



***School of English, Journalism  
and European Languages***

**Faculty of Arts**

**HEJ 507  
Media Relations**

**Semester 2, 2010**

**Unit Outline**

**Dr Kate Nash**

CRICOS Provider Code: 00586B

# Contact details

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## Unit description

Media engagement is a central component of contemporary communications strategies. This unit provides students with the necessary skills to successfully relate with media. Students will be introduced to the principles, practices and theories of media relations and will consider the impact of media relations on society.

Students will learn how to plan a media relations campaign and produce a range of written media products. The dual emphasis on practice and theory will help students to critically engage with media relations and its impact on world events.

## Intended learning outcomes

On completion of this unit, you should be able to:

1. Plan a media relations campaign to address a specific communications issue
2. Produce a range of media relations products suitable for different media outlets
3. Reflect critically on media relations in terms of ethics and social impact
4. Relate media relations theory to practice

## Generic graduate attributes

The University has defined a set of generic graduate attributes (GGAs) that can be expected of all graduates (see <http://www.utas.edu.au/tl/policies/index.htm>). By undertaking this unit you should make progress in attaining the following attributes:

**Knowledge:** will be developed through the use of a range of academic and media skills within the context of media relations practice. Knowledge will be assessed through the development of media relations plans and products and through critical writing about media relations practice.

**Communication skills:** will be enhanced as a result of the unit's focus on communication in context. Students will focus on the communicative potential of different media and communications skills will be assessed throughout the unit in a range of contexts

**Problem-solving skills:** will be developed through engagement in practical tasks that require the sourcing, evaluation and incorporation of information into media relations work. Problem solving skills will be assessed within the context of media relations practice.

A **Global perspective** on the media industry and media relations will be fostered through a consideration of the different contexts in which media relations is practiced.

**Social responsibility** will be addressed through a reflection on the ethics of media relations. In their practical work participants will be expected to demonstrate engagement with ethics and to have developed a concept of ethical practice.

## Alterations to the unit as a result of student feedback

The University of Tasmania regularly requests feedback from students through the Student Evaluation of Teaching and Learning (SETL) process. Changes to units stemming from student responses to texts and teaching strategies are regularly implemented in the School of English, Journalism and European Languages.

# Learning expectations and teaching strategies/approaches

## ***Expectations***

The University is committed to high standards of professional conduct in all activities, and holds its commitment and responsibilities to its students as being of paramount importance. Likewise, it holds expectations about the responsibilities students have as they pursue their studies within the special environment the University offers.

The University's Code of Conduct for Teaching and Learning states:

*Students are expected to participate actively and positively in the teaching/learning environment. They must attend classes when and as required, strive to maintain steady progress within the subject or unit framework, comply with workload expectations, and submit required work on time.*

## **Learning resources required**

### ***Requisite texts***

The texts for this unit are:

Richard Stanton (2007). *Media Relations*, Oxford University Press

Ronald Smith (2008). *Becoming A Public Relations Writer: A Writing Process Workbook for the Profession*, Routledge: New York & London.

### ***Recommended reading***

The following texts are in reserve in the Morris Miller Library:

Burton, B., *Inside Spin: The dark Underbelly of the PR Industry*, Allen and Unwin, 2007.

Cottle, Simon, ed. *News, Public Relations and Power*. London: Sage Publications, 2003.

Ewen, S., *PR! A Social History of Spin*, Basic Books, New York, 1996.

Fortunato, J., *Making Media Content: The Influence of Constituency Groups on Mass Media*, Routledge, 2005.

Guth, D., and Marsh, C., *Public Relations: A Values Driven Approach*, Boston: Pearson 2007.

Heath, R.L., *Encyclopaedia of Public Relations*, Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA, 2005.

Hunt, Todd and Grunig, James E. *Public Relations Techniques*. Fort Worth: Harcourt College Publishers, 1994.

Johnston, J., *Media Relations: Issues and Strategies*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney 2007.

Jowett, Garth. S. and O'Donnell, Victoria. *Reading in Propaganda and Persuasion: New and Classic Essays*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2006.

L'Etang, Jacquie and Pieczka, Magda, *Public Relations: Critical Debates and Contemporary Practice*, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers, London and Mahwah, 2006.

Renton, N.E. *Public Relations: A Matter of Spin*. Essendon: Penon Business, 2004.

Martin, Jan Lee (Ed.). *The New Australian and New Zealand Public Relations Manual*, Tymson & Lazar. Manly: Tymson Communications, 2006.

McKie, David and Munshi, Debashish, *Reconfiguring Public Relations: Ecology, Equity and Enterprise*, Routledge 2007.

Moloney, K., *Rethinking Public Relations: PR Propaganda and Democracy*, Routledge, London 2006

Segal-Horn, S. (ed.) *The Strategy Reader*, Blackwell, Oxford, 2004.

Seitel, Fraser P. *The Practice of Public Relations*. Upper Saddle River: Pearson Education, 2004.

*Stauber, John, C. and Rampton, Sheldon. Toxic Sludge Is Good For You: Lies, Damn Lies and the Public Relations Industry*. Monroe: Common Courage Press, 1995.

Smith, Ronald D., *Becoming a Public Relations Writer: A Writing Process Workbook for the Profession*, Routledge, 2007.

Stanton, Richard. *Media Relations*. Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Theaker, A., *The Public Relations Handbook* 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, Routledge, 2007.

Zappala, Joseph M. and Carden, Ann R., *Public Relations Writing Worktext: Strategic Message Development*, Routledge, 2009.

## MyLO

MyLO will provide you with important administrative information about the unit as well as additional readings and resources. It will be updated regularly throughout the semester. You can access the HEJ 507 website through the Learning Online login page:

[www.utas.edu.au/coursesonline](http://www.utas.edu.au/coursesonline)

To access MyLO from your own computer you will need the appropriate software, and hardware to run that software. Please see UConnect at <http://uconnect.utas.edu.au/> for information about computer software you will need.

**Note:** Older computers may not have the hardware to run some of the required software applications. Contact your local IT support person or the Service Desk on 1818 or 1300 304 903 or visit the website [www.utas.edu.au/servicedesk](http://www.utas.edu.au/servicedesk) if you experience difficulties.

## Details of teaching arrangements

### **Workshops/seminars**

Weeks 1-4 & 9-13 Wednesday 2:10 – 4pm in SB Arts201.Lab

### **Practicum**

Friday August 20<sup>th</sup> 9am – 5pm Media Training Workshop

Date TBC – Newsroom tour

### **Occupational health and safety (OH&S)**

The University is committed to providing a safe and secure teaching and learning environment. In addition to specific requirements of this unit you should refer to the University's policy at:

[http://www.admin.utas.edu.au/hr/ohs/pol\\_proc/ohs.pdf](http://www.admin.utas.edu.au/hr/ohs/pol_proc/ohs.pdf)

## Specific attendance/performance requirements

Students are expected to attend all classes. Students who fail to attend classes may be disadvantaged.

## Assessment

### **Assessment schedule**

Assessment task	Task length	Date due	Percent weighting	Links to Intended Learning Outcomes
<b>Media Relations Plan A</b>	750 words	9 August	10%	1 & 2
<b>Media Releases (2)</b>	600 words		10%	
<b>Media Analysis A (Essay)</b>	2 500 words	6 September	30%	3 & 4
<b>Media Relations Pan B</b>	750 words	18 October	10%	1,2, 3 & 4
<b>Portfolio</b>				
Feature story	1500 words		20%	
Media Releases (3)	1 000 words		10%	
<b>Media Analysis B (Exegesis)</b>	1 000 words		10%	

## **Assessment details**

### **Assessment task 1**

**20%**

#### **Task description**

***You should identify a communications issue and prepare a media relations plan to address it. Your plan should contain a situation analysis, identify key publics and propose a strategy and range of tactics. You should also indicate how you will evaluate your plan. You should also write TWO media releases that are relevant to your issue. It may target general or specialist media and you should specify where you would send your release.***

#### **Task Length**

***Media Relations Plan: 750 Words (10%)***

***Media Release: 600 Words (10%)***

#### **Assessment criteria**

##### **Media Relations plan:**

1. Consistent use of ONE Media Relations planning process including correct use of terminology
2. Strategic communication demonstrated by clear links between publics, strategy, tactics and evaluation

##### **Media Releases:**

3. Your media release should adhere to the conventions taught in the unit including: journalistic writing and structure, evidence of newsworthiness, strategic use of quotes and identifying information.

***Please refer to the criteria sheet for this task which will be provided by your lecturer.***

**Date due: 9 August**

## Assessment task 2

30%

### *Task description*

You should focus on an organisation that is facing a communications issue that is being covered in the Australian media. Source **at least THREE** media releases and **SIX** media stories (these can be print or online/blog stories and should be from a variety of sources) that relate to the issue. In an essay you should analyse the organisation's communications strategy and consider the way in which this has been reported in the media.

### *Task Length*

2 500 words

### *Assessment criteria*

1. Analyse the content of media releases and media stories with reference to framing, location and type of story, spokespeople and language use.
2. Justify your position with evidence drawn from the scholarly literature
3. Communicate in the form of an academic essay – considering essay structure, argument, spelling, punctuation and referencing

***Please refer to the criteria sheet for this task which will be provided by your lecturer.***

***Date due: 6 September***

## Assessment Task 3

50%

### *Task description*

***You should identify a communications issue and prepare a media relations plan to address it. Your plan should contain a situation analysis, identify key publics and propose a strategy and range of tactics. You should also indicate how you will evaluate your plan.***

***You should prepare a portfolio of media relations products to address your communications issue. Your portfolio should contain:***

***THREE media releases (1 000 words) and feature story (1500 words)***

***You should also prepare an analysis (exegesis) linking your media relations work to the scholarly literature.***

### *Task Length*

***Media Relations Plan: 750 Words (10%)***

***Media Releases (3): 1 000 Words (10%)***

***Feature Story: 1 500 Words (20%)***

***Exegesis: 1 000 Words (10%)***

### *Assessment criteria*

#### **Media Relations plan:**

1. Consistent use of ONE Media Relations planning process including correct use of terminology
2. Strategic communication demonstrated by clear links between publics, strategy, tactics and evaluation

#### **Media Releases:**

3. Your media releases should adhere to the conventions taught in the unit including: journalistic writing and structure, evidence of newsworthiness, strategic use of quotes and identifying information.

#### **Feature Story:**

4. Your feature should adhere to the conventions taught in the unit including: Structure and journalistic writing, evidence of

newsworthiness and research, strategic use of interviews.

***Please refer to the criteria sheet for this task which will be provided by your lecturer.***

***Date due: 18 October***

## **Submission of assignments**

Students are required to submit a signed assignment cover sheet with every assignment. The cover sheet includes a declaration that all material submitted is your own work except where there is clear acknowledgement or reference to the work of others. Assignment cover sheets are available from the School office and the School website. **Assignments submitted without a completed, signed cover sheet will not be marked.** Students who submit assignments without a signed cover sheet will be contacted once via their UTAS email address; in such instances the cover sheet should be completed within two weeks of the assignment due date.

Assignments must be submitted in hard copy (not by email) via the assignment slot at the School office. Students are required to keep copies of all submitted assignments.

Assignment cover sheets can be downloaded from [http://www.utas.edu.au/ejel/student\\_resources/](http://www.utas.edu.au/ejel/student_resources/)

Assignments submitted on time will be returned within three weeks of the due date; once on time assignments have been returned no further late assignments will be accepted. All marked assignments will be returned in tutorials unless otherwise advised.

## **Penalties**

Honours and postgraduate coursework units (400, 500 and 600 level)

Late submissions will be penalised as follows: 10% of the available marks per day for the first five (5) working days and 50% on the following day.

## **Requests for extensions**

Late work will be accepted without penalty if accompanied by a medical certificate for the relevant period or equivalent documentation in the case of a serious non-medical reason but you must contact the unit coordinator prior to the assignment due date.

## **How your final result is determined**

Undergraduate and Postgraduate Coursework units

The following distribution of marks and grades is applied in assessing your work:

- High Distinction (HD)—80-100%
- Distinction (DN)—70-79%

- Credit (CR)—60-69%
- Pass (PP)—50-59%
- Fail (NN)—0-49%

## Review of results and appeals

Please refer to the **Student Resources** page on the School's website for information that addresses how to apply for a review of assessment, make an appeal or seek clarification regarding any assessment practices in this unit:

[http://www.utas.edu.au/ejel/student\\_resources/student\\_resources.htm](http://www.utas.edu.au/ejel/student_resources/student_resources.htm)

## Academic referencing

In your written work you will need to support your ideas by referring to scholarly literature, works of art and/or inventions. It is important that you understand how to correctly refer to the work of others and maintain academic integrity.

Failure to appropriately acknowledge the ideas of others constitutes academic dishonesty (plagiarism), a matter considered by the University of Tasmania as a serious offence.

The Journalism, Media and Communications discipline uses the Harvard style of referencing. For more information about referencing, and a brief introductory guide to Harvard referencing style, please refer to: <http://www.utas.edu.au/ejel/referencing.html>

For general information on presentation of assignments, including referencing styles:

<http://utas.libguides.com/referencing>

Please read the following statements on academic misconduct and plagiarism. Should you require clarification please see your unit coordinator or lecturer.

## Academic misconduct

**Academic misconduct** includes cheating, plagiarism, allowing another student to copy work for an assignment or an examination and any other conduct by which a student:

- seeks to gain, for themselves or for any other person, any academic advantage or advancement to which they or that other person are not entitled; or
- improperly disadvantages any other student.

Students engaging in any form of academic misconduct may be dealt with under the Ordinance of Student Discipline, and this can include imposition of penalties that range from a deduction/cancellation of marks to exclusion from a unit or the University. Details of penalties that can be imposed are available in the Ordinance of Student Discipline – Part 3 Academic Misconduct, see <http://www.utas.edu.au/universitycouncil/legislation/>

### Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a form of cheating. It is taking and using someone else's thoughts, writings or inventions and representing them as your own; for example, using an author's words without putting them in quotation marks and citing the source, using an author's ideas without proper acknowledgment and citation, copying another student's work. If you have any doubts about how to refer to the work of others in your assignments, please consult your lecturer or tutor for relevant referencing guidelines, and the academic integrity resources on the web at:

<http://www.academicintegrity.utas.edu.au/>

The intentional copying of someone else's work as one's own is a serious offence punishable by penalties that may range from a fine or deduction/cancellation of marks and, in the most serious of cases, to exclusion from a unit, a course or the University.

**The University and any persons authorised by the University may submit your assessable works to a plagiarism checking service, to obtain a report on possible instances of plagiarism. Assessable works may also be included in a reference database. It is a condition of this arrangement that the original author's permission is required before a work within the database can be viewed.**

For further information on this statement and general referencing guidelines, see <http://www.utas.edu.au/plagiarism/> or follow the link under 'Policy, Procedures and Feedback' on the **Current Students** homepage.

## Further information and assistance

If you are experiencing difficulties with your studies or assignments, have personal or life-planning issues, disability or illness which may affect your course of study, you are advised to raise these with your lecturer in the first instance.

There is a range of University-wide support services available to you including Teaching & Learning, Student Services, International Services. Please refer to the **Current Students** homepage at: <http://www.utas.edu.au/students/>

Should you require assistance in accessing the Library visit their website for more information at <http://www.utas.edu.au/library/>

You are also welcome to contact the School of English, Journalism and European Languages with any enquiries:

Room 557, Humanities Building  
Sandy Bay campus, Hobart

Tel: (03) 6226 2347  
Fax: (03) 6226 7631  
Email: [SEJEL.admin@utas.edu.au](mailto:SEJEL.admin@utas.edu.au)  
<http://www.utas.edu.au/ejel>

## Unit schedule

Week	Date beginning	Topic	Readings / Resources	Further information
14	12 July	Introduction to the Unit and What is Media Relations? Some Key concepts and definitions		
15	19 July	Understanding the media – exploring news values and media diversity. Focus on the Media Release	Smith Chapter 5 – News and Ch 6 – News Releases. Chapter 3 looks at persuasive writing.  Stanton Ch 5 – writing news releases. There is also a good media release planning template in the back of the book.	
16	26 July	Media Relations campaign planning. Planning models and different sectors for media relations practice.	Stanton Ch 3 and 4  You may also wish to have a look at Johnston and Zawawi's Public Relations Theory and Practice for a discussion of PR planning.	
17	2 August	Media Analysis	Stanton Ch 6 – there is also some content on Framing in Ch 2 and 7  Other reading will be provided	
18	9 August	No Class		<b>Assignment 1 due 9 August</b>
19	16 August	No Class		<b>20 August Media Training Day – Media Lab</b>
20	23 August	No Class		
21	6 September	No Class		<b>Assignment 2 due 6 September</b>
22	13 September	Feature Writing in Media Relations	Smith Ch 9	
23	20 September	Media Relations 2.0 and Portfolio workshopping	Materials to be provided via MyLO	
24	27 September	Media Relations and society and portfolio workshopping	Ch 13 Stanton and materials to be provided	

<b>25</b>	4 October	Crisis Communications	Material to be provided via MyLO	
<b>26</b>	11 October	Workshop and Wrap-up		<b>Assignment 3 due Monday 18 October</b>
<b>Study period: 16 – 22 October 2010</b>				
<b>Examination period: 23 October – 9 November 2010</b>				