reactions, critique, recommendations:

- Does company manage to run the dialogue with their publics? How is it activated? (You will learn more on evaluation techniques through the following lecture)

I do want your opinion here and all the possible ways to enhance the communication strategy in the given case.

Each point of the analysis is worth 6 points. The total number of points to receive for this task is 30.

You will be asked to run the peer evaluation for this task to maintain the contribution of each member to the group activity. For that purposes, I ask you to split 100% of involvement between each member of the team and send it to me via email.

