



## **Boston University Study Abroad**

London

### **Planning and Strategy in British Public Relations**

**COM CM 413 (Core course)**

**FALL 2019**

#### **Instructor and Class Information**

A. Name	Dr Kathleen Dixon Donnelly
B. Day and Time	Wednesday and Thursday, Lecture: 9 am to 1 pm [TBC]
C. Location	43 Harrington Gardens [TBC]
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F. Office hours	Wednesday or Thursday afternoons by appointment

#### **Course Aims**

This course aims to teach the background, context, theories, practices and functions of public relations in contemporary Britain. We will analyse the environment of British organisations, particularly politics, society, the economy and the media, as these have a strong influence on both the structure and practice of PR in the UK. While the focus of the course will be on business, we will also look at the use and influence of PR in contemporary British politics and the non-profit sector. Specifically the course aims to:

- Provide an understanding of the role of public relations in Britain and demonstrate its centrality and increasing importance to organisations. In this context we will discuss how PR is both strongly related to other business disciplines such as marketing and human resources, but also has properties and functions specific to itself alone.
- Analyse the history of PR in the UK and US and the theoretical underpinnings which inform much of its practice. We will examine systems, stakeholder, and other relevant theory, identifying and applying major concepts used in the social sciences to explain individual and collective human behaviour in a public relations context.
- Discuss the growing importance of corporate social responsibility [CSR] to British corporations and demonstrate how this is becoming strategically central to both their practice of PR and overall corporate identity.
- Look at the structure of the media, politics, business and society in Britain and how these inform so much of what PR does. In addition, we will examine to what degree PR influences and affects these structures.
- Demonstrate the ability to select and apply appropriate academic models to support analysis and insight of organizational issues.

#### **Alignment with HUB outcomes**

This class links to three key HUB outcomes:

*Scientific and Social Inquiry: Social Inquiry 1*

‘Students will identify and apply major concepts used in the social sciences to explain individual and collective human behaviour’

In class, relevant PR theories concerning stakeholders and publics will be analysed. In the assessment, you will be required to identify which publics are most important to your organization’s public relations, research them using both primary and secondary research, through interviews, surveys, databases, etc., and focus on one or two specific target publics to analyse for their plan. You will make use of R. Freeman’s stakeholder theory, as well as JE Grunig and FC Repper’s theories of latent, aware and active publics. In your plan you will be required to apply A. Mendelow’s stakeholder mapping grid to the organization’s relevant publics.

### *Communication: Digital/Multimedia Expression*

Public relations now relies heavily on all types of digital media, particularly social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, and whatever has been introduced to the marketplace since.

‘1. Students will be able to craft and deliver responsible, considered and well-structured arguments using media and modes of expression appropriate to the situation.’

You will be required to make recommendations, and develop sample executions, to make a case for a client to adopt your ideas, in writing and in appropriate media for an oral presentation.

‘2. Students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the capabilities of various communication technologies and be able to use these technologies ethically and effectively.’

In recommending and executing PR tactics, you will develop an understanding of how technological tools are used strategically and ethically by PR practitioners to achieve objectives.

‘3. Students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the fundamentals of visual communication’

In addition, you will write and design specific messages to be delivered in the appropriate traditional media as well as digital media, including searching for, evaluating, and adapting appropriate visual images.

### *Intellectual Toolkit: Creativity/Innovation*

‘1. Students will demonstrate an understanding of creativity as a learnable, iterative process of imagining new possibilities that involve risk-taking, use of multiple strategies, and reconceiving in response to feedback, and will be able to identify individual and institutional factors that promote and inhibit creativity.’

Roger von Oech’s concepts of the four stages of the creative process will be analysed in class, and form the basis for the structure of the PR plan assessment.

To make recommendations to your client, you will be required to evaluate the nature of the organization you have chosen, based on their previous PR campaigns: Are they creative? Do they try out innovative strategies or stick to the tried and true? Do they make use of new tactics, for example, the latest social media platforms, or only traditional media?

‘2. Students will be able to exercise their own potential for engaging in creative activity by conceiving and executing original work either alone or as part of a team.’

This will be an individual assignment, although you will be sharing information in class. In your assessment, you will be required to come up with a creative strategy to address one of the issues facing the organization, and, in addition, recommend tactics to implement the strategy, and create one or more of these tactics, for example, a press release, a series of Tweets, mock ups of brochures and/or posters, etc.

### **Additional Course Objectives**

On successful completion of this course students will be able to:

1. Explain how businesses, governments and charities in Great Britain use public relations strategically;
2. Compare and contrast the British public relations industry with the American and European public relations industries;
3. Analyse and critique the theories which underpin public relations and the contexts in which it operates, in both Great Britain and the United States;
4. Apply public relations theories to real life British case studies and organizations;
5. Evaluate different public relations strategies employed by British organizations, including their use of digital media to achieve communication objectives; and
6. Create and develop strategies for selected British organizations and plan and execute tactics, including digital media, to implement these strategies.

### **Course Structure**

The course will run for five weeks and will consist of two weekly sessions lasting four hours each. The full class sessions will consist of lectures, discussions, case-study work, activities, and/or guest speakers and presentations. There will also be a field trip, preferably to a London public relations agency, early in the course.

The last hour of most classes will be seminar sessions facilitated by student groups, which will form part of your final mark. The seminar titles and dates will be assigned to groups during the first class. You are expected to come to class fully prepared and to take an active part in class activities. You are also expected to keep up with daily news events and read any assigned literature for each week.

### **Course Assessment**

The assessment for the course will be broken down as follows:

- **PR Plan, 75%:** The assessment for the course will be focused on researching and developing a public relations plan for a real British organization of your choice. This can be from the corporate, SME, government or charity sectors, but *cannot* be your internship organization. You are required to conduct both primary and secondary research on your client and their publics. Your plan should follow this outline:
  - I. Situation analysis in SWOT format
  - II. Target Public Analysis, including influential stakeholders, using stakeholder theory
  - III. Creative original strategy to address one key issue facing the organization
  - IV. Objectives and Key Messages
  - V. Implementation/Tactics, including sample press release and at least three other executions, including at least one using digital media

VI. Evaluation based on McNamara's theory

The written plan should be submitted after the last class day.

- **PR Plan presentation, 15%:** You will present your plan on exam day, to the tutor and one or two PR professionals, if possible. Your presentation should cover the key points of your plan and last 7 to 10 minutes, followed by questions at the end.
- **Class participation, 10%:** Recorded attendance and participation in class activities.

**Tentative Course Schedule: All subject to change.**

Each class will start with a discussion of the news stories of the day. You are expected to access news via numerous sources, such as BBC News online, on tv and on radio, in newspapers and magazines, throughout the week, and bring examples to class to discuss.

Week	Lecture Session 9 am -1 pm	
<b>1: Thurs.</b>	Introduction to the course. Discussion of expectations, field trips, and guest speakers. Explanation of syllabus and assessments. Overview of marketing and how it related to PR.	
<b>2: Wed.</b>	Discuss assignment to bring to class an example of a news story that is the result of a press release. UK media context: In class exercise analyzing examples of UK media. Discussion of history and regulation of UK v US media.  Media relations in the UK: Comparison and contrast with US. News release style and format to be used in assessment.  In-class exercise: Writing news release headlines; outlining release content	
<b>3 and 4: Thurs., date tbc</b>	<b>TOUR OF LONDON AGENCY: This will be an all-day class to meet with PR professionals in their working environment from approximately 10 am to 3:45 pm, including travel time. Details to be discussed in class in advance. Previous trips have been to the London offices of global PR firm Ketchum, Inc., where we have met with Stephen Waddington, Partner and VP of Engagement</b>	
<b>5: Wed.</b>	The PR industry: What do PR people do? Broom, Dozier and Grunig's theory of the responsibilities of PR professionals.  PR Planning: SWOT analysis; primary and secondary research  Researching your assessments: Guest speaker: BU London Librarian, David Crossinggum, will demonstrate how to use databases you can access via the BU London library, as well as external sources, such as YouGov, which are available outside the network.	

<b>6. Thurs.</b>	<p>Stakeholder theory, including Freeman, Mendelow, etc.</p> <p>Target public analysis: Using primary and secondary research to analyse specific demographics</p> <p>Small group tutorials</p>	
<b>7: Wed.</b>	<p>Using social media for PR I: Guest speaker: CIPR Social Media Trainer, including activities to create social media artefacts— Twitter feeds, Facebook posts, etc.</p> <p>Harvard Reference System</p>	
<b>8: Thurs.</b>	<p>Using social media for PR II: Guest speaker: PR professional presenting ‘case study’ of recent social media campaign</p> <p>Using the creative process: Analysis of Roger von Oech’s four stages of the creative process, including using brainstorming to generate strategies to address issues, stated in one-sentence.</p> <p>Creative exercise: Creative Scavenger Hunt*</p> <p>Drafting one-sentence strategy statements</p> <p>Individual tutorials</p>	
<b>9. Wed.</b>	<p>Objectives, Key messages and tactics, including traditional and digital media.</p> <p>In-class exercise: Creating individual tactics including blogs, posters, brochures, etc., using AIDA [Attention, Interest, Desire, Action] structure</p> <p>Individual tutorials</p>	
<b>10. Thurs.</b>	<p>Evaluating PR programmes: Apply McNamara’s theory of evaluating PR campaigns</p> <p>Multi-cultural communications: High v low context cultures, observing Hall and Hofstede’s theories in practice on your upcoming placement.</p> <p>Individual tutorials</p>	
<b>Mon.</b>	<p><b>STUDENT PRESENTATIONS</b></p> <p>Schedule to be determined</p> <p>An opportunity to present your ideas and recommendations to a PR professional and receive feedback.</p>	

\*The Creative Scavenger Hunt is done in teams of 2 or 3 students, outside the classroom, even outside the building. It includes items such as ‘Find something smelly’; ‘Find something that reminds you of your mother’; ‘Find a story’; ‘Find something that you would want to tell someone about.’ This emphasizes the Explorer stage of the creative process in terms of looking for information in new areas, and the ability to identify and tell a story, which is a key skill in public relations.

**Contingency Class Date: TBD.** You are obligated to keep this date free to attend class should any class dates need to be rescheduled

**\*\*\*You must attend a mandatory drop-in session (to sign Internship Agreement and for any questions about placement, social programme, travel and academics) on [TBD].**

## **Course Reading**

Your primary reading for this class will be keeping up with the UK media on a daily basis, including newspapers, magazines, tv, radio and on-line credible news sources, as well as trade publications available online and from the library.

The recommended, but not required, textbook for the course is Alison Theaker, ed., *The Public Relations Handbook* (most recent edition).

A supplementary text which you are also recommended to use if possible is the most recent edition of D. Wilcox and B. Reber, *Public Relations Writing and Media Techniques*, which along with the Theaker book, is on reserve in the library as reference works. You can use them there, but not take them out.

The UK professional body for public relations practitioners, the Chartered Institute of Public Relations [CIPR], publishes a quarterly magazine, *Influence*, which is available on line and also in hard copy in the library.

The CIPR also publishes a series of paperback books on all aspects of PR. Most relevant for this class would be the latest editions of:

- Gregory, A. *Planning and Managing Public Relations Campaigns*. London: Kogan Page.
- Gregory, A. *Public Relations in Practice*. London: Kogan Page.
- Oliver, S. *Public Relations Strategy*. London: Kogan Page.

Other key texts in the field would include the most recent edition of any of the following:

- Bland, M, Theaker, A and Wragg, D. *Effective Media Relations*. London: Kogan Page.
- Cutlip, S, Center, A, & Broom, G. *Effective Public Relations*. Harlow: FT/Prentice Hall.
- Dozier, D, Grunig, L, & Grunig, J. *Manager's guide to Excellence in Public Relations and Communications Management*. LEA.
- Harrison, S. *Public Relations: An Introduction*. UK: Thomson Learning Business Press.
- Kitchen, P. *Public Relations Principles and Practice*. London: Thomson Business Press.

## **ATTENDANCE POLICIES**

### **Classes**

As a Boston University London programme student, you are expected to attend each and every class session, seminar, and field trip in order to fulfill the required course contact hours and receive course credit. If you have been absent from two class sessions (whether authorized or unauthorized), you will need to meet with the Directors to discuss your continued participation on the programme.

### *Authorised Absence*

If you expect to be absent from any class, you should notify a member of Academic Affairs and complete an Authorised Absence Approval Form 10 working days in advance of the class date. In the case of absence due to illness for more than one day, you should submit the Authorised Absence Approval Form with the required doctor's note as soon as possible.

The Authorised Absence Approval Request Form is available from:

<http://www.bu.edu/london/current-semester/>

**Please note: Submitting an Authorised Absence Approval Form does not guarantee approval of an authorized absence.**

You may apply for an authorized absence only under the following circumstances:

- **Illness (first day of sickness):** If you are too ill to attend class, you must phone the BU London Student Affairs Office, who will in turn contact your lecturers.
- **Illness (multiple days):** If you are missing more than one class day due to illness, you must phone the BU London Student Affairs Office each day you are ill. You must also provide the Student Affairs office with a completed Authorised Absence Approval Form and a sick note from a local doctor excusing your absence from class.
- **Important placement event** that clashes with a class, which is verified by your internship supervisor.
- **Special circumstances** approved by the Directors (see below).

**The Directors will only in the most extreme cases allow students to leave the programme early or for a significant break.**

### *Unauthorised Absence*

If you miss a class due to an unauthorized absence will receive a **4% grade penalty** to your final grade for the course whose class was missed.

This grade penalty will be applied by the Academic Affairs office to your final grade at the end of the course. As stated above, if you have missed two classes you will need to meet with the Directors to discuss your participation on the programme as excessive absences may result in a 'Fail' in the class and therefore expulsion from the programme.

### **Religious Holidays**

Boston University's Office of the University Registrar states:

'The University, in scheduling classes on religious holidays and observances, intends that students observing those traditions be given ample opportunity to make up work. Faculty members who wish to observe religious holidays will arrange for another faculty member to meet their classes or for cancelled classes to be rescheduled.'

### **Special Accommodations**

You will need to contact the Office of Disability Services to request accommodations for the semester you are abroad. You are advised by BU-ODS not to expect the same accommodations as you receive on campus.

BU London can only uphold special accommodations if we have received the appropriate documentation from the BU-ODS. We cannot accept letters from other universities/centres.

All disabilities need to be known to the ODS in Boston if they are to be used as a reason for

requiring a change in conditions, i.e., reduced internship hours or special accommodations for the internship schedule.

### **Lateness**

If you arrive more than 15 minutes after the posted class start time, you will be marked as late. If you have irregular class attendance (**more than two late arrivals** to class), you will be required to meet with the Associate Director for Academic Affairs. If the lateness continues you may have your final grade penalised.

### **Grading**

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

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

### **Grading Criteria**

**'Incomplete'** or **I** grades are not permitted because of the obvious difficulty in making up missed work once the student has left the country. All work must be completed on time. We also do not allow **'Audits'** (AU), **'Withdrawals'** (W), or **'Pass/Fail'** (P) grades.

The grades reflect the quality of the work. Lecturers and students should use the following criteria for an understanding of what each grade means.

**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 (see following section in Academic Conduct Code)

Please refer to the Academic Handbook for detailed grading criteria and policies on plagiarism: <http://www.bu.edu/london/current-semester>

*Final grades awarded by the tutor are subject to deductions by the Academic Affairs Office due to unauthorized absences.*