Course Description & Objectives

This course is designed to introduce you to the theory and application of crisis management (and issues/risk management). A crisis may be considered any situation that threatens the integrity of an organization’s reputation, community or professional standing, operations, public structure or functions. All organizations experience crises. Crises interrupt organizations’ routines and attract extreme public and media scrutiny. For some organizations, a crisis may be fatal – irrevocably harming the organization’s image, reputation, and bottom line. For other organizations, a crisis is an expected event that the organization has planned and prepared for well in advance. The critical difference between a crisis-prone and crisis-prepared organization is effective crisis management. And the key to effective crisis management is effective communication. The goal of this course is to apply both theoretical and practical principles of crisis management to the myriad of situations calling for action and responses to an organization’s stakeholders. By the end of the course, you will:

- Acquire an overall understanding of the nature of organizational crises and effective crisis management principles.
- Learn about the role of crisis communication theory in explaining how organizations prepare and respond to crises.
- Understand other allied fields: issues management, risk management, risk communication, and reputation management.
- Understand and apply effective crisis communication principles and strategies.
- Recognize potential ethical and legal problems for crisis communication managers.
- Be able to plan crisis communication plans for organizations.
- Be able to apply their knowledge of crisis management to their own research.
**Required Text**

We will use two textbooks throughout this course. In addition, additional readings will be assigned throughout the course and posted on Sakai. All readings should be completed prior to the class meeting for that day.


- Several supplemental readings are supplied via Sakai.

- All readings should be completed prior to the class meeting for that day.

**Recommended Text**


**Grading Scale:**

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<th>Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>95-100</td>
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<td>A-</td>
<td>90-94</td>
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**Basis for Course Grade:**

- Attendance & Participation 10%
- Discussion Leadership 15%
- Case Analysis Paper 10%
- Crisis Communication Plan for Master Students/ Research Paper Proposal Option for Ph.D. Students 25%
- Final Research Paper Proposal Draft 10%
- Final Research Paper (Written:25% + Presentation: 5%): Ph.D. students must complete their study 30%

**Assignments:**

- All assignments should be stapled, typed, double-spaced, and 12 points Times New Roman font. Spelling, punctuation, and grammatical errors will result in point deductions. APA (American Psychological Association) style will be the standard for references and in-text citations.
Grades will be based on a combination of categories as follows:

- **Participation & Attendance (10%)**: This class is learner-centered course. It uses discussions to engage in the learning process. Thus participation is a key to your success in this class. I encourage everyone to actively participate in our class discussions. Speak up your opinion. In addition, you cannot succeed in this course if you do not attend class. You are allowed one unexcused absence during the semester. You must provide written documentation to explain your absence. I will subtract 5 points from your final grade for every unexcused absence. All absences must be cleared through me before class starts. There will be no make-ups for any unexcused absences.

- **Discussion Leader (15%)**: You will facilitate a session discussion once during the semester. **For the discussions to be successful, the entire class must read the readings each week.** Each discussion leader should outline the key points of the readings for that week and will prepare discussion questions to facilitate discussion. Presentations should outline the key points of the readings for that week and pose questions to the group to foster discussion. Make sure to include theoretical and conceptual implications of the readings as well as practical and professional applications. Discussion leaders are expected to hand out an outline to the class stating what they will cover in the presentation. Activities, exercises, examples, and other creative approaches are welcome and encouraged. Discussion questions can be direct, Sophistic, leading, or take an extremist viewpoint (within the appropriate contexts and good taste, of course). At times I will ask various students to respond to questions or comment on the readings. At least by 10 pm the day before class, the discussion leader(s) should email to the other students and me discussion questions that s/he will use to guide our discussion.

- **Case Study Analysis Paper & Discussion (10%)**: You will facilitate a case study discussion once during the semester. You can select a crisis case either from Talespin book (recommended book) or choose one current organizational crisis (international or national) by analyzing news coverage of the crisis. Each case discussion leader will prepare a 3-5 page analysis paper of their case. The leader also will prepare discussion questions related to the case. Each discussion leader will have approximately 15 minutes to discuss the case with the class. You should begin your discussion with a brief presentation on the case. In leading the class discussion it will be important to: (a) provide your analysis of the selected cases (including comparison/contrast to another case), (b) relate key concepts and principles to the cases and (c) provoke discussion. You also will need to prepare discussion questions in advance, which you will turn in with your paper. Your analysis paper should include background on the crisis, background on the organization, and an analysis of the organization’s preparation for, response to, and/or recover to the crisis. You will sign up for your crisis analysis paper presentation date in class.

The paper is due the day you present. Send your paper and ppt file to me before class. The assessment criteria for Case study analysis paper & discussion is posted on Sakai in the “Lessons” folder.

- **Crisis Communication Plan for Master students (25%, approximately 15-20 pages**: 10% for the written plan (team), 5% for individual, & 10% for simulation) or
Research Proposal option for Ph.D. students:

**Crisis Communication Plan:** You will develop a crisis communication plan in small groups. Your crisis communication plan will focus on pandemic flu. As a team, you will select the specific organization you design the plan for, but I will designate the type of organization you must select (corporate, government, or nonprofit) based upon your preferences. We will discuss the format for the crisis communication plan in class. Your crisis communication plan is **due on Mar. 14 (Week 10).** The assessment criteria document for the crisis communication plan is posted on Sakai in the "Lessons" folder. Your crisis communication plan will follow the format outlined by Fearn-Banks (see week 5 reading), which we will discuss in class. You will receive two grades for the crisis communication plan: team and individual. I will assign team grade based on the assessment criteria posted on Sakai. The individual grade will be assigned by your teammates. Each team member will complete an evaluation of each other and I will average the evaluations for your individual grade. **Peer evaluation should also be submitted on Mar. 14 (week 10).**

**Simulation:** You will work in your teams to respond to a hypothetical crisis involving pandemic flu after you turn in your final crisis communication plan. The crisis simulation situation will be posted on Sakai on March 21 (Wednesday). Based on simulation crisis situation provided, your group will need to respond to the crisis, consulting your crisis communication plan. Your simulation assignment will include 1) update your employees about the situation. Decide the best medium for communication with your employees and create the text you would use to communicate the situation to your employees, 2) Update the media on the current situation by providing a fact sheet and media release, and 3) prepare a brief opening statement for the press conference (no more than 5 minutes). Finally you need to plan for how to use social media sites for handling the crisis. You have no more than 3 hours to complete this simulation assignment. This time begins when you download the simulation from Sakai and ends when you send me your answers. Specify your starting date and time and ending time at the end of your response document. So don't download the simulation crisis situation from Sakai unless you are ready. All documents for this simulation assignment are **due on March 28 (week 12) by 5:00 pm. Earlier submissions are encouraged.** Don't wait until the end. Email all documents by 5:00 pm to me (sorakim@jou.ufl.edu) and cc all group members.

**Alternative Option for Ph.D. Students (Research Proposal):** If you don't wish to do team CCP+ simulation option, you can write at least a 10 to 15 research paper proposal instead, excluding references. This option is also **due on March 14 (Week 10).** Ph.D students might consider choosing this option. Collaboration with classmates is acceptable. Your paper will follow standard format for research papers and include, at minimum, an introduction with rationale and purpose, a review of relevant literature (including a theoretical foundation), presentation of research questions and/or hypotheses, a methods section. You do not need to collect data for this research proposal. Students should follow the American Psychological Association Style Manual (APA) and include a title page, 200 word maximum abstract, references at the end (include only works actually cited in the document), and appendices if needed.

- **Final Research Paper Proposal Draft (10%):** A proposal on your final paper topic is **due on Feb. 28 (week 8).** You should provide a two-to-three page description of the crisis related research topic. The proposal should include the purpose and importance of
the study, identify research gap in existing literature regarding the selected topic, possible contributions to the current body of knowledge, and tentative research questions or hypothesis. You can consider this proposal “Introduction” section of your final research paper.

- **Final Research Paper (30%: Written: 25%, Presentation: 5%):** This final research paper could be either a completed research paper or a research proposal. For Ph.D. students, it should be a completed research paper. The length of your final paper should be at least 15 pages double-space, not counting references, appendices, etc. APA format should be followed for citing references and formatting the document (a title page, abstract, references, etc.). A completed research paper should include an outline of the following: Introduction, Literature Review, Hypotheses/Research Questions, Methods, Results, Discussions & Implications, and Conclusion. A final research paper proposal should also include introduction, literature review, a completed method section, results of pre-tests or possible results, discussion of possible findings, and conclusion. You do not need to collect data if you choose the final research paper proposal option (applicable to master students only). Final Research Paper is **due on April 18 (week 15)**. Also you will present your final research paper in a professional presentation (with professional dress) just like you would at an academic conference. This should be good practices for you. All students are required to attend all presentations; failure to do so will result in a deduction from your own presentation score.

**University of Florida Policies**

**Classroom Accommodation:** If you require accommodation for this course, please let the instructor know as soon as possible. Please note that Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation.”

**Academic Honesty:**

Plagiarism (literary or artistic theft), copying someone else's work or other forms of dishonesty will not be tolerated. Any case of academic dishonesty will be considered grounds for an automatic failing grade in the course. University guidelines will be followed for any offenses.

- Having someone else do your work for you is also considered academic dishonesty.

- When completing any assignments for this class, it is important to clearly attribute where you obtained your information from, whether it is from a Web site or from an organization’s internal document. To clarify, you CANNOT copy anything word for word from any source without putting quotes around it, even if it is given to you directly from an organization. This includes Web site copy, mission statements, etc. In these cases, you should paraphrase and cite the source as your write or simply quote it.

All students are expected to be honest in all their academic work. Failure to uphold the standards of honesty will result in the appropriate disciplinary action by the University of Florida.
As a result of completing the registration form at the University of Florida, every student has signed the following statement:
“I understand that the University of Florida expects its students to be honest in all their academic work. I agree to adhere to this commitment to academic honesty and understand that my failure to comply with this commitment may result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from the university.” It is your responsibility to be familiar with the academic student code. You can review the honor code and sanctions for violations to the code in the following link: http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/procedures/studenthonorcode.php

Academic Student Honor Code:
“We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.”

UF Counseling Services: UF has resources available for students in need of counseling for personal or academic reasons, such as:

• University Counseling Center (for personal counseling and academic counseling). Located at: 301 Peabody Hall, Phone #: 392-1575
• Student Mental Health (for personal counseling). Located at the Student Health Care Center, Phone #: 392-1171
• Career Resource Center (for career counseling). Located in the Reitz Union, Phone #: 392-1601

For more information and other resources visit: http://www.counsel.ufl.edu or speak to your instructor and she will be happy to point you in the right direction.
**Tentative Course Schedule:**

Course schedule is subject to change, as instructor deems appropriate and necessary.

**Week 1 (Jan. 10): Introduction to the course**

- Introduction to the course
- Sign up for discussion leadership, case study, & current crisis news report dates.

**Week 2 (Jan. 17): Crisis Management**

Readings:

- Coombs Chapters 1: A need for more crisis management knowledge
- Chapter 3: Proactive management functions and crisis management
- Chapter 4: The crisis preventive process

**Week 3 (Jan. 24): Crisis Communication Theories**

Readings:


**Week 4 (Jan. 31): Defining Issues Management, Risk Communication, & Crisis Communication**

Readings:


**Week 5 (Feb. 7): Crisis Detection & Crisis Preparation**

Readings:

- Coombs Chapters 5, 6, & 7

**Case Studies Analysis Presentation: 3 students**

**Week 6 (Feb. 14): Crisis Response**

Readings:

- Coombs Chapter 8

**Case Studies** : 2 Students

**Week 7 (Feb. 21)** : Cultural Concerns/ Managing Emotion in Crises

**Readings:**


**Case Studies** : 2 students

**Week 8 (Feb. 28)** : Legal & Ethical Concerns of Crisis Management

- **Final Research Paper Draft Due**

**Readings:**


**Case Studies: 2 Students**

**Week 9 (Mar. 7): Spring Break**

**Week 10 (Mar. 14): Corporate ability, CSR & Crisis:**

- Crisis Communication Plan Due (Ph.D. students' Research Proposal Option Due)

**Readings:**


**Case Studies: 2 Students**

**Week 11 (Mar. 21): Role of Technology in Crisis Management**

**Topics covered:** Web sites, blogs, and other technology-based crisis management tools
Readings:

- Coombs Chapter 2: Effects of the online world on crisis communication and crisis management

Case Studies: 2 students

**Week 12 (Mar. 28) : Project week:**

- **CCP Simulation Assignment Due**

**Week 13 (April 4) : Crises in Various Sectors (Government, Non-profit, Corporation, & Nation’s)**

Readings:


**Case Studies Analysis Presentation:** 3 students

**Week 14 (April 11): Crisis Recovery/Post-crisis concerns/Final Lessons**

**Readings:**

- Coombs Chapter 9

**Case Studies Analysis Presentation:** 4 students

**Week 15 (April 18): Final Research Paper Presentation**

- **Final Research Paper Due**
- Presentations (Final paper presentations)