

# Public Relations (B.A.)

## Program Description

The public relations major combines a strong base in academic study with opportunities to test concepts through projects with actual clients. Writing proficiency is a necessary element of the major, as writing and knowledge of target audiences form the basic foundation of good public relations. Students learn theories and gain hands-on experience in creating strategic information programs, internal communications plans, media relations, and special events as they build their professional portfolios using all available formats of media (print, video, radio and television, newspapers, and digital and electronic applications). Students learn from practicing professionals who are their professors, lecturers, mentors, and clients, bringing a real-world substance to the major. Internships augment the experience.

## Locations

To learn where the B.A. in public relations is offered, please visit our Web site at [www.webster.edu/ugcatalog/comm\\_journ.html](http://www.webster.edu/ugcatalog/comm_journ.html)

## Student Learning Outcomes

Successful graduates of the program will gain:

- Understanding and mastery of public relations and corporate communications functions employed in both business and non-profit organizations including problem analysis, strategic planning, message development and tactical solutions;
- A thorough knowledge of philosophy and function of the news media and the necessary skills to interface with members of the media in both proactive and reactive contact;
- Knowledge of American business in its various forms and an awareness of the functions of business departments as they relate to public relations;
- Solid writing skills in business, media and public relations formats, such as white papers, news releases, strategic and tactical public relations campaign materials and plans, etc.;
- Production skills in those tactical areas important to successfully functioning as a public relations professional including: publishing graphics, internet web site management, computer software applications and any other medium relevant to the student's chosen career path;
- Superior client relationship and communication skills including interpersonal communications, organizational communications and business presentations.

## Portfolio Review Course Requirements

EPMD 1000 Introduction to Media Production  
MEDC 1010 Introduction to Mass Communications  
PBRL 2100 Fundamentals of Strategic Communications and Public Relations  
INTM 2350 Production Tools for Advertising and PR  
PBRL 2920 Writing for Public Relations

## Degree Requirements

60 required credit hours  
36 general education credit hours  
32 elective credit hours

## Required Courses

EPMD 1000 Introduction to Media Production	3 hours
MEDC 1010 Introduction to Mass Communications	3 hours
JOUR 1030 Fundamentals of Reporting	3 hours
MEDC 1050 Introduction to Media Writing	3 hours
BUSN 1200 Introduction to Business	3 hours
SPCM 1280 Interpersonal Communications	3 hours
COAP 2020 Desktop Publishing	3 hours
PBRL 2100 Fundamentals of Strategic Communications and Public Relations	3 hours
MEDC 2200 Ethics in the Media	3 hours
INTM 2350 Production Tools for Advertising and PR	3 hours
PBRL 2920 Writing for Public Relations	3 hours
INTM 3100 Programming for Web Communications	3 hours
ADVT 3500 Visual Communication for Advertising and Public Relations	3 hours
SPCM 3500 Presentations for Media Professionals	3 hours
MEDC 4100 The Law and the Media	3 hours
PBRL 4300 Crisis Communications Management	3 hours
PBRL 4800 Media Relations	3 hours
PBRL 4920 Public Relations Campaigns*	3 hours
MEDC 4950 Professional Media Practicum, or PBRL 4620 Senior Overview	3 hours

\*Capstone Course

In addition, a minimum of 6 credit hours from the following:

MEDC 2800 Cultural Diversity in the Media	3 hours
PBRL 3200 Specialized Publications	3 hours
MEDC 3260 International Communications	3 hours
MNGT 3550 Public Relations	3 hours
PBRL 3920 Public Information Production	3 hours
PBRL 4050 Special Events	3 hours
PBRL 4200 Organizational Communication	3 hours
PBRL 4700 Professional Development in Public Relations	3 hours

Relevant electives (not required for the major, but the faculty suggests students consider these courses to supplement their major):

JOUR 2300 Journalism: Layout and Design	3 hours
MNGT 3500 Marketing	3 hours
MNGT 3510 Advertising	3 hours
PBRL 4190 Public Relations Research	3 hours
MEDC 4500 Interactive Media	3 hours

## Course Descriptions

### ADVT 3500 Visual Communication for Advertising and Public Relations (3)

This course presents concepts and techniques of modern design for a variety of media commonly used by advertising and public relations professionals, including posters, brochures, public relations kits, print and television advertising, sales promotions, and Web site/Internet. Students learn the basic elements of design and their best uses. Emphasis is placed on problem/solution exercises and assignments that challenge students to utilize those elements of promotional design to solve communication problems in workplace settings. Project critiques are conducted regularly, and aesthetic and psychological aspects of work are analyzed.

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## **BUSN 1200 Introduction to Business (3)**

Surveys fundamental aspects of American business, including the private enterprise system, forms of business, financing, marketing, personnel, production, quantitative analysis, and government regulations.

## **COAP 2020 Desktop Publishing (3)**

Designed to develop proficiency in page layout and design by utilizing the latest desktop publishing software, including related word processing and graphics tools. Emphasizes successful completion of a publication by the student. Prerequisite: COAP 1020.

## **EPMD 1000 Introduction to Media Production (3)**

Students learn the basics of media production using the media tools of photography, film, video, audio production, and interactive media. Students apply these fundamentals by participating in hands-on group projects.

## **INTM 3100 Programming for Web Communications (3)**

Students learn the application of interactive media to the Internet. The course addresses concepts and strategies for integrating interactive function and design in the World Wide Web context. Students learn how to organize information and design the interactive function of a Web-based delivery system. The projects in this class are publications of Web sites that have interpreted and applied interactive design and function in their Web site. Prerequisites: INTM 1600 and INTM 2200 or permission of the instructor.

## **JOUR 1030 Fundamentals of Reporting (3)**

Students learn the basic forms and techniques of modern journalistic writing. Students write both simple and complex news stories and are introduced to feature writing and other specialized story forms. Basic word processing skills and competence in diction and grammar are required.

## **JOUR 2300 Journalism: Layout and Design (3)**

Students learn the fundamentals of newspaper and magazine layout and design, principles of good typography, front and interior page makeup, and photo placement.

## **MEDC 1010 Introduction to Mass Communications (3)**

Students learn the history, development, and impact of the mass media, including print, photography, film, radio, and television and digital media. The course focuses on communication theories and research, media systems, structure and ethics, the relationship between the media and society, and future directions in media communications.

## **MEDC 1050 Introduction to Media Writing (3)**

Students learn the basics of media writing formats, the style, structure, and techniques involved in print journalism, scriptwriting, advertising, public relations writing, critical writing, and writing for the computer screen.

## **MEDC 2200 Ethics in the Media (3)**

Students learn the ethical considerations applied to journalism, broadcast journalism, photography, audio, film, video, interactive digital media, the internet, public relations, and advertising. Students learn to analyze the ethical dilemmas facing media professionals. Prerequisite: MEDC 1010.

## **MEDC 2800 Cultural Diversity in the Media (3)**

Students learn how the media portrays images, messages, and impact regarding race, gender, class, and sexual orientation, and how groups that are marginalized in the media affect the economics and history

of the industry. Students investigate the multiple ways that they have learned about cultural diversity through personal reflection, formal education, and the media.

## **MEDC 3260 International Communications (3)**

Students learn the philosophy, process, problems, and potentials of communication across cultural boundaries by studying the interrelationships between communications and social, political, economic, and cultural factors that affect international communications. Cross-listed with INTL 3260. May be repeated for credit if taken at international campuses.

## **MEDC 4100 The Law and the Media (3)**

Students learn the specifics of First Amendment freedoms and the laws that restrict or regulate the flow of information in American society, libel and privacy torts, information access problems, shield laws, broadcast regulation, copyright laws, and constraints on political communication and advertising. Junior or senior standing is advised.

## **MEDC 4950 Professional Media Practicum (3-8)**

Provides an internship placement that offers supervised professional experience in audio production, broadcast and print journalism, photography, public relations and advertising/marketing communications, interactive media, animation, video and film. In addition to field placement, students attend regular seminars and write observations and analysis of their internship experience. Prerequisites: Students generally do internships during the senior year after initial portfolio review and must have permission of advisor and instructor. (Students may earn no more than a total of 8 credit hours for internships during their program at the University.)

## **MNGT 3500 Marketing (3)**

Studies the marketing process as it relates to management, channels of distribution, trends in selling, consumer behavior, promotion and pricing policies, research, communications, and government regulation.

## **MNGT 3510 Advertising (3)**

Studies advertising in terms of its relation to the economy, marketing management, and behavioral sciences. Includes the use, organization, planning, and preparation of advertising and its economic and social effects. Prerequisite: MNGT 3500.

## **MNGT 3550 Public Relations (3)**

Studies public relations policies and practices as an integral process of information gathering, assembling, evaluating, and reporting. Includes an overview of the role of public relations in developing favorable external public opinion toward an organization, corporation, institution, or individual.

## **PBRL 2100 Fundamentals of Strategic Communications and Public Relations (3)**

Students learn strategic and tactical communications skills necessary for the practice of corporate communications and public relations in business, organizational, and non-profit settings. Topics covered include the history and theory of public relations, strategic communications processes, stakeholder analysis and issues management, and communications tactics such as media relations, publications, community relations, consumer relations, employee communications, and online Internet communications.

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## **PBRL 2920 Writing for Public Relations (3)**

Students learn the writing skills of public relations by adapting writing style and format to specific stakeholders and to a variety of public relations situations. Students examine professional copy and produce their own writing for inclusion in their portfolios. Each student receives instructor's critique of his or her writing and has a chance to critique fellow students' work. Prerequisites: MEDC 1050, JOUR 1030, and PBRL 2100.

## **PBRL 3200 Specialized Publications (3)**

Students learn the strategic planning and production techniques involved in writing and producing public relations publications, including print and electronic newsletters and internal information pieces. The course emphasis is on needs analysis and the development of a publications plan, including communications objectives and strategies, production skills, and evaluation mechanisms. Prerequisites: PBRL 2920 and COAP 2020.

## **PBRL 4050 Special Events (3)**

Students learn the theory and organizational strategies of special events as a function of public relations. Topics include client consulting, objective setting, budgeting, sponsorships, vendor negotiations, and follow-up procedures. Students apply these concepts by developing an actual event. Prerequisite: PBRL 2100.

## **PBRL 4190 Public Relations Research (3)**

Students learn the basic concepts of public relations research using the Internet for instruction and assignment. Students learn how to gather and apply data to public relations program design and evaluation. The course presents primary and secondary data collection methods used in PR research, as well as basic statistical concepts for data analysis. Students also learn to interpret, to report, and to apply findings to specific public relations cases and situations. Prerequisite: PBRL 2100.

## **PBRL 4200 Organizational Communication (3)**

Students learn to use the tools of mass media to communicate to employees, volunteers, and special organizational internal publics, and how those internal messages are used to achieve the goals and objectives of businesses and not-for-profit organizations. Students learn the theories of organizational communication and the techniques used to conduct an internal audit of the communication climate in an organization. Prerequisite: MEDC 1010.

## **PBRL 4300 Crisis Communications Management (3)**

In this course students learn techniques for dealing with sudden and unexpected situations that have a negative impact on organizations and their images to key constituencies. Through case studies and mock crises, students develop strategic solutions for crisis situations and create a generic crisis communications plan that can be included in their personal portfolios. Prerequisite: PBRL 2100.

## **PBRL 4620 Senior Overview (3-6)**

Provides an opportunity for seniors to demonstrate their proficiency in public relations and/or communications campaigns. The student assumes responsibility for the production of a project under the direction of a faculty member. Prerequisites: senior standing, acceptance into the major through portfolio review, and permission of the instructor.

## **PBRL 4700 Professional Development in Public Relations (3)**

Students learn the various career options in the field of public relations and develop and present their personal portfolios. They learn the value of participating in professional public relations organizations; improving their interviewing skills; and preparing their résumés. Prerequisites: public relations major and senior standing.

## **PBRL 4800 Media Relations (3)**

Students learn effective verbal and nonverbal communication techniques and apply these concepts to a series of "real-world" simulations in which they learn to attract, work with, and be interviewed by radio, television, and newspaper reporters. Prerequisite: PBRL 2100 or permission of the instructor.

## **PBRL 4920 Public Relations Campaigns (3)**

The culmination of the public relations curriculum, students in this course operate as a public relations agency, serving the needs of an actual client. The course offers students the opportunity to apply learned theories to developing a complete public relations campaign. Emphasis is placed upon concept, strategy, tactics, and presentation skills. Prerequisite: PBRL 2100.

## **SPCM 1280 Interpersonal Communication (3)**

Students learn to apply the contexts and skills associated with interpersonal communication competence, the intrapersonal constructs necessary for effective interpersonal communication, as well as skills and behaviors associated with relating with others. A focus is placed on relational development and dynamics. Topics include: self-disclosure, listening, nonverbal communication, and conflict.

## **SPCM 3500 Presentations for Media Professionals (3)**

This course focuses on building skills that contribute to presentational effectiveness within media contexts and professions. The course is an intensive speaking course with an emphasis on activities specific to media-related professions, such as requests for proposals and portfolio presentations. Prerequisite: SPCM 1040 or permission of instructor.