

Graduate Public Relations Course Description Handbook

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*It is important to note that the MA in Strategic PR follows a specific path: enrollees must complete six required courses, noted with an asterisk below, before taking any electives.

PR 501 Public Policy Communication

This course is designed to familiarize students with the key strategies and tools used in communications campaigns designed to influence public policy. Student will develop skills in analyzing and evaluating such campaigns.

Whether the topic is global warming or charter schools, a variety of players outside of government are influencing policy debates by using the tools of public relations to promote information, ideas and positions. Conversely, the public policy

arena has become a critical laboratory for the development of new means of practicing public relations. This course will examine the communication strategies employed by advocates, think tanks and philanthropies to shape policy deliberations and decisions. While examining all aspects of a policy campaign, including litigation and lobbying, our focus will fall on messaging strategies. We'll assess the imagery, language and media conduits used to influence public opinion, news media coverage and ultimately decision makers.

PR 508 Public Relations and Advertising Fundamentals and Strategy*

This course explores the contemporary practice of public relations, advertising and its expanding role in a broader strategic communication and digital context. Emphasis is on strategy, critical thinking and problem-solving as these relate to communication challenges and opportunities. Students will also examine ethical, legal and theoretical concepts and frameworks related to persuasive communication and its practice today.

PR 522 Storytelling with Data Intelligence

This course is designed to train students to obtain the skill sets and data-confidence in this new era of communication. This course will provide the foundations of quantitative research, the basics of storytelling with data, and critical thinking skills in public relations, advertising and related fields. This course is a building block for the subsequent classes in our research track and professors in the subsequent research courses will assume that students have mastered all the knowledge and skills taught in this sequence. There are three parts to the course: Introduction to fundamentals of storytelling with data intelligence, storytelling with traditional research methods, and storytelling with emerging research methods.

PR 523 Advanced Audience Insight Mining

This course is designed to provide students training with cutting-edge digital research methods and applied data analytic skills relevant to current and future public relations practices. Specifically, the focus of the class is on introducing students to big data analytics, social network analysis, text-mining and machine-learning to engage publics through data-driven storytelling. The course emphasizes both conceptual understanding and analytic skill training.

PR 524 Multimedia Content Creation for Brand Storytelling I

PR 524 is an introduction to strategic brand storytelling, the process for developing effective content and the digital content creation tools used. PR 525 is part two of a two-part sequence on multimedia content.

This class will examine media that is created and published by today's practitioner. The Internet and growth of digital content have enabled brands, organizations and individuals to become publishers and directly engage their audiences with increasingly effective levels of targeting. The strategic skills to create effective, engaging content across all categories – paid advertising, earned media, owned – are vital in today's communication ecology. This class examines strategies and tactics needed to be an effective brand storyteller including, digital content created for social channels, owned media and paid advertising.

PR 525 Multimedia Content Creation for Brand Storytelling II

PR 525 is part two of a two-part sequence on multimedia content. This class will examine media that is created and published by today's practitioner. The Internet and growth of digital content have enabled brands, organizations and individuals to become publishers and directly engage their audiences with increasingly effective levels of targeting. The strategic skills to create effective, engaging content across all categories – paid advertising, earned media, owned – are vital in today's communication ecology. This class examines strategies and tactics needed to be an effective brand storyteller including, digital content created for social channels, owned media and paid advertising.

PR 529 Business and Economic Foundations for Communicators*

Guided by the principle of economic literacy, this course focuses on core themes related to the business and economics of public relations:

1. Core economic principles as they relate to the corporate PR/communications function. Students will examine the impact of macroeconomic developments on business strategy and communication programs of companies and other organizations. They also will learn the language and workings of the business media.
2. "Business 101," the basic principles that govern businesses, including accounting, finance, human resources, operations, marketing and sales.

3. Financial communications and investor relations including basics such as quarterly earnings announcements and what constitutes a shareholder, but also spanning the lifecycle of a private enterprise from funding announcement to filing for initial public offering to quiet period. This section will discuss investor relations as a specialization of financial public relations. It will explore how the current financial communication environment has evolved in light of the corporate scandals of the early 21st Century.
4. Media entrepreneurship, exploring key entrepreneurial concepts relevant to the new media world. Topics include the entrepreneurial perspective, innovation theory, start-up strategies, business-idea evaluation, introduction to entrepreneurial finance and developing innovative media products and business models.

PR 532 International Public Relations

Public information policies and practices of national and supranational government units and national and multinational corporations involved in international relations.

PR 534 Social Value: Research Seminar on Networked Social Influence

Theory and practice of social value, the measurement of people's impact on each other; collaboration on analysis and creation of articles for conferences and journals.

PR 535 Persuasive Writing*

This course introduces students to the array of writing assignments today's PR and advertising practitioners might encounter. It is divided into four distinct modules: 1) mastering the School of Journalism's rigorous writing standards. Through in-class drills and homework, students will learn to organize and plan their writing both with and without deadline pressure; 2) applying those skills to standard persuasive PR and advertising copywriting assignments; 3) tackling the prevailing digital standards such as writing for social media, websites and other digital media as well as traditional printed materials; 4) learning the basics of strategic messaging and copywriting in the advertising realm.

PR 536 Digital, Social and Mass Media Public Relations Strategies

This course is about understanding the dramatically changing media landscape and the role traditional, social and emerging digital channels play in communications and conversations. How a brand, organization or cause utilizes the numerous "media" channels in today's ever-changing communication environment is explored and examined. The course examines the evolving modern communication ecology and how paid, earned, sharable and owned media fit into the practice of modern public relations. The PESO model is used throughout the semester.

The course explores an increasingly complex universe of media. It takes special aim at identification of target audiences -- the people to be reached through public relations -- and engaging them with the right messages through the right media. Primary and secondary research tools, as well as logic and experience are a focus in this process. Students will learn how to connect strategic public relations goals with the changing media "channels" that exist in today's digital world. They will also learn the difference between "free" and "paid" media and the varying degrees of control and message integrity that accompany each. Along the way, a variety of strategic considerations will be revealed, e.g.:

- Identification of target audiences
- Effective media strategies
- Development of newsworthy messages/message tracks
- Brainstorming creative approaches to capture media attention and your audience
- How to utilize the power of digital communication platforms and maximize message amplification
- The importance of ethnic and specialized media considerations
- The role content, especially multimedia, plays in connecting with audiences at different times
- Discovery of content and the role search engines play; how to use search engine optimization

PR 537 Public Relations and Branding

This course is designed to deepen students' knowledge of the role of public relations in the contemporary practice of branding and brand communication. The first part of the course provides an overview of the concept of branding, with an emphasis on understanding the anatomy of a brand and how it is manifested through all forms of communication. We will develop an in-depth analysis of a specific brand. The second part explores how public relations and marketing can harness insights and ideas to build a brand. We will examine a series of current case studies and create a brand building communications campaign for an individual brand.

PR 538 Image Management in Entertainment

This class will examine the role of public relations and publicity in managing the public images of performers, executives and entertainment companies. Through the real life experiences of some of the top journalists, executives and public relations practitioners in the entertainment field, we will discuss the role of PR and the importance of creating and maintaining a personalized, positive image through media of all types. This includes reputation evolution and crisis management. Analysis of current news stories will be an integral element of these discussions.

PR 540 Branding through Partnerships, Activations, and Influencers

Analyze celebrity partnerships, influencer campaigns and brand integrations. Create innovative entertainment marketing strategies across media platforms. Evaluate ROI and risk management.

PR 541 AI-Assisted Strategic Communication

Covers coding in Python, AI fundamentals, advanced AI-assisted communication and ethical considerations. Hands-on workshops, client collaboration and real-world AI applications.

PR 545 International Internships in the Media

Intensive field experience at international news media and public relations organizations.

PR 561 Principles of Public Relations

Practical and theoretical survey of the public relations profession as it is currently practiced, providing a social/contextual backdrop for further study of the field.

PR 562 Foundations of Effective PR Writing

Specialized writing for persuasive and strategic communication contexts. Intensive focus on public relations writing for print, online, broadcast, and social media.

PR 563 Promotional and Product Public Relations

This class will train students in how specific promotionally oriented theories and practices of the public relations discipline, particularly in the area of product promotion, can dramatically enhance the reach and effectiveness of multi-disciplinary communications campaigns. Students will understand how to devise, implement and evaluate public relations strategies to help achieve promotional and sales objectives. Special emphasis on 360 degree integrated programs.

PR 565 Corporate Public Relations and Reputation

Students study the planning, management and evaluation of strategic public relations campaigns with a focus on corporate reputation. Emphasis is on real-world examples; the class features visits by many senior corporate communications executives from Fortune 500 companies and incorporates a semester-long project that provides students the opportunity to work together as a team with a senior communications "client."

PR 568 Crisis Management in Strategic Public Relations

This course is designed to train students in the art of Critical Thinking and how to apply these concepts to a variety of challenges including Crisis Management and Mitigation. During the semester, we will focus on how to communicate in a time of crisis to effectively manage the situation and disseminate key messages to various stakeholders. Through case studies and in-class exercises, the students will learn the critical communication skills needed for an array of practical problems. There is heavy emphasis in this course on interaction within the class sessions and examining issues/problems from a 360-degree perspective.

PR 583 Managing Communication in the Entertainment Industry

Examination, application and critique of traditional and contemporary organizational communication theory as it applies to the entertainment industry's unique internal and external environments.

PR 597 Financial and Investor Communications

This course provides a practical, working understanding of financial communications, concerned primarily with articulating a company's value, not only as it relates to matters of corporate image and the cultivation of a favorable financial and investment environment but also, for publicly traded companies, with the legal interpretation of and compliance with SEC and other government regulations, as well as with the disclosure requirements of the securities exchanges. A look at investor relations focuses on corporate disclosure responsibilities, stockholder relations, and relations with the professional investor community including analysts.

Also important is the ability to help articulate an enterprise's position at sensitive and often high-profile times such as:

- Friendly and contested transactions
- Bankruptcies and restructurings
- Crises, litigation, shareholder activism and other proxy-related issues
- All capital-raising activities

In an environment where markets and audiences are increasingly blurred, it is important for practitioners to advise management teams and boards of directors how to tell the story behind their strategic decisions and business imperatives. This not only reduces risk but because each relevant audience understands their actions, companies can successfully manage their corporate brand, reputation, and, critically, valuation. Financial public relations practitioners, therefore, require knowledge in such areas as tender offers and takeovers, public offerings, proxy solicitation, and insider trading, which are covered in this course.

PR 598 Improvisational Leadership

PR 598 is an improvisational leadership workshop designed to inspire students to become successful leaders. It is focused on developing four key competencies necessary for future leaders in the PR/Communications field – Confidence, Creativity, Curiosity and Courage. Much of the course will be experiential, encouraging students to step outside their comfort zones and explore new challenges. By the end of the class, students will gain important skills to further their careers and enrich their lives.

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