

Interdisciplinary Programmes

Academic year 2019-2020

Crisis Communication

MINT027-3 - Spring - 3 ECTS
27 and 28 March 2020 Rooms S7 and S8

Course Description

This 3 ECTS workshop provides students with a methodological approach of how to deal with reputation management of firms and organizations in situations of crisis. It will go through a five-step process for handling crisis communications, showing students how to deal with and respond to media, build effective messaging strategies, and identify relevant response strategies. A large part of the workshop is dedicated to actual situations where the students work through a scenario, are interviewed on camera and receive critiques for the handling of events.

➤ **PROFESSOR**

[Rolf Olsen](#)

Syllabus

Course Requirements

Requirement 1: Attendance in all parts of the workshop is required and students are expected to engage with the recommended readings and/or online resources in preparation for the course. It is essential that you come prepared and actively participate.

Requirement 2: Students will be required to complete case study exercises in groups throughout the course. Evaluation will be based on (i) individual performance and participation throughout these exercises; (ii) a group presentation and performance in the case study exercises.

Course Evaluation

Performance in the course depends both on active participation and performance in the case study exercises. Evaluation will be based on:

1. Active participation and contribution to the course 50%
2. Performance in case study exercises 50%

Course Material

- Leidar briefing about the 2010 oil spill in Gulf of Mexico
- Leidar insight - *Changing the game: Traditional vs Social Media in a Crisis*
- Rolf Olsen – *Transcript of talk on fake news, Jun 17 + Recent case study from Geneva NGO*
- Overview of top crisis events of 2019 from Holmes Report

Overview of the Course

An enterprise or an organization can be affected by a crisis at any time anywhere around the world: natural disasters, accidents, production failures, economic or financial collapse, cyber security issues, social media mishaps, individual misconduct by leaders or employees, conflict scenarios or terrorist attacks – all have the potential to negatively impact the performance or reputation of the affected organization.

Communications is an important part of every crisis response - organizations must communicate effectively with their staff, partners and the public, and a good crisis response should involve explaining what they are doing to fix the situation and ensure it won't happen again.

In addition to the theory, participants have to handle a tailored realistic crisis scenario. They are given personal feedback on their performance and taught tips and skills for dealing with a crisis situation. Participants leave the course knowing how to identify issues, create a crisis communications plan, define messages and handle traditional and social media.

The first day of the course will provide an overview of the crisis management principles and structures. It will focus on the communications and reputation management elements. The second day will be dedicated to practical exercises helping students to “feel the crisis management” through a real life case study (including individual and group camera exercises).

Course Schedule with Recommended Readings and Online Resources

Day 1 Perfect storm – crisis communications

1. Stakeholders management and basics of crisis management

The analysis of media handling of the spill in Gulf of Mexico put the importance of the crisis communications in the contemporary context. The presentation starts with a discussion about the most memorable and characteristic memories related to media coverage of the spill. The analysis and key lessons show the growing importance of social media as a context for issues management.

2. Power of social media – Crisis case studies

Social media plays a role not only in communications, but can be a driver of debate and change in society. The speed with which news, information and messages spread has changed the way that protest activities are organized, and gives campaigners a wider platform to engage with the public.

3. Power of the correct approach to developing messages

The success of any brand in the current media environment depends on multiple factors. However, well defined messages are a crucial success factor for any organization. Traditional and social media can then become the vehicles which spread these messages.

4. Messaging workshop

During this workshop participants work on a scenario-based case study created for this training. Working in groups, participants will develop and deliver messages to address scenario. The aim of this workshop is to leverage the theory from previous sessions, and establish a basis for the next day's media training.

Day 2 Media practice and crisis management

5. One to one interview exercise

Participants use the messages created during previous session in a filmed TV style interview. They practice both hostile and open-ended interview styles to rehearse basic media interaction skills.

6. Press conference simulation

Participants will practice a press conference in groups. Each group has the opportunity to be on both sides of camera - as journalists and company's representatives.

7. Feedback session and discussion

This session aims to share experiences of participants acquired during the workshop, and provide collective feedback.

8. Crisis management in advocacy

Interests of stakeholders vary, and every issue has at least two sides. It is therefore crucial to know how to defend the cause or organization when facing criticism or attack. This session will focus on the concept of defensive advocacy, which defines how NGOs and IGOs manage their communications in the time of crisis.