

Las Positas College
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Course Outline for MSCM 7
INTRO TO PUBLIC RELATIONS
Effective: Fall 2009

I. CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

MSCM 7 — INTRO TO PUBLIC RELATIONS — 3.00 units

Introduction to the principles, evolution, and professional practice of public relations. Concepts of planning and executing effective communication strategies, including message design and distribution, for all types of organizations.

3.00 Units Lecture

Strongly Recommended

ENG 1A - Critical Reading and Composition

Grading Methods:

Letter or P/NP

Discipline:

	MIN
Lecture Hours:	54.00
Total Hours:	54.00

II. NUMBER OF TIMES COURSE MAY BE TAKEN FOR CREDIT: 1

III. PREREQUISITE AND/OR ADVISORY SKILLS:

Before entering this course, it is strongly recommended that the student should be able to:

A. ENG1A

IV. MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES:

Upon completion of this course, the student should be able to:

- A. demonstrate understanding of the principles and current practices of public relations;
- B. define and differentiate the concepts of public relations, advertising, press agency, marketing, journalism, and public affairs;
- C. describe the evolution of the field of public relations from historical to current practices;
- D. describe a public relation practitioner's training, characteristics, work assignments, and employment prospects;
- E. plan and prepare publicity programs, press releases, memos, and online public relations for different types of organizations;
- F. understand and apply theories of public relations to different types of organizations;
- G. understand and apply legal and ethical concepts of public relations to different types of organizations;
- H. discuss and analyze the roles and techniques of research, strategic planning, action and communication, and evaluation in public relations practice;
- I. define and differentiate among the publics served by public relations practitioners;
- J. discuss and analyze the future trends in public relations with emphasis on the role of technology in public relations.

V. CONTENT:

- A. Principles and current practices in public relations
 1. Definition of public relations
 2. Contrast of one-way and two-way communication systems
 3. Current use of public relations by different organizations
- B. Public relations distinguished from related fields
 1. Advertising
 2. Press agency
 3. Marketing
 4. Journalism
 5. Public affairs
- C. Evolution of public relations
 1. Pre-modern public relations
 2. Public relations as a new industry
 3. Public relations and war
 4. Public relations and social activism
 5. Public relations and advertising
 6. Public relations and new
- D. The practice of modern public relations

1. Areas of employment
 - a. Corporations
 - b. Non-profit organizations
 - c. Trade associations
 - d. Government
 - e. Public relations agencies
 - f. Public relations consultants
2. Characteristics and training
3. Activities and duties
4. Working conditions and job prospects
- E. Tools of public relations practitioners
 1. Publicity packages
 2. Press releases
 3. Memos
 4. Online public relations
- F. Theories of public relations
 1. Communication theories
 2. Motivation
 3. Persuasion
 4. Social influence
- G. Legal and ethical issues in public relations
 1. Code of ethics
 2. Cultural issues
 3. Trust and corporate social responsibility
 4. Legal issues
 - a. The first amendment
 - b. Government and business regulation
 - c. The internet
 - d. Crisis management
 - e. Litigation
- H. The Process of Public Relations
 1. Research
 2. Strategic planning
 3. Action and communication
 4. Evaluation of effectiveness
- I. The Different Publics
 1. The media
 2. Employees
 3. Community
 4. Consumers
 5. Investors
 6. Governments
 7. Nontraditional publics
- J. The future of public relations
 1. Online public relations
 2. Viral marketing
 3. Global public relations
 4. Evolving roles for public relations practitioners

VI. METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:

- A. **Lecture** -
- B. Small group and whole-class discussion
- C. Films, video tapes, and recordings
- D. Guest presentations by public relations specialists
- E. Event planning and event planning simulations
- F. Written work, including summaries, papers, and exams
- G. Individual/group evaluation of student and professional prose
- H. Instructor conferences
- I. Possible field trips to different organizations

VII. TYPICAL ASSIGNMENTS:

A. Oral presentation of group research and discussion: 1. Compare one-way communication to two-way communication using principles of public relations discussed in class. 2. Define and explain the changing role of the public relations practitioner in the age of new media. B. Written analysis of ethical issues presented in a movie: View Thank You for Smoking and describe the application of Public Relations Society of America's Code of Professional Standards for the Practice of Public Relations to the actions of one of the public relations practitioners in the movie. C. Public relations project: Prepare and execute a public relations event for an organization. For example, prepare and execute a magazine release party for the campus magazine. D. Oral presentations on public relations project: Provide an oral report describing the public relations event you created and evaluate its effectiveness. E. Essay examinations – Typical questions: 1. Explain the significance of public relations in the history of women's suffrage. 2. Describe and differentiate two of the publics served by public relations specialists. 3. What is viral marketing and how has it changed the practice of public relations?

VIII. EVALUATION:

A. **Methods**

B. **Frequency**

1. Class participation: daily
2. Written analyses, oral presentations, and examinations are ongoing
3. Public relations program : minimum of one over the semester

IX. TYPICAL TEXTS:

1. Bivens, Thomas H. *Public Relations Writing*. 6th ed., McGraw-Hill, 2008.
2. Coombs, Timothy W. and Sherry J. Holladay *It's Not Just PR: Public Relations in Society*, Blackwell, 2008.
3. Guth, David W. and Charles Marsh *Public Relations: A Values-Driven Approach*. 4th ed., Pearson, 2009.
4. Lattimore, Dan, et al. *Public Relations: The Profession and the Practice*. 2nd ed., McGraw-Hill, 2007.

X. OTHER MATERIALS REQUIRED OF STUDENTS: