

Undergraduate Public Relations Course Description Handbook

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PR 209: Effective Writing for Strategic Public Relations

This course is an intensive, hands-on writing course designed to provide students with the following:

1. An understanding of proper writing styles with sensitivity to the requirements of different situations, media and publications.
2. Competence in writing mechanics and grammar, headlines, labels, structure and the ability to express information clearly to the intended audience(s).
3. Confidence in judging importance and making content decisions in writing.
4. An understanding of what constitutes news and the nuances of how it is defined by a wide variety of media: general news publications and broadcast outlets, specialized trade publications, websites, blogs and internal communications.
5. Familiarity with persuasive writing techniques and knowledge of when to apply them.
6. Successful completion of the required GPS Exam.
7. Enhanced storytelling ability.

PR 250: Strategic Public Relations: An Introduction

This course will familiarize students with strategies and practices in the growing field of public relations/strategic communication through analysis of landmark cases with special emphasis on historical roots, evolution, current and future practices. An array of guest speakers from all walks of the PR profession will share their insights into the vast PR world. This course is the foundation of the public relations program

PR 340: Introduction to Advertising

This course is for the undergraduate student interested in learning the fundamentals of today's advertising profession and its role in marketing communications. The foundation of advertising is persuasion: the effort to persuade someone somewhere to do something, usually with respect to a commercial offering. Because advertising lives and breathes in contemporary culture, it is a discipline in transition, reverberating from the many radical disruptions and transformations in today's society, due to changes in technology, economic circumstances, and human behavior.

Advertising falls under the promotion area of the overall Marketing Mix (The 4Ps - product, price, promotion and place). Promotion includes all activities that involve communicating with the customer about a product or service and its benefits and features. This is the allocation of resources among public relations, advertising, sales promotion, direct marketing and personal selling.

Advertising will be the primary focus of this class; however, we will also address all facets of the Marketing Mix to illustrate how they are integrated and how they each impact how a brand looks and feels and speaks. Emphasis will be placed on understanding the current practice of advertising, including traditional and non-traditional media, digital, experiential, and social media.

Introduction to Advertising is a practical course and the first class in USC's Advertising Minor curriculum at Annenberg.

PR 341: Advertising Copywriting

This course is for the undergraduate student who is interested in learning the role of the creative director, copywriter and art director, in the development and execution of advertising ads and campaigns across all mediums. The objective of the course is to provide an overview of the techniques an advertising copywriter uses to conceive and write ads. There will be numerous concept assignments given in print, radio and online. The concept of the creative team (copywriter and art director) will be introduced and its origin examined. The role of the advertising agency in developing, maintaining or shifting a client's brand image will also be explored, with an emphasis on the copywriter's role in the process. Presentations of your ideas will be integral to class participation.

PR 342: Advertising Media and Analysis

This course will focus on media planning and buying and the role they each play in advertising campaigns. Media planning is the concept of determining the most effective and efficient ways to reach and engage consumers with an advertising or marketing message.

- Who is the appropriate audience?
- Where and when are best to reach them?

- What mindset are they in when consuming a specific media type?
- What is the optimal combination and amount of ‘media’ (using that term in the broadest sense)?
- How is success measured?

We will examine the “art and science” of media; it is a combination of the two. In general, this course will focus on the major media types: broadcast, digital, print, and outdoor. We will also examine the role of media sales.

PR 343: Advertising Design and Production

This class is for the student interested in gaining a working knowledge of the creative process associated within the advertising profession. This course will provide the student with introductory skills needed for art direction, design and the tools used in production in advertising. Projects will include development and execution of concept based advertisement, creative briefs, headlines (copywriting) typography, color, layout, design, campaigns: commercial and public service, digital branding, social media and “activation,” logos, and promotional events. The role of the creative team (Art Director and Copywriter) will be emphasized but the main focus of the class will be on the role of the Art Director/Designer in the visual and conceptual development of advertising campaigns through various mediums and media. The role of the advertising agency and design studio in developing, maintaining or shifting a client’s brand image will also be explored. Strategic Creative Briefs will be explained and required at the beginning of each project.

Mandatory on-going class critiques will be a part of every project and are necessary in sharing ideas, learning from one another and improving individual student work. All students are expected to participate and present the work required and/or “completed” for each project at each class meeting for review. Students will execute work independently, sometime in teams and in class labs on your own laptops, therefore, some working knowledge of the Adobe CC or CS6 suite: InDesign, Photoshop and Illustrator is recommended. If needed, free online software tutorials on Lynda.com are available to help facilitate and complete projects. Save and backup all. Every project will be critiqued and reviewed by the class either as hard copy or on an overhead screen. The Adobe Suite is available free to Annenberg students while currently enrolled at USC – instructions are posted on Blackboard.

PR 351A: Strategic Public Relations Media and Content

Today’s public relations professional needs to understand and be competent in many forms of communication. The business world they work in is rapidly evolving with earned, owned and paid media converging. Media relations, social media content creation and influencer engagement, and paid media are now equally important for any organization’s strategic communications. The role of the public relations practitioner has changed to reflect this shift and training needs to include intensive writing plus creating high-quality multimedia content for traditional, emerging and social media. This class is an intensive, hands-on lab course designed to provide students with the skills necessary to engage with, and produce compelling content for, contemporary media channels of all types. What defines the media/influencers: Who are they? What do they do? How do they get their stories? What tools are needed in today’s media environment? How do we best engage decision makers in today’s environment of media convergence?

PR 351B: Strategic Public Relations Media and Content

In this course we will examine media that is created and published by today’s public relations practitioner. Web 2.0 platforms have enabled brands, organizations and individuals to become publishers and directly engage their audiences. This class examines strategies and tactics needed to be an effective publisher including digital content created for social and owned media channels.

This course is designed to teach students about the array of public relations tools available to them, with particular emphasis on writing, digital content creation and production of other communications collateral. Students will be exposed to audience research and segmentation, social media and digital communications writing, multi-media content creation, feature writing, newsletter preparation, basic principles of design, video production and brainstorming. Case histories will illuminate the use of these tools and examples of materials will be used extensively throughout the course. This is a lab course; a great deal of hands-on activities such as writing, graphic design, video production and oral presentations will be assigned.

PR 352: Public Relations Media and Content for Non-Majors

Building on the journalistic and PR writing standards that students mastered in their PR 209 course, PR 352 gives them the opportunity to apply those standards to earned and controlled media. The foundation of the course is to build content for a staple in the PR world: the Information Kit. Students will learn advanced writing and editing, basic design skills and fairly sophisticated video planning, shooting, editing and production skills, all with an eye toward devising persuasive content.

PR 428: Social, Legal and Ethical Foundations of Public Relations

As the field of Strategic Public Relations continues to grow in size, complexity, and the ability to interact directly and on a two-way basis without mass media intermediaries, practitioners must be increasingly cognizant of their responsibilities to society at large, the legal and regulatory environment in which they function, and the ethical standards and decision-making processes on which they must rely. PR 428 provides an applied, working understanding of those interconnecting concepts and responsibilities, with an emphasis on personal decision-making.

PR 429: Business and Economic Foundations of Public Relations

As public relations and communication are evolving into a discipline that is central to the success of organizations of all types, practitioners increasingly need to be familiar with fundamental aspects of business and economics as they relate to the corporate communication function. To be a valuable counselor to the executive management team and/or clients, PR practitioners need to be conversant in the language of the boardroom.

At the same time, changes in the media landscape and the rise of social media have created a dynamic employment market, lowering the threshold for entrepreneurially minded practitioners to build their own communication firms. This requires a solid understanding of media and consultancy business models.

PR 444: Lifestyle Public Relations

The course examines the growing practice areas that comprise Lifestyle PR: specifically fashion, food, hospitality, travel and tourism. Different from the traditional notion of consumer brand marketing, Lifestyle PR taps into the behavioral insights we can draw from purchasing, travel, dining and other data. Coursework includes preparing an assigned Case of the Week from within the various emphases, crafting and launching an original personal blog, and an in-depth look at the media/personalities that influence these practice areas. Throughout the course, we will tie insights to trends, while still examining the fun surrounding these categories. Guest speakers who practice PR in these lifestyle spaces will expand students' knowledge about the career paths, the special skills needed to succeed and the challenges they face.

PR 450: Advanced Strategic Public Relations

This course serves as the "capstone" course for the Bachelor of Arts in Public Relations. It synthesizes all of the material covered in prior courses; brings that material to bear on case analyses and campaign development; puts that material in a strategic context; and strengthens the student's ability to apply those skills to elements of the campaign development process. Students will research, write and present a campaign to an actual client. It also features a required internship.

PR 451: Promotional Public Relations

Students will learn about promotional PR strategies and practices, and how these can extend the reach and effectiveness of multi-disciplinary, integrated marketing communications campaigns. Students will understand how public relations can and should contribute to the overall marketing and promotional mix, and how the Internet and social media are transforming the way PR professionals are communicating about brands, products and services.

PR 452: Public Relations in Entertainment

Public Relations in Entertainment - Public relations in the design, promotion, and presentation of popular entertainment, including films, broadcasting, music, expositions, amusement parks, legitimate theater (Broadway/off Broadway) resorts and arenas. Students will learn historical context, tactics and strategies used in entertainment PR with the integration of real world and real time examples. Multimedia will be used in the form of clips, web pages, presentations, etc. There is no text book for this course, so class attendance is necessary to receive all of the required information found on exams. The course is designed to be interactive with extensive discussion and class participation expected. Lectures will be supplemented by in-class guest speakers who are working professionals in the fields of media and/or entertainment public relations.

PR 453: Public Relations Strategies for Working with Athletes

This course examines the communication strategies of professional athletes, their public relations and branding teams, and media. We will study and analyze through highly interactive discussions how athletes build (and diminish) the brand of their team and sponsors. Professional athletes communicate to a wide variety of audiences. Their communication teams must strategize to reach each of these audiences and create a positive impression of the athlete before each of these audiences. We will explore the various messages created in the name of the athletes, messages that may, at times, seem self-contradictory. We will discuss ways in which communication teams create a larger brand for athletes that is meant to subsume and make sense of these various communicated images. Students will learn theories of sports communication and have the opportunity to interact with many high-level professionals who employ those theories to create effective communication strategies for athletes.

PR 454: Sports Public Relations

This course is designed to introduce you to the wide-ranging field of sports public relations. The objective of this class is to prepare you for an entry-level position in the sports public relations field. The course will include discussions regarding various aspects of sports public relations, presentations by professionals associated with the field, writing assignments and role-playing exercises.

PR 455: Public Relations for Non-Profit Organizations

Introduction to the specialized field of public relations for non-profits including non-governmental organizations (NGOs), advocacy organizations and private foundations. This course is appropriate for students who want to learn the history of non-profits, the fundamentals of how they are governed and organized, the importance of strategy and fundraising, cause-marketing campaigns and the blurring of lines with for-profit social enterprise efforts, and how to develop and implement a comprehensive public relations campaign for a non-profit organization of the student's choosing. Through lecture, group assignments, and student-led critiques and discussions, this course will examine case studies and present-day scenarios, require the development of a public relations campaign, and culminate in crafting a case study assessing the effectiveness of an assigned NGOs public relations campaign.

PR 456: Public Relations for Diverse Audiences

Researching, planning, executing and evaluating communications campaigns aimed at audiences segmented by culture, lifestyle and other factors.

PR 457: The Role of Celebrity in Public Relations

This course examines the history and application of the celebrity in Public Relations. While the main focus will be the entertainment industry, we will also explore politics and other fields (sports, fashion, etc.), looking at both traditional and social media. We will investigate what it means to be a "celebrity" in the 21st century via case studies, news articles and guest speakers.

PR 458: Public Relations in Politics and Political Campaigns

This course will teach public relations strategy and tactics in the context of a political campaign, but the key concepts will be applicable to almost any persuasive and motivational messaging challenge.

Students will learn the principles of campaign message development, and will be asked to practically apply those lessons by developing campaign messages of their own for both real and hypothetical candidates. They will be asked to attempt to deliver campaign messages as well, both in writing and in classroom exercises that require them to play the role of both candidate and campaign strategist by participating in mock news conferences, ad tests, and other simulations of real-life campaign experiences. By the end of the semester, they will be prepared to write a full-length campaign strategy prospectus on behalf of a political candidate or cause of their choosing.

This course will be an exercise in pure, practical politics. If you have a political ideology, be prepared to check it at the door. Because rather than engaging in a philosophical debate over the relative merits of various candidates and causes, we will instead use this course to examine the inner workings of the political process and the manner in which political messages are communicated to the voting public. Rather than arguing liberal vs. conservative and Democrat vs. Republican, this course will focus on how successful campaign operatives of both parties develop, target and deliver a message to the voters.

PR 463: Strategic Public Relations Research, Analysis and Insights

This course is designed to provide a theoretical and applied understanding of the roles research can play in public relations and marketing. The course will cover research methodologies, techniques, design, and analysis with a focus on application. Course discussion and exercises will link the applied use of research to strategic direction, messaging and evaluation. Students will learn to conduct a full-scale research project and present the findings.

PR 473: Emerging Media Strategies for Communication and Public Relations

In-depth, hands-on study of emerging digital, social and owned media channels; Emphasis on the evaluation of such media as effective tools for audience engagement.

PR 477: Strategic Netnography for Digital Communication Insights

This course provides deep understanding and hands-on experience in the application of digital anthropology to contemporary public relations and communication fields. Students will gain a toolkit of powerful frameworks and approaches through which to understand and inform decisions about social media management and other digital communications strategies.

Skills learned in this course include the analysis of multimedia data and presentation of research data. This course is suitable for all Master-level public relations, communication, and communications management students who want to be able to discover and apply research insights from all forms of social media data. Master and Ph.D. level students will benefit from the in-depth focus on an increasingly influential methodology.

PR 478: Social Media Analytics: Data and Content Creation for Real-time Public Relations

Students will learn to work as a social media analyst and real-time content creator for today's social web. Much of this course takes place in the Annenberg Media Center and focuses on the interaction between PR practitioners and news media outlets.

In an environment much like that found in sophisticated PR organizations, students will use cloud-based software applications to set up topic profiles; refine the data stream; analyze the data stream looking for influencers, news sources and other salient information; create data visualizations for rapid insights; and archive data for other research projects.

Using software applications such as Crimson Hexagon, Google Search Trends, HootSuite, Radian6, and other current and emerging social web tools, students will examine how companies, celebrities, non-profits, causes and other organizations connect and engage with key constituencies. We will examine why some original content is more shareable than others and how companies and organizations stay relevant into today's Twitter, Instagram and emerging channel social streams. In addition, students will be integral to the daily news monitoring, analysis and reporting of the converged media center.

You will learn to be comfortable running comprehensive social web listening and analytics for the converged media center, working in close cooperation with student-run news outlets. Students will work with assignment editors and other key personnel from these sites to identify fast breaking news, emerging trends, and other social web activities that are part of each day's news gathering and reporting.

The course will include one 3-hour shift per week as a social media analyst for the converged media center during which time you will be primarily responsible for its live operation.

PR 481: Careers and Strategies in Health Communication

Understanding of the dynamic, changing world of U.S. healthcare; knowledge of healthcare audiences and how to reach them; creating effective strategic communications initiatives.

PR 485: Multimedia PR Content: Digital/Social Media Lab

Digital/Social Media Working Lab explores the fundamentals of the professionally-oriented applications of the real-time web and various digital platforms. It provides students a hands-on, project-based, practical knowledge of social media trends and applications. Students will engage in social media, develop and manage online content, begin to create a personal brand, learn to adapt quickly to new online tools/applications, and support fellow team members. This is a

collaborative class and is structured to mimic a creative professional workgroup. We engage in social media during class so laptops are required. Smartphones are welcome, but your primary working device is your laptop.

Today's PR and Journalism environments require adept social media skills, technological competence, and understanding of this complex public news and media environment.

PR 486: Multimedia PR Content: Introduction to Digital Design Tools

It's increasingly important that public relations professionals not only be good at writing for an array of audiences, but also have an understanding of basic design principles and a fluency in digital design tools, such as Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Illustrator, and Adobe InDesign. While many organizations may employ outside designers, or have an art department of their own, sometimes the task of creating smaller design collateral, such as postcards, Infographics or posters, falls to the PR practitioner. For many smaller firms, an art department or contract design help may not be available, so it is even more imperative to have a basic understanding of how to design collateral and execute these designs in the above programs. These are also important skills to have when communicating with an art department or outside designer, so you can clearly and effectively work with these parties and understand their needs.

PR 487: Multimedia PR Content: Introduction to Audio/Video Tools

This hands-on workshop introduces students to essential audio/video concepts and tools needed to create compelling narratives and content for an online world of completely digital distribution. Students will learn the basics, technical knowledge of video production including necessary software tools, and learn to manage their online video content and utilize it to build their personal brand and that of clients. Students will conceive, write, shoot, edit, export, deliver and export their own digital stories by:

1. learning the underlying principles of narrative, intentionality of design, and video production
2. practicing the basics of digital video making tools (Adobe Creative Cloud)
3. better understanding of new media and the online content landscape
4. becoming proficient in visual and audio tools/trends
5. developing new communication, engagement, and narrative skills
6. creating an online digital portfolio, brand and platform focused on their creative output in the class to attract future employers

Class exercises will be a combination of team projects and individual assignments.

PR 488: Multimedia PR Content: Visual Communication of Information

It's increasingly important that public relations professionals not only be good at writing for an array of audiences, but also have an understanding of basic design principles and a fluency in digital design tools, such as Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Illustrator, and Adobe InDesign. While many organizations may employ outside designers, or have an art department of their own, sometimes the task of creating smaller design collateral, such as postcards, Infographics or posters, falls to the PR practitioner. For many smaller firms, an art department or contract design help may not be available, so it is even more imperative to have a basic understanding of how to design collateral and execute these designs in the above programs. These are also important skills to have when communicating with an art department or outside designer, so you can clearly and effectively work with these parties and understand their needs. This course will also serve as an introduction in designing for the web, and highlight the major differences between designing print collateral and digital collateral and websites.

PR 491: Transmedia, New Media and Strategic Public Relations

We are in the midst of a period of profound and prolonged media change, which is impacting the ways companies and individuals connect. The rules of branding and strategic communication are shifting to accommodate new technologies, new connections, and new social worlds. Exploring the way that traditional and social media interact, the way that media converge, and the way that platforms organize new commitments and forms of contribution is core to the understanding of how public relations, branding, social media management, and strategic communication of all forms are combining. This course examines the boundary of these forms and takes a practical, future-oriented approach to preparing new strategies and tactical combinations for transmedia branding.

PR 492: Personal Branding

This course will take a highly focused approach to understanding the strategic public relations discipline specifically as it applies to personal brands, including those of communication entrepreneurs who serve personal brands, those “client” personal brands themselves, and the students enrolled in the course. This will be achieved primarily through the analysis of contemporary case studies and creative problem solving.

The course will help students gain real world practical experience by working with current personal brands in a variety of industries. It will equip each student with the tools needed to explore his or her own unique skill set, goals, and personal brand attributes as they prepare for a career in the public relations field.

Special emphasis will be placed on the analysis and use of new and emerging digital/social media channels, which are, and will continue to have, a profound effect on the creation and maintenance of personal brands.