



MAS 389

Public Relations Theories

MQC1 Day 2014

Dept of Media, Music & Cultural Studies

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Disclaimer

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Unit Convenor

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Moderator

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Credit points

3

Prerequisites

6cp at 200 level

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

This unit is a critical introduction to the theory and practice of public relations (PR). In this unit, you will be asked to explore the dominant perceptions of PR. At the same time, you will investigate its presence in our everyday life. Various theories and critiques of PR and an exploration of the relationship between PR and the media and other stakeholders will occupy the first half of the unit. In the second half, we will examine specific PR contexts, including corporate, government, NGOs, international relations, internal communications, and crisis communication. At a practical level, you will be required to write a media release and to justify your rationale in a class presentation. Overall, the course will enable you to be informed about the role that PR plays in our social, political and cultural environments. It will also help develop strong conceptual and analytical foundations as well as creative and presentation skills necessary to design a PR campaign in the next unit, MAS390, in preparation for a career in public communication.

Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at <https://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-dates>

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge of the role and place of PR in contemporary society
- Understand, evaluate and critique the principles and theories of public relations
- Present and debate ideas confidently to a group
- Exhibit high level English writing skills
- Analyse issues and synthesise them in a way that is understandable to others

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Due
<u>Write media release</u>	25%	4pm, Tuesday 29 April
<u>Presentation on media release</u>	10%	From Week 3
<u>Write-up of class presentation</u>	20%	One week after presentation
<u>Essay</u>	35%	12pm, Wednesday, June 11. 2014
<u>Participation</u>	10%	Ongoing

Write media release

Due: **4pm, Tuesday 29 April**

Weighting: **25%**

You will prepare a media release on a social, political or commercial development/issue of your choice. It should be both newsworthy and meet the perceived objectives of the client. Your release will target a specific journalist and/or media outlet.

Choose an existing organisation, possibly one you have connections with (as employee or volunteer), research it and then write a media release on a realistic development/issue for that organisation. The organisation must be real and the development/issue you are writing about must be realistic, however it must not have taken place already.

Your media release should reflect your understanding of the organisation, the complexities of the development/issue and why it is relevant for your targeted audience.

A media release is a professional piece of writing. It should be written at a level acceptable to the media: its construction, content and creativity are important and should exhibit high level English writing skills.

Length: 2 pages (1000 words) maximum plus rationale cover page. Please submit to turnitin AND a hard copy to your lecturer on 29 April, 2014.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Understand, evaluate and critique the principles and theories of public relations
- Exhibit high level English writing skills
- Analyse issues and synthesise them in a way that is understandable to others

Presentation on media release

Due: **From Week 3**

Weighting: **10%**

You must relate the relevance of the issue you are covering in your media release to an aspect of the coursework and present on it to the class. You are required to find at least one academic journal article or book reference that relates to the topic in addition to the reader.

In a brief presentation, you will attempt to persuade your tutorial group on an issue directly relevant to your media release in a way that relates to the theory covered in the course.

On successful completion you will be able to:

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Write-up of class presentation

Due: **One week after presentation**

Weighting: **20%**

This is a formal write-up of the rationale behind your media release which was covered in your class presentation. It should include any feedback you received from audience. You should present your ideas clearly and succinctly. It is due a week after your presentation (ie at your next tutorial) and should be referenced. Length: maximum 750 words.

On successful completion you will be able to:

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Essay

Due: **12pm, Wednesday, June 11. 2014**

Weighting: **35%**

The essay questions will be distributed in Week 5. You are expected to conduct a fair degree of independent research, draw on relevant readings beyond the reader and demonstrate a broad understanding of the issues relevant to the essay question. You will be rewarded for: demonstrating critical thinking, drawing your own conclusions, correct grammar and spelling, clean layout and correct referencing. Length: 1500 words.

On successful completion you will be able to:

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Participation

Due: **Ongoing**

Weighting: **10%**

All tutorials are compulsory and you must be an active participant. Attendance registers will be taken and if you miss more than two tutorials you have to submit a medical certificate. Please note that attendance does not constitute participation. Marks for participation will be based on: punctuality, preparation and familiarity with readings, actively taking part in discussions and group activities and asking well-thought out questions. Failure to prepare for tutorials will result in forfeiture of this assessment component.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge of the role and place of PR in contemporary society
- Present and debate ideas confidently to a group
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Delivery and Resources

Technology

Online units can be accessed at: <http://ilearn.mq.edu.au/>.

PC and Internet access are required. Basic computer skills (e.g., internet browsing) and skills in word processing are also a requirement.

Please consult teaching staff for any further, more specific requirements.

Lecture times

There will be two hour lectures and one hour tutorials every week on Tuesdays during Session 1. Attendance is taken routinely for both lectures and tutorials and count towards participation.

Required and recommended texts and/or materials

All required readings are in the MAS389 Public Relations Theories: Unit Reader available from the Co Op Bookshop on Phillip Street in Sydney CBD. Additional resources that may be useful or interesting to you will be posted on iLearn. This means that new resources will be made available to you as they come to hand.

Useful textbooks include:

Chia, J. and Synnott, G. (Eds). 2012. *An Introduction to Public Relations and Communication Management*. Melbourne: Oxford University Press.

Johnston, J., & Zawawi, C. (Eds). 2009. *Public relations: Theory and Practice*. Sydney: Allen & Unwin.

Macnamara, J. 2012. *Public relations: theories, practices, critiques*. Sydney: Pearson Australia.

L'Etang, J. 2008. *Public Relations: concepts, practice and critique*. London: Sage Publications.

Unit Schedule

Week 1	Lecture: Introduction and outline of assessments. No tutorial in Week 1. For readings for every week, refer to the unit reader and to ilearn.
Week 2	Lecture & discussion themes: Defining PR and its history <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is public relations? Is it an independent discipline or a sub-section of something else?• What are the differences between PR, marketing and advertising?• What is the general perception about PR?• What are your perceptions about PR and those who practice it?
Week 3	Lecture & discussion themes: PR and media: symbiosis? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is the relationship between PR and the media?• How should PR people work most effectively with journalists and vice versa?• The media release: what is its structure, important characteristics?• How have new technologies influenced communication with journalists?

Week 4	<p>Lecture & discussion themes: Publics and public opinion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is a public?• What is the process by which public opinion is formed?• What is the difference between publics and target audiences?• Why have publics been so important in PR?• How are publics categorised?
Week 5	<p>Lecture & discussion themes: Public relations theories and concepts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Propaganda and persuasion theory - how helpful are they for a PR practitioner?• What is the role of emotion in persuasion?
Week 6	<p>Lecture & discussion themes: Stakeholders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How useful is the concept of stakeholder theory in PR?• What are the advantages and the pitfalls?
Week 7	<p>Lecture & discussion themes: Research - for practitioner and student</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Why is research important for PR practitioners?• What are the most useful forms?• What research should be undertaken by academics?
Week 8	<p>Lecture & discussion themes: Ethical behaviour</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is the difference between ethics and morals?• How does this apply to the practice of PR?• Self-regulation vs industry regulation
Week 9	<p>Lecture & discussion themes: PR and new technologies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How have new technologies influenced PR practice and theory?• How successfully are they being used?• What are some of the ways in which social media is being used to improve crisis communication?

Week 10	<p>Lecture & discussion themes: PR in a crisis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is the role of PR in crisis management?• What is the difference between issues management and crisis management?• What are the principles of good crisis management?• How does the way a crisis is handled affect an organisation's or individual's reputation?• Consider some of the crises covered by the media in the last year. How were they managed?• Is political PR a case of ongoing crisis management?
Week 11	<p>Lecture & discussion themes: PR and government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How important is PR in the democratic process?• What role do media advisors play in this election campaign?• What is the role of PR in the relationships between government and businesses and NGOs?• What is the role of lobbying?
Week 12	<p>Lecture & discussion themes: International PR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How would you define international PR?• Are there differences in approaches between global PR consultancies and international NGOs?• What is the difference between how domestic and international publics are viewed by an international PR strategist?
Week 13	<p>Lecture & discussion themes: Internal communication, unit review and the way forward</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is internal PR?• Is good external PR dependent on good internal communication?• How can the organisation benefit from good internal comms?• Have your perceptions about PR and PR practitioners changed since the beginning of semester? Why/why not?• Does PR deserve its bad reputation as spin doctoring?• Has the subject increased your interest in studying further in PR, taking an internship and furthering a career in comms?

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central](#). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

Academic Honesty Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/academic_honesty/policy.html

Assessment Policy <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy.html>

Grading Policy <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grading/policy.html>

Grade Appeal Policy <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/gradeappeal/policy.html>

Grievance Management Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grievance_management/policy.html

Disruption to Studies Policy http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/disruption_studies/policy.html *The Disruption to Studies Policy is effective from March 3 2014 and replaces the Special Consideration Policy.*

In addition, a number of other policies can be found in the [Learning and Teaching Category](#) of Policy Central.

Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: https://students.mq.edu.au/support/student_conduct/

Grades

Macquarie University uses the following grades in coursework units of study:

- HD - High Distinction
- D - Distinction
- CR - Credit
- P - Pass
- F – Fail

Grade descriptors and other information concerning grading are contained in the Macquarie University Grading Policy which is available at:

<http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grading/policy.html>

For further information, please refer to the following link:

<http://universitycouncil.mq.edu.au/legislation.html>

Grade Appeals and Final Examination Script Viewing

If, at the conclusion of the unit, you have performed below expectations, and are considering lodging an appeal of grade and/or viewing your final exam script please refer to the following website which provides information about these processes and the cut off dates in the first instance. Please read the instructions provided concerning what constitutes a valid grounds for

appeal before appealing your grade.

<http://www.city.mq.edu.au/reviews-appeals.html>

Attendance at Macquarie City Campus

All Students are required to attend at least 80% of the scheduled course contact hours each Session. Additionally Macquarie City Campus monitors the course progress of international students to ensure that the student complies with the conditions of their visa relating to attendance.

This minimum level of attendance includes all lectures and tutorials. Tutorial attendance will be recorded weekly. If any scheduled class falls on a public holiday this will be rescheduled as advised by your Lecturer. Attendance at any mid-Session or in-class test is compulsory unless otherwise stated.

Unavoidable non-attendance due to illness or circumstances beyond your control must be supported by appropriate documentation to be considered for a supplementary test. Other non-attendance will obtain zero for the test. You should refer to the section below on Special Consideration for more details about this.

Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit <http://students.mq.edu.au/support/>

Learning Skills

Learning Skills (mq.edu.au/learningskills) provides academic writing resources and study strategies to improve your marks and take control of your study.

- [Workshops](#)
- [StudyWise](#)
- [Academic Integrity Module for Students](#)
- [Ask a Learning Adviser](#)

Student Services and Support

Students with a disability are encouraged to contact the [Disability Service](#) who can provide appropriate help with any issues that arise during their studies.

Student Enquiries

For all student enquiries, visit Student Connect at ask.mq.edu.au

Student Support at Macquarie City Campus

Students who require assistance are encouraged to contact the Student Services Manager at Macquarie City Campus. Please see reception to book an appointment.

Macquarie University provides a range of Academic Student Support Services. Details of these services can be accessed at <http://students.mq.edu.au/support/>

At any time students (or groups of students) can book our Student Advising rooms on Level 6 by emailing info@city.mq.edu.au with a day and time and nominated contact person. There are additional student study spaces available on Level 1.

Macquarie University Campus Wellbeing also has a presence on the City Campus each week. If you would like to make an appointment, please email info@city.mq.edu.au or visit their website at: <http://www.campuslife.mq.edu.au/campuswellbeing>

StudyWISE provides:

- Online learning resources and academic skills workshops http://www.mq.edu.au/learning_skills
- Personal assistance with your learning & study related questions

IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit <http://informatics.mq.edu.au/help/>.

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the [Acceptable Use Policy](#). The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.

IT Help at Macquarie City Campus

If you wish to receive IT help, we would be glad to assist you at <http://informatics.mq.edu.au/help/> or call 02 9850-4357.

When using the university's IT, you must adhere to the Acceptable Use Policy. The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students and it outlines what can be done.

Students must use their Macquarie University email addresses to communicate with staff as it is University policy that the University issued email account is used for official University communication.

Students are expected to act responsibly when utilising Macquarie City Campus IT facilities. The following regulations apply to the use of computing facilities and online services:

- Accessing inappropriate web sites or downloading inappropriate material is not permitted.
- Material that is not related to coursework for approved unit is deemed inappropriate.
- Downloading copyright material without permission from the copyright owner is illegal, and strictly prohibited. Students detected undertaking such activities will face disciplinary action, which may result in criminal proceedings.

Non-compliance with these conditions may result in disciplinary action without further notice.

If you would like to borrow headphones for use in the Macquarie City Campus computer labs (210, 307, 311, 608) at any point, please ask at Level 2 Reception. You will be required to provide your MQC Student ID card. This will be held as a deposit while using the equipment.

For assistance in the computer labs, please see a Lab Demonstrator (usually they can be found in Lab 311, otherwise ask at Level 2 Reception).

Graduate Capabilities

Capable of Professional and Personal Judgement and Initiative

We want our graduates to have emotional intelligence and sound interpersonal skills and to demonstrate discernment and common sense in their professional and personal judgement. They will exercise initiative as needed. They will be capable of risk assessment, and be able to handle ambiguity and complexity, enabling them to be adaptable in diverse and changing environments.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Demonstrate knowledge of the role and place of PR in contemporary society
- Understand, evaluate and critique the principles and theories of public relations
- Present and debate ideas confidently to a group

Discipline Specific Knowledge and Skills

Our graduates will take with them the intellectual development, depth and breadth of knowledge, scholarly understanding, and specific subject content in their chosen fields to make them competent and confident in their subject or profession. They will be able to demonstrate, where relevant, professional technical competence and meet professional standards. They will be able

to articulate the structure of knowledge of their discipline, be able to adapt discipline-specific knowledge to novel situations, and be able to contribute from their discipline to inter-disciplinary solutions to problems.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Demonstrate knowledge of the role and place of PR in contemporary society
- Understand, evaluate and critique the principles and theories of public relations
- Present and debate ideas confidently to a group
- Exhibit high level English writing skills

Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking

We want our graduates to be capable of reasoning, questioning and analysing, and to integrate and synthesise learning and knowledge from a range of sources and environments; to be able to critique constraints, assumptions and limitations; to be able to think independently and systemically in relation to scholarly activity, in the workplace, and in the world. We want them to have a level of scientific and information technology literacy.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Demonstrate knowledge of the role and place of PR in contemporary society
- Understand, evaluate and critique the principles and theories of public relations
- Present and debate ideas confidently to a group
- Analyse issues and synthesise them in a way that is understandable to others

Problem Solving and Research Capability

Our graduates should be capable of researching; of analysing, and interpreting and assessing data and information in various forms; of drawing connections across fields of knowledge; and they should be able to relate their knowledge to complex situations at work or in the world, in order to diagnose and solve problems. We want them to have the confidence to take the initiative in doing so, within an awareness of their own limitations.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Demonstrate knowledge of the role and place of PR in contemporary society
- Understand, evaluate and critique the principles and theories of public relations
- Present and debate ideas confidently to a group
- Exhibit high level English writing skills
- Analyse issues and synthesise them in a way that is understandable to others

Creative and Innovative

Our graduates will also be capable of creative thinking and of creating knowledge. They will be imaginative and open to experience and capable of innovation at work and in the community. We want them to be engaged in applying their critical, creative thinking.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Exhibit high level English writing skills
- Analyse issues and synthesise them in a way that is understandable to others

Effective Communication

We want to develop in our students the ability to communicate and convey their views in forms effective with different audiences. We want our graduates to take with them the capability to read, listen, question, gather and evaluate information resources in a variety of formats, assess, write clearly, speak effectively, and to use visual communication and communication technologies as appropriate.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Exhibit high level English writing skills
- Analyse issues and synthesise them in a way that is understandable to others

Changes since First Published

Date	Description
16/01/2014	The Prerequisites was updated.