

**Advanced Crisis Communication**

JOUR 7410-001, M50

Fall 2016

Wednesdays 5:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Meeman 106

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Office: Meeman 306

Office hours: MW 12:30 – 4 p.m., T 2 – 5 p.m., and by appointment

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**COURSE REQUIREMENTS****CATALOG DESCRIPTION:**

Discussing all aspects of a crisis, including preparation, response, recovery, and mitigation. Focuses on communication from an organization and government to all potential publics. Will also discuss the impact of social media and potential from one-to-one communication. Course will include a multi-day crisis simulation.

**COURSE 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 a number of 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 communication 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.

**PREREQUISITE:**

None

**TEXTBOOKS**

Required:

Coombs, W. T. (2012). *Ongoing crisis communication: Planning, managing, and responding* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Other readings and articles will be provided to all students via eCourseware.

Recommended:

Heath, R. L., & O'Hair, D. (Eds.) *Handbook of risk and crisis communication*. New York: Routledge.

There are a variety of crisis books that specialize in a particular area, including disaster sociology, complexity theory, organizational response, public health, terrorism, and rhetorical analysis. If you have a particular area of interest, consider asking Dr. Janoske for a recommendation on a book within that area.

## **COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:**

This is meant as a general guideline to the major assignments within the class. More detail will be provided in class and on eCourseware. Deadlines are also listed in the Class Schedule. All work should be turned in as a Word document via Dropbox in eCourseware. All work is due at the start of class, 5:30 p.m. CT on the assigned Wednesday, unless otherwise noted.

### *1. Discussion Leader*

Each week, one person will serve as the discussion leader. Discussion leaders will be responsible for leading the majority of the class period, both through presenting a brief overview of the material read, and through leading discussion on that material. S/he will develop a list of questions based on the readings for the class to discuss, paying special attention to the real world implications of the research and theory we will be reading. The discussion leader will also highlight a few of the most important or most interesting points from the readings. Please be creative and find ways to try to engage the class and help us remember the important concepts. For example, show us a video clip, a cartoon, a photo, or a Web site and ask the class to analyze it from the theoretical perspective(s) of the week.

Discussion leaders should address the following general questions:

- What contribution has this approach made to the field of mass communication?
- What are the theory's strengths and weaknesses? or What are the argument's strengths and weaknesses?
- What is the theoretical significance of the research?
- What are the practical applications of this approach to journalism and the field?
- What were the most important or interesting points from the readings?

### *2. Weekly Short Papers*

Each week, students will be asked to respond to the readings in the form of a 1-2 page paper (double-spaced). 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. Students may make connections to readings from other weeks, connections to their final paper, connections to something they have read about or learned in either popular media or another course, among others. 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. Given the brevity of the papers, there is no need to define concepts or theories, but students should provide examples where appropriate.

Students will NOT be required to turn in short papers for the weeks in which they are the discussion leaders.

Papers should BOTH be uploaded to Dropbox (for grading) and be brought to class in some form (printed, on a laptop/tablet, etc.) in order to help the student remember their ideas and connections during the class discussion.

### *3. Research and Practice Paper*

One area of focus this semester will be increasing understanding and application of crisis research in industry, and the resulting impact of existing crisis communication on research focus. You will choose both an area of crisis research and an organization that you think could benefit from that area of research, and create a way/forum for academics and practitioners to both utilize what the other offers in this sub-area. A synthesis of this information, including an outline for the project suggested, should be presented in a paper,

approx. 5-7 pages.

Your suggestions will also be presented toward the end of the semester, *Shark Tank*-style, with both industry members and researchers judging your offerings on feasibility, accessibility, and other applicable areas. Students whose projects are “funded” by the experts will receive extra credit.

*Area of interest/organization proposal:* September 7

*Literature and Organizational Analysis:* October 12

*General project/forum suggestion:* October 26

*Shark Tank presentation:* November 30

*Final paper due:* December 7 @ 5:30 p.m.

4. *Crisis Simulation*

More detail will be provided about this in class. Dates for simulation are November 9 and 16.

**GRADING:**

There are 500 possible points in this class. At the end of the semester, your class average will be calculated and fractions will be rounded to the nearest whole number. Letter grades will be determined according to the scale below.

<i>Discussion Leader (2)</i>	60 points each	120 points
<i>Weekly Short Papers (10)</i>	10 points each	100 points
<i>Crisis Simulation</i>		120 points
<i>Research and Practice Paper</i>		160 points
<i>Area proposal</i>	15 points	
<i>Lit/Org analysis</i>	30 points	
<i>Ideas for Project</i>	15 points	
<i>Final Paper</i>	75 points	
<i>Presentation</i>	25 points	
<i>Total</i>		500 points

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A	448-500	B	398-447	C	348-397	D	300-347
						F	Below 300

## QUALITY OF WORK

All work in this course should follow AP Style, including proper spelling, grammar, and language. A large part of public relations is having a polished written concept of what you are communicating. This includes all class work and presentations. Problems in these or other areas will result in the deduction of points.

I expect your work to be good and to be yours. What is not yours should be fully cited. In documenting sources you should use APA formatting. If you need help with writing and citing sources, please see me for resources. In addition, Purdue University's Online Writing Lab is an excellent resource, and can be found at <http://owl.english.purdue.edu>.

## QUESTIONS ABOUT GRADES

If you would like to ask about a grade, please make an appointment to meet with me outside of class time, as I will not discuss grades via email or during class. If you have a question or problem with a grade, exam question, or in-class assignment, you have 48 hours after the assignment is returned to you to contact me, or the grade stands. Your question or appeal must be stated in writing, citing your position and why you feel the mark is incorrect. The appeal should be turned in to the professor or sent via email within the stated time frame.

Additionally, you are responsible for tracking your grade online and meeting with the professor early in the semester if you are concerned about your overall grade. Meeting with the professor early and often can help both parties involved find ways to improve student-instructor understanding and quality of work.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

This is a basic schedule for topics and major assignments over the course of the semester. Although every effort will be made to stick with this schedule, please understand that some material may require more or less discussion and class time. Thus, changes to the schedule may occur. All changes will be announced in class.

Note: Readings will be announced the first day of class, and should be completed prior to the session they will be discussed. Articles not in the Coombs book will be available on eCourseware.

<b>Class</b>	<b>Content</b>	<b>Due</b>	<b>Readings</b>
Week 1			
Aug. 24	Course introduction. What is a crisis?	<b>Discussion leader sign-up</b>	
Week 2			
Aug. 31	Foundations of crisis communication; balance between research & practice		
Week 3			
Sept. 7	Crisis theories	<b>Area of interest due</b>	
Week 4			
Sept. 14	Strategic management approach to crisis		
Week 5			

Sept. 21	Publics, emotion, coping strategies		
	<b>**PRD Ethics Twitter chat is Tuesday, September 20 @ 7pm CT**</b>		
Week 6			
Sept. 28	Traditional and new media uses in a crisis		
Week 7			
Oct. 5	Proactive planning and environmental scanning		
Week 8			
Oct. 12	Responding to crises	<b>Lit/Org Analysis due</b>	
Week 9			
Oct. 19	Ethics and leadership		
Week 10			
Oct. 26	Recovery and resilience, discourse of renewal	<b>Initial project idea due</b>	
Week 11			
Nov. 2	Special topics, best practices		
Week 12			
Nov. 9	<b>Crisis Simulation</b>		
Week 13			
Nov. 16	<b>Crisis Simulation</b>		
Week 14			
Nov. 23	<b>Class does not meet</b>		
Week 15			
Nov. 30	Last day of classes	<b><i>Shark Tank!</i></b>	
Dec. 7	<b>Final Paper Due by 5:30 p.m.</b>		

## DEPARTMENT POLICIES

### PORTFOLIO REQUIREMENT:

All students in the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media are required to develop and maintain an active portfolio of their work. Students are to begin the portfolio in JOUR 2121 and contribute to it from every course thereafter. The portfolio should contain samples of the student's work from his/her courses and/or professional experience and should develop as the student builds skills. Portfolios will undergo a final, external review while students are enrolled in the capstone course for their majors.

Students may use any type of web hosting for their portfolios, but it must have an independent and professional URL. The department requires students to use WordPress to build their portfolio sites. Students are encouraged to consider purchasing a URL and hosting if they plan to use the portfolio for a long term, but must keep the portfolio active for six months following graduation from the University of Memphis.

Students should have a professional email address they plan to use throughout their professional life, via a common email service, such as Gmail or Yahoo.

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
- Social media links

Students might wish to include a blog, video reels, photograph galleries, SoundSlides presentations, design PDFs, audio files, and Storify pieces as examples of professional work. The professional work should ultimately be tailored to the career the student seeks after graduation. Thus, each student's portfolio should show a unique blend of work.

**EMAIL:**

You must have your UM email account activated. If you are using another provider such as Google, you are required to have your UM email forwarded to that account. Go to the <http://iam.memphis.edu> website to implement forwarding of UM email. You are required to check your email daily. You are responsible for complying with any email sent to you by your professor or the University.

**MOBILE PHONES AND LAPTOPS:**

Some classes require a tablet, laptop or a smartphone. Others do not. Your instructor will set the policy for her/her specific class.

**ATTENDANCE:**

Class attendance is mandatory in the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media. You may be assigned a failing grade for the semester for nonattendance, or habitual late arrival. No late work will be accepted without prior arrangements, which are acceptable to your professor. Students may not be permitted to make up any missing work unless it is for an absence due to illness or other catastrophic emergency such as a death in the family that can be documented (e.g. with a doctor's note or a copy of the newspaper obituary). This is a professional program for journalists who are expected to understand and comply with deadlines. If you have some problem making it to class on time make arrangements to fix the problem or consider taking another class. You should consider this class your "job" in the educational process and be on time just as you would elsewhere.

**CHEATING:**

In addition to university-wide policies stated in the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities, the Department of Journalism considers making up quotes from sources, turning in substantially the same assignment for credit in two different courses, or a student receiving any assistance from others for work assigned to be done on his/her own, as acts of cheating punishable to the degree determined appropriate by the course instructor and department chair. That may include grade reductions or seeking dismissal of the student from the university.

Further, as this is a journalism/mass communication class, students are expected to comply with copyright law, 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 an evaluation of the originality of your ideas and proper use and attribution of sources. As part of this process, you may be required to submit electronic as well as hard copies of your written work, or be given other instructions to follow. By taking this course, you agree that all assignments may undergo this review process and that the assignment may be included as a source document in Turnitin.com’s restricted access database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism in such documents. Any assignment not submitted according to the procedures given by the instructor may be penalized or may not be accepted at all.” (Office of Legal Counsel, October 17, 2005)

**ONLINE SETEs:**

You are urged to complete the SETEs evaluation of this course. Once your instructor has posted your grade, you can immediately see that grade, provided you completed a teacher evaluation for that class. How to access your evaluation forms: Log in using your UUID and email password; click on the gray “Student” tab; complete an evaluation for each course listed and hit the “Submit” button at the bottom of the form. It will only take a few minutes of your time. We take the evaluations very seriously and use them to improve courses and instructional quality. Your feedback is essential and will be appreciated.

**DEADLINES:**

Remember there’s a reason “DEAD” makes up half the word “deadline.” All deadlines are firm. This is journalism and strategic media. If you get into trouble, talk to your instructor. Exceptions will be made for reasonable circumstances if the student notifies the instructor prior to the due date.

**AP STYLE AND GRAMMAR:**

All written work in this class should follow the AP Stylebook and accepted rules of grammar and punctuation. If you don’t know the style for a particular phrase, look it up or ask your classmates or the instructor.

**DISABILITY:**

Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss your specific needs. Please contact the Office for Disability Services at 901-678-2880 in 110 Wilder Tower Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

**DIVERSITY:**

Students are required to respect the differences of others and treat all persons with respect. Discriminatory, derogatory and threatening language or behavior will not be tolerated. Further, students are expected to consider their work through a diverse mind. Mass communications reach a mass audience, and students should be aware of how those messages are received by a diverse audience.

**WEATHER POLICY:**

Always check with local media and the University of Memphis website regarding inclement weather. If the university is closed or classes are canceled, this course will not meet. However, students will still be responsible for that day’s work.