

Instructor: Kristin Hocevar, PhD (feel free to call me Kristin!)

E-mail: hocevar@sou.edu

Office hours: TBA, and by appointment

Class days and time: Mondays and Wednesdays, 10:30am-12:20pm

Comm ~~407:446/546~~: Risk and Crisis Communication ~~(to be Comm 446)~~

This course examines a variety of communications (e.g., organizational, media) with audiences in the context of personal or health risks they may face and/or in emergency or crisis situations. Students will develop skills for communicating about risks and crises to a variety of audiences, and will evaluate successful and unsuccessful examples of risk and crisis communication based on relevant international case studies.

Learning Objectives

In this course students will:

- Understand/Describe the role of science and statistics in communicating risk to the public, and identify the challenges of communicating this complex information to ~~lay audiences, particularly those with lower education, non-scientific audiences.~~
- Identify the advantages and disadvantages of different crisis management strategies, based on past global crises.
- Consider the ethics of crisis management and response, including how best to reach populations of different cultures, income, and other SES levels.
- Use research on prior global crises to formulate recommendations for ethical and successful crisis management at different levels, including communication strategies.
- ~~Continue to develop~~Develop writing and message creation skills.
- Graduate (500-level) students will do all of the above, as well as demonstrate additional skills in analyzing prior crises in order to inform future crisis planning, ~~formulating a crisis and/or or risk communication plan, and evaluating and communicating risk to lay audiences, by formulating a crisis and/or risk communication plan~~

Required book: Ulmer, R. R., Sellnow, T. L., & Seeger, M. W. (2017). Effective crisis communication: Moving from crisis to opportunity. 4th Edition.

Course Assignments

Each student's course grade will be based on these assignments. More information will be provided about each assignment on the course site and in class.

Open-Book Quizzes

Quizzes may consist of multiple-choice questions, short answer questions, or a combination. They are to be taken in our classroom on the designated dates. No early exam/quiz option will be given, and no make-up quizzes will be given except in the case of extreme emergency. If you experience an emergency, it is your responsibility to (1) inform the instructor as soon as you can, preferably before the scheduled exam date and time, and (2) give the instructor written documentation of the emergency (such as a medical note from a physician).

Risk and Crisis Communication Research Paper Outline

Leading up to your research paper, you will begin by submitting a paper outline, identifying your topic and sketching out your paper plan.

Risk and Crisis Communication Research Paper Sample Section

Leading up to your research paper, you will submit a sample section, so that I can provide feedback and make sure you are heading in the right direction with your writing. This will expand on one section of your outline, and the text from this assignment can be re-used (with revisions) in your final paper.

Risk and Crisis Communication Research Paper

In this paper, you will examine existing case studies in the area of risk communication, crisis communication, or both, and critique the response on a variety of metrics. Based on your research, you will make recommendations for communication practitioners facing a similar risk or crisis issue. **Graduate (500-level)546 (graduate) - students** will be expected to provide a more comprehensive paper. Specifically, graduate students will develop a crisis response plan as part of their research paper, which is not required of undergraduate students. Formulating this plan will allow the graduate student to demonstrate applied skills beyond simply evaluating prior crises, and plans such as these are often required of individuals working in a crisis response capacity at organizations.

Crisis Communication Presentation

Approximately half the class will be assigned to present on a specific example of unsuccessful organizational crisis communication and the other half successful organizational crisis communication. Working in a group, you will analyze and present your example case study. You will consider the following questions: Why was it successful or unsuccessful? Why? How could it be more effective in the future? Was it ethical or unethical, and why? Did the crisis response privilege certain stakeholders' needs over others? Based on this case study, what would you recommend future crisis communicators do to prepare for and respond to a similar crisis? What do we learn about successful crisis communication from this case study?

500-level546 (graduate) students: You will complete this as an individual assignment.

Attendance and Participation

Full points will be awarded for consistent participation in class discussions/activities and attendance; fewer points will be awarded for inconsistent participation and/or attendance. Absences will by necessity impact your total number of participation points, as you are unable to participate fully in class when you are not present. There will also be in-class group work and activities that will contribute to your total points for attendance and participation. If you are present for these activities and participate with your group, you will receive 100% of the available points for that activity, which will contribute to your overall points in this category. You can miss up to two classes without impacting your attendance points.

Additional Assignments for 500-level (COMM 546) graduate students only:

500-level students will complete a short-answer and essay exam at the end of the course during the final exam period, to demonstrate comprehensive and applied knowledge of course concepts. To prepare for this exam, students will also need to read one crisis or risk communication book of their choice (in addition to the course textbook), approved by the instructor.

<u>ASSIGNMENT</u>	<u>POINTS POSSIBLE</u>
Attendance and Participation	60
Quizzes	70
Outline	10
Sample Section	40
Final Paper	90
Presentation	30
TOTAL	300

Grading Scale

Grades are the percentage of points you earn out of the course total of points possible. The grading distribution is as follows:

A+	98%-100%	B+	87%-89%	C+	77%-79%	D+	67%-69%
A	94%-97%	B	84%-86%	C	74%-76%	D	64%-66%
A-	90%-93%	B-	80%-83%	C-	70%-73%	D-	60%-63%
						F	59% and below

Policies and Expectations

Attendance

Your understanding of the material depends on your attendance and participation in class, and both are important components of your grade. Attendance will be taken in each class, and for any class you miss you will want to get notes from a friend.

Course Web Site and Email

This class will use our course web page for many important course materials, including posted readings, assignments, announcements, and so forth. It is important that you check that page regularly. It is also very important that you check your SOU email account regularly.

Late Assignments and Exams/Quizzes

All of the assignments for this course must be completed and turned in by the due date and time. Failure to turn in assignments by the due date/time will result in a reduction of the final grade. Specifically, 10% will be deducted for each day late (so, if the assignment is turned in one day late, 10% will be lost, 20% for 2 days late, and so forth). Always back up your work electronically in more than one location! Additionally, exams/quizzes are to be taken on the designated dates. No early exams are permitted, and make-up exams will only be permitted in the case of extreme, documented emergency. If an emergency arises that will affect your ability to take an exam or turn in an assignment on time, please let me know as soon as possible.

Classroom Teaching/Learning Atmosphere

Every student will be expected to treat one another with respect and we as a group will work to create an environment where learning is fostered. I will use a combination of lecture, class discussion, videos, and in-class activities to contribute to your understanding of the course topic. Additionally, the structure of points earned for the course is designed to allow for areas in which students might perform differently (e.g., quizzes versus things like presentations and participation) in order to ensure that all students have the opportunity excel.

Course Topics and Schedule

Week 1	<u>Introduction to Course</u> <u>Crisis Communication Background</u>
Week 2	<u>Risk Communication Background</u> <u>Crisis Communication Theories & Models</u>
Week 3	<u>Crisis & Risk Communication & Uncertainty</u>
Week 4	<u>Crisis Communication Source Considerations & Leadership</u> <u>**Paper Outline Due**</u>
Week 5	<u>Crisis Communication & Ethics / Disparities in Risk and Crisis Communication</u> <u>Culture and Crisis and Risk Communication</u>
Week 6	<u>Crisis Communication Case Studies / Disparities in Risk and Crisis Communication</u> <u>Presentation Group Work</u> <u>**Sample Section Due**</u>
Week 7	<u>In-Class Presentations</u>
Week 8	<u>Media in Risk & Crisis Communication</u>
Week 9	<u>Families and Interpersonal Communication in the Context of Risk and Crises</u>
Week 10	<u>What can we learn from prior crises?</u> **Final papers due**

University Policies and Resources

SOU Cares

SOU has a wide range of resources to help you succeed. Our faculty, staff, and administration are dedicated to providing you with the best possible support. The SOU Cares Report allows us to connect you with staff members who can assist with concerns, including financial, health,

mental health, wellbeing, legal concerns, family concerns, harassment, assault, study skills, time management, etc. You are also welcome to use the SOU Cares Report to share concerns about yourself, a friend, or a classmate at <https://inside.sou.edu/ssi/index.html>. These concerns can include reports related to academic integrity, harassment, bias, or assault. Reports related to sexual misconduct or sexual assault can be made anonymously or confidentially. Student Support and Intervention provides recourse for students through the Student Code of Conduct, Title IX, Affirmative Action, and other applicable policies, regulations, and laws.

Academic Honesty Statement and Code of Student Conduct

Students are expected to maintain academic integrity and honesty in completion of all work for this class. According to SOU's Student Code of Conduct: "Acts of academic misconduct involve the use or attempted use of any method that enables a student to misrepresent the quality or integrity of his or her academic work and are prohibited".

Such acts include, but are not limited to: copying from the work of another, and/or allowing another student to copy from one's own work; unauthorized use of materials during exams; intentional or unintentional failure to acknowledge the ideas or words of another that have been taken from any published or unpublished source; placing one's name on papers, reports, or other documents that are the work of another individual; submission of work resulting from inappropriate collaboration or assistance; submission of the same paper or project for separate courses without prior authorization by faculty members; and/or knowingly aiding in or inciting the academic dishonesty of another.

Any incident of academic dishonesty will be subject to disciplinary action(s) as outlined in SOU's Code of Student Conduct: <https://inside.sou.edu/assets/policies/CodeofStudentConduct.pdf>. In case of loss, theft, destruction or dispute over authorship, always retain a copy of any work you produce and submit for grades. Retain all written work that has been graded and handed back to you.

Emergency Notifications

SOU is committed to a safe community. Student, faculty and staff emails are automatically enrolled in SOU Alert, the campus emergency communication system. In the event of emergency, closure, or other significant disruption to campus operations, such as inclement weather, messages are delivered via SOU Alert. To ensure timely notification, students, faculty, staff are strongly encouraged to visit InsideSOU to register their cell phone numbers and/or add family members to the system. Campus Public Safety is available 24 hours/day by dialling 541-552-6911. CPS responds to safety concerns, incidents, and emergencies and can provide safety escorts to on-campus locations. CPS works in collaboration with Ashland Police and Fire.

Statement on Title IX and Mandatory Reporting

Federal law requires that employees of institutions of higher learning (faculty, staff and administrators) report to a Title IX officer any time they become aware that a student is a victim or perpetrator of gender-based bias, sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic violence, or stalking. Further, Oregon law requires a mandatory report to law enforcement of any physical or emotional abuse of a child or other protected person, including elders and people with disabilities, or when a child or other protected person is perceived to be in danger of physical or emotional abuse. If you are the victim of sexual or physical abuse and wish to make a confidential disclosure please use the confidential advising available at

<https://inside.sou.edu/ssi/confidential-advisors.html>, or use Southern Oregon University's Anonymous Harassment, Violence, and Interpersonal Misconduct Reporting Form: https://jfe.qualtrics.com/form/SV_7R7CCBciGNL473L

SOU Academic Support/Disability Resources:

To support students with disabilities in acquiring accessible books and materials, and in planning their study and time management strategies, SOU requires all professors to include information regarding Academic Support and Disability Resources on course syllabi. It is the policy of Southern Oregon University that no otherwise qualified person shall, solely by reason of disability, be denied access to, participation in, or benefits of any service, program, or activity operated by the University. Qualified persons shall receive reasonable accommodation/modification needed to ensure equal access to employment, educational opportunities, programs, and activities in the most appropriate, integrated setting, except when such accommodation creates undue hardship on the part of the provider. These policies comply with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1974, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and other applicable federal and state regulations that prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability.

If you are in need of support because of a documented disability (whether it be learning, mobility, psychiatric, health-related, or sensory) you may be eligible for academic or other accommodations through Disability Resources. See the Disability Resources webpage at <https://inside.sou.edu/dr/index.html> for more information or to schedule an appointment. If you are already working with Disability Resources, make sure to request your accommodations for this course as quickly as possible to ensure that you have the best possible access.

Communication Program Learning Outcomes

Proficient Communication	Students will communicate effectively in diverse social settings, including interpersonal, group, online, and institutional. They will be able to express messages, adapt the content and style of messages to social contexts, and engage in dialogue about a topic with respect to all participants.
Critical Thinking and Inquiry	Students will analyze problems in communication and develop solutions to those problems, contribute new knowledge to the field of communication, and apply disciplinary history and theory through research methods and analysis of evidence.
Ethical Practice	Students will know how diverse models of ethics relate to communication practices and be able to communicate ethically.
Engagement	Students will participate proactively in public life and engage in active citizenship. They will have the skills to promote rich dialogue among diverse audiences and across multiple modes of communication.
Cultural Competence	Students will apply multiple worldviews, experiences, and knowledge of power structures into everyday issues. They will also initiate meaningful interactions with other cultures and articulate insights into one's own cultural roles and biases, with an awareness of how their own experiences shape these roles, biases, and perspectives.
Professional Preparation	Students will make concrete connections between their studies of communication and their career aspirations. They will learn how to use relevant tools and technologies, acquire practical experience through internships and practica, and prepare and present portfolios of work suitable for gaining professional employment.
Media and Visual Literacy	Students will access, analyze, evaluate, and create media messages.