

# Course Abstract

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*To foster a productive learning environment, the College requires that all students adhere to the Code of Student Conduct which is published in the college catalog and website.*

**Course ID and Name:** COM 120 Introduction to Public Relations

**Department:** Visual Performing Media Arts

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**Prerequisites:** ENG 121                      **Co-requisites:** N/A

## Course Description:

This introductory course explores the field of public relations, emphasizing the evolution, role, function and scope of public relation in American society. The course will include organizing programs and using the print and electronic media to implement such programs. Students will be exposed to staple writing activities such as news releases, brochures and pitch letters.

## General Education Status:

Credits:	Lecture Hours:	Lab Hours:
3	3	0

## Learning Outcomes:

1. Identify the basics of public relations writing, including the importance of writing objectives for various audiences and channels.
2. Distinguish the differences between various public relations models of message transmission.
3. Identify barriers to media coverage including timeliness, prominence, proximity, significance, utility and ethical procedures in creating messages (news).
4. Interpret mass media, comparing news releases w/fact sheets.
5. Organize pitch letters, media kits, community calendars and public service announcements.

## **Course Content Areas:**

### **Essential Components of Public Relations:**

Communication management, social responsibility, marketing and advertising. The public relations process is also examined, specific models include: the Traditional 4 Step Model, the Dynamic Model and Values-Driven Model.

### **Occupational Responsibilities:**

Traditional entry level tasks are examined, including boundary spanning, media relations, public affairs (government positions), community relations, business-to-business relations, consumer relations, investor relations (shareholders), non-profit organizations, agencies and consultants.

### **Evolution of Public Relations:**

A historical overview is examined, including the Progressive Era (1890s-1917), the expansion of democracy and technological improvements. Historical figures of public relations and their contributions include Theodore Roosevelt, Ivy Ledbetter Lee and Edward Bernays.

### **Theoretical Perspectives Regarding Public Relations:**

Theories analyzed include the Magic Bullet Theory, The Two-Step Theory, The N-Step Theory, Diffusion Theory, The Agenda-Setting Hypothesis, Uses and Gratifications Theory and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. The concept of Public Opinion is also examined as well as ethics and the Potter Box, a model used in ethical crises.

### **Research and Evaluation:**

Developing research strategies and understanding various methodologies. Concepts include the Communication Audit, Feedback Research, Quantitative Research, Secondary Research, Focus Groups and Survey Research. Survey samples are examined, including sampling frames, units of analysis, probability sampling, non-probability sampling and systematic sampling. An analysis of survey results include the differences between attributes and variables as well as univariate analysis, bivariate analysis and multivariate analysis.

### **Public Relations Planning:**

Values-driven planning includes Ad Hoc Plans, Standing Plans and Contingency Plans. The essence of a plan is examined including consensus building, brainstorming, goals/objectives/tactics and proposals (written version of an expanded plan).

### **Tactics and Traditional Publics:**

Various publics are examined in addition to the tactics used to communication with such publics. Tactics include face-to-face meetings, newsletters, magazines, videos, bulletin boards, speeches, intranets, e-mails, instant messaging, news releases, media kits, media advisories, pitch letters, video news releases, actualities, news conferences, public service announcements, annual reports and websites.

**Writing and Presentation Skills:**

The 10 step writing process is examined, which includes credibility, research, organization, writing, revision, macroediting, microediting, approval, distribution and evaluation. The presentation process includes researching the topic under discussion, planning the presentation, making the presentation and evaluating the presentation.

**Crisis Communications:**

An in depth analysis of crisis communications includes characteristics of the warning stage, point of no return stage, clean-up stage and things return to normal stage. Opportunities which may arise as a result of crisis are also examined. Crisis planning includes the 4 stage process; risk assessment, developing the plan, response and recovery.

**P.R. in the Digital Age**

The growth of consumer-focused marketing is analyzed, including integrated marketing communications, database marketing, customer-relationship marketing and integrated brand communication.

**Cross-Cultural Communication:**

Demographic/psychographic/geodemographics are examined as well as the concept of globalization. Cultural attributes are studied, which include chronemics, attitudes about formality, individualism, attitudes about rank and hierarchy, religion and diet. Cross-cultural public relations includes the 9 step process; awareness, commitment, research, local partnership, diversity, testing, evaluation, advocacy and continuing education.

**Legal Issues:**

Certain legal perspectives regarding public relations includes the Federal Trade Commission, The Federal Communications Commission, the Food and Drug Administration and copyright guidelines.