

## 1. General Information

1a. Submitted by the College of: COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

Date Submitted: 1/14/2013

1b. Department/Division: Communication

1c. Contact Person

Name: Deanna Sellnow

Email: [Deanna.Sellnow@uky.edu](mailto:Deanna.Sellnow@uky.edu)

Phone: 257-2886

Responsible Faculty ID (if different from Contact)

Name:

Email:

Phone:

1d. Requested Effective Date: Semester following approval

1e. Should this course be a UK Core Course? No

## 2. Designation and Description of Proposed Course

2a. Will this course also be offered through Distance Learning?: No

2b. Prefix and Number: COM 535

2c. Full Title: Risk and Crisis Communication

2d. Transcript Title:

2e. Cross-listing:

2f. Meeting Patterns

LECTURE: 3

2g. Grading System: Letter (A, B, C, etc.)

2h. Number of credit hours: 3

2i. Is this course repeatable for additional credit? No

If Yes: Maximum number of credit hours:

If Yes: Will this course allow multiple registrations during the same semester?

2j. Course Description for Bulletin: This course examines strategic risk and crisis communication research, theory, and practices. Special emphasis is placed on crisis planning, media relationships, image restoration, ethical responses, and organizational learning.

2k. Prerequisites, if any: CIS 110, CIS 111, COM 325

2l. Supplementary Teaching Component:

3. Will this course taught off campus? No

If YES, enter the off campus address:

4. Frequency of Course Offering: Fall,

Will the course be offered every year?: Yes

If No, explain:

5. Are facilities and personnel necessary for the proposed new course available?: Yes

If No, explain:

6. What enrollment (per section per semester) may reasonably be expected?: 35

7. Anticipated Student Demand

Will this course serve students primarily within the degree program?: Yes

Will it be of interest to a significant number of students outside the degree pgm?: No

If Yes, explain: [var7InterestExplain]

8. Check the category most applicable to this course: Relatively New – Now Being Widely Established,

If No, explain:

9. Course Relationship to Program(s).

a. Is this course part of a proposed new program?: No

If YES, name the proposed new program:

b. Will this course be a new requirement for ANY program?: No

If YES, list affected programs:

10. Information to be Placed on Syllabus.

a. Is the course 400G or 500?: Yes

b. The syllabus, including course description, student learning outcomes, and grading policies (and 400G-/500-level grading differentiation if applicable, from 10.a above) are attached: Yes

## Distance Learning Form

Instructor Name:

Instructor Email:

Internet/Web-based: No

Interactive Video: No

Hybrid: No

1. How does this course provide for timely and appropriate interaction between students and faculty and among students? Does the course syllabus conform to University Senate Syllabus Guidelines, specifically the Distance Learning Considerations?

2. How do you ensure that the experience for a DL student is comparable to that of a classroom-based student's experience? Aspects to explore: textbooks, course goals, assessment of student learning outcomes, etc.

3. How is the integrity of student work ensured? Please speak to aspects such as password-protected course portals, proctors for exams at interactive video sites; academic offense policy; etc.

4. Will offering this course via DL result in at least 25% or at least 50% (based on total credit hours required for completion) of a degree program being offered via any form of DL, as defined above?

If yes, which percentage, and which program(s)?

5. How are students taking the course via DL assured of equivalent access to student services, similar to that of a student taking the class in a traditional classroom setting?

6. How do course requirements ensure that students make appropriate use of learning resources?

7. Please explain specifically how access is provided to laboratories, facilities, and equipment appropriate to the course or program.

8. How are students informed of procedures for resolving technical complaints? Does the syllabus list the entities available to offer technical help with the delivery and/or receipt of the course, such as the Information Technology Customer Service Center (<http://www.uky.edu/UKIT/>)?

9. Will the course be delivered via services available through the Distance Learning Program (DLP) and the Academic Technology Group (ATL)? NO

If no, explain how student enrolled in DL courses are able to use the technology employed, as well as how students will be provided with assistance in using said technology.

10. Does the syllabus contain all the required components? NO

11. I, the instructor of record, have read and understood all of the university-level statements regarding DL.

Instructor Name:

SIGNATURE|LLST223|Laura L Stafford|Dept approval for ZCOURSE\_NEW COM 535|20120819

SIGNATURE|LLST223|Laura L Stafford|College approval for ZCOURSE\_NEW COM 535|20120819

SIGNATURE|JMETT2|Joanie Ett-Mims|Undergrad Council approval for ZCOURSE\_NEW COM 535|20120824

SIGNATURE|ZNNIKO0|Roshan N Nikou|Graduate Council approval for ZCOURSE\_NEW COM 535|20120912

COM 535: Risk and Crisis Communication  
2:00 – 3:15 pm, Tuesday & Thursday

**Professor:**

**Office:**

**Office Hours:**

**Email Address:**

**Course Description:** This course examines strategic risk and crisis communication research, theory, and practices. Special emphasis is placed on crisis planning, media relationships, image restoration, ethical responses, and organizational learning.

**Prerequisites: None**

**Student Learning Outcomes:**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Describe how communication can prevent, cause, accelerate, and assist in the recovery from a crisis event.
- Create crisis plans based on appropriate risk assessment.
- Examine the ethical implications of crisis planning and response.
- Adapt messages to diverse audiences and vulnerable populations.

**Course Objectives**

- To understand how communication can prevent, cause, accelerate, and assist in the recovery from a crisis event.
- To understand risk assessment and the crisis planning process.
- To introduce students to applicable theories and image restoration strategies.
- To increase awareness of the best practices in risk and crisis communication.
- To examine the ethical implications of crisis planning and response.
- To understand audience diversity and vulnerable populations in a crisis.
- To explain a crisis event through case study analysis.

**Required Textbooks**

- Coombs, T. W. (2007). *Ongoing crisis communication: Planning, managing, and responding*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Ulmer, R. R., Sellnow, R. L., & Seeger, M. W. (2007). *Effective crisis communication: Moving from crisis to opportunity*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

**Required Readings**

- Reading 1: Coombs, W. T. (2010). Parameters for crisis communication. In W. T. Coombs & S. J. Holladay (Eds.), *The Handbook of Crisis Communication* (pp. 17-53). New York: Wiley-Blackwell.

- Reading 2: Seeger, M. W. (2006). Best practices in crisis communication: An expert panel process. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 34(3), 232-244.
- Reading 3: Ulmer, R. R. (2001). Effective crisis management through established stakeholder relationships: Malden Mills as a case study. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 14(4), 590-615.
- Reading 4: Kanso, A. M., Levitt, S. R., & Nelson, R. A. (2010). Public relations and reputation management in a crisis situation: How Denny's restaurants reinvigorated the firm's corporate identity. In W. T. Coombs & S. J. Holladay (Eds.), *The Handbook of Crisis Communication* (pp. 359-377). New York: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Reading 5: Sellnow, T. L., Ulmer, R. R., & Snider, M. (1998). The compatibility of corrective action in organizational crisis communication. *Communication Quarterly*, 46, 60-74.
- Reading 6: Seeger, M. W., Sellnow, T. L., & Ulmer, R. R. (2003). Theories of organizational crisis. In M. W. Seeger, T. L. Sellnow, & R. R. Ulmer (Eds.), *Communication and Organizational Crisis*. Westport, CT: Praeger.
- Reading 7: Weick, K. E. (1993). The collapse of sensemaking in organizations: The Mann Gulch Disaster. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 38(4), 628-652.
- Reading 8: Veil, S. R. (2011). Mindful learning in crisis management. *Journal of Business Communication*, 48(2), 116-147.
- Reading 9: Sellnow, T. L., Seeger, M. W., & Ulmer, R. R. (2002). Chaos theory, informational needs, and natural disasters. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 30(4), 269-292.
- Reading 10: Veil, S. R., Sellnow, T. L., & Heald, M. (in press). Memorializing crisis: The Oklahoma National Memorial as Renewal Discourse. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 39(2), 164-183.

## **ASSIGNMENTS (approximately 325 POINTS)**

### **Discussion Questions (approximately 35 POINTS) (approx. 11%)**

By **9:00 am** each day you have a reading assignment due, email ([shari.veil@uky.edu](mailto:shari.veil@uky.edu)) **two thought provoking** discussion questions or points of contention **and** a paragraph response or reflection on **each** question (no definition questions or any question that is answered in the book).

### **Activities and Assignments (approximately 40 POINTS) (approx. 12%)**

There will be in-class activities, assignments, case discussions, reflection papers, and quizzes throughout the semester. Points for these activities may not be made up.

### **Crisis Du Jour (10 POINTS) (approx. 3%)**

On your assigned day you will deliver a 5-minute presentation to the class and turn in a 1-page outline on a current crisis in the headlines. In both the presentation and outline you will describe the crisis situation including where you learned of it (with proper APA citation) organization(s)/individual(s) involved, current status, key issues, and your assessment of the crisis communication response thus far. If you are not able to present on your assigned day you must secure a trade in presentation day and both parties must notify me a week before the first of the two presentations.

**Article Review (20 points) (approx. 6%)**

Find a research article that helps you better understand risk or crisis communication. Write a 1-2 page summary, analysis, and argument for why it should be added to the reading list next year. Include the full APA citation. Papers will be presented in class.

**Drafts (25 points) (approx. 8%)**

You will submit drafts of your case study reference list, presentation, and paper during the semester. Drafts must show progress throughout the semester.

**Undergrad Case Study Paper (75 POINTS) (approx. 23%)**

Each undergraduate student will write a 10-15 page analysis of a crisis case. The format will include an introduction of the case, a literature review of the theoretical lens through which the case is viewed, and an analysis of the case through the theoretical lens. Students will need to cite *at least* 10 credible sources other than the texts and readings from class.

**\*\*\*Graduate Student Case Study Paper (75 POINTS) (approx. 23%)**

*Each graduate student will write a 20-25 page crisis case study analysis. The format will include an introduction of the case, a literature review of the theoretical lens, a methods section detailing data collection, an analysis of the case through the theoretical lens, and a discussion of how the theoretical perspective was extended through the case analysis. Students will need to cite at least 20 sources other than the texts and readings assigned.*

**Case Study Presentation (20 POINTS) (approx. 6%)**

Each student will present the crisis case analysis. Using PowerPoint as an AV tool, students will explain the background of the case, the theoretical lens that best fits the case, and the analysis of the case through the theoretical lens. Presenters must involve the audience through examples, activities, or discussion.

**Exams (100 POINTS) (approx. 31%)**

There will be two exams each covering half the term. (50 points each)

**Grading Scale**

Only students who have completed all components of the major assignments on time are eligible for a passing grade in this course.

90 – 100%:	A	(292-325)
80 – 89%:	B	(260-291)
70 – 79%:	C	(227-259)
60 – 69%:	D	(195-226)
59% and below:	E	(0-194)

### **Graduate Student Grading Scale**

Only students who have completed all components of the major assignments on time are eligible for a passing grade in this course.

90 – 100%:	A	(292-325)
80 – 89%:	B	(260-291)
70 – 79%:	C	(227-259)
Below 69%:	E	(0-226)

### **Final Exam Information: TBD**

**Mid-term Grade:** Mid-term grades will be posted in myUK by the deadline established in the Academic Calendar (<http://www.uky.edu/Registrar/AcademicCalendar.htm>)

### **Attendance and Participation**

You are expected to be in class and to participate fully every day so you can benefit as much as possible from this course. This means you are expected to (a) read and consider applications of the information *before* coming to class, (b) ask questions and/or make applications in small group and large group class discussion, and (c) work to facilitate classroom interaction.

In order to accomplish these goals, you need to be in class every day. If you are absent on a day when an assignment is due or an exam is given, you will be allowed to hand in or make-up that work *only* if the absence is officially excused. You may be asked to provide official written documentation for absences. Excuses for university-sponsored activities must be made *prior* to such absences. No make-up work is available for in-class exercises, workshops, or exams unless approved in advance by your instructor.

Absences beyond two per semester will be penalized by dropping your final course grade 5% (1/2 letter grade) for each such absence. If you exceed 5 unexcused absences, you will be unable to pass this course. Note: Please reference the definition of excused absence in current edition of *Students Rights and Responsibilities* or on the web at <http://www.uky.edu/StudentAffairs/Code/>.

Students who are frequently tardy or unprepared may be marked absent for the day. Your instructor reserves the right to add quizzes to the class agenda if too many class members appear to be unprepared. So be prepared and on time. Preparation involves not only reading but also making notes on the reading so that you are prepared to discuss issues in depth.

For any emergency situation that arises, call the Instructional Communication Division office (257-8370) to leave a message with Michelle Elison or Erin Berger. Also, be sure to email your instructor as soon as you know about the situation.

### **Excused Absences**

Students need to notify the professor of absences prior to class when possible. S.R. 5.2.4.2 defines the following as acceptable reasons for excused absences: (a) serious illness, (b) illness or death of family member, (c) University-related trips, (d) major religious holidays, and (e) other circumstances found to fit “reasonable cause for nonattendance” by the professor.

Students anticipating an absence for a major religious holiday are responsible for notifying the instructor in writing of anticipated absences due to their observance of such holidays no later than the last day in the semester to add a class. Information regarding dates of major religious holidays may be obtained through the religious liaison, Mr. Jake Karnes (859-257-2754).

Students are expected to withdraw from the class if more than 20% of the classes scheduled for the semester are missed (excused or unexcused) per university policy.

### **Verification of Absences**

Students may be asked to verify their absences in order for them to be considered excused. Senate Rule 5.2.4.2 states that faculty have the right to request “appropriate verification” when students claim an excused absence because of illness or death in the family. Appropriate notification of absences due to university-related trips is required prior to the absence.

### **Academic Integrity**

Per university policy, students shall not plagiarize, cheat, or falsify or misuse academic records. Students are expected to adhere to University policy on cheating and plagiarism in all courses. The minimum penalty for a first offense is a zero on the assignment on which the offense occurred. If the offense is considered severe or the student has other academic offenses on their record, more serious penalties, up to suspension from the university may be imposed.



Plagiarism and cheating are serious breaches of academic conduct. Each student is advised to become familiar with the various forms of academic dishonesty as explained in the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities. Complete information can be found at the following website: <http://www.uky.edu/Ombud>. A plea of ignorance is not acceptable as a defense against the charge of academic dishonesty. It is important that you review this information as all ideas borrowed from others need to be properly credited.

Part II of Student Rights and Responsibilities (available online <http://www.uky.edu/StudentAffairs/Code/part2.html>) states that all academic work, written or otherwise, submitted by students to their instructors or other academic supervisors, is expected to be the result of their own thought, research, or self-expression. In cases where students feel unsure about the question of plagiarism involving their own work, they are obliged to consult their instructors on the matter before submission.

When students submit work purporting to be their own, but which in any way borrows ideas, organization, wording or anything else from another source without appropriate acknowledgement of the fact, the students are guilty of plagiarism. Plagiarism includes reproducing someone else's work, whether it is a published article, chapter of a book, a paper from a friend or some file, or something similar to this. Plagiarism also includes the practice of employing or allowing another person to alter or revise the work, which a student submits as his/her own, whoever that other person may be.

Students may discuss individual assignments among themselves or with an instructor or tutor, but the actual work must be done by the student. When a student's assignment involves research in outside sources of information, the student must carefully acknowledge exactly what, where and how he/she employed them. If the words of someone else are used, the student must put quotation marks around the passage in question and add an appropriate indication of its origin for essays and papers and in the form of "oral footnotes" in public speeches. Making simple changes while leaving the organization, content and phraseology intact is plagiaristic. However, nothing in these Rules shall apply to those ideas, which are so generally and freely circulated as to be a part of the public domain (Section 6.3.1).

***Please note: Any assignment you turn in will be submitted to an electronic database to check for plagiarism.***

### **Accommodations Due to Disability**

If you have a documented disability that requires academic accommodations, please see your instructor as soon as possible during scheduled office hours. In order to receive accommodations in this course, you must provide your instructor with a *Letter of Accommodation* from the Disability Resource Center (Room 2, Alumni Gym, 257-2754, email address: jkarnes@email.uky.edu).

### **Assignments & Exams**

All assignments are due at the beginning of class even if a student is absent from class or running late. In professional communication practice, and even more so in a crisis, an assignment or project that is not timely becomes useless, regardless of the reason. If you anticipate missing a deadline for any reason, you are expected to turn in the assignment before the deadline. If you are ill or gone the day an assignment is due you may email the assignment **before** the start of class. **Assignments turned in after the start of class will be docked a minimum of five points. Assignments not turned in by the end of class will receive zero points.** Allowances will be made only with documentation for the most dire of circumstances (the computer lab not being open, printer not working 10 minutes before class, computer crashing when you didn't save a backup, oversleeping, traffic, trouble parking, etc. are not dire circumstances). Because exams make-up a significant portion of your grade, allowances may be made for missing exams in the most dire circumstances. Notification for missing an exam must be provided *by noon the day before the exam* and documentation is required for any allowance. The Student Rights and Responsibilities, Part II, Section 5.2.4.2 details UK's policy on excused absences. (<http://www.uky.edu/StudentAffairs/Code/part2.html>)

### **Technology & Outside Work**

Laptops are only allowed for working on projects during designated times. Use of laptops, cell phones, MP3 players, and other technology is prohibited during class time. All items must be put away and turned off when you enter class. In addition, no outside work is allowed in class (this includes homework and studying for another class). *Violation of this policy will result in dismissal from the class and forfeiture of the class activity/quiz points for the day.*

### **Diversity / Harassment**

All members of this class will be treated with respect. Freedom of expression requires tolerance of opinions that may be offensive to some. However, conduct which constitutes harassment or discrimination on the basis of sex, color, religion, marital status, sexual orientation, national origin, age, beliefs, or disability is strictly prohibited. If you feel uncomfortable in the classroom, please let me know so it can be corrected.

### **Grievance Procedure**

Occasionally, students are unsatisfied with some dimension of the course. In such cases, students should schedule a meeting, first, with the instructor. If the student and

instructor cannot reach a satisfactory resolution, a joint meeting will be scheduled with the department chair.

**DAILY SCHEDULE**  
**Dates and assignments can and will change**

**Thursday, August 26** – What is crisis communication?

**Tuesday, August 31** – Warning Signals: Shackleton’s Adventure  
**Due Today:** Reading 1 (Coombs)

**Thursday, September 2** – Warning Signals: Shackleton’s Adventure  
**Due Today:** Ulmer 1 / Coombs 1 & 2

**Tuesday, September 7** – Crisis Prevention  
**Due Today:** Coombs 3 & 4

**Thursday, September 9** – Understanding Uncertainty: Inconvenient Truth  
**Due Today:** Ulmer 2

**Tuesday, September 14** – Understanding Uncertainty: Inconvenient Truth

**Thursday, September 16** – Planning - Writing a Plan  
**Due Today:** Coombs 5 & 6 / Reading 2 (Seeger)

**Tuesday, September 21** – Stakeholders in Crisis  
**Due Today:** Ulmer 3 / Reading 3 (Ulmer)

**Thursday, September 23** – Vulnerable Populations  
**Due Today:** Reading 4 (Kanso, Levitt, & Nelson)

**Tuesday, September 28** – Understanding Diversity: When the Levee’s Broke

**Thursday, September 30** – Understanding Diversity: When the Levee’s Broke  
**Due Today:** Ulmer 4

**Tuesday, October 5** – Leadership in Crisis  
**Due Today:** 3 page draft

**Thursday, October 7** – Exam 1

**Tuesday, October 12** – Case study discussion

**Due Today:** Ulmer 5, 6, 7, 8

**Thursday, October 14** – Reputation Management - Crisis Response

**Due Today:** Coombs 7 & 8 / Reading 5 (Sellnow, Ulmer, & Snider)

**Tuesday, October 19** – Crisis Evaluation

**Due Today:** Coombs 9 & 10

**Thursday, October 21** – Crisis Theories

**Due Today:** Reading 6 (Seeger, Sellnow, & Ulmer)

**Tuesday, October 26** - Blaming vs. Learning: Mann Gulch

**Due Today:** Reading 7 (Weick)

**Thursday, October 28** – Learning through Failure

**Due Today:** Ulmer 9 & 10

**Tuesday, November 2** – Article Review Discussion

**Due Today:** Article Review

**Thursday, November 5** – Mindfulness: Cider House Rules

**Due Today:** Reading 8 (Veil)

**Tuesday, November 9** – Mindfulness: Cider House Rules

**Due Today:** Reference list draft

**Thursday, November 11** – Sensemaking & Chaos Theory / Mindfulness

**Due Today:** Reading 9 (Sellnow, Seeger, & Ulmer)

**Tuesday, November 16** – Class Workday

**Due Today:** 5 page draft

**Thursday, November 18** – Ethical Demands in Crisis

**Due Today:** Ulmer 11 & 12

**Tuesday, November 23** – Exam 2

**Thursday, November 25** – **Happy Thanksgiving**

**Tuesday, November 30** – Class Workday

**Due Today:** PowerPoint presentation draft

**Thursday, December 2** – Presentations

**Due Today:** 10 page draft

**Tuesday, December 7** – Presentations

**Thursday, December 9** – Renewal: OKC Memorial

**Due Today:** Reading 10 (Veil, Sellnow, & Heald)

**Thursday, December 16th 1:00 p.m.** – Final Papers Due