



MSC in Strategic Communication and Public Relations

COURSE PLAN

Subject title: Strategic Public Relations Planning

ECTS Credits: 7,5 ECTS

Student Workload: 187,5 hours

Lecturers: Mònika Jiménez Morales, Elisenda Estanyol Casals

1. Presentation

The Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) describes Public Relations as “the strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their publics”. The Strategic Public Relations course wants to prepare the students to effectively apply strategic and creative communications skills. The main goal is to develop an awareness of the strategic nature of Public Relations, understood as a managerial function inside organizations. Students will also develop core PR skills as planning, leadership, writing and oral presentation.

PR professionals can design and develop Communication programs for a range of private companies, but also from governments to non-profit organisations (NGOs). The course will focus on Strategic planning and Communication skills, and will discuss the relationship that PR has with Marketing, Advertising, and Human Resources departments.

2. Competences

Transversal competences

- Autonomous work capability
- To reinforce the learning of working in teams
- Critical thinking
- Understanding the PR concepts in the social sciences context.
- To understand how public relations programs influence individuals, society and the economy.

- Being capable to use specific vocabulary of the PR discipline
- To differentiate ethical PR practice
- To build Communications skills (improve writing skills and oral presentation skills)

Specific competences

- To understand the main models and principles of the PR theories.
- To gain a basic understanding of PR history.
- To learn how to think strategically and brainstorm.
- Understanding the role of PR and corporate communications in business management
- Identify the roles and functions of PR
- Knowing how to manage strategically public relations programs
- Capability of understanding the customer's demands.
- Capability of identifying targets, providing strategic solutions
- Capability of identifying procedures and phases on the development of a PR campaign: briefing, strategy, creation and communication plan.
- Comprehension of PR as a communication process in an economic and social environment. 360° Communication concept
- To understand how the web and social media has impacted public relations.

3. Contents

0. INTRODUCTION:

- The need for Strategic Public Relations Management
- Strategic PR versus Tactic PR
- Communication management by objectives
- Theories of PR: Why are them useful?
- PR vocabulary: reputation, image, propaganda...
- The role of persuasion on the modern era.

1. PUBLIC RELATIONS: CONCEPTUALIZATION AND DEFINITION

2. THE PR SYSTEM

- Clients
- PR consultancies and Communication in-house department. Organizational structures of main PR agencies. Internal PR departments.

- Publics and audiences
- 3. THE PR PROCESS:
 - Research:
 - Understanding the importance of research in the PR process. Methods and techniques.
 - Analyzing the situation
 - Analyzing the organization
 - Analyzing the publics (public, market, audience and stakeholders). Elaborating the publics map.
 - Strategy:
 - Identification of the different elements of a PR Strategic plan: bases, proceedings and characteristics.
 - Mission versus Vision
 - Goals
 - Objectives
 - Strategy
 - Tactics
 - Messages development
 - Action:
 - Implementation of the PR plan
 - Understanding the role of an effective communication on the PR process. Media and targets.
 - Evaluation:
 - Measuring the different elements of the communication process.
 - Methodology: Focus group, Survey research, Content analysis...
- 4. PR THEORIES
 - Symmetric Theory (The Theory of Excellence)
 - Critical theory
 - Rhetoric theory
- 5. PR TECHNIQUES & SECTORS
 - Corporate Communication
 - Internal Communication
 - Media Relations
 - Lobby & Public affairs
 - Crisis Communication & Issues Management
 - Marketing Communication
 - Event Management
 - Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)



- Entertainment, Sport, Tourism and PR
- Politics, Government and PR
- Global Public Relations
- Nonprofit, Health, and Education
- 6. HISTORY OF PR
 - Origins of PR in the USA.
 - Ivy L. Lee
 - Edward L. Bernays
 - James E. Grunig
 - PR Evolution through history.
 - PR in Europe. From Lucien Matrat to s.XXI
- 7. PR 2.0: The impact of the web and social media on public relations.
- 8. PR ETHICS
 - Definition and ethical codes.

4. Evaluation

- Class participation (individual –teacher’s assessment): 10%
- Group exercise 1: Design of an Internal Communication plan: 35%
- Group exercise 2: Design of an External Communication plan: 35%
- Individual exercise: Analysis of a Case study & oral presentation: 20%

The evaluation of these exercises is based the following criteria:

- Language: grammar, order and precision in the use of language and communications terms. Elaboration of discourse and essay composition.
- Content: research on the topic, relevance to course’s content and demonstration of reflexion and critical analysis over the discussed.
- Assertiveness: the ability to state an opinion or analyse an issue and be persuasive and convincing to the reader.



5. Bibliography and didactic resources

5.1. Basic bibliography

Smith, R. D. (2013). Strategic planning for public relations. Routledge.

Cutlip, S. M., Center, A. H., & Broom, G. M. (2006). Effective public relations. Prentice-Hall international editions.

5.2. Complementary bibliography

Austin, Erica Weintraub, and Bruce E. Pinkleton. Strategic public relations management: Planning and managing effective communication programs. Routledge, 2006.

Coombs, W. T., & Holladay, S. J. (2009). PR strategy and application: Managing influence. Wiley-Blackwell.

Gregory, A., & Willis, P. (2013). Strategic public relations leadership. Routledge.

Heath, R. L. (ed.). Encyclopedia of public relations. Sage Publications, 2013.

L'Etang, J. (2006). Public relations and rhetoric. The future of excellence in public relations and communication management: Challenges for the next generation, 359-371.

Pieczka, M., & L'Etang, J. (2006). Public relations and the question of professionalism. Public relations: Critical debates and contemporary practice, 265-278.

Wilcox, D. H., Cameron, G. T., & Reber, B. H. (2014). Public relations: Strategies and tactics, Pearson, Boston.



6. Methodology

Class lecturing and discussion seminars. Case studies review.

Course interactive portal with information and referential articles and links to support exercises and class participation.

Visits to PR consultancies and in-house Communication Departments, located in Barcelona.