
Digital Media and Public Relations

Instructor: Raquel Herrera

Course description

Public relations campaigns are currently using digital media intensively. This course adopts a comprehensive approach to the intersection between PR and digital media to deepen in understanding how to optimize PR strategies. The subject presents the fundamentals of PR campaigns and strategies within the digital sphere, as well as key drivers of the field such as strategic issue management, public affairs, and advocacy campaigns. Moreover, digital metrics, tools and indicators will be used to position, plan, and evaluate the impact of these campaigns.

The course in the study plan

This is an *elective* course for the students. It takes place in the second quarter of the course; a key requirement being that the core courses on Fundamentals of Communication Management have been passed.

ECTS Credits

4 ECTS Credits

Specific competences

At the end of the course, the student will be able to...

- › To understand the role that public relations play in society.
- › To apply public relations strategies to several types of cases and scenarios.
- › To design and produce public relations strategies in digital media.

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- › To align public relations strategies with current public affairs and advocacy campaigns.
- › To apply digital techniques in public relations campaigns.
- › To acquire critical thinking towards persuasive communication in the new public sphere after the digital revolution.

Learning outcomes

At the end of the course, the student...

- › Will have acquired the fundamentals of public relations in the digital environment: key concepts, techniques and tools of positioning and evaluation.
- › Will have learned the advantages, outcomes, challenges, and process of public affairs and advocacy in the digital sphere.
- › Will be able to plan, design, produce and test strategic communication campaigns in the digital media.

Aligning with other programs from Universitat Pompeu Fabra and UPF's Barcelona School of Management, this subject will integrate sustainable development goals such as quality education, gender equality, decent work and economic growth, plus responsible production and consumption.

Contents

The course covers eight topics to be presented in eight sessions. The 5th session is devoted to students' presentations for Assignment 1. The 10th session is devoted to the final presentation by students. Feedback will be provided throughout the subject (face to face interactions) and through Moodle:

1. Introduction to the subject
2. Insight into the 5As (I)

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3. Insight into the 5As (II)
4. Insight into the 5As (III)
5. First presentations (Assignment 1)
6. Revising and updating projects for Assignment 2
7. Digital channels: websites
8. Digital channels: social media
9. Digital channels: branded content and influencer marketing
10. Final presentations (Assignment 2)

Course Learning Plan/ Method of presentation

The teaching method combines lectures and practical work in the form of readings, debates, case-studies, presentations, problem solving. Every session will have lectures to present the main concepts, theories, techniques, and tools of the topic. The students will use those concepts and activities to prepare their individual or group projects inside and outside class, delving into development of digital marketing and/or PR campaigns from the strategic and tactical perspective.

Hours of dedication (between classroom and student work): 100h

Course assessment

This course's assessment has three parts: in class participation (through the topics presented and/or through debates in class), Assignment 1 (to be presented in session 1) and the Final Project or Assignment 2 (to be presented in session 10). Students will also work in class with materials provided by the professor. Also, students must submit written versions of Assignment 2 and create short presentations for both assignments, to be discussed with the professor and their peers. Thus, the evaluation will be as indicated:

- › Attendance/participation: 10%
- › Assignment 1 (small groups): 40%
- › Final project/Assignment 2 (small groups): 50%

Important notice regarding late assignments

If you are unable to turn in an assignment on time because of a documented illness or family tragedy, you will not be penalized for turning in work late, provided you present your written excuse within one week of returning to class. If you must turn in work late for other reasons, 2 points will be deducted from the grade on the assignment for each day (each weekday, not class day) that it is turned in late. The first late day begins right after the assignment's deadline unless another time is designated. Thus, if an assignment's deadline is at 19:00h, a student submitting his/her assignment at 19:01 will lose 2 points. This policy applies to all assignments, including the research proposal. As per the syllabus, emailed assignments will not be accepted: you can always upload an assignment after the due date, and it will be marked late as appropriate.

Important notice regarding plagiarism

All written work submitted on this course is to be expressed in your own words. Text copied from a book, a website, another student's paper, your own previous work, or any other source is not acceptable if not clearly quoted. In any individual or group assignment or presentation, you must indicate the sources of all borrowed texts, ideas or facts that go beyond common knowledge. Using third-party sources without being duly attributed would be considered plagiarism, be it intentional or not. Any work written, developed, created, or inspired by artificial intelligence (AI) is considered plagiarism and will not be accepted, unless otherwise instructed. For quoting sources you must always use the recommendations of the APA style. Penalties for plagiarism may range from a failing grade on the assignment with no make-up opportunity, to a failing overall grade in the course and notification to the BSM Dean.

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Weeks	Content of the class	Practical activities
Week 1	Introduction to the subject environment Thursday January 9	Introduction to the subject, Presentation of Assignment 1
Week 2	Insight into the 5As (I) Thursday January 16	Revising Philip Kotler's 5As of digital marketing and PR
Week 3	Insight into the 5As (II) Thursday January 23	Revising Philip Kotler's 5As of digital marketing and PR. Advancing Assignment 1.
Week 4	Insight into the 5As (III) Thursday January 30	Revising Philip Kotler's 5As of digital marketing and PR
Week 5	Presentations of Assignment 1 Thursday February 6	In class presentations in groups
Week 6	Revising and updating projects for Assignment 2 Thursday February 13	Live feedback to improve Assignment 1 and start Assignment 2.
Week 7	Digital channels: websites Thursday February 20	Key organic and advertising for display content and search options

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Week 8	Digital channels: social media Thursday February 27	Key organic and advertising for social media, progress of assignment 2
Week 9	Digital channels: branded content and influencer marketing Thursday March 6	Key ideas on branded and influencer marketing, progress of assignment 2
Week 10	Final presentations Assignment 2 Thursday March 13	In class presentations in groups and final remarks

Key readings and key web references

Main reference: Kotler, Philip (2017). Marketing 4.0. Moving from traditional to digital. Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Nur Uysal (2018). "On the relationship between dialogic communication and corporate social performance: advancing dialogic theory and research," *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 30:3, 100-114, DOI: 10.1080/1062726X.2018.1498344

Erica Ciszek & Nneka Logan (2018). "Challenging the dialogic promise: how Ben& Jerry's support for Black Lives Matter fosters dissensus on social media," *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 30:3, 115-127, DOI: 10.1080/1062726X.2018.1498342

Edelman. Edelman Trust Barometer (2025)

<https://www.edelman.com/trust/trust-barometer>

Kantar. Advertising, Media, and PR (2014)

<https://www.kantar.com/expertise/advertising-media-pr>

Nielsen. Global Media Insights (US + English speaking versions)

(2024). <http://www.nielsen.com/es/insights>

Other recommended readings

Main reference: Kingsnorth, Simon (2019). *Digital Marketing Strategy: An Integrated Approach to Online Marketing*. London: Philadelphia, PA: Kogan Page.

Einstein, M. (2016). *Black Ops Advertising: Native Ads, Content Marketing, and the CovertWorld of the Digital Sell*. Or Books: London and New York.

Grunig, J. E. (2009). *Paradigms of global public relations in an age of digitalisation*. Prism 6 (2). http://praxis.massey.ac.nz/prism_online_journ.html

van Dijk, J. (2013). *The culture of Connectivity. A Critical History of Social Media*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.