

COURSE SYLLABUS

Public Relations

Course code: MKT 368

Semester and year: Fall 2025

Day and time: Tuesdays 8-10:45am

Instructor: Jeff Medeiros, MBA Information Systems, BSc Marketing/Finance
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Consultation hours: As requested by student(s)

Credits US/ECTS	3/6	Level	Bachelor
Length	15 weeks	Pre-requisite	MKT 248
Contact hours	42 hours	Grading	Letter grade

1. Course Description

Upon successfully completing this course, students will have a basic understanding of the purpose, principles, and practice of Public Relations (PR) as an independent discipline and an integrated part of the complete marketing mix. In addition, a contemporary overview of Public Relations concepts in local and international business environments will be assessed using practical case studies.

It will be emphasized that each student will come into contact with Public Relations techniques throughout their life and that understanding this field will benefit them even though they may not use this knowledge directly in their field of work. Students will create a real PR Campaign proposal for an existing organization to enhance their knowledge of this field further. A wide variety of public relations techniques and operating areas are examined, including Media Relations, International PR, the PR practitioner's role, Content Marketing, and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), for example.

2. Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate understanding of how and where Public Relations fits within the Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) concept.
- Understand and be able to use PR terms.
- Be able to explain how various organizations use PR practices to adapt to change, manage competition and conflict, and forge mutually beneficial relations with diverse organizational stakeholder publics.
- Practice specific PR writing skills, including writing a Press Release and creating an Advertorial.
- Understand the role of ethics within PR based on specific case studies.
- Practice presentation skills and the ability to explain the studied topic to peers.
- Be able to apply various theories of how active publics form and how Stakeholder Publics can be identified and worked with to achieve goals.
- Explain and demonstrate creativity and understanding of the concepts in an in-depth Public Relations Campaign Plan.
- Demonstrate understanding of the new trends in PR utilized on the Internet and in social media and how they have affected traditional marketing and advertising trends.

- Comprehend how PR is practiced in reality due to shared experiences from a guest speaker.
- Improve communication and presentation skills through group work, analysis, and individual presentations.
- Apply the so-called circular four-step public relations process to create a campaign plan for a specific problem. This includes identifying the key public targeted, properly writing campaign objectives; creating the essential campaign message and executions; and creating a media plan to carry the campaign.
- Understand and discuss the implications of what is now being called a major paradigm shift—the impact of new media/social media—in public relations and marketing, including content marketing.

3. Reading Material

Required Materials (Available in the Library* or to Download) – Selections will be assigned during the semester from these textbooks.

- *Strategic Planning for Public Relations*
Ronald D. Smith, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc (2002)
 - Tench, Ralph, *Exploring Public Relations*, FT Prentice Hall, 2009, 2nd ed.
 - Yaverbaum, Eric, *Public Relations*, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2006, 2nd ed.
- *On reserve (cannot be checked out but only used in the Library) in the AAU Library.*

NOTE: In case of scarcity of a book, scanned chapters will be uploaded for each lecture. Additional required reading may be uploaded to the e-learning system for individual lecture topics.

Recommended Materials (Available in the Library* or via Interlibrary Loan)

- Scott, David Beerman, *The New Rules of Marketing and PR*, Jon Wiley & Sons, Inc., 7th ed., 2020
- Blythe, Jim, *Great PR Ideas*, Marshall Cavendish Business, 2009
- Philip Kotler, Gary Armstrong, *Principles of Marketing, Global Edition*, 16/E (2015)
Other articles were placed on the class Website and PR-related books in the AAU Library.*
**On reserve (cannot be checked out but only used in the Library) in the AAU Library.*
- *Strategic Public Relations: 10 Principles to Harness the Power of PR* Jennifer Gehrt, Colleen Moffitt and Andrea Carlos
Publisher: Xlibris (2010)
- *Public Relations: Strategies and Tactics* (10th Edition) Dennis L. Wilcox, Glen T. Cameron
Publisher: Allyn & Bacon; 10 edition (2011)
- *Public relations Principles and practice* Phillip J. Kitchen
Publisher: Thomson Learning (2002)
- *Perfect PR*
- Iain Maitland
Publisher: International Thomson Business Press
- *Public Relations Strategies and Tactics*
Dennis L. Wilcox, Phillip H. Ault and Warren K. Agee
Publisher: Addison-Wesley Educational Publisher Inc. (1998)

4. Teaching Methodology

The course will be taught in a very interactive manner using current issues and having students analyze case studies, compete in interactive contests, present a specific Public Relations Campaign plan for a chosen organization, learn specific experiences from guest speakers and engaging with the Association of PR Professionals in the Czech Republic (APRA) working with a small business or NGO to create a strategic plan with specific tactics introduced during the session during the course. **Active participation** in class discussions and the off-site group projects is mandatory since learning communication skills is a crucial aspect of the real Public Relations world. Cooperating actively in group activities is another must-have skill, as PR is almost always a well-coordinated team effort. Using computers and telephones during class is strictly forbidden unless used for class purposes specified by the course leader.

5. Course Schedule

Date	Class Agenda
Session 1 2 nd Sept	Topic: Introduction to Public Relations (PR) – Course administrative Information and Defining PR Description: expectations, deadlines, and procedures. Introduction to the importance of leveraging Strategic Planning for Public Relations within an Integrated Communication model to ensure success overviewing the four primary phases (broken down into nine steps) Deadline: To Be Determined (TBD) Reading Assignment: Introduction and <i>Phase One FORMATIVE RESEARCH - Step 1 Analyzing the Situation</i> Smith, <i>Strategic Planning for Public Relations (Intro through p 24)</i>
Session 2 9 th Sept	Topic: <i>Research – Analyzing the Situation</i> Description: Review of where a PR practitioner starts -> research: Where, Why and How, and the basic Principles of Crisis Management Deadline: TBD. Reading Assignment: <i>Phase One FORMATIVE RESEARCH - Step 2 Analyzing the Organization</i> Smith, <i>Strategic Planning for Public Relations (pp 28-31 and Exercise To Be Assigned)</i>
Session 3 16 th Sept	Topic: <i>Analyzing the Organization</i> Description: Using the Public Relations Audit model, identifying what information needs to be researched to create a SWOT – Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Threats for the organization or client. The audit involves the Internal Environment, the External Environment, and the Public Perception. Deadline: TBD. Reading Assignment: <i>Phase One FORMATIVE RESEARCH - Step 3 Analyzing the Publics</i> Smith, <i>Strategic Planning for Public Relations (pp 39-49 and Exercise To Be Assigned)</i>
Session 4 23 rd Sept	Topic: <i>Analyzing the Publics</i> Description: Introducing the concept of a Public as a community of people with shared interests for the purposes of targeted communication and understanding of the four categories of Publics. Deadline: TBD Reading Assignment: <i>Phase Two STRATEGY - Step 4 Establishing Goals and Objectives</i> Smith, <i>Strategic Planning for Public Relations (pp 69-77 and Example p 78, Exercise To Be Assigned)</i>
Session 5 30 th Sept	Topic: <i>Introduction to Phase Two – Strategy, with Step 4 – Establishing Goals and Objectives</i> Description: Review the basic definition of Goals and Objectives and the

	critical elements required to articulate them clearly that will inform the tactical plan later. The concepts are simple; the execution requires hard work. Deadline: TBD Reading Assignment: <i>Phase Two STRATEGY - Step 5 Formulating Action and Response Strategies</i> Smith, <i>Strategic Planning for Public Relations</i> (pp 82-109 and Example p 109, Exercise To Be Assigned)
Session 6 7 th Oct	Topic: <i>Formulating Action and Response Strategies and Review of Midterm</i> Description: Considering the complexity and motivation for responses, a typology of Public Relations responses is introduced, including pre-emptive, proactive, reactive, or strategic inaction. Deadline: TBD Reading Assignment: <i>Phase Two STRATEGY - Step 6 Using Effective Communication</i> Smith, <i>Strategic Planning for Public Relations</i> (pp 113-144 and Examples Only, Exercises To Be Assigned) and Review previously covered content to prepare for the Midterm Exam.
Session 7 14 th Oct	Topic: Using Effective Communication and Midterm Review Description: Communicating effectively by considering the major characteristics: 3 C's – Credibility, Charisma and Control Deadline: TBD Reading Assignment: <i>Phase Three TACTICS - Step 7 Choosing Communication Tactics</i> Smith, <i>Strategic Planning for Public Relations</i> (pp 152-210 and Examples, Exercise To Be Assigned)
Session 8 21 st Oct	Mid-term exam Description: The exam format will be a written test with multiple-choice questions, fill-in-the-blanks and short essay questions Reading Assignment: <i>Midterm Break</i>
28 th Oct	Midterm Break
Session 9 4 th Nov	Topic: Choosing Communication Tactics Description: Choosing the four primary options: (1) face-to-face communication and opportunities for personal involvement, (2) organizational media (sometimes called controlled media), (3) news media (uncontrolled media) and (4) advertising and promotional media (another form of controlled media). Reading Assignment: <i>Phase Three TACTICS - Step 8 Implementing the Strategic Plan</i> Smith, <i>Strategic Planning for Public Relations</i> (pp 211-226 and Examples, Exercise To Be Assigned)
Session 10 11 th Nov	Topic: Implementing the Strategic Plan Description: Introduction to the elements of a formal strategic plan, written with critical and clearly defined sections, including the documented research (previous course material), Goals and Objectives, Budgeting, Resources, Timelines, and Deliverables. Reading Assignment: <i>Phase Three TACTICS – Step 9 Evaluating the Strategic Plan</i> Smith, <i>Strategic Planning for Public Relations</i> (pp 231-251 and Examples, Exercise To Be Assigned)
Session 11 18 th Nov	Topic: Evaluating the Strategic Plan Description: This is the final planning element, indicating specific methods for measuring the effectiveness of each recommended tactic in meeting the stated objectives.

	Reading Assignment: Review of the four phases and nine steps to ensure they are applied to the final team project.
Session 12 25 th Nov	PR Campaign project tactics for designated client mapped to objectives Reading Assignment: Review course material and team presentation material to discuss the next lesson.
Session 13 2 nd Dec	Topic: Final Presentation Review and Final Exam Review Description: Review of Team Project Presentations and course content with a presentation on all the details of the final exam. Reading Assignment: N/A
Session 14 9 th Dec	Topic: Final Presentations and Competition Description: Student teams will present their project PR Strategic Plan to a 'Dragon's Den' type panel made up of PR experts from the participating firms.

6. Course Requirements and Assessment (with estimated workloads)

Assignment	Workload (average)	Weight in Final Grade	Evaluated Course-Specific Learning Outcomes	Evaluated Institutional Learning Outcomes*
CP Attendance and Class Participation (<i>Individual</i>)	42 hrs.	15%	See Participation on the e-learning site. Ability to read, think, and express ideas analytically, critically, and creatively. Ability to ask and answer questions relating to subject knowledge. Ability to communicate effectively in oral English. Ability to meet deadlines. Ability to identify and summarize key points relating to a topic.	Effective communication
CW1 Assignment No. 1: <i>Individual Presentation: PR in the News</i> – PPT-based presentation (with notes) on a previously agreed topic	20 hrs.	10%	Ability to recognize when information is needed and to locate, evaluate, and effectively use (including citation) that information. Ability to read, think, and express ideas analytically, critically, and creatively. Ability to identify and use fundamental principles, concepts, and methods essential for acquiring and applying knowledge. Ability to cite relevant texts. Ability to identify and summarize key points relating to a topic. Ability to create and give a	Effective Communication

			business presentation. Ability to explain a topic to peers. Ability to communicate effectively in oral and written English.	
E1 Quizzes (average of all quizzes will be used to determine % of 10% earned)	15 hrs.	10%	Prove that the discussed theory is correctly understood as well as implemented. Demonstrate understanding of how and where Public Relations fits within the Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) concept.	
E2 Midterm Exam	20 hrs.	15%	Prove that the discussed theory is correctly understood as well as implemented.	Effective and Reasonable Action Critical thinking
CW2 Assignment No. 2: PR Writing - Press Release and Advertorial	10 hrs.	10%	Practice specific PR writing skills, including writing a Press Release and creating an Advertorial.	Critical thinking
CW3 Assignment No. 3: Group Project - PR campaign tactics.	23 hrs.	20%	Ability to recognize when information is needed and to locate, evaluate, and effectively use (including citation) that information, applying the most effective tactic to achieve the desired outcome. Ability to work in a team.	Critical Thinking Effective Communication Effective and Reasonable Action
E3 Final Project Submission and Presentation	20 hrs.	20%	Prove that the discussed theory is correctly understood as well as implemented in the semester project.	Effective and Reasonable Action Critical thinking
TOTAL	150	100%		

*1 = Critical Thinking; 2 = Effective Communication; 3 = Effective and Responsible Action

Participation guidelines:

- Class participation and preparation – the lesson topics need to be studied from the indicated textbook beforehand so that an in-depth discussion can be held in each class.
- All students are expected to attend and participate in class. Missing class will seriously affect your grade! However, simply attending every class is *not* participation.
- Facebooking, surfing online, and texting are *not* considered active participation and are the fastest way to earn 0 points.
- Expect your course leader to keep track of how often you participate by actively responding to questions, asking questions, and engaging in class discussions to help earn your participation grade. If you are unsure, please ask your course leader what you can do to increase your participation grade.
- For further participation guidelines, please see the course NEO e-learning site.
- Any or all of the following will IMMEDIATELY reduce your participation grade by 10% for each occasion:

1. Arriving late for, or leaving early, a class, leaving a class apart from hourly breaks.
2. Continually talking. (This means talking for longer than a few seconds.)
3. Reading non-course related material, e.g., newspapers and magazines, or online, e.g., Facebook, during class.
4. Any breach of the **Electronic Devices policy** below.
5. Any other action that another student may reasonably find distracting during class.

Assignments. All assignments will be evaluated for clarity of writing, critical analysis of the issues, proper use of references to support positions taken, quality and diversity of sources, and the extent to which the assignment meets the requirements specified.

- See below for the detailed Course Assignment Grading Criteria.
- *Remember:* It is important to answer *all* aspects of the assignments.

As per university regulations, five academically respectable, correctly cited sources are the minimum expected for ALL assignments. Therefore, any assignments NOT meeting this standard will NOT be graded.

- **Written assignments must**, as a minimum, include a cover sheet, table of contents, abstract / executive summary, introduction, conclusion / summary / recommendations, and works cited / bibliography as separate pages. The main body of the paper should include a header (title of course, term and name of student) and footer (date and page number). The paper should have normal margins (1" on all sides) be single-sided, 1.5-spaced, **12-point font**, Times New Roman. Failure to meet ANY of the above requirements will result in the assignment not being graded.
- Creativity is to be demonstrated in the content of your paper. Your work should reflect your understanding of the material. An emphasis on synthesis and critical thinking rather than simply "reporting" is expected.
- For the group assignment, each group member must complete a Group Self-Assessment form (see: handout, available on the course Website). Failure to do so will result in the assignment not being graded.
- Your **presentation** must include a cover 'page', a list of contents, an introduction explaining what is to come and why it is important, a conclusion / summary, and a works cited and a bibliography at the end of the presentation, all as separate slides.
- Your **presentation** slide master must include a header (title, of course, term and name of student) and footer (date and page number).
- **All sources must be written in an academic style using** appropriate in-line citation (preferably **Harvard formatting: author, year, page number**). Information on proper Harvard citation is available as a link on the online class course space.
- Each presentation will be graded on your understanding of the topic, relevant data use, clarity, organization, time management, graphics, etc.

7. A detailed description of the assignments

Class Participation: All students are expected to attend and participate in class. Missing class will seriously affect your grade! However, simply attending every class is *not* participation. Facebooking, surfing online, and texting are *not* considered active

participation and are the fastest way to earn 0 points. Active and prepared participation in class discussions depends on having previously read and made notes on all the case studies. If you are unsure, please ask your course leader what you can do to increase your participation grade.

Assessment breakdown

Assessed area:	Percentage
Attendance rate, attending class on time, discussion	50%
Student not using PC and phone during class	50%
Total	100%

Assignment no. 1 - PR in the News - student presentations

Two students will choose a topic relating to the main topic of the scheduled class. It should relate to PR as a current issue. Both students' presentations should be around 10 minutes long. The topic of both students will be the same; however, each student will provide a different angle on the given concept. Specific topic ideas will be discussed at the beginning of the semester. A written version must be handed in as well as presented to fellow students in class. *Minimum six different academically respectable, properly cited sources.*

Assessment breakdown

Assessed area:	Percentage
Written presentation	40%
Presentation	40%
The overall quality of work and effort – presenting on the scheduled date	20%
Total	100%

Assignment no. 2 - PR writing - Press Release and Advertorial

Applying theoretical knowledge in creating a unique Press and Advertorial for a specified topic. It will be graded individually, and students will vote for the best one in class.

Assessment breakdown

Assessed area:	Percentage
Advertorial – content and overall appeal	50%
Press Release – content, Press Release elements	50%
Total	100%

Assignment no. 3 - Final Class Project - PR Campaign

PR Campaign Proposal for a specified organization – An in-depth PR Campaign will be prepared in groups for a specified organization. A written version is also to be submitted, as each group will present their findings in a 20-minute presentation at the end of the semester. All group members will also assess each other's efforts.

Assessment breakdown

Assessed area:	Percentage
Written Campaign Plan	40%
PowerPoint presentation	40%
The overall quality of work and effort	20%
Total	100%

8. General Requirements and School Policies

General requirements

All coursework is governed by AAU's academic rules. Students are expected to be familiar with the academic rules in the Academic Codex and Student Handbook and to maintain the highest standards of honesty and academic integrity in their work. Please see the AAU intranet for a [summary of key policies](#) regarding coursework.

Course specific requirements

There are no special requirements or deviations from AAU policies for this course.