

MSc Strategic Communication and Public Relations

Public Affairs and Advocacy (31792)

Term:	2 nd
Number of ECTS:	5 ECTS
Number of hours:	125 hours
Language:	English
Instructor:	Núria Almiron

1. Course objectives

There is not a universal definition for public affairs. This is why their function is usually offered instead: the purpose of public affairs is to influence public policy and resource allocation decisions. At roots, public affairs are about the political influence. Therefore, public affairs are also about the public administration, public interest, leadership, democracy, ethics, persuasion, power and social values.

The principal two arms of public affairs are lobbying (government relations) and corporate responsibility (community relations)—although the list of activities encompassed by public affairs also include issues management, media relations, stakeholder relations, or crisis management, amongst others. This course focuses on the former—lobbying (government relations) and advocacy. Students will be introduced to Public Affairs and Advocacy as academic and practical disciplines.

2. Course outline

PART 1: Public Affairs' Theory

I. Introduction to public affairs

Public affairs in perspective. The three components of public affairs: communications, government relations, and public issues management.

II. Public affairs as a discipline

Trends and traditions. About the setting of an academic and practical discipline. What is in public affairs? Is public affairs always public affairs?

PART 2: Lobbying in Practice

III. Advocacy processes and strategies

The three key participant groups in lobbying processes: government, interests groups, and media.

The common elements of successful advocacy campaigns.

IV. Case studies

Practical approaches on strategies, narratives and advocacy. Cases for discussion and research may include topics on:

- Politics
- Business & Finance
- Human rights & Social justice
- Ecology & Environment

3. Assessment

Course assessment will be attained by the means of three different elements: attendance to class presentations and seminars as well as participation in public discussions with the professor (students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the assigned readings), the development of a public affairs project and an oral presentation of it before the classmates.

Each activity will account for the following grades:

- Lectures and seminars attendance and participation: 35%
- Presentation of the Public Affairs project research: 15%
- Advocacy project research: 50%

4. Bibliography and teaching resources

Readings for Part 1

Fleisher, Craig (2012). Anniversary retrospective, perspective and prospective of corporate public affairs: moving from the 2000+ PA Model toward Public Affairs 2.0. *Journal of Public Affairs*, 12(1): 4–11.

Getz, Kathleen A. (2002). Public affairs and political strategy: Theoretical foundations. *Journal of Public Affairs*, 1(4) & 2(1):305-329.

McGrath, Conor; Moss, Danny; Harrys, Phil (2010). The evolving discipline of public affairs. *Journal of Public Affairs*, 10: 335-352.

Schendelen, Rinus van (2012). New trends of public affairs management at the EU level. *Journal of Public Affairs*, 12(1):39-46.

Reading for Part 2:

Libby, Pat & Associates (2012). *The Lobbying Strategy Handbook. 10 Steps to Advancing any cause effectively*. London: Sage.

Academic journals

Journal of Public Affairs, (Johan Willey and Sons, US) 2001-

Philosophy and Public Affairs (Princeton University Press, US), 1971-

Institute of Public Affairs Review (Institute of Public Affairs, Australia), 1997-

Rhetoric and Public Affairs (Michigan State University Press, US), 1998-

Perspectives in Public Affairs (Arizona State University, US), 2004-2009

5. Methodology

The course will consist on the combination of:

- General and theoretical class presentations by the professor
- Seminars in which readings and case of studies will be discussed
- Personal enquiry, individual research and readings
- Personal tutoring