



Governance (GOVN) 444

Media Relations (Revision 4)

Status:

Replaced with new revision, see the [course listing](#)  for the current revision 

Delivery mode:

Individualized study online  and **Paced study**  with **Video component** 
(Overseas students, please contact the University Library before registering in a course that has an audio/visual component).
Delivered via Brightspace.

Credits:

3

Areas of study:

Arts or Social Science

Prerequisites:

None. **CMNS 301** or a course in communication theory is recommended but not required.

Precluded:

GOVN 444 is a cross-listed course—a course listed under 2 different disciplines—**CMNS 444**. GOVN 444 may not be taken for credit by students who have obtained credit for CMNS 444 or HSRV 444.

Challenge:

GOVN 444 has a challenge for credit option.

Faculty:**Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences**

Overview

In this course you will learn about the foundations of public relations as well as an overview of what is called critical public relations studies—perspectives on the *study* (and not just the practice) of public relations through a variety of theories and case studies. The public relations practitioner helps to construct and control the image of an organization for the public (or at least attempts to do so). It is important to consider the implications of these processes and their broader role. More than simply propaganda, public relations practice since the latter part of the twentieth century reflects the impact of powerful consumer movements and the recognition that public opinion and trust is crucial for the survival of both commercial and public organizations. This course engages with disciplines and critical perspectives including environmental studies, race, gender, sexuality, capitalism, history, disability, colonialism, ethics, and more.

Outline

- Unit 1—Foundations of Public Relations
- Unit 2—The Day-to-Day of Public Relations
- Unit 3—Journalism and Public Relations
- Unit 4—Digital Worlds and Public Relations
- Unit 5—The Environment and Public Relations
- Unit 6—Government and Public Relations
- Unit 7—Panic! Crisis Communication and Public Relations

Learning outcomes

Upon the completion of GOVN 444: Media Relations, you should be able to

- discuss the history of public relations, particularly its role in colonial state formation;
- recognize and apply the RACE (research, analyze, communicate, evaluate) formula to public relations functions;
- discuss the key factors, ethical considerations, and typical tasks involved in effective media relations;
- create a press release and an effective media relations plan;
- name components of an Indigenous framework for public relations and be able to apply public relations principles to social action in a range of marginalized communities and social movements;
- name a selection of digital strategies used by public relations practitioners;
- analyze examples of corporate social responsibility;
- name several public relations strategies and tools used both within and for communicating with government;
- analyze the role of public relations as a method of political manipulation in an international context
- analyze the role of journalism as a method of holding public relations practitioners accountable; and
- be familiar with several working definitions of *crisis communication*.

Evaluation

To **obtain credit**  for GOVN 444, you must achieve a minimum grade of **D (50 percent)**  or better on each assignment and a composite course grade of at least D (50 percent). The weighting of the composite mark is as follows:

Activity	Weight
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Activity	Weight
Assignment 1: Questions for Further Discussion	15%
Assignment 2: Corporate Social Responsibility Analysis	35%
Assignment 3: Questions for Further Discussion	15%
Assignment 4: Research Essay	35%
Total	100%

Materials

All course materials for GOVN 444 are available online.

Challenge for credit

Overview

The challenge for credit process allows you to demonstrate that you have acquired a command of the general subject matter, knowledge, intellectual and/or other skills that would normally be found in a university-level course.

Full information about [challenge for credit](#) can be found in the Undergraduate Calendar.

Evaluation

To **receive credit** for the GOVN 444 challenge registration, you must achieve a grade of at least **D (50 percent)** on the examination.

Activity	Weight
Part I: Essay	50%

Activity	Weight
Part II: Online Exam	50%
Total	100%



Challenge for credit course registration form

Important links

- › [Academic advising](#)
- › [Program planning](#)
- › [Request assistance](#)
- › [Support services at AU](#)

Athabasca University reserves the right to amend course outlines occasionally and without notice. Courses offered by other delivery modes may vary from their individualized study counterparts.

Opened in Revision 4, October 31, 2024

Updated August 24, 2026

View **previous revision**