












5.00 credits

30.0 h

Q1

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| Teacher(s) | Jacobs Thomas ; |
| Language : | English |
| Place of the course | Bruxelles Saint-Louis |
| Prerequisites | <i>The prerequisite(s) for this Teaching Unit (Unité d'enseignement – UE) for the programmes/courses that offer this Teaching Unit are specified at the end of this sheet.</i> |
| Learning outcomes | <p>At the end of this learning unit, the student is able to :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will be able to define and understand the differences and similarities between corporate communication, public relations, marketing, and corporate propaganda. • Students will be able to approach corporate communication, organisational communication, and public relations from a theoretical, conceptual, and critical point of view. • Students will acquire experience with the practices and the realities of corporate and organisation communication, and will be capable of emulating these practices in a hands-on manner. They will have the ability to critically reflect on their own practical experiences from a scientific standpoint. • Students will be able to use, deploy, interpret, evaluate, and (de)construct in a critical fashion the strategies used in corporate and organisational communication and in public relations (e.g. stakeholder communication, corporate identity, branding, reputation management, crisis management, lobbying,...). • Students will be able to reflect critically about questions relating to corporate social responsibility and to the use of professional communication strategies in democratic societies. |
| Evaluation methods | <p>January session (first term):</p> <p>During the January exam session, students will be evaluated based on two criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group work: 60% <p>Students will, at the start of the course, be invited to choose an existing organisation whose communicative practices they want to analyse and understand. They will regularly meet in small groups, which will be put in the position of the unit that is responsible for communication within this organisation. Throughout the first term, these small groups will regularly be given tasks that encourage them to put into practice the ideas, theories, concepts, and knowledge seen during the course, in a way that applies them to the chosen organisation. The assigned tasks will take the form of written essays, oral presentations, the compilation of a corpus, etc. They will partially have to be completed during the class, partially at home. Students that cannot be present during the in-class assignments are requested to contact the teacher prior to the class.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oral open-book exam: 40% <p>During the oral exam, the students will be asked questions that invite them to reflect on the portfolio of materials they produced in small groups throughout the course (written essays, oral presentations, corpus,...). During the exam, they will be able to bring these materials, as well as their notes, and the materials available on the course website, but they will not be allowed to copy or directly cite from them. The consultation of other materials will be prohibited. Students do not need to pass both of these components separately to succeed the class.</p> <p>If an external force necessitates the organisation of an exam in digital format, this will be a collective measure, that cannot apply to individual cases.</p> <p>June and August session (second and third term):</p> <p>Students who did not pass the class in January will be based on a single criterium in the second and/or third term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written, closed-book exam: 100% <p>The students will be evaluated based on a written, closed-book, in-person exam. The questions will relate to matters discussed during the class, in the readings, and in the PowerPoint presentations. The exam will comprise both questions of a theoretical nature, and questions relating to the application and the operationalisation of the concepts and ideas seen during the class. It will involve both shorter and more focused questions (e.g. multiple choice, definitions), and longer, more open questions (e.g. essay questions).</p> <p>If an external force necessitates the organisation of an exam in digital format, this will be a collective measure, that cannot apply to individual cases. In this case, the exam will take place in an open-book format, meaning the students can consult the course materials as well as their notes, but they will not be allowed to copy or directly cite from them. The consultation of other materials will be prohibited.</p> <p>Students who did not pass the January session, but passed one of its two components cannot maintain their original points.</p> |

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| Teaching methods | <p>Plenary courses combined with collective discussions of assigned examples and regular tasks to be accomplished in smaller groups.</p> <p>Throughout the course, the students will be invited to read and study a number of texts provided via Moodle.</p> |
| Content | <p>This course offers an introduction to organisational communication, corporate communication, and public relations. The identities, attitudes, opinions, and practices of individual consumers, corporate stakeholders, governmental actors, and citizens of democratic societies are nowadays constantly targeted by highly qualified professionals concerned with the image and the reputation of their companies and brands. Every day and every hour, we are wittingly and unwittingly, willingly and unwillingly confronted with the strategies, the discourses, and the communication of private organisations. This course studies corporate activity in society through a discursive and communicative lense, in order to explain the functioning, the impact, and the effect of corporate communication.</p> <p>The course first provides a general introduction to the key concepts with which it works: corporations, communication, and public relations. What do these notions entail? How are they transformed by ongoing digital revolutions? How can we study and theorize them?</p> <p>Ensuingly, we zoom in on various forms and genres of corporate communication and public relations, in order to understand how organisations communicate with their interlocutors. We will focus in particular on internal communication, reputation management, crisis communication, advertisement campaigns, branding, public opinion, and corporate social responsibility. Communicative genres that will feature include press communiqués, ads, speeches and press conferences, social media posts, public relations, storytelling, and corporate propaganda.</p> <p>Throughout the course a hands-on and practice-driven approach is predominant. The students will be asked to produce and elaborate their own examples of organisational and corporate communication and to engage with the activities and genres discussed above first-hand. Yet this engagement will at all times inspired by scientific theories and critical ideas, and it will be accompanied and guided by a reflection that is rooted in the scientific literature and state-of-the-art. As such, we will regularly switch from a more hands-on and practice-oriented perspective to a more theoretical and critical position vis-à-vis corporate communication and public relations. This critical perspective in particular implies that the course does not just focus on corporate actors, but also on their relation with and effect on the public sphere and democratic decision-making processes. Questions about whitewashing and diversity therefore also make for relevant topics.</p> |
| Bibliography | <p>Les étudiant(e)s disposeront d'une sélection de textes et de ressources audiovisuelles. Leur lecture sera partiellement obligatoire, partiellement optionnelle. La bibliographie suivante n'est pas exhaustive, mais elle est indicative des sujets que nous discuterons en classe.</p> <p>Alvesson, M., & Kärreman, D. (2000). Varieties of discourse: on the study of organizations through discourse analysis. <i>Human Relations</i>, 53(9), 1125-1149.</p> <p>Alvesson, M., & Willmott, H. (2002). Identity regulation as organizational control: Producing the appropriate individual. <i>Journal of Management Studies</i>, 39(5), 619-644. doi:10.1111/1467-6486.00305</p> <p>Breeze, R. (2013). <i>Corporate discourse</i>. London: Bloomsbury Publishing.</p> <p>Butterick, K. (2011). <i>Introducing public relations: theory and practice</i>. London: Sage.</p> <p>Cornelissen, J. (2014). <i>Corporate communication: a guide to theory and practice</i>. London: Sage Publications.</p> <p>L'Etang, J., McKie, D., Snow, N., & Xifra, J. (Eds.). (2017). <i>The Routledge handbook of critical public relations</i>. London / New York: Routledge.</p> <p>L'Etang, J. (2011). <i>Public Relations: concepts, practice and critique</i>. London: Sage Publications.</p> <p>Mumby, D. K. (2013). <i>Organizational communication: a critical approach</i>. London: Sage Publications.</p> <p>Miller, D., & Dinan, W. (2008). <i>A century of spin: how public relations became the cutting edge of corporate power</i>. London: Pluto Press.</p> <p>Les lectures recommandées et les ressources audiovisuelles seront fournies via le forum en ligne Moodle.</p> |
| Faculty or entity in charge | <p>ESPB</p> |

| Programmes containing this learning unit (UE) | | | | |
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| Program title | Acronym | Credits | Prerequisite | Learning outcomes |
| Bachelor in Law | DROB1BA | 5 | BDROI1125 |  |
| Bachelor in Law French-English (and French-English-Dutch) | DRAB1BA | 5 | BDROI1125 |  |
| Bachelor in Law French-Dutch (and French-Dutch-English) | DRNB1BA | 5 | BDROI1125 |  |
| Bachelor in Information and Communication (French- English) | COAB1BA | 5 | BPOLS1114 |  |
| Bachelor in Information and Communication (French-Dutch- English) | COTB1BA | 5 | BPOLS1110 |  |
| Bachelor in Sociology and Anthropology | SOCB1BA | 5 | BPOLS1110 |  |
| Bachelor in Sociology and Anthropology (French-English) | SOAB1BA | 5 | BPOLS1114 |  |
| Bachelor in Sociology and Anthropology (French-Dutch- English) | SOTB1BA | 5 | BPOLS1110 |  |
| Bachelor in Political Sciences | SPOB1BA | 5 | BPOLS1110 |  |
| Bachelor in Political Sciences (French-English) | SPAB1BA | 5 | BPOLS1114 |  |
| Bachelor in Information and Communication [Dual Bachelor's degree for the holder of a Bachelor in Political Sciences] | COMB1BA | 5 | |  |