

## Advanced Crisis Communication

JRSM 7410.001/S01

Spring 2024

M 5:30 – 8:30 p.m. via Zoom (link on Canvas)

**Prof. Kim Marks Malone, APR, Fellow PRSA**

Office 334A Meeman Journalism Bldg.

Office hours: M/W, 1 – 2 p.m.; T/R, 3 – 4 p.m.; Other hours by appointment

Phone: 619.316.5498 (mobile, text preferred)

Email: [ksmarks@memphis.edu](mailto:ksmarks@memphis.edu)

X: @ksmarks

LinkedIn: @kimmarksmalone

Instagram: @ksmarks

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS

#### **Catalog description**

This course will explore theories and research related to communication before, during, and after a crisis. Students examine the fundamentals of organizational communication, crisis management, and strategic and crisis communication planning and examine case studies of several real-life crises: organizational crises, natural disasters, accidents, terrorism incidents, health crises, and major crises of credibility. The goal is to prepare students to better strategize, plan, execute, and evaluate crisis across a variety of types of organizations and crises. Students will be exposed to crisis management best practice principles, dominant and emerging research trends, and dominant and emerging theories. Additionally, students should become better analysts of crisis communication in the world around them.

#### **Prerequisites**

Graduate status

#### **Textbooks, software and required materials**

- Ulmer, R. R., Sellnow, T. L. & Seeger, M. W. (2023). *Effective Crisis Communication: Moving from Crisis to Opportunity*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. ISBN 978-1071852392
- Other readings will be assigned and posted to Canvas.
- Access to personal social media accounts – may be newly created for this class but you

## Synchronous Class Format

This graduate-level seminar will meet synchronously via the web-based video conferencing platform Zoom. The link for the Zoom meeting is posted in Canvas and will be sent via email/calendar invite.

This class includes lecture and discussions. Each week, we will discuss a new topic and I and/or designated classmates will be responsible for presenting ideas for debate from the readings and examples from industry and critically analyzing the week's concepts. Please note that failure to attend class or to actively take part – even if all your assignments are turned in on time and done acceptably – will significantly affect your final grade. Read the material *before* the scheduled class time and be prepared to engage in discussion.

As a discussion-based seminar, you are expected to have your video on during our class meeting. Please let me know if this is going to be an issue for you in advance.

All assignments must be submitted via Canvas in .doc or .docx format unless otherwise noted. Work submitted in a different format may result in point deductions being assessed to your work.

## Accessing the course website

1. Go to the University of Memphis learning management system home page:  
<https://memphis.instructure.com>
2. Log in using your University of Memphis username and password.
3. On your course dashboard, click on the course card for Spring Term 2024 Advanced Crisis Communication 28309.202410, 28609.202410

## GRADING AND COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

This is meant as a general guideline to major assignments within the class. More details will be provided in class and on Canvas. Deadlines will be listed on each assignment.

**Weekly discussion posts.** You will be asked to respond to the readings in the form of a 250- to 300-word discussion post each week. The idea is not to regurgitate the readings but to analyze them by providing insights and comments that demonstrate knowledge and deep thinking about theories, methods, and concepts found in the week's readings. You may make connections to readings from other weeks, connections to something you have read about or learned in popular media and more. The purpose is to interact with the material in such a way as to be prepared to discuss it in class and to write out your thoughts on the ideas presented.

You will be given a prompt each week to help guide the direction of your writing. Be sure to have your discussion post at hand during class to help remember your ideas and connections during the class discussion.

Discussion posts will be graded on (1) content – the post addresses all questions asked and is appropriate in length to stimulate further discussion, clearly relates to the main topic and includes several supporting details and/or examples; (2) contribution – the post is thoughtful, analytical and original; (3) connections – you make connections between course content, readings, and personal reflection, current events, etc.; and (4) mechanics – the post is well-structured, logical, and free of grammatical and spelling errors.

Assignments. We will do various assignments over the course of the semester to reinforce concepts covered in readings and class discussions.

**Crisis du Jour.** You each will deliver a 3- to 5-minute presentation and submit a 2-page (double-spaced, 1-inch margins, 12-point Times New Roman) summary on a crisis that made headlines within the last 12 months. In both the presentation and the summary, you will describe the situation including where you learned of it (proper citation), organization(s) or individuals involved, status, key issues, and your assessment of the response (or response so far) You must use at least three references in your summary and cite them properly using [APA \(7th edition\)](#).

You will select your crisis in advance via a discussion post. Crises may not be presented by more than one person. The first person to post the crisis topic in the assigned discussion board has 'dibs.'

**Crisis Case Study.** This assignment will allow you to apply concepts and theories from the readings, examples, and class discussions to a crisis communication scenario over the course of several assignments that will culminate in a final paper and presentation. You will introduce a crisis case of your choosing and critique the organization's response to the crisis. The crisis cannot be one that is discussed in class/readings and must have taken place since January 2021. It may be an ongoing crisis or one that has been resolved. You will back up your critique of the organization's response with both research and theory. More details will be provided on Canvas.

**Class participation.** You are expected to attend each class and actively participate in the discussions.

## Grading

- Weekly discussion posts, 25%
- Assignments, 30%
- Final Crisis Case Study & Presentation, 40%
- Class participation, 5%

A = 90% - 100%; B = 80% - 89.9%; C = 70% - 79.9%; D = 60% - 69.9%; F = Below 60%

## Quality of work

All work submitted should follow AP style, including proper spelling, grammar, and language. A large part of mass communication is having a polished written concept of what you are

communicating. This includes all classwork and presentations. Although line editing is unlikely, problems in these or other areas will result in deduction of points.

## Plagiarism policy

I expect your work to be good and to be original, meaning it is yours. If you quote anything or get information from other sources, they should be fully cited. Cite your sources using [APA style](#) (7<sup>th</sup> edition). If you need help with writing and citing sources, please see me for resources. If you commit plagiarism by presenting the ideas, representations or works of another person(s) as your own or by knowingly submitting your work for multiple assignments or classes without explicit permission, the following policy applies:

*First offense:* warning, redo the assignment for no more than 50% credit.

*Second offense:* automatic 0, no option to redo the assignment.

*Third offense:* automatic class fail.

Note that any instances of plagiarism may result in other disciplinary sanctions which may be imposed through the regular University of Memphis academic misconduct process.

## ChatGPT/AI

Some assignments this semester may direct you to use ChatGPT. You will follow the directions for these assignments posted on Canvas for these assignments and how to “show your work” with the AI tool.

For all other assignments, you are permitted to use ChatGPT and other AI tools for gathering information, writing drafts, and revising your writing. However, you are expected to include a disclosure statement at the end of your assignment describing which AI tool you used and how you used it. For example, "*ChatGPT was used to draft about 30% of this assignment and to provide revision assistance. AI-produced content was edited for accuracy and style.*" Be prepared to submit any prompts you used for assistance with your assignment as well as the original ChatGPT/AI tool output and to be able to explain/show how you fact-checked and improved upon the AI's work. Your work will be run through AI detection software.

## Late work

Work submitted late in Canvas is subject to a 2% per day reduction in your grade on the assignment. The deduction is automatic in Canvas.

I will not accept work after three weeks beyond the due date. At that point, the work is no longer helpful to current course concepts. Waiting until the end of the semester and submitting everything at once is not an option – please do not even propose it.

If you feel like you are falling behind or if life circumstances are causing you to miss assignments, please reach out to me as soon as possible so we can work together to plan for you to get caught up. I'm happy to help each one of you stay current and not fall behind. I want

to see you succeed in this class but that requires you to take on the responsibility of communicating with me. If I don't know, I can't help.

## Contacting me

The best and quickest way to contact me is via email ([ksmarks@memphis.edu](mailto:ksmarks@memphis.edu)). Do not use the email in Canvas, use my memphis.edu. I will respond within 24 – 48 hours. You may also text me. If you text me, please include your name and the class. If you have a problem, do not let it snowball. Contact me ASAP.

## JOURNALISM AND STRATEGIC MEDIA POLICIES

### Portfolio requirement

As an undergraduate student in the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media, you are required to develop and maintain an active portfolio of your work. Portfolios begin in JRSM 3900/3905. The portfolio should contain samples of coursework and/or professional experiences and should develop as you build skills. Portfolios will undergo a final, external review while you are enrolled in your capstone course.

You may use any type of web hosting for your portfolio, but it must have an independent and professional URL. You may use any content management system, but you are encouraged to use WordPress, Wix, or Squarespace. It is also encouraged to purchase a URL if you plan to use the portfolio long term. You must keep the portfolio active for six months following graduation from the University of Memphis.

You should have a professional email address you plan to use throughout your professional life, via a common email service, such as Gmail.

All portfolios must contain the following items:

- Samples of work from courses and/or professional activities. (Example: Broadcasting students must include a video reel)
- A current résumé
- A personal profile
- Contact information/means of contact
- Professional social media links (minimum LinkedIn)

You may wish to include a blog, video reels, photograph galleries, presentations, design PDFs, audio files or writing pieces as examples of professional work. The professional work should ultimately be tailored to the career you seek after graduation. Your portfolio should show a unique blend of work.

### Email

You must have your UofM email account activated. If you are using another provider, such as Google, you are required to have all UofM emails forwarded to that account. Go to the [account management website](#) for information about implementing email forwarding. You are required to check your email daily.

### Electronic devices

Some classes require a tablet, laptop or a smartphone. Others do not. Instructors will set the policy for their specific classes.

## AI/Chat GPT

The use of artificial intelligence software, such as Chat GPT, is prohibited in some courses and required in others in Journalism & Strategic Media. Please refer to specific guidelines for this course in the course-specific part of the syllabus.

## Attendance

Class attendance is mandatory in Journalism & Strategic Media. You may be assigned a failing grade for the semester for nonattendance or habitual tardiness.

## Course repetition

Majors and minors who fail to earn the minimum passing grade (C-) in a class required by your program of study in Journalism & Strategic Media after three attempts will be dropped from the program.

You may not use or submit work from a previous course, even if it is the same course being repeated, to fulfill requirements for assignments in another course. Substantially reworking the original submission, or working with the same general idea, may be permissible upon discussion and with written approval from the professor of the current course.

## Academic integrity

The University of Memphis expects all students to behave honestly and follow the policies stated in the Student Code of Rights and Responsibilities. If you need more information about the University policy on academic integrity visit the [Office of Student Accountability's website](#).

In addition to University-wide policies, the Department of Journalism & Strategic Media considers making up quotes from sources, turning in substantially the same assignment for credit in two different courses or receiving any assistance from others for work assigned to be done on your own, as acts of cheating and punishable to the degree determined appropriate by the course instructor and department chair. Punishment may include grade reductions or seeking dismissal of the student from the University.

Further, you are expected to comply with copyright and intellectual property laws and must have sufficient permission to use any copyrighted materials used in creative projects, unless otherwise informed in cases of exercises or reproduction.

Your written work may be submitted to Turnitin.com, or a similar electronic detection method, for rating originality of your ideas and to evaluate proper use and assignment of sources. All creative work may be checked for policy adherence by the professor. The only exception to this policy is your online portfolio and its attendant pieces (for example, the résumé and logo). By taking this course, you agree that all assignments may undergo this review process. The assignment may be included as a source document in Turnitin.com's restricted access database. It is solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism in such documents. Assignments not submitted according to the instructor's procedures may be penalized or may not be accepted at all.

## Online SETEs

You are encouraged to complete the SETEs evaluation of this course. If completed, once the instructor has posted final grades, you can immediately see that grade. To access evaluation forms, log in to MyMemphis; click the "Student Pages" dropdown menu and select "My Resources" and find the SETE

evaluation forms; complete an evaluation for each course listed and hit the “Submit” button at the bottom of the form. Completing the SETE will only take a few minutes. Faculty take the evaluations seriously and use them to improve courses and instructional quality. Your feedback is essential and is appreciated.

### Deadlines

All deadlines are firm. Because Journalism & Strategic Media is a professional program, students are expected to understand and comply with deadlines. Students needing an extension on an assignment must receive approval from the instructor. Exceptions will be made for reasonable circumstances if the student notifies the instructor prior to the due date.

You may be permitted to make up missing work if it is for an absence because of illness or other catastrophic emergency, such as a death in the family that can be documented.

### AP Style and grammar

All written work in this class must follow the AP Stylebook and accepted rules of grammar and punctuation. You are responsible for learning these rules and checking your work for errors.

### Disability and accommodations

If you need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability, contact Disability Resources for Students at 901-678-2880 in 110 Wilder Tower Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations.

### Diversity and inclusivity

The Department of Journalism & Strategic Media values diversity in all its forms. Some of these forms include ability, age, appearance, ethnicity, gender identity, immigration status, language, nationality, race, religion/spirituality, sex, sexuality, socio-economic status, and other personal identities and experiences. As such, students are expected to participate in fostering an inclusive environment that respects the differences of others.

Students are expected to approach their work through a diverse lens. Creating messages that resonate with diverse audiences requires an understanding of a variety of perspectives, which are carried out through multiple platforms, such as digital and traditional media outlets.

The department seeks to foster healthy and positive classroom discussions and experiences. As such, faculty and students are expected to remain respectful and professional at all times.

### Weather policy

Always check with local media, the University of Memphis website regarding inclement weather.

### Student support

If you are experiencing personal or academic challenges including, but not limited to food or housing issues, family needs, or other stressors, visit the Student Outreach & Support page to learn about resources that can help: <https://www.memphis.edu/deanofstudents/crisis/index.php> or contact the Dean of Students Office at 901-678-2187, or in person in Suite 359 in the University Center for assistance. You may also talk with course instructors about the challenges you are experiencing. Instructors may be able to assist in connecting you with campus or community support.