

MODULE 7: Public Relations Theory & Practice

Stage	1						
Semester	2						
Module Title	Public Relations Theory & Practice						
Module Number/Reference	7						
Module Status (Mandatory/Elective)	M						
Module ECTS credit	10						
Module NFQ level (only if applicable)	9						
Pre-requisite Module Titles	Research Methods						
Co-requisite Module Titles	Corporate PR, Political Communications						
Is this a capstone module? (Yes or No)	No						
List of Module Teaching Personnel	Robbie Smyth, Catherine Heaney						
Contact Hours				Non-contact Hours			Total Effort (Hours)
Lecture	Practical	Tutorial	Seminar	Assignment	Placement	Independent work	
48			12	84		96	240
Allocation of Marks (Within the Module)							
	Continuous Assessment	Project	Practical	Final Examination	Total		
Percentage contribution	100				100		

Intended Module Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this module, the learner will be able to:

1. Demonstrate an in depth understanding of the principles and theoretical underpinnings of public relations as well as its origins and history,
2. Critically assess both the relationship between new media and public relations practice and the impact of new media on PR and its development.
3. Evaluate, critically discuss and select appropriate PR tools and practices in order to develop an effective PR strategy.
4. Distinguish between the categories and sectors of PR activities and demonstrate a critical understanding of the academic research that has been conducted in these areas.
5. Synthesise the appropriate theory into a number of practical and applied contexts.

Module Objectives

This module seeks to introduce learners to the concepts and theories underpinning public relations. The learners examine the origins and history of public relations, including the different classifications of PR roles, categories, industry ethical and

professional standards, and the steps involved in the generation of strategic and tactical plans. It also demonstrates the role that media content creators play in the PR environment both as a receiver and creator of PR messages.

Module Aims

This module aims to:

- (1) Explore the role, process, strategies, functions, applications and tactics of public relations from a theoretical and applied perspective.
- (2) Enhance understanding of the discipline and services provided by public relations professionals, for those planning careers in public relations.
- (3) Enhance understanding of the complex relationship between public relations and the media.

Module Curriculum

Indicative Syllabus

(1) Origins History and Definitions

Definitions of PR? The origins of modern PR, Bernays and Ledbetter Lee.
The culture of PR
Examples of PR professionals, their skill sets and type of work.

(2) PR Principles

Code of Practice
Corporate Social Responsibility
Legal and Ethical considerations
Reputation Management, the Corporate Image
Commitment to research, fact finding, maintaining records

(3) Identifying Publics

Communication approaches
The approaches of Grunig and Hunt
Situational Analysis
The four models of public relations practice

(4) Media channels

Cost / Timing implications: Print, Radio or TV
Considering the Target Audience
PR in the context of Advertising and Marketing
PR by association: e.g. sponsorship, special events
Case studies in PR management

(5) Presenting the Message: PR Tasks

Planning, Investigation Researching
Considering the particular public being targeted
Structuring a PR programme
Measurement and Evaluation
Organising events and press conferences:

Generating PR media content, press releases, speeches, reports

(6) Case Studies

NGO PR

The NGO and charity environment in Ireland

Profile creation and fund raising

Activist PR

Communication on environmental issues

Protests and PR

Reading lists and other learning materials

Recommended Reading

Butterick Keith, (2011) *Introducing Public Relations – Theory and Practice*, Sage

Davis Anthony (2007) *Mastering Public Relations*, Palgrave

Franklin Et al, (2009) *Key Concepts in Public Relations*, Sage

Gordon Averill Elizabeth, (2011) *Public Relations*, Oxford

Gunning Ellen, (2007) *Public Relations – A practical Approach*, 2nd edition, Gill and MacMillan

Sriramesh Krishnamurthy, [Vercic](#) Dejan , editors, (2009) *The Global Public Relations Handbook, Revised and Expanded Edition: Theory, Research, and Practice*, 2nd edition, Routledge

Secondary Reading

Bernays Edward, L, (2004) *Public Relations*, Kessinger Publishing

Bernays Edward, L, (2004) *Propaganda*, Ig Publishing

Boykoff Maxwell T, (2011) *Who Speaks for the Climate? Making Sense of Media Reporting on Climate Change*, Cambridge University Press

Breakenridge Deirdre K, (2012) *Social Media and Public Relations: Eight New Practices for the PR Professional*, Prentice Hall

Chartered Institute of Public Relations Social Media Panel, (2012) *Share This: The Social Media Handbook for PR Professionals*, John Wiley & Sons

Curtin Patricia A, Gaither T. Kenn, (2007) *International Public Relations: Negotiating Culture, Identity, and Power*, Sage

Foster John, (2012) *Writing Skills for Public Relations: Style and Technique for Mainstream and Social Media (PR In Practice)*, Kogan Page.

Goodwin Jeff, Jasper James M, editors, (2009) *The Social Movements Reader: Cases and Concepts*, 2nd edition, Blackwell.

Hansen Anders (2010) *Environment, Media and Communication*, Routledge

Lester Libby (2010) *Media and Environment: Conflict, Politics and the News*, Polity

Morris Trevor, Goldsworthy Simon, (2011) *PR Today: The Authoritative Guide to Public Relations*, Palgrave Macmillan.

Oliver Sandra, (2010) *Public Relations Strategy (PR in Practice)*, 3rd edition, Kogan Page

Opp Karl-Dieter, (2009) *Theories of Political Protest and Social Movements: A Multidisciplinary Introduction, Critique, and Synthesis*, Routledge.

Regeister Michael, Larkin Judy, (2008) *Risk Issues and Crisis Management in Public Relations: A Casebook of Best Practice (PR In Practice)*, Kogan Page

Sellnow Timothy L, Seeger Matthew W, (2013) *Theorizing Crisis Communication*, Wiley

Tench Ralph, Yeomans Liz, (2007) *Exploring Public Relations*, Sage
Theaker Alison, (2012) *The Public Relations Handbook*, 4th edition, Routledge
Theaker Alison, Yaxley Heather, (2012) *The Public Relations Strategic Toolkit: An Essential Guide to Successful Public Relations Practice*, Routledge

Academic Journals

Learners are introduced to the academic journals such as Public Relations Inquiry, Journal Public Relations Research, Public Relations Quarterly, Public Relations Review, Public Relations Journal and Public Relations Tactics.

Module Learning Environment

The key initial task is to introduce learners to origins and history of PR, moving on the theoretical principles and concepts that underpin contemporary PR practice. demonstrating the media context and using that as a springboard for the learners first assignment which is a PR project, either developing a PR plan or if the learners are specializing in visual and design modules they are given the task of designing a range of PR material for a client. Piecing together a PR plan provides the learners with an incentive to embrace the concepts of PR reading into the topic in a theoretical way.

Module Teaching and Learning Strategy

This ten credit module involves directing and supporting the learner through a considerable amount of independent reading and research. The module material is dealt with through set piece lectures tutorials and seminars. The lectures introduce the key subject areas with the tutorials structured to assist learners in the assignment work. The seminars are structured around learner presentations on academic readings and on their own assignment work. In particular assignments 3 and 4 involve presentation of the work in a class setting with the learner leading discussion, while fielding queries on their work.

Module Assessment Strategy

Learners are required to complete four assignments. The major work is an academic essay which aims to meet learning outcomes 1 and 4. The literature review meets learning outcomes 1, 2 and 4. Assignment 3 deals specifically with learning outcome 3 and 5. Assignment 4 returns focus to the 1, 2 and 4th learning outcomes.

Element Number	Weighting	Type	Description
1	50	Academic essay	A series of topics will be offered to learners to complete a major work, approximately 2,500 to 3,000 words
2	20	Literature review	Learners will select an active PR area, research and write a short literature review on the area, approximately 2000 words
3	20	Media Analysis	Learners will select an NGO, environmental, or activist PR story gaining media coverage and critically analyse the PR processes at work, approximately 1,500 words
4	10	In class presentation	Learner will make a presentation on a key reading, take questions and lead class discussion.