

COURSE SPECIFICATION DOCUMENT

Academic School / Department:	Communications and The Arts
Programme:	MA Advertising and Public Relations
FHEQ Level:	7
Course Title:	Public Relations Practice
Course Code:	APR 7101
Total Hours:	200
Timetabled Hours:	39
Guided Learning Hours:	21
Independent Learning Hours:	140
Credits:	20 UK CATS credits 10 ECTS credits 4 US credits

Course Description:

This course explores the fundamental principles and tools involved in the professional practice of public relations, with a particular focus on media relations and third-party endorsement, although other PR specialisms are also covered including direct engagement with social media. It introduces students to differences in key sectors in the practice of public relations including government and industry, politics and public sector, third and voluntary sectors, and reputational management for organisations and individuals. It offers a thorough critical overview of the typical practice of public relations across sectors, including their interrelationship, and enables and encourages students to apply practical tools with confidence. It relates the practice of public relations to international events and contemporary issues.

Prerequisites:

MA Advertising and Public Relations students only

Aims and Objectives

- To explore critically key aspects of the practice of public relations.
- To develop insight and critical understanding into the role of the media in the practice of public relations and develop appropriate skills for media relations.
- To develop and review professional skills in the research techniques, critical analysis, creative work and written and oral presentation skills used in public relations practice.

- To develop a sophisticated understanding of the role of creativity, teamwork, group commitment and cooperation in professional public relations practice.
- To consider the role of media relations and other forms of PR activity in public, including the direct engagement through social media in private and third sector organisations, and to understand the functions involved in managing the communications needs of both organisations and individuals in brand, reputation, marketing, and media relations functions.
- To understand the interrelationships and distinctions between PR and advertising practice, which students study simultaneously.

Programme Outcomes:

By the end of this course successful students will be able to:

A4; B1; B4; C3; D2; D4

A detailed list of the programme outcomes is found in the Programme Specification. This is maintained by Registry and located at: <https://www.richmond.ac.uk/programme-and-course-specifications/>

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this course, successful students should be able to:

- Demonstrate a critical understanding of key aspects of the practice of public relations.
- Show an understanding of the role of the media in the practice of public relations and display appropriate skills for media relations work.
- Display professional skills in the research techniques, critical analysis, creative work, and written and oral presentation skills used in public relations practice.
- Demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of the role of creativity, teamwork, group commitment and cooperation in professional public relations practice.
- Show a comprehensive understanding of the role of media relations and other forms of PR activity in public, private and third sector organisations, and to understand the functions involved in managing the communications needs of both organisations and individuals in brand, reputation, marketing and media relations functions.

Indicative Content:

- Different roles of public relations in varying contexts – including the private, public and not-for-profit sectors.
- Relationship of public relations professionals to other management functions.
- Current practices and developments in public relations across all platforms, including the role of PR in relation to new media.
- Legal, ethical, and regulatory concerns.
- Public relations tools including creative thinking, press pitching and briefing, and use of social media.
- Written skills including press releases, articles, blogs, and email.

- Visual tools including publicity materials, photo opportunities.
- Events such as press conferences and presentations.

Assessment:

This course conforms to the University Assessment Norms approved at Academic Board and are located at <https://www.richmond.ac.uk/university-policies/>

Teaching Methodology:

Teaching will include interactive lectures, supplemented with a range of audio-visual aids, designed to introduce students to the key concepts of professional practice. Guest speakers and activities with external organisations will contribute alternative perspectives and experience. Students will develop their critical understanding of these concepts and their practical application through a range of workshops and group and individual exercises undertaken in class and out of class. Their group and individual presentations and written work will be discussed in feedback sessions which explore responses to issues arising from professional practice. The teaching will be supplemented with individual tutorials designed to address students’ personal needs.

Indicative Text(s):

Henslowe, P. (2003) *Public Relations – A Practical Guide to the Basics*. London: Kogan Page.

O'Donnell, A. (2023) *Public Relations and Communications: From Theory to Practice*. London: Routledge.

Rosenberg, A. (2021) *A modern guide to public relations: unveiling the mystery of PR*. La Vergne: Veracity Marketing.

Theaker, A. (2020) *The Public Relations Handbook*. 6th edn. London: Routledge.

Thomas, E.A. (2023) *Public Relations: Best Practices and Applications*. California: Cognella Academic Publishing.

See syllabus for complete reading list.

Change Log for this CSD:

Nature of Change	Date Approved & Approval Body (School or AB)	Change Actioned by Registry Services
Revision 1 – annual update	May 2023	
Total Hours Updated	April 2024	
