MSc/Dip Strategic Public Relations and Communication Management

MSc Strategic Public Relations
(Double Degree with Lund University)

MSc Strategic Communication and Public Relations
(Joint Degree with Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona)

PREP62 Public Relations and Public Communications: Theories and Contexts

Module Outline

Academic Year 2013-14
Semester 1
MODULE COORDINATOR AND SEMINAR LEADER

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Telephone: (01786 46)6225
Room: J9, Pathfoot Building
Office hours: Tuesday, 12.00 – 14.00

MODULE AIMS

The module aims to provide an overview of the key public relations and communication theories, and thus provide a conceptual introduction to the discipline of public relations and public communications.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

On completion of this module students will:

- be familiar with the range and scope of theoretical literature in the field and have an understanding of the key paradigms and approaches in the field;

- understand the key theoretical frameworks, main concepts and their disciplinary origins and sources;

- be able to apply critical theories, rhetorical theories, social theories, postmodernism;

- understand organisational issues and requirements and their implications for societal and global impacts;

- understand the epistemologies underpinning research paradigms and their influence upon public relations theory development.

MODULE CONTENT

This module has an academic emphasis and explores communication and social theories, concepts and principles required for advanced understanding of public relations as a societal practice. It adopts broader scientific and sociological perspectives on communication and public relations and thoroughly examines their implications for societal and global impacts. It explores theoretical debates and epistemologies underpinning research paradigms and their influence upon public relations theory development.

The indicative syllabus includes the following theoretical traditions, which are discussed in relation to public relations and public communications:

- Social theory and sociology of public relations
- Social constructivism
- Symbolic interactionism and relationship management
- Framing
- Networking, community and social capital
- Postmodernism
- Politics, subpolitics and democratic processes
- Social responsibility, risk, legitimacy, trust and reflection
- Discourse analysis and discourse ethics
- Social psychology: attitudes, behaviour, cognitive theories
- Theories of influence, propaganda and persuasion
- Contemporary studies and challenges in public relations and public communications

**TEACHING**

The learning and teaching process includes readings, lectures, workshops, discussions, presentations, individual research and self-study.

Students will attend weekly lectures and seminars in which they will gain deeper understanding of theoretical frameworks and discuss the various set of readings and core texts. Lectures will provide insights into theoretical literature. Seminars will include workshops, discussions, applications and presentations of the theoretical concepts and their relevance to contemporary organisational practice.

**ASSESSMENT**

Assessment of this module consists of:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of assignment</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
<th>Words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Timed assignment</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>Max. 2 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Academic essay</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>1,800 words (+/- 5%)</td>
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</tbody>
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This module outline should be read alongside the assignment briefs, which include the assessment criteria. These will be issued and discussed as indicated in the schedule of work.

**Assessment Criteria**

To be provided in the assignment brief.

**Distribution Date**

Your assignment briefs will be distributed on 1 October 2013.

**Submission Date and Place**

Your timed assignment is due on **Tuesday, 29 October 2013** and is to be submitted to the module coordinator after the assessment time.
Your essay is due on **Wednesday, 4 December 2013 by midday**. Electronic versions must be submitted via the digital assessment submission facility in Succeed or in case of technical difficulties emailed to Jane Cambell (jane.campbell@stir.ac.uk). Please do not email the assignments to the module coordinator (marking at the University of Stirling is anonymous).

**Feedback**

You will receive detailed written feedback on your assessments usually within 20 working days of submission. You will also receive direct verbal feedback and have the opportunity to attend separate feedback sessions.

**MODULE PASS REQUIREMENTS**

Students must attempt all elements of assessment and obtain an overall pass grade to successfully complete the module.

**TIMETABLE AND OUTLINE OF WEEKLY SESSIONS**

Lectures will be on Tuesdays, 10.00 – 12.00 in Cottrell C.2B86.
Seminars will be on Tuesdays, 14.00 – 17.00 in Pathfoot P.D1 (only weeks 8 – 12 as indicated in the outline of weekly sessions below).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date w/c</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Preparation</th>
<th>Seminar</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>9/9 Introduction to the module: Public relations as an academic discipline</td>
<td>Ihlen et al. Ch. 1 L’Etang, Ch. 1, 2</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>16/9 Origins of public relations theory: Management perspective, Excellence paradigm and system theory</td>
<td>Heath, Ch. 3, 19 Cutlip et al., Part I L’Etang, Ch. 8 L’Etang &amp; Pieczka, Ch. 17 Grunig et al., Ch. 1, 5, 11,12</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>23/9 Social constructivism and public relations</td>
<td>Ihlen et al., Ch. 3 Heath, Ch. 11 Berger and Luckmann (optional)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>30/9 Framing paradigm and public relations: Communication practitioners as frame doctors? Assignment briefs issued</td>
<td>Ihlen et al., Ch. 7 Goffman (optional)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Subject to change as/when required. Please check Succeed regularly for updates.
2 Please see the Journal Articles section of the Reading List below for additional readings.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading List</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 5    | 7/10  | Applying symbolic interactionism and impression management to public relations and relationship management | L’Etang & Pieczka Ch. 16  
Blumer, Ch. 1, 3  
Ledingham & Bruning, Ch. 1, 3 | N/A                         |
| 6    | 14/10 | Public relations, networking and social capital                       | Ihlen et al., Ch. 9, 12                                                      | N/A                         |
| 7    |       | **Mid-semester break**                                               |                                                                              |                             |
| 8    | 28/10 | Societal implications of public relations: public opinion, public, the public sphere and democracy | Ihlen et al., Ch. 8, 10, 11  
Habermas, Ch. 2, 5, 7  
Heath, Ch. 7  
L’Etang, Ch. 5  
L’Etang & Pieczka, Ch. 7, 22 | Timed assignment               |
| 9    | 4/11  | Rhetorical and discursive approaches to public relations             | Ihlen et al., Ch. 5  
L’Etang and Pieczka, Ch. 18  
Heath et al., Ch. 1, 5  
Heath, Ch. 4 | Timed assignment  
feedback  
Paper presentations |
| 10   | 11/11 | Social psychology and public relations: attitudes, behaviour and theories of persuasion | Perloff, Ch. 2  
Jowett & O’Donnell, Ch. 1  
O’Keefe, Ch. 4, 6  
Petty & Cacioppo Ch. 9 | Paper presentations           |
| 11   | 18/11 | Power, propaganda, persuasion and social influence theories          | L’Etang & Pieczka, Ch. 1, 2  
Perloff, Ch. 1  
Dillard & Pfau, Ch. 6, 9 | Paper presentations           |
| 12   | 25/11 | Public relations, legitimacy, risk, crisis, reputation and CSR in postmodernity | Ihlen et al., Ch 2, 6, 15  
Heath, Ch. 31, 32, 33, 39  
L’Etang & Pieczka, Ch. 21 | Paper presentations  
Module feedback and reflection |

**READING LIST**

**Core Module Texts (recommended for purchase)**


Link to eBook: https://www.dawsonera.com/abstract/9780203883235


Available in the [Library Catalogue](#)

Available in the [Library Catalogue](http://stir.eblib.com/patron/FullRecord.aspx?p=668577&echo=1&userid=xAGd6B296uVo3xo3eXcP09vy2sE%3d&tstamp=1378822296&id=c93ea9b11c6ec24a067def81af5ae190671302a&extsrc=shib-pid&patrontype=member%40stir.ac.uk)

#### Key Books


Link to eBook:

http://stir.eblib.com/patron/FullRecord.aspx?p=668577&echo=1&userid=xAGd6B296uVo3xo3eXcP09vy2sE%3d&tstamp=1378822296&id=c93ea9b11c6ec24a067def81af5ae190671302a&extsrc=shib-pid&patrontype=member%40stir.ac.uk


Not available in the library yet.

Journal articles


**Journals**

*Communication Theory*
*Corporate Communications*
*International Journal of Strategic Communication*
*Journal of Communication*
*Journal of Communication Management*
*Journal of Public Relations Research*
*Media, Culture & Society*
*Public Relations Inquiry*
*Public Relations Quarterly*
*Public Relations Review*

**Websites**

CIPR Chartered Institute Public Relations, UK [online]. Available at: [http://www.cipr.co.uk/](http://www.cipr.co.uk/) [Accessed: 2 September 2013]

European Communication Research and Education Association. [online]. Available at: [www.ecrea.eu](http://www.ecrea.eu) [Accessed: 2 September 2013]


Public Relations Society of America, NY [online]. Available at: [http://www.prsa.org](http://www.prsa.org) [Accessed: 2 September 2013]