

PUBLIC RELATIONS MAJOR

The study of public relations is focused on understanding how various communication channels and platforms are used to effectively communicate. Public Relations at Fairfield is concerned with ethical argument and advocacy, clear writing, understanding interpersonal relationships, and thinking critically about how to shape messages and narratives aimed at specific stakeholders. The study of Public Relations focuses on clear, effective, and ethical communication that creates change and advocates for those with the least access to wider audiences.

By completing a major in Public Relations students will be able to:

1. Apply the principles of primary and secondary research to public relations situations.
2. Apply basic public relations theories and principles to practice.
3. Create effective public relations and crisis management plans across media platforms utilizing clear and effective writing.
4. Deliver clear and effective presentations.
5. Create ethically sound and socially responsible public relations plans.
6. Synthesize broader liberal arts knowledge in the service of public relations plans.
7. Identify optimal means of communication across various media platforms and channels, audience and situational contexts.
8. Critically evaluate the work of others for clarity, appropriate style, ethical soundness and sensitivity.

Requirements

The major in Public Relations is a 33-credit course major for undergraduate students that will engage students in the study of strategic communication and prepare students for a broad range of careers. The Public Relations major consists of 11 three-credit courses. All Public Relations majors complete a set of seven required courses known as public relations foundations. Public relations majors must also complete one writing course, one ethics course, and two electives. With the aid of the communication faculty, students have the ability to focus their studies in several areas of interest and to develop a personalized trajectory that best suits their theoretical and applied interests. Public Relations majors are strongly encouraged to complete minors related to their areas of interest, to continue their foreign language beyond the intermediate level, to study abroad, enroll in service-learning courses, and to pursue internships that allow for applied learning of theoretical material.

Students are encouraged to meet with faculty advisors to design a comprehensive academic plan that takes advantage of the varied offerings in the Communication Department as well as from complimentary majors, minors and programs across the University to fulfill their public relations major.

The requirements are as follows:

| Code | Title | Credits |
|---|------------------------------------|---------|
| The 11-course (33 credit) PR Major requires each of the following 7 courses (21 credits): | | |
| Public Relations Major Required Courses | | |
| COMM 1101 | Argument and Advocacy ¹ | 3 |

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| COMM 1102 | Introduction to Public Relations ¹ | 3 |
| COMM 1130 | Mass Media and Society | 3 |
| COMM 2220 | Introduction to Organizational Communication | 3 |
| COMM 3324 | Crisis Communication | 3 |
| COMM 2299 | Communication Research Methods ⁴ | 3 |
| COMM 4999 | Capstone: Research Projects in Communication ² | 3 |

Plus, PR Majors must choose at least 1 of the following Public-Relations Focused Elective courses (not COMM 4980) from any of the following (12 credits):

Public Relations-Focused Electives

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| COMM 2201 | Persuasion |
| COMM 2333 | Public Relations Strategy Development |
| COMM 3333 | Public Relations Management and Campaigns |

And/or (no more than three Elective courses – 9 credits) from the following:

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| COMM 4980 | Internship |
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And/or:

Media-Focused Electives

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| COMM 2231 | Media Institutions |
| COMM 2236 | Gender, Sexuality, and Media |
| COMM 2238 | Communication and Popular Culture |
| COMM 2239 | Consumer Culture |
| COMM 3326 | Free Speech: Philosophical Origins to Digital Debates |
| COMM 3335 | Globalization, Media, and Culture |
| COMM 4330 | Misinformation in Digital Media |
| COMM 4333 | News Media and Democracy |
| COMM 4336 | Social Media |

Non-Profit and Policy-Focused Electives

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| COMM 2200 | Interpersonal Communication Theories |
| COMM 2240 | Intercultural Communication |
| COMM 2242 | Alcohol, Addiction, and Culture |
| COMM 2246 | Family Communication |
| COMM 3345 | Relational Communication |
| COMM 4350 | Family Crisis Communication |

Strategic Communications-Focused Electives

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| COMM 3322 | Leadership Communication |
| COMM 3325 | Organizational Communication and Advertising |
| COMM 3340 | Conflict Communication |

Healthcare-Focused Electives

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| COMM 2200 | Interpersonal Communication Theories |
| COMM 2240 | Intercultural Communication |
| COMM 2242 | Alcohol, Addiction, and Culture |
| COMM 3248 | Health Communication |
| COMM 3347 | Communication in Healthcare Organizations |
| COMM 3348 | Health Risk Communication |

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| COMM 4343 | Ethics and Medical Marketing Communication |
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Total Credits**33**

- ¹ COMM 1101 and COMM 1102 are the foundational courses in the public relations major. Students should plan to take both courses during the same semester, preferably during their first or second year. COMM 1101 and COMM 1102 should be completed before taking the 2000, 3000, or 4000-level courses.
- ² Students complete COMM 4999, the required capstone course, during their senior year.
- ³ A course taken as a required course can not "double count" as an elective.
- ⁴ Students should enroll in Research Methods during their Sophomore year.

Notes:

- Under special circumstances, and with the approval from the Department Chair, **double majors** may "double count" up to two courses from their second major as public relations electives. Some *second major* and *minor programs* may also choose to "double count" public relations courses to satisfy the second major or minor requirements. Students should consult those second major or minor chairs for approval.
- Internships (COMM 4980) may be counted toward the major only once. Although two internships can be completed for academic credit (up to 6 credits), only 3 credits will count toward the Public Relations major.
- Independent studies do not count toward the Public Relations major.
- Special topics courses (COMM 4339 and COMM 4900) may each be taken twice for credit if the topics of the courses are different.