

# PUBLIC RELATIONS, BA

Public relations is a proactive, strategic function that strives to mesh the interests of an organization and its publics. Public relations professionals build and maintain those relationships that are essential to the organization's success — or failure — by applying research skills, visual thinking, strategic planning and effective writing.

Success requires a passion for learning about public relations. This program will lead students in developing skills necessary for creating persuasive messages and the means to expose those messages to the intended audience. This includes the ability to conduct research to measure program needs, develop program quantifiable objectives and focused strategies, implement state-of-the-art tactics and master the tools to measure a program's return on investment. Students of public relations will develop and hone critical and creative thinking skills.

## Requirements

Students are responsible for ensuring that they have met all University, College, major and minor requirements.

Students seeking to major in public relations may pursue one of the following options:

- *Public relations major (37 hours)*: prepares students for careers as account executives, brand managers, publicists, client services managers, community affairs specialists, etc.
- *Digital communication concentration (37 hours)*: prepares students for careers as social media managers, digital marketing specialists, digital communication managers, etc.

## Core Curriculum and General Education Requirements

| Code and Title   | Hours        |
|--|--------------|
| <b>First-Year Compass Courses</b>                                  |              |
| UA 101 Legends   | 1            |
| UA College Compass Course <sup>5</sup>                             | 2            |
| <b>Written Composition</b>   |              |
| EN 103 or Advanced English Composition                             | 3            |
| EN 104 Honors English Composition                                  |              |
| Or EN 101 and EN 102   |              |
| <b>Humanities, Literature, Fine Arts and World Languages</b>       |              |
| Literature   | 3            |
| Humanities, Literature, Fine Arts, or World Languages <sup>1</sup> | 6            |
| <b>Natural Science and Mathematics</b>                             |              |
| Natural Science  | 8            |
| MATH 110 or higher   | 3-4          |
| <b>History and Social/Behavioral Sciences</b>                      |              |
| History  | 3            |
| History or Social/Behavioral Sciences <sup>2</sup>                 | 6            |
| <b>U.S. and Global Citizenship<sup>3</sup></b>                     | <b>3</b>     |
| <b>Writing<sup>4</sup></b>   | <b>6</b>     |
| <b>Total Hours</b>   | <b>44-45</b> |

## Footnotes

- <sup>1</sup> a) COM 123 Public Speaking (or COM 124 Honors Public Speaking) is an ancillary course in the public relations major; you can use this Humanities core course to satisfy 3 hours of these 6 hours. b) You must meet the World Language proficiency requirement and can do so in a variety of ways. For those who must meet this proficiency requirement by taking the second part of an introductory language sequence course (102) or by taking both parts of an introductory language sequence (101 and 102), you do not have an option of taking a Humanities, Literature, or Fine Arts course for 3-6 of these hours.
- <sup>2</sup> SB core hours can be satisfied by MC 101 Intro To Mass Communic and APR 241 Intro to Ad and PR, which are required courses in the PR major. Both MC 101 and APR 231 require at least a C-.
- <sup>3</sup> Can be satisfied by APR 426 International Public Relations; must earn at least a C-.
- <sup>4</sup> Must earn at least a C- in Writing core courses; the following courses in the advertising major can satisfy the 6-hour W core requirement. *Writing core for PR majors without a concentration (two of the three following classes)*: JCM 303 News Writing and Reporting, APR 303 Public Relations Strategy and APR 332 Public Relations Writing; *writing core for the digital communication concentration*: APR 303 Public Relations Strategy and APR 333 Digital Writing and Strategy.
- <sup>5</sup> This requirements can be satisfied by CIS 100 Freshman Compass CIS.

## Public Relations Major

*All courses in the public relations major and their prerequisites, including ancillary courses, require at least a C-. Be sure to check course prerequisites to ensure timely progress through the public relations major coursework. Click here for the comprehensive public relations major handout, which contains a degree checklist, detailed coursework and four-year plans for the public relations major and digital communication concentration, and other resources.*

| Code and Title   | Hours |
|--|-------|
| <b>Foundation Courses:</b>                                 |       |
| MC 101 Intro To Mass Communic                              | 3     |
| JCM 103 Mechanics of Media Writing                         | 1     |
| APR 241 Intro to Ad and PR                                 | 3     |
| APR 280 Intro to Audience Analysis                         | 3     |
| APR 290 Intro to Channels and Msg                          | 3     |
| APR 300 or Basic Principles of Design                      | 3     |
| APR 325 Social and Digital Media                           |       |
| APR 303 Public Relations Strategy                          | 3     |
| <b>Intermediate Courses:</b>                               |       |
| JCM 303 News Writing and Reporting                         | 3     |
| APR 332 Public Relations Writing                           | 3     |
| Two APR 400-level or MC 400-level electives                | 6     |
| <b>Capstone Courses:</b>                                   |       |
| One course chosen from MC 401, APR 451, APR 452 or APR 453 | 3     |

|                          |  |              |
|--------------------------|--|--------------|
| APR 433                  | Public Relations Campaigns                             | 3            |
| <b>Total Hours</b>       |  | <b>37</b>    |
| <b>Ancillary Courses</b> |  | <b>Hours</b> |
| CIS 250                  | Intro to Design Software <sup>1</sup>                  | 3            |
| CIS 260                  | Intro to Research <sup>1</sup>                         | 3            |
| COM 123 or<br>COM 124    | Public Speaking <sup>2</sup><br>Honors Public Speaking | 3            |

**Footnotes**

<sup>1</sup> CIS 260 Intro to Research is a prerequisite to APR 280 Intro to Audience Analysis. CIS 250 Intro to Design Software is a prerequisite to APR 300 Basic Principles of Design and APR 325 Social and Digital Media. Both CIS 250 and CIS 260 will count as general electives in the degree program.

<sup>2</sup> COM 123 Public Speaking (or COM 124 Honors Public Speaking) can count as a Humanities core course or as a general elective.

## Minors for Students Majoring in Public Relations

The A+PR department requires each of its students to complete a minor. C&IS students may choose to select any minor outside of the College. Within the College, no overlap of major and minor classes is permitted. Public relations students minor in such diverse areas as communication studies, general business, political science, art, psychology, history, mathematics, cultural studies, and languages such as Chinese, Japanese, Russian and Spanish. A minor is not required if the student pursues a second major.

## A+PR Department Requirements

Students are asked to make special note of the following Department of Advertising and Public Relations requirements.

### Student Responsibility

As an A+PR student, you are here to become a leader — to shape the future of global advertising and public relations in a socially conscious manner. You are here to do the extraordinary, not just what is expected. The faculty expects you to be passionate about your work, fluent in your discipline and engaged as a learner. We are your partners in these endeavors.

It is the student's responsibility to understand the requirements for the advertising major or minor and to seek the advice of their assigned advisor when choosing coursework. Public relations students receive advisor assignments from Tisch Student Services and Engagement soon after they declare the public relations major via DegreeWorks or they may go to 190 Phifer or email [tischstudentserv@ua.edu](mailto:tischstudentserv@ua.edu) to request one.

### Prerequisites

A number of courses within and outside the department require other courses as prerequisites. A student who registers for any course without satisfying the proper prerequisites will be required to drop the course. Before registering, students are advised to review course descriptions for prerequisites and other requirements.

### Minimum Grade Requirement

A grade of C- or higher is required in all courses counted in the public relations major or minor. In addition, grades of C- or higher must be earned in all required external courses, including those established as prerequisites for courses in the public relations major or minor and those required directly in the major or minor. In keeping with University policy,

when a course is taken more than one time, each enrollment will be counted in the cumulative hours attempted and used in computation of the grade point average, but only the final enrollment may count as credit toward the degree.

### Minimum Grade Point Average

A 2.0 or higher overall grade point average is required of all students who have earned 45 hours or more of college credit and wish to transfer into the college.

## Digital Communication Concentration

The 15-hour digital communication concentration will prepare students for public relations careers in the digital communication industry. **All courses in the digital communication concentration and the public relations major and their prerequisites require at least a C-.** Be sure to check course prerequisites to ensure timely progress through the digital communication concentration and public relations major; see also the ancillary courses required for the public relations major. Click here for the comprehensive public relations major handout, which contains a degree checklist, detailed coursework and four-year plans for the public rel majors and digital communication concentration, and other resources.

| <b>Digital Communication Concentration Courses</b>         |                              | <b>Hours</b> |
|--|------------------------------|--------------|
| APR 300  | Basic Principles of Design   | 3            |
| APR 325  | Social and Digital Media     | 3            |
| APR 333  | Digital Writing and Strategy | 3            |
| APR 430  | Advanced Digital Marketing   | 3            |
| One APR 400-level or MC 400-level elective                 |                              | 3            |
| <b>Total Hours</b>   |                              | <b>15</b>    |
| <b>PR Major Core Courses</b>                               |                              | <b>Hours</b> |
| MC 101   | Intro To Mass Communic       | 3            |
| JCM 103  | Mechanics of Media Writing   | 1            |
| APR 241  | Intro to Ad and PR           | 3            |
| APR 280  | Intro to Audience Analysis   | 3            |
| APR 290  | Intro to Channels and Msg    | 3            |
| APR 303  | Public Relations Strategy    | 3            |
| Two capstone courses:                                      |                              |              |
| One course chosen from MC 401, APR 451, APR 452 or APR 453 |                              | 3            |
| APR 433  | Public Relations Campaigns   | 3            |
| <b>Total Hours</b>   |                              | <b>22</b>    |

Graduates find employment at public relations and advertising agencies, the public relations or promotional departments of businesses, industries and government agencies, and with traditional and nontraditional media outlets.

## Types of Jobs Accepted

Our graduates work as account executive assistants, brand ambassadors, brand managers, client services managers, social media managers, community affairs specialists, company event planners, publicists and digital marketing specialists.

## Jobs of Experienced Alumni

Owners, presidents & CEOs of public relations agencies, vice president—corporate communication, shareholder relations, media relations, professors, account executives, etc.

Learn more about opportunities in this field at the Career Center