

**FIP 256**  
**MUNICIPAL PUBLIC RELATIONS**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

Prerequisites: None

Corequisites: None

This course is a general survey of municipal public relations and their effect on the governmental process. Topics include principles of public relations, press releases, press conferences, public information officers, image surveys, and the effects of perceived service on fire protection delivery. Upon completion, students should be able to manage the public relations functions of a fire service organization. Course Hours Per Week: Class 3. Semester Hours Credit, 3.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

- a. Describe the importance of public relations
- b. Understand the public relations process
- c. Explain how public relations helps improve organizations and society
- d. Understand professional ethics in public relations practice
- e. Differentiate between open and closed systems
- f. Describe public relations communications
- g. Understand the use of communication technology
- h. Understand the major media used for communicating with external publics
- i. Describe the basic guidelines for building good media relations and working with the press
- j. Explain public relations problems
- k. Understand the importance of evaluating a public relations program
- l. Describe the goals of government public relations programs
- m. Understand the barriers to effective public relations in government
- n. Explain the major aspects of government-media relationships

**OUTLINE OF INSTRUCTION:**

- I. The art of making up minds
  - a. Power public relation has arrived
  - b. The growth of planning
  - c. Public Relations: A two-way function
  
- II. Integrated Marketing
  - a. How PR and marketing can work together
  - b. Breaking the mind-set
  - c. Publicity, Promotion, and Positioning
  - d. Defying the norms

- III. Using surveys as a publicity tool
  - a. Surveys as legitimate research
  - b. Publicity survey planning
  - c. Putting your survey in context
  - d. Conveying the data
  - e. Measuring results
  
- IV. PR as a Strategic Weapon
  - a. Coming up with a strategy
  - b. The keys to success
  
- V. The Power of Internet Public Relations
  - a. Benefits of Internet publicity
  - b. Customize each release
  
- VI. How PR Can Replace Advertising
  - a. Event Marketing
  - b. Picking the right events
  - c. Nuts and bolts of event marketing
  
- VII. The Secrets of Crisis Management
  - a. The critical first few minutes
  - b. General principles
  - c. Preemptive public relations
  - d. Anticipating disasters
  
- VIII. New Ways That PR Serves Clients
  - a. Encourage risk taking
  - b. Getting acquainted with the media
  - c. Assume media skepticism
  - d. Assuming the integrity of the agency
  - e. A conditional “Yes” is better than a premature “No”
  
- IX. How to Stage Manage the Interview
  - a. Getting ready for the interview
  - b. Looking alive on television
  - c. What if they do not ask the right question
  - d. Should you refuse to face the media
  - e. Handling hostility
  
- X. Getting on Radio and Television
  - a. Delivering what television wants
  - b. Using celebrities
  - c. Media tours
  - d. Video news releases
  - e. Radio

- XI. Running Effective News Conferences
  - a. Deciding to hold a news conference
  - b. Basics of the news conference
  
- XII. Evaluating the PR Program
  - a. The nuts and bolts of evaluation
  - b. Research in evaluating public relations
  - c. The right attitude toward evaluation

**REQUIRED TEXTBOOK AND MATERIALS:**

Textbooks to be selected by instructor

**STATEMENT FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:**

Students who require academic accommodations due to any physical, psychological, or learning disability are encouraged to request assistance from a disability services counselor within the first two weeks of class. Likewise, students who potentially require emergency medical attention due to any chronic health condition are encouraged to disclose this information to a disability services counselor within the first two weeks of class. Counselors can be contacted by calling 686-3652 or by visiting the Student Development Office in the Phail Wynn Jr. Student Services Center, room 1309.