



Faculty of Social Sciences

KOMC14, Strategic Communication: Public Relations and Strategic Communication in New Media - Perspectives, Practice and Methods, 30 credits

Strategisk kommunikation: Public relations och strategisk kommunikation i nya medier - Perspektiv, praktik och metoder, 30 högskolepoäng
First Cycle / Grundnivå

Details of approval

The syllabus is an old version, approved by the board of the Department of Strategic communication on 2015-03-17 and was last revised on 2016-03-15. . The revised syllabus applied from 2016-08-29. , autumn semester 2016.

General Information

The course is a free standing first cycle course. The course takes place in Helsingborg.

Language of instruction: English

Main field of studies

Strategic Communication

Depth of study relative to the degree requirements

G1F, First cycle, has less than 60 credits in first-cycle course/s as entry requirements

Learning outcomes

The course consists of four modules.

Module 1: Public Relations - theory and practice, 7.5 credits

On completion of the module, the student shall demonstrate

Knowledge and understanding

- knowledge of the theoretical concepts which define public relations,
- knowledge of a range of activities associated with public relations practice,

- understanding of ways in which the discipline claims to distinguish itself from e.g. marketing and advertising,

Competence and skills

- the ability to plan and develop actions designed to enable persuasive engagement with a range of audiences in commercial, public sector and not for profit organisations,

Judgement and approach

- a critical awareness of the effectiveness, limitations and social implications of public relations activity, and have an understanding of the frameworks needed to make informed ethical judgments,
- the ability to appreciate the importance of public relations both as a creative activity and as a management function, and have a critical awareness of inherent tensions in these two framings.

Module 2: Strategic Communication and Digital Media – Culture and Society, 7.5 credits

On completion of the module, the students shall demonstrate

Knowledge and understanding

- specialised theoretical and practical understanding of strategic communication in digital media,
- general knowledge of theories and theoretical concepts in the field of digital media,
- understanding of how technology and structures determine the social and cultural significance of digital media for individuals, groups, organisations and society,

Competence and skills

- the ability to independently analyse empirical data from the perspective of the theoretical knowledge acquired in the course,
- the ability to identify and analyse opportunities and problems in the field of digital media, and report the findings in speech and writing,

Judgement and approach

- the ability to critically reflect on digital media as tools for strategic communication focusing on aspects of policy, culture and power, and the communication of organisations.

Module 3: Introduction to Research Methods, 7.5 credits

On completion of the module, the students shall demonstrate

Knowledge and understanding

- understanding of the important dividing line between theory of science perspectives and research methods,

Competence and skills

- the ability to critically review research findings in strategic communication,
- the ability to apply and critically reflect on analytical methods in strategic communication,
- the ability to apply text and image analysis as well as observation as methods,
- the ability to propose and argue for different methods on the basis of a stated aim and issues
- the ability to design a research project and produce academic texts,

Judgement and approach

- the ability to identify limitations in different research strategies and draw conclusions about differences between strategies.

Module 4: Academic Paper in Digital Media, 7.5 credits

On completion of the module, the students shall demonstrate

Knowledge and understanding

- understanding of the research area of strategic communication and digital media that underpins the investigation,
- knowledge of the relationship between different types empirical data and choice of research method,

Competence and skills

- the ability to write an academic research paper with a methodological or thematic connection to strategic communication and digital media,
- the ability to identify, formulate and solve scientific problems in a given time frame,
- the ability to conduct research-based information searches using the library's databases,
- the ability to orally and in writing to describe and argue for the chosen research method, problems and solutions,

Judgement and approach

- the ability to make judgments with respect to scientific, social and ethical aspects of strategic communications.

Course content

The course consists of four modules.

Module 1: Public Relations - Theory and Practice

In this module students develop an appreciation of the both theoretical and practical conceptions of public relations. Study of public relations activity as practiced by commercial and not-for-profit organisations is illuminated by critical examination from a range of theoretical perspectives. Although examples will be drawn primarily from Swedish, UK and US experience, students are invited to consider public relations in a broader transnational and global context. Emphasis is placed on understanding the changing nature of the discipline, including those driven by the increasing importance of digital platforms and channels.

The module develops the student's ability to consider public relations as a strategic activity, and builds familiarity with the public relations toolkit – the range of tactical devices employed for delivering organisational messages and engaging with a range of stakeholder groups. This includes developing techniques for measuring and evaluating the effectiveness of such activity.

As well as critically examining the reality of what is sometimes described as the "professional project" students are encouraged to consider ethical issues surrounding public relations activity, including power imbalances and tensions around truth, persuasion, authenticity, transparency and legitimacy.

Module 2: Strategic Communication and Digital Media – Culture and Society

The module critically addresses the development of digital media and provides insights into the issues caused by this development. The general aim is to enable students to describe and re-examine the use of digital media in strategic communication informed by a critical approach and new knowledge and understanding.

The module deals with current key theories and concepts in the field of digital media and strategic communication from a social sciences perspective. Among the topics discussed on the course are the new challenges caused by the development of new media.

Module 3: Introduction to Research Methods

The module introduce students to the theory of science and research methods in the social sciences specialising in strategic communication. The purpose is to enable students to develop the ability to reflect critically on and review scholarly texts. A further aim is for students to familiarise themselves with and develop an understanding of research strategies and methods as a preparation for the impending academic paper.

During the module, students will engage with different theory of science perspectives and research methods. The focus is on qualitative analyses of texts and images in mass media and popular culture but quantitative analysis will also be introduced. Furthermore, the course deals with observation as a method in both physical and digital environments. Students will actively apply different methods and reflect on their advantages and shortcomings in group exercises to be reported at seminars. The course also includes a component in which students have an opportunity to test different analytical methods on a set of empirical data.

Module 4: Academic Paper in Digital Media

The purpose of the module is that the student will complete a paper on a defined research problems in strategic communication and digital media. The work will be based on scientific principles and fulfill fundamental theoretical and methodological knowledge. The work is done in groups of students that plan their work in consultation with a supervisor. During the module seminars are organized in order to deepen the student's knowledge of scientific problems, research methods and scientific writing. The final paper is examined by an examiner at a public seminar with other students.

Course design

Teaching consists of lectures, guest lectures, supervision, workshops and seminars.

In module 4, Academic Paper in Digital Media, at least one supervisor is appointed for each essay group. Supervision is limited to the semester the student first is registered for the course. Exceptions can be made if there are special reasons. The number of supervision sessions are limited.

Attendance at workshops and seminars is compulsory unless there are special grounds. An alternative form or date for compulsory components is offered to students who are not able to complete a compulsory component owing to circumstances beyond their control, e.g. accident, sudden illness or similar. This also applies to students who have missed teaching because of activities as a student representative.

Exchange students that cannot participate in the compulsory examination seminar on module 4, Academic Paper in Digital Media, will write a critical review of two of the papers presented at the seminar.

Assessment

The four modules in the course are assessed separately.

Module 1: Public Relations - Theory and Practice

The module is assessed through a seminar assignment, a paper, and an oral exam.

Module 2: Strategic Communication and Digital Media - Culture and Society

The module is assessed through seminar assignments and oral presentations prepared in groups, and an individual assignment.

Module 3: Introduction to Research Methods

The module is assessed through active participation in seminars and a individual written examination.

Module 4: Academic Paper in Digital Media

The module is assessed through an academic paper in group and active participation in an examination seminar.

In connection with the course students are offered three examinations, a regular examination, a re-examination and one additional re-examination. Within one year after the course, students are offered a minimum of two additional re-examinations. Thereafter, more examinations are offered but in accordance with current course content.

Subcourses that are part of this course can be found in an appendix at the end of this document.

Grades

Marking scale: Fail, E, D, C, B, A.

The student's performance is assessed with reference to the learning outcomes of the course. For the grade of E the student must show acceptable results. For the grade of D the student must show satisfactory results. For the grade of C the student must show good results. For the grade of B the student must show very good results. For the grade of A the student must show excellent results. If a student does not achieve acceptable standards she will fail..

The course grade is determined by the mean of the grades of the marked exams (in A = 5, B = 4, C = 3, D = 2, E = 1). To pass the course, the student must have received at least the grade E on all components of the course marked with the grading scale E – A, F, and pass all other components marked with the grading scale Pass – Fail, and participated in all compulsory components.

Some course components such as seminars and workshops are exempted from the grading scale. In this case the grades awarded will be Pass or Fail. For the grade of Pass the student must show acceptable results. If a student does not achieve acceptable standards she will fail.

At the start of the course students are informed about the learning outcomes stated in the syllabus and about the grading scale and how it is applied in the course.

Entry requirements

45 credits in relevant subject in social sciences, humanities or business studies of which at least 30 credits should be in strategic communication, political sciences, sociology, media studies, communication studies, service management, fashion studies, journalism or marketing.

A good command of English language both spoken and written, equivalent to English 6/B (advanced) proficiency in the Swedish secondary system, is required. Equivalence assessments will be made according to national guidelines.

Foreign students are exempted from the basic university eligibility requirement of commanding the Swedish language.

Further information

The course is equivalent to four modules in the third semester of the Bachelor of Science Program in Strategic Communications and Digital media, 180 credits, and three modules in the third semester of the Bachelor of Science Program in Strategic Communications, 180 credits. The course can therefore not be included as an elective course in these programs.

Subcourses in KOMC14, Strategic Communication: Public Relations and Strategic Communication in New Media - Perspectives, Practice and Methods

Applies from H17

- 1701 Seminar assignment on PR, 1,5 hp
Grading scale: Fail, Pass
- 1702 Paper on PR, 3,0 hp
Grading scale: Fail, E, D, C, B, A
- 1703 Oral examination on PR, 3,0 hp
Grading scale: Fail, E, D, C, B, A
- 1704 Seminar on strategic communication and digital media 1, 1,0 hp
Grading scale: Fail, Pass
- 1705 Seminar on strategic communication and digital media 2, 1,0 hp
Grading scale: Fail, Pass
- 1706 Seminar on strategic communication and digital media 3, 1,0 hp
Grading scale: Fail, Pass
- 1707 Essay on strategic communication and digital media, 4,5 hp
Grading scale: Fail, E, D, C, B, A
- 1708 Seminar on collecting qualitative data, 1,0 hp
Grading scale: Fail, Pass
- 1709 Seminar on analyzing qualitative data, 1,0 hp
Grading scale: Fail, Pass
- 1710 Seminar on using quantitative research methods, 1,0 hp
Grading scale: Fail, Pass
- 1711 Exam in research methods, 4,5 hp
Grading scale: Fail, E, D, C, B, A
- 1712 Seminar on Academic Paper, 0,0 hp
Grading scale: Fail, Pass
- 1713 Paper in Strategic Communication, 7,5 hp
Grading scale: Fail, E, D, C, B, A

Applies from H16

- 1601 Seminar assignment on PR, 1,5 hp
Grading scale: Fail, E, D, C, B, A
- 1602 Paper on PR, 3,0 hp
Grading scale: Fail, E, D, C, B, A
- 1603 Oral examination on PR, 3,0 hp
Grading scale: Fail, E, D, C, B, A
- 1604 Seminar on strategic communication and digital media 1, 1,0 hp
Grading scale: Fail, Pass
- 1605 Seminar on strategic communication and digital media 2, 1,0 hp
Grading scale: Fail, Pass
- 1606 Seminar on strategic communication and digital media 3, 1,0 hp
Grading scale: Fail, Pass
- 1607 Essay on strategic communication and digital media, 4,5 hp
Grading scale: Fail, E, D, C, B, A
- 1608 Seminar on collecting qualitative data, 1,0 hp
Grading scale: Fail, Pass
- 1609 Seminar on analyzing qualitative data, 1,0 hp
Grading scale: Fail, Pass

- 1610 Seminar on using quantitative research methods, 1,0 hp
Grading scale: Fail, Pass
- 1611 Exam in research methods, 4,5 hp
Grading scale: Fail, E, D, C, B, A
- 1612 Opposition on academic research paper, 0,0 hp
Grading scale: Fail, Pass
- 1613 Academic research paper, 7,5 hp
Grading scale: Fail, E, D, C, B, A