



**Boston University British Programmes**  
**Strategy And Tactics In British Public Relations:**  
**A Practical Guide to British Public Relations-**  
**TO BE CONFIRMED**  
**COM CM 413**  
**Elective B**

**I. Class description: COM CM 413**

- A. Name of Class: "***Strategy and Tactics in British Public Relations***"  
Former title: Problem Solving in British Public Relations
- B. Credit hours: Four
- C. Catalogue description:  
This track specific course for the Advertising, Marketing and Public Relations track will benefit both novices and experienced Public Relations' students alike, offering a strategic, tactical and 'hands on' insight into the world of British Public Relations. We recommend that students should have taken COM CM 301 'Principles and Practices of Public Relations' or their home institutions equivalent class, but it is not a necessary requirement for participating in the course. Simply a desire to learn about British Public Relations should suffice, together with a will to consider not only what to think but how to think and relate effectively.

**II. Textbooks/Supplies**

**Primary:**

Regular review of national newspapers, magazines, trade titles, PR/marketing related publications eg PR Week, Campaign, Media Week, Marketing, Marketing Week etc. *The importance of this aspect of the course should not be under-estimated.*

Current recommended books and journals, clippings, articles, and relevant websites will also be introduced each semester.

Public Relations: An Introduction by Shirley Harrison, Thomson (2000)

The Public Relations Handbook by Alison Theaker, Routledge (July 2004)

PR Power by Amanda Barry, Virgin Business Guides (2005)

Working with Emotional Intelligence by Daniel Goleman, Bloomsbury Paperbacks (1999)

The Writers' and Artists' Yearbook 2006

Guardian Media Guide 2006

Campaign Creative Directory 2006

Hollis Guides, PIMS and printed and on-line sources from IPR and/or PRCA

**Secondary:**

Public Relations, Principles and Practice by Philip Kitchen, International Thomson Business Press 1<sup>st</sup> Ed (1997)

Fast Food Nation by Eric Schlosser, Penguin Books (2002)

**III. Objectives/Ideology Behind Course Structure**

Historically, PR courses have been designed to provide students with a great deal of theoretical knowledge surrounding the PR discipline. By way of contrast, the reality of the creation and implementation of a PR strategy within the workplace is the complete antithesis of this – there is often little time to look at a book for an answer. More often than not, the practical overrides the theoretical, although ideally a true balance of both strategic and tactical measures should be employed wherever possible.

The role of the PRO (Public Relations Officer) has become more and more vocational, especially in the last ten years, when communications budgets have been whittled down and rationalised across the globe. The essence of each and every PR account, whether it be relating to a business, government, or financial organisation is that the PR must affect the 'bottom line', however this may be defined.

The following course has been designed to provide an overview of how PR works in real terms to students of all disciplines, as well as to break down how PR fits into many aspects of the overall corporate function.

Lectures will require input from students as an enquiring mind usually represents a more captive and interested audience. Students will be required to regularly read the British media, journals, watch British television and be aware of how the PR process can filter into many aspects of our day-to-day life.

Hopefully, the students will end the course having been given an insight into the British business world, the media, how to add value to an organisation and how to have the confidence to believe in yourself – without this skill, no journalist or any other third party will believe in you.

By the end of the semester, students will have been taught the basics of press release writing skills, new business presentation writing and delivery, an overview of the British media and an insight into the various elements that make up a fully integrated public relations campaign. It is intended to provide students with life skills that can be adapted to a host of work environments, both in the USA and abroad.

Wherever possible, students will be expected to cite examples from their placements for discussion and debate within class.

#### IV. Evaluation Plan and Grading Criteria

Coursework	<b>50%</b>
Final exam	<b>30%</b>
Presentations	<b>10%</b>
Attendance and participation	<b>10%</b>
<i>Total</i>	<b>100%</b>

#### GRADING SYSTEM

The following Boston University table explains the grading system that is used by faculty members on Boston University's British Programmes.

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Honour Points</b>	<b>Usual%</b>	<b>Definition</b>
A	4.0	93-100	Excellent
A-	3.7	89-92	
B+	3.3	85-88	
B	3.0	81-84	Good
B-	2.7	77-80	
C+	2.3	73-76	
C	2.0	69-72	Satisfactory
C-	1.7	65-68	
D	1.0	60-64	Low pass
F	0.0	Unmarked	Fail

**"Incomplete"** or **I** grades are not permitted to be issued by faculty, because of the obvious difficulty in making up missed work once the student has left the country. All work must be completed on time. The grades reflect the quality of the work.

It is also important to realise that grades below C may not be transferable to non BU students' home institutions. Lecturers and students should use the following criteria for an understanding of what each grade means.

**"Withdrawn"** The Boston University Provost has announced that faculty members may no longer assign grades of "W" (Withdrawn). In supporting this policy, the Registrar's Office will no longer assign W grades on individual students' official Boston University records, even if the grade sheet has a "W"

recorded for a student. Alternative grades to "W" are "F" (Failing) or "MG" (Missing Grade).

### **GRADING CRITERIA**

**A** This exceptional grade is assigned only to work that has persistently outstanding quality in both substance and presentation. The student must demonstrate a sustained capacity for independent thought and extensive study, producing rigorous and convincing analyses in well-ordered prose.

**A-** Awarded to work that is clearly focused and analytical, and based on wide reading. The student must cover all the principal points of a question and systematically develop a persuasive overall thesis, allowing for one or two venial omissions or inapt expressions.

**B+, B, B-** This range of grades indicates that the student has shown some evidence of original thought and intellectual initiative. The student has cited sources beyond the class materials, and shown a degree of originality in perception and/or approach to the subject. The work will show thoughtful management of material, and a good grasp of the issues. The differences between a B+, a straight B and a B- may reflect poor presentation of the material, or mistakes in punctuation, spelling and grammar.

**C+, C, C-** Work in this grade range is satisfactory, but uninspiring. If the work is simply a recitation of the class materials or discussions, and shows no sign of genuine intellectual engagement with the issues, it cannot deserve a higher grade. Should an essay fail to provide a clear answer to the question as set, or argue a position coherently, the grade will fall within this range. Quality of presentation can lift such work into the upper levels of this grade range. Work of this quality which is poorly presented, and riddled with errors in grammar, spelling and punctuation, will fall into the lower end of the range. To earn a C grade, the work must demonstrate that the student is familiar with the primary course material, be written well enough to be readily understood, be relevant to the assignment, and, of course, be the student's own work except where properly cited.

**D** A marginal pass can be given where some but not all the elements of the course have been completed satisfactorily.

**F** The failing grade indicates the work is seriously flawed in one or more ways:

- \*Obvious lack of familiarity with the material
- \*So poorly written as to defy understanding
- \*So brief and insubstantial that it fails to properly address the subject
- \*Material presented is not relevant to the assignment
- \*Demonstrates evidence of plagiarism

### **VI Schedule**

Suggested reading will be advised in advance of the following week's lecture, either in the form of a photocopied handout or from course

textbooks. Students will be required to read these materials in anticipation of workshops within the second half of each week's lecture. In addition, the lecturer will endeavour to incorporate worksheets into class wherever possible.

General reference materials relating to different areas eg crisis management and celebrity PR etc will be boxed within the library. Please make use of these materials as they will not only add to your existing knowledge of the PR discipline, but also assist with your coursework and final exam.

*Please feel free to add cuttings to each file or indeed start up a new section, as appropriate. Please ensure that originals are photocopied – please be considerate to your fellow students.*

## **1. British Media Workshop And An Introduction To The British Media.**

Course description and assessment criteria discussed.

Plus

Truth or dare. An introduction to British print and broadcast media and comparisons with the media in the USA. Groups will participate in tactical, analytical and interactive sessions, by way of an introduction into the world of British PR and the media.

*\*\*Students are expected to bring to class editions of British magazines, newspapers and cuttings for discussion, as appropriate\*\*. IMPORTANT.*

Plus

## **Business Overview And PR As Part Of The Corporate Machine.**

- A lesson in psychology
- Corporate structures and skill set allocation
- General business acumen
- How to be a good manager/communicator
- Key lessons
- Patience is a virtue
- Know your client
- PR and the law
- Why consider PR of traditional marketing – options
- Marketing strategies

Students will be asked to complete all of the following as graded coursework:

1. To prepare an outline trade and consumer public relations proposal to

launch/promote their placement organisation. This piece of work can be presented to the group as an individual presentation. Alternatively, students may prefer to write a second new business presentation for the purposes of the presentation session (for additional practice).

Plus

2. To prepare a trade or consumer press release to launch/promote any aspect of their placement company to the British trade or consumer media.

Please note that each paper will constitute equal marks and that information should not simply duplicate what may have already been created by the organisation proper. Lecturers generally mark placement portfolios so are exposed to different elements of the Elective B programme. Duplication of materials would therefore equate to plagiarism. **This coursework will constitute 50% of the overall final grade.**

In addition, students are required to make a formal presentation (**10% of the final grade**). This presentation can be of part one of the coursework or on a completely separate topic of choice.

**Class and field trip attendance constitutes 10% of the overall final grade and the remaining 30% by the final exam.**

## 2. What Is PR? Introduction/Overview. Problematic In Itself...

Rollover from class one, as required.

Plus

### *General*

- How to promote a business/considerations
- PR within the overall marketing mix
- The image of PR in the UK cf reality
- Objectives
- Strategy
- Evaluation procedures
- Adding value
- Clients – People profiles (good and bad)
- Target media
- Target market
- Third party endorsement
- Grey definitions of PR
- Internal communications and external PR
- Investors

- Media evaluation
- New business
- Retaining clients
- The bottom line
- Budgets
- Teams

#### *Event Management*

- Sponsorship
- Corporate functions
- Exhibitions
- Launches
- Press conferences

#### *Media relations*

- Advance features
- Photography and usage
- Press release writing and distribution - Embargoes
- Promotions/Reader's offers
- One-to-one interviews
- Planning
- Syndicated features
- 'Selling in' and telephone 'ring rounds'
- Writing skills/styles with examples
- Press office function
- Media training
- Media relationship building (networking)
- Interview technique
- Media evaluation

Workshop: Creating a hypothetical new client, the group will brainstorm and create a strategic and creative public relations campaign. The thought process behind the campaign and how to structure and deliver a 'pitch' (part 1).

Plus

Trade and consumer press release writing (1).

Homework: Students will be asked to prepare a trade or consumer press release in anticipation of Friday 10<sup>th</sup> November.

### **3. How To Deal With The British Media.**

- How the media works
- Interviews
- Know your media and your client
- Key messages

- Making the media work for you
- The different types of media: Print (trade/consumer) and Broadcast (terrestrial and satellite)
- Radio and television - limitations
- What the media are looking for in a story/press release
- Who does what at a newspaper/television programme
- Writing press releases/fact sheets/biographies/listings information/photo call notices etc

Workshop: Discussion and feedback relating to press release writing (1) based on structure and trade and consumer press release writing (2) and critique of the same, highlighting news angles and content. The image compared with the reality of PR in the UK and elsewhere.

#### 4. **New Business PR Proposal Writing (Part 2) Plus Presentations.**

New Business Pitch/presentation – Practical exercise whereby students will individually be asked to consider a hypothetical client brief and collectively come up with a suitable PR proposal to present in class.

Workshop: De-brief on pitch plus presentation practice for each student in anticipation of the final, assessed presentation. Recommendations re course grading policy/expectation and summary of course, to date.

*Discuss structure of final exam/presentation. No books required or reference materials.*

#### 5. **Government Relations/Lobbying Plus Presentation Preparation.**

**Guest Speaker:** Robert Khan MCIPR is the Public Affairs Manager for the Association of London Government which represents the 32 London Councils and the Corporation of London. He is currently on secondment to the LGA, as a senior adviser to the Labour party in local government. He is currently Chairman of the CIPR's Government Affairs Group and is a member of the CIPR Council. He has previously worked as a lecturer in public and constitutional law and as a researcher to a Labour Member of Parliament in the House of Commons. He is a qualified Barrister and was educated at the Universities of Southampton and Cambridge".

- Communication between Parliament and industry
- Government affairs
- Grassroots campaigning
- How lobbying can influence key decision makers
- Local and national lobbying
- Political campaigning
- The hierarchy of the British establishment – How it works

Plus

Rollover from previous week's activity.

Workshop: preparation for individual presentations.

*Course work to be handed in to the lecturer in person or via e-mail and discuss initial exam/syllabus queries.*

## **6. Individual Presentations Plus Introduction To Crisis Management.**

Individual presentations (maximum of 15 minutes each depending on group numbers).

*Course work handed back (including grades for this part of the course) and discussed with the lecturer.*

Plus

Introduction to Crisis Management.

- Definitions of a crisis and how to handle one
- Communicating the appropriate message to the media, the public and victims/families
- Handling pressure groups
- Managing a crisis – What to do and what not to do
- Planning, creating and implementing a crisis strategy and staff training
- Putting theory into practice
- Recovering and returning to normality
- Taking legal advice
- The psychology of crisis management

Workshop: Students will brainstorm producing a crisis manual and how to manage crisis situations.

## **7. Crisis Management Video And Field Trip.**

Jim Dunn Crisis Video screening between 9.00am and 9.45am. Please refer to the website [www.crisisexperts.com](http://www.crisisexperts.com). A handout that accompanies the video will be given to each student. Attendance is compulsory and a register will be taken.

Plus

Field trip to Fleishman-Hillard PR. Attendance is compulsory and a register will be taken. Students will leave 43 Harrington Gardens together, accompanied by a member of the BU Academic Affairs team at approximately 10.00am.

## 8. Revision Summary Plus International PR And The Future Of PR.

Crisis management handout from previous week's video and feedback from video and field trip. Q&A.

Plus

- International PR – crossing borders – same, same but different?
- Other types of PR
- Has the new media revolution changed the face of PR?
- How does one market an on-line organisation?
- How has PR changed over the last twenty years
- Making the most of PR – Adding value to your client's brand or organisation
- Putting theory into practice
- The confidence factor
- The role of PR in the future
- Third party cross-marketing

Workshop: Case history relating to Globalisation – Consider the case of McDonalds for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and beyond. Can an international brand translate from market to market without socio-cultural implications?

Plus

Feedback from presentations (general) and discussions re individual queries)

Plus

Revision class.

## 9. The Real World – Finding Jobs In PR.

*Students should prepare a resume/CV for this class for general discussion/critique.*

- CV techniques
- Interviews
- British job applications
- Working in PR
- Handy practical tips and recommendations

Plus

Final queries re exams and logistics reminders.

## 10. Exams

### VI Terms and Conditions

***\*\*Attendance at all classes and visits is mandatory. Students missing lectures without a doctor's letter or authorisation from the Director or from the EUSA Placements' Team will automatically be docked a – or a + from their final grade. Persistent lateness will also be penalised in the final grade. A register of attendance will be taken at the beginning of each session and marks will be awarded for attendance. Absence can be conveyed either by advising a senior member of staff in the Academic Affairs Office with a request that the information be passed on to me; or by email prior to class. Leaving it to another class member to convey messages will not be acceptable. Appointments for interviews for internships should not conflict with attendance at classes.***

Any student who is unable to attend a class, or take part in an assignment because of religious reasons, must give notice in advance of class. He/she will be required to make up for time lost. In this situation arrangements must be made with another student for class notes to be shared. Written papers must be delivered before agreed deadline, failure to hand in the paper will result in deducted marks.

I will make some time available in each session for students to raise questions etc. Should students wish to discuss matters with me in person I will also be available during the break mid-lecture and at the end of class. Alternatively, please feel free to e-mail me with questions. If you have problems with the availability of reading materials (all of which should be in the library) please contact me either through the Academic Affairs Office or via e-mail.

#### ***Plagiarism***

Boston University's *Code of Student Responsibilities* states:

The value of any grade, credit, honour or degree received by a student presupposes that all work submitted by a student is his or her own. A student who uses or relies upon the work of others or who, except under conditions expressly permitted by the instructor, furnishes assistance to another student, violates the standards of the University. Students must insist upon academic honesty and integrity from their fellow students and must report promptly any case of alleged violation of academic conduct. Failure to do so is a violation of this code.

Plagiarism can take many forms, including the reproduction of published material without acknowledgement, or representing work done by others as your own. This includes the increasingly common practice of

purchasing and downloading work from Internet “paper mills.” You should be extremely careful when submitting work for this course that all work is correctly sourced. Prints outs of websites that have been used in research may be required by the lecturer in cases of a grade dispute and all website based reference material should be kept by the student until after the end of the semester