

	<b>FLORENCE UNIVERSITY OF THE ARTS</b> THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF FLORENCE	<b>SYLLABUS</b>	Rev. 8 April 2025 Academic Affairs
---	---	-----------------	--

Format revised 2025  
 Syllabus revised 2025

Florence University of the Arts (FUA) is an academic institution for study abroad in Florence, Italy. FUA collaborates with The American University of Florence (AUF), an international university offering US-style undergraduate and graduate degrees, in a cooperation to offer study abroad programs with a diverse breadth and depth of academic curriculum.

FUA study abroad programs may include AUF offerings, which are US-aligned in terms of higher education standards as per the university's institutional structure. Common courses offered by FUA and AUF have been jointly selected by both institutions as eligible for mutual recognition and delivery. As such, equal academic standards, credibility, and outcomes are vetted by the Academic Offices of the institutions for all courses and syllabi offered in the study abroad program.

## DEPARTMENT OF MASS COMMUNICATION

COURSE TITLE: INTRODUCTION TO PUBLIC RELATIONS

COURSE CODE: CPMCCP150

3 semester credits

### 1. DESCRIPTION

This course introduces students to the strategic roles and functions of the Public Relations (PR) practitioner. Students evaluate the context in which PR is practiced, gain an understanding of the potential and practice of PR as a management function, and critically analyze the structure of PR management, its role, and techniques. In addition, students will be introduced to the rhetorical arguments that impact PR activities and will be made aware of the importance of professionalism and ethics in the practice of public relations.

### 2. OBJECTIVES

The aim of this course is to provide an introduction to the fundamentals of the Public Relations process, its professional strategies and its most common activities.

At the end of the course students should be able to:

- recognize the steps of the PR process and their related activities
- define public relations and identify instances of PR in multiple contexts;
- develop a basic PR campaign plan and know the fundamental stages to implement it
- analyze and evaluate the results of a PR campaign
- know how to prepare a news release
- understand the relations between PR and social media

### 3. REQUIREMENTS

There are no prerequisites for this course.

### 4. METHOD

This course consists of lectures, class discussions, projects, and interaction with the local community. Mediums for instruction used will include, but are not limited to, interactive and hands-on activities which challenge thought processes, integrate relevant academic sources, may include multimedia references, propose creative problem-solving, and other appropriate forms of delivery as deemed appropriate to the course's purpose.

### 5. TEXTBOOK – FURTHER READINGS – RESOURCES

TEXTBOOK (Copy available at the university library):

T. Morris, S. Goldsworthy, *PR Today. The authoritative guide to public relations*. Palgrave MacMillan, 2012

The textbook is mandatory for course participation and completion. Where applicable additional materials may be provided by the instructor.

### FURTHER READINGS

Cutlip, S.M., Center, A.H., Broom, G.M. *Effective Public Relations*. Pearson Education, 2006.

Guth, David W. and Marsh, Charles. *Adventures in Public Relations: Case Studies and Critical Thinking*. Boston, Mass.; Allyn and Bacon, 2005.

Newsom, Doug, Van Slyke, Judy, and Kruckeberg, Turk and Dean. *This is PR: The Realities of Public Relations*. 9th edition. Thomson/Wadsworth, 2006.

Smith, Ronald. D. *Strategic Planning for Public Relations*. 3rd edition. Routledge, 2009.

Wilcox, Dennis L. and Cameron, Glen T. *Public Relations: Strategies and Tactics*, 10th edition, Pearson Education Inc., 2012.

## LIBRARY

Course participants may access the campus library. Please consult the posted schedules for official opening times. Texts may be consulted on-site, and scanning/internet services available.

## 6. COURSE MATERIALS

No additional course materials are necessary.

## 7. COURSE FEES

Course fees cover course-related field learning activities, visits, and support the instructor's teaching methodologies. Book costs are not included in the course fee. If this course requires a fee, the exact amount is communicated prior to enrollment.

## 8. GRADING AND EVALUATION & ATTENDANCE

10% Attendance  
20% Class Participation and Assignments  
20% Midterm Assessment  
25% Final Exam  
25% Paper/Project

The above grade breakdown percentages reflect the grading scale standards in the "Grading and Evaluation System" section of the catalog.

### Attendance

Class participation is mandatory. Based on the hours defined in the Academic Catalog's attendance policy, students may miss up to 2 class encounters delivered as lecture hours. A third absence constitutes a course failure.

Please note that absence hours may vary according to the learning methodology, as per the academic catalog policy on credit hours:

[https://catalog.fua.it/standard\\_regulation](https://catalog.fua.it/standard_regulation)

## 9. EXAMS / PROJECTS / ASSIGNMENTS

Midterm Assessment: Analyze the differences and relationships between Public Relations, Advertising, and Marketing.

Write a reflective essay (approx. 500-750 words) that:

- Defines and explains the core functions of PR, Advertising, and Marketing
- Discusses the differences and similarities between the three disciplines
- Provides examples of how PR, Advertising, and Marketing intersect or diverge in real-world scenarios

Consider the following questions:

- What are the primary goals and objectives of each discipline?
- How do PR, Advertising, and Marketing contribute to an organization's overall communication strategy?

- What are the key challenges and opportunities in integrating PR, Advertising, and Marketing efforts?

Final Exam: **The time and date of the exam cannot be changed for any reason.** Format: the exam is divided into two sections:

- Part I: 13 short-answer questions.
- Part II: three essay questions.

The Final Exam is cumulative

Final Project: Develop a comprehensive PR campaign that demonstrates understanding of key concepts and strategies.

Form a group of 3-4 students.

Choose a hypothetical client (e.g., local business, non-profit, event) or a brand.

Develop a PR campaign that includes:

- Situation analysis (target audience, goals)
- Key messaging and positioning
- Media and tactics (traditional and/or digital)
- Budget and timeline
- Evaluation plan

Then prepare a written report (approx. 1,000-1,500 words) where you:

- Describe the campaign strategy and rationale
- Outline the tactics and media channels
- Include a budget and timeline

Prepare a visual presentation that will be presented to the class.

Assignments: This course requires at least 3 assignments as per the course outline in the syllabus.

Further details are provided in the course portal.

## 10. COURSE OUTLINE

Lesson 1	
Meet	In class
Lecture	Understanding Public Relations. Presentation of the course; introduction to the class syllabus. Information on assignments and exams. Information on field trips and related activities. Bibliography and suggested readings.
Objectives	Students will be informed on the level, requirements, and main contents and practices of the course. Students will be familiar with the global scope of the public relations industry.
Readings/Assignments	<p>Chapter 1, T. Morris, S. Goldsworthy, <i>PR Today</i>.</p> <p>Assignment #1 assigned, due by next class meet:</p> <p>Choose a simple PR case study (e.g., company responding to customer complaint on social media).</p> <p>Identify the key ethical issues (e.g., honesty, transparency, respect).</p> <p>Write a short reflection (approx. 250-500 words) on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The ethical implications of the situation</li> <li>- How PR ethics principles can guide the response</li> <li>- Potential consequences of different actions</li> </ul>

Lesson 2	
Meet	In class
Lecture	PR Ethics
Objectives	Students will become familiar with PR ethical dilemmas and ethical professionalism in PR in different working situations.

<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	Chapter 2, T. Morris, S. Goldsworthy, <i>PR Today</i> .
----------------------------------	---

<b>Lesson 3</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	The make-up of the PR industry
<b>Objectives</b>	Understand the various branches of working in the PR industry.
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	<p>Chapter 3, T. Morris, S. Goldsworthy, <i>PR Today</i>.</p> <p>Assignment #2 assigned, due by next class meet:</p> <p>Choose a brand or organization with a strong online presence.</p> <p>Identify their current social media platforms and content strategy.</p> <p>Develop a proposal for a social media campaign to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Engage with a specific target audience</li> <li>- Achieve a specific PR goal (e.g., increase brand awareness, manage crisis)</li> </ul> <p>Write a concise report (approx. 250-500 words) that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Describes the brand's current online presence</li> <li>- Outlines your proposed social media campaign</li> <li>- Explains the potential benefits and challenges</li> </ul>

<b>Lesson 4</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	PR, marketing and advertising.
<b>Objectives</b>	Understand the connections and the difference between PR, marketing, and advertising.
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	<p>Chapter 4, T. Morris, S. Goldsworthy, <i>PR Today</i>.</p> <p>FINAL PROJECT OVERVIEW.</p>

<b>Lesson 5</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	PR in the online world
<b>Objectives</b>	Students will grasp the connections between a PR campaign and the use of the Internet and social media to maximize its results.
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	<p>Chapter 7, T. Morris, S. Goldsworthy, <i>PR Today</i>.</p> <p>MIDTERM ASSESSMENT ASSIGNED, due prior to next class meet.</p>

<b>Lesson 6</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	PR and the law
<b>Objectives</b>	Know how to handle a sampling of legal problems concerning PR (privacy, copyright, trademark, employee speech, etc.)
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	Chapter 9, T. Morris, S. Goldsworthy, <i>PR Today</i> .

<b>Lesson 7</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	Planning and strategy: POSTAR
<b>Objectives</b>	Become familiar with the most common and efficient strategies to handle a PR campaign on classical and new media.
<b>Readings</b>	<p>Chapter 10, T. Morris, S. Goldsworthy, <i>PR Today</i>.</p> <p>Assignment #3 assigned, due by next lesson:</p> <p>Choose a PR case study (e.g., product launch, crisis communication, awareness campaign).</p> <p>Identify the target audience and key message.</p> <p>Develop a persuasive communication plan that incorporates:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Rhetorical devices (e.g., ethos, pathos, logos)</li> <li>- Emotional appeals</li> <li>- Credible sources</li> </ul> <p>Write a concise report (approx. 250-500 words) that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Describes the PR scenario and target audience</li> <li>- Outlines your persuasive communication plan</li> <li>- Explains the potential impact on the audience</li> </ul>
--	--

<b>Lesson 8</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	PR in practice: Pitching stories and Media Skills
<b>Objectives</b>	Develop a basic awareness of pitching strategies required by the PR profession. Develop a basic awareness of media skills required by the PR profession. Devising a news release.
<b>Readings</b>	Chapter 11-12, T. Morris, S. Goldsworthy, <i>PR Today</i> .

<b>Lesson 9</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	Crisis management: the power of persuasion & reaching multicultural audiences
<b>Objectives</b>	Identify crisis related to a PR context and learn possible techniques and strategies to provide effective solutions. Students will be able to identify the elements according to which to segment relevant target audiences for specific PR activities.
<b>Readings</b>	Chapter 14, T. Morris, S. Goldsworthy, <i>PR Today</i> . Chapter 15, T. Morris, S. Goldsworthy, <i>PR Today</i> . FINAL PROJECT DUE

<b>Lesson 10</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	Event management within a PR campaign
<b>Objectives</b>	Learn the fundamental elements and strategies to arrange and conduct events related to a PR campaign
<b>Readings</b>	Chapter 13, T. Morris, S. Goldsworthy, <i>PR Today</i> . Final Project Presentation

<b>Lesson 11 Final Exam</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	
<b>Lecture</b>	FINAL EXAM