



**UNIVERSITY OF
STIRLING**

School of Arts and Humanities
Division of Communications, Media and Culture

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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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:

	Type of assignment	Weighting	Words
1	Timed assignment	40%	Max. 2 hours
2	Academic essay	60%	1,800 words (+/- 5%)

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 SESSIONS¹

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).

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

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.

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	<i>Mid-semester break</i>			
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)

Ihlen O., Fredrikson M. & van Ruler B. (Eds.) (2009). *Social Theory and Public Relations: Key Figures and Concepts*. New York: Rutledge.

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

L'Etang, J. (2008). *Public relations: Concepts practice and critique*. London: Sage.

Available in the [Library Catalogue](#)

L'Etang, J., & Pieczka, M. (2006). *Public Relations: Critical debates and contemporary practice*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
Available in the [Library Catalogue](#)

Key Books

Berger, P. L. & Luckmann, T. (1967). *The social construction of reality*. New York: Longman.

Bettinghaus, E. P. & Cody, M. J. (1994). *Persuasive Communication*. New York, NY: Holt, Rhinehart and Winston.

Blumer, H. (1986). *Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press.

Coombs, T. & Holladay, S. (2007). *It's not just PR: Public relations in society*. Malden, MA London: Blackwell.

Cornelissen, J. (2004). *Corporate communications: Theory and practice*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Curtin, P. A. & Gaither, T. K. (2007). *International public relations: Negotiating culture, identity and power*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Cutlip S.M., Center, A.H. & Broom, G.M. (2006). *Effective Public Relations* (9th ed.). Prentice Hall.

Dillard, J. P. and M. Pfau (Eds.) (2002). *The persuasion handbook: Developments in theory and practice*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Dozier, D. M., Grunig, L.A. & Grunig, J.E. (1995). *Manager's guide to excellence in public relations and communication management*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Edwards, L. & Hodges, C. (Eds.) (2011) *Public relations, society & culture*. London: Routledge.

Link to eBook:

http://stir.eblib.com/patron/FullRecord.aspx?p=668577&echo=1&userid=xAGd6B296uVo3xo3eXcP09vy2sE%3d&tstamp=1378822296&id=c93eae9b11c6ec24a067def81af5ae190671302a&extsrc=shib_pid&patrontype=member%40stir.ac.uk

Gass, R. H. & Seiter, J.S. (2011). *Persuasion, social influence and compliance gaining* (4th ed.). London: Pearson.

Goffman, E. (1959). *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. New York: Anchor Books.

Goffman, E. (1974). *Frame analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Grunig, J. E., Dozier, D. M., Ehling, W. P., Grunig, L. A., Repper, F. C. & White, J. (Eds.) (1992). *Excellence in public relations and communication management*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Hillsdale, NJ.

Habermas, J. (2003). *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

Heath, R. L. (2010). *The Sage Handbook of public relations*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Heath, R. L., Toth, E. L. & Waymer, D. (Eds.) (2009). *Rhetorical and Critical Approaches to Public Relations II*. Routledge: New York.

Johnson-Cartee, K. S. (2005). *News Narratives and News Framing: Constructing Political Reality*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.

Jowett, G. S. & O'Donnell, V. (1992). *Propaganda and Persuasion* (2nd ed.). Sage, Newbury Park, London, New Delhi.

Ledingham, J. A. & Bruning, S.D. (Eds.) (2000). *Public relations as relationship management: A relational approach to the study and practice of public relations*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

L'Etang, J. (2004). *Public Relations in Britain: A History of Professional Practice in the Twentieth Century*. Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

L'Etang, J. & Pieczka, M. (Eds.) (1996). *Critical perspectives in public relations*. London: International Thomson Business Press.

May, S., Cheney, G. & Roper, J. (2007). *The debate over corporate social responsibility*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Mayhew, L. H. (1997). *The New Public: Professional communication and the means of social influence*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

McKie, D. & Munshi, D. (2007). *Reconfiguring public relations: equity, ecology and enterprise*. London: Routledge.

Link to eBook: <http://stir.eblib.com/patron/FullRecord.aspx?p=308795>

Moss, D. & DeSanto, B. (2011). *Public Relations: A Managerial Perspective*. London: Sage.
Not available in the library yet.

Moss, D., Verčič, D. & Warnaby, G. (Eds.) (2003). *Perspectives on Public Relations Research*. London, New York: Routledge.

O'Keefe, D. (2002). *Persuasion* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Perloff, R.M. (1993). *The dynamics of persuasion*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Pratkanis, A. & Aronson, E. (1991). *Age of Propaganda: The Everyday Use and Abuse of Persuasion*. New York: W. H. Freeman.

Splichal, S. (1999). *Public Opinion: Developments and Controversies in the Twentieth Century*. Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers.

Splichal, S. (Ed.) (2001). *Public opinion and democracy: vox populi - vox dei?* Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.

Sriramesh, K. & Verčič, D. (Eds.) (2009). *The global public relations handbook*. London: Routledge.
Link to eBook: <https://www.dawsonera.com/abstract/9780203889374>

Toth, E. (Ed.) (2007). *The future of excellence in public relations and communication management*. Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
Link to eBook: <http://stir.eblib.com/patron/FullRecord.aspx?p=425600>

Verčič, D., van Ruler, B. & Tkalac Verčič, A. (Eds.) (2008). *Public Relations Metrics: Research and Evaluation*. London: Routledge.

Zerfuss, A., van Ruler, B. & Sriramesh, K. (Eds.) (2008). *Public Relations Research: European and International Perspectives and Innovations*. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.
Not available in the library yet.

Journal articles

Bentele, G. & Wehmeier, S. (2007). Applying sociology to public relations: a commentary. *Public Relations Review*, 33, 294–300.

Berger, B. (2005). Power over, power with, and power to relations: critical reflections on public relations, the dominant coalition, and activism. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 17(1), 5–28.

Blomback, A. & Brunninge, O. (2009). Corporate identity manifested through historical references. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 14(4), 404–419.

Bowen, S. (2004). Expansion of ethics as the tenth generic principle of public relations excellence: a Kantian theory and model for managing ethical issues. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 16(1), 65–92.

Bowen, S. (2008). A state of neglect: public relations as “corporate conscience” or ethics counsel. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 20(3), 271–296.

Brown, R. (2006). Myth of symmetry: public relations as cultural styles. *Public Relations Review*, 32, 206–212.

Bruning, S. & Ledingham, J. (1999). Relationships between organizations and publics: development of a multi-dimensional organization–public relationship scale. *Public Relations Review*, 25(2), 157–170.

Burkhart, R. (2007). On Jurgen Habermas and public relations. *Public Relations Review*, 33, 249–254.

Christensen, L., Fuat Firat, A. & Cornelissen, J. (2009). New tensions and challenges in integrated communications. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 14(2), 207–219.

Clark, C. (2000). Differences between public relations and corporate social responsibility: an analysis. *Public Relations Review*, 26(3), 363–380.

Cornelissen, J. (2000). Toward an understanding of the use of academic theories in public relations practice. *Public Relations Review*, 26(3), 318–326.

Dozier, D. & Lauzen, M. (2000). Liberating the intellectual domain from the practice: public relations, activism, and the role of the scholar. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 12(1), 3–22.

Edwards, L. (2006). Rethinking power in public relations. *Public Relations Review*, 32(3), 229–231.

Edwards, L. (2009). Symbolic power and public relations practice: locating individual practitioners in their social context. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 21(3), 251–272.

- Ferguson, M. (1984). Building theory in public relations: inter-organizational relationships as a public relations paradigm. Invited paper presented to Public Relations Division, Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication Annual Convention, August, 1984.
- Gower, K. (2006). Public relations research at the crossroads. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 18(2), 177–190.
- Grunig, J. (2006). Furnishing the ediface: ongoing research on public relations as a strategic management function. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 18(2), 151–176.
- Heath, R. (2000). A rhetorical perspective on the values of public relations: crossroads and pathways toward concurrence. *Journal of public relations research*, 12(1), 69–91.
- Heath, R., Lee, J. & Ni, L. (2009). Crisis and risk approaches to emergency planning and communication the role of similarity and sensitivity. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 21(2), 123–141.
- Holtzhausen, D. (2000). Postmodern values in public relations. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 12(1), 93–114.
- Holtzhausen, D. & Voto, R. (2002). Resistance from the margins: the postmodern public relations practitioner as organizational activist. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 14(1), 57–84.
- Hoy, P., Raaz, O. & Wehmeier, S. (2007). From facts to stories or from stories to facts? Analyzing public relations history in public relations textbooks. *Public Relations Review*, 33, 191–200.
- Hung, C. J. F. (2005). Exploring types of organization-public relationships and their implications for relationship management in public relations. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 17, 393–426.
- Hutton, J. (1999). The definition, dimensions, and domain of public relations. *Public Relations Review*, 25(3), 199–214.
- Ihlen, Ø. (2005). The power of social capital: adapting Bourdieu to the study of public relations. *Public Relations Review*, 31(4), 492–496
- Ihlen, Ø. (2007). Building on Bourdieu: a sociological grasp of public relations. *Public Relations Review*, 33, 269–274.
- Ihlen, Ø. (2008). Mapping the environment for corporate social responsibility: stakeholders, publics and the public sphere. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 13(2), 135–146.
- Ihlen, Ø. & van Ruler, B. (2007). How public relations works: theoretical roots and public relations perspectives. *Public Relations Review*, 33, 243–248.
- Ihlen, Ø., & Verhoeven, P. (2012). A public relations identity for the 2010s. *Public Relations Inquiry*, 1(2), 159–176.
- Jensen, I. (2001). Public relations and emerging functions of the public sphere: an analytical framework. *Journal of Communication Management*, 6(2), 133–147.
- Johansson, C. (2007). Goffman's sociology: an inspiring resource for developing public relations theory. *Public Relations Review*, 33, 275–280.
- Kelly, K., Laskin, A. & Rosenstein, G. (2010). Investor relations: two-way symmetrical practice. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 22(2), 182–208

- Kent, M. & Taylor, M. (2002). Toward a dialogic theory of public relations. *Public Relations Review*, 28(1), 21–37.
- Kent, M. & Taylor, M. (2007). Beyond excellence: extending the generic approach to international public relations: the case of Bosnia. *Public Relations Review*, 33(1), 10–20.
- Kernstock, J. & Brexendorf, T. (2009). Implications of Habermas’s “theory of communicative action” for corporate brand management. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 14(4), 389–403.
- Kiouis, S., Popescu, C. & Mitrook, M. (2010). Understanding influence on corporate reputation: an examination of public relations efforts, media coverage, public opinion, and financial performance from an agenda-building and agenda-setting perspective. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 19(2), 147–165
- Laskin, A. (2009). The evolution of models of public relations: an outsider’s perspective. *Journal of Communication Management*, 13(1), 37–54.
- Ledingham, J.A. (2000). Guidelines to building and maintaining strong organization-public relationships. *Public Relations Quarterly*, 45(3), 44–47.
- Ledingham, J.A. (2001). Government-community relationships: Extending the relational theory of public relations. *Public Relations Review*, 27, 285–295.
- Ledingham, J.A. (2003). Explicating relationship management as a general theory of public relations. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 15(2), 181–198.
- Lee, J., Woeste, J. & Heath, R. (2007). Getting ready for crises: strategic excellence. *Public Relations Review*, 33(3), 334–336.
- Leeper, R. (1996). Moral objectivity, Jurgen Habermas’s discourse ethics, and public relations. *Public Relations Review*, 22(2), 133–150.
- L’Etang, J. (2005). Critical public relations: some reflections. *Public Relations Review*, 31, 521–526.
- L’Etang, J. (2008). Writing PR history: issues, methods and politics. *Journal of Communication Management*, 12(4), 319–335.
- Lim, S., Goh, J. & Sriramesh, K. (2005). Applicability of the generic principles of excellent public relations in a different cultural context: the case study of Singapore. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 17(4), 315–340.
- Motion, J. & Leitch, S. (2007). A toolbox for public relations: the oeuvre of Michel Foucault. *Public Relations Review*, 33, 263–268.
- Murphy, P. (2000). Symmetry, contingency, complexity: accommodating uncertainty in public relations theory. *Public Relations Review*, 26(4), 447–462.
- Pearson, R. (1990). Ethical values or strategic values? The two faces of systems theory in public relations. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 2(1), 219–234.
- Pieczka, M. (2011) Public relations as dialogic expertise? *Journal of Communication Management*, 15(2), 108–124.

Porter, L. (2009). Communicating for the good of the state: a post-symmetrical polemic on persuasion in ethical public relations. *Public Relations Review*, 36, 127–133.

Roper, J. (2005). Symmetrical communications: excellent public relations or a strategy for hegemony? *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 17(1), 69–86.

Verčič, D., van Ruler, B., Butschi, G. & Flodin, B. (2001). On the definition of public relations: a utopian view. *Public Relations Review*, 27, 373–387.

Waeraas, A. (2007). The re-enchantment of social institutions: Max Weber and public relations. *Public Relations Review*, 33, 281–286.

Wang, A. (2007). Priming, framing, and position on corporate social responsibility. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 19(2), 123–145.

Wehmeier, S. (2006). Dancers in the dark: the myth of rationality in public relations. *Public Relations Review*, 32, 213–220.

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

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

International Communication Association. [online]. Available at: www.icahdq.org [Accessed: 2 September 2013]

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

Institute for Public Relations [online]. Available at: <http://www.instituteforpr.org/> [Accessed: 2 September 2013]