COM4114: CRISIS COMMUNICATION

Effective Term
Semester A 2023/24

Part I Course Overview

Course Title
Crisis Communication

Subject Code
COM - Media and Communication
Course Number
4114

Academic Unit
Media and Communication (COM)

College/School
College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CH)

Course Duration
One Semester

Credit Units
3

Level
B1, B2, B3, B4 - Bachelor's Degree

Medium of Instruction
English

Medium of Assessment
English

Prerequisites
Nil

Precursors
Nil

Equivalent Courses
EN3569 Crisis Communication

Exclusive Courses
Nil

Part II Course Details

Abstract

This course aims to train students on the theories/concepts/principles of crisis communication and management from public relations perspectives, focusing on the important concepts of strategic issue management, risk communication; thus,

the contributions public relations makes to crisis communication. Throughout the semester, 4-5 students will form a mock PR firm to deal with a real life crisis. As a result of this course, students will have opportunities to review and learn theories and concepts applicable to crisis communication, analyze and discuss public relations case studies, keep up to date with issues, trends, and events in the crisis management field through a variety of channels, and learn and practice effective presentation skills in front of a large audience.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

	CILOs	Weighting (if app.)	DEC-A1	DEC-A2	DEC-A3
1	Explain what crises are, how to communicate and manage crises effectively	20	x	x	
2	Apply relevant theories and models in analyzing crisis cases	20	x	x	
3	Demonstrate understanding on the roles that strategic public relations plays, which contribute to the reduction of the crisis occurrences, as well as the function of communication prior, during and post crises	30	x	x	
4	Develop workable crisis communication and management plan	30	x	x	x

A1: Attitude
Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

A2: Ability
Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to real-life problems.

A3: Accomplishments
Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

Teaching and Learning Activities (TLAs)

	TLAs	Brief Description	CILO No.	Hours/week (if applicable)
1	Lectures	Lectures on the basic concepts/principles and specific aspects of public relations practices related to crisis communication – issue management, risk communication, environmental scanning, etc.	1, 2, 3	3 hours/week x 7
2	Examination	Examination on the relevant theories and cases	1, 2, 3	3 hours/week x 3
3	Discussion	Discussion on the development of a crisis communication plan	1, 2, 3, 4	3 hours/week x 3

Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

	ATs	CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks (e.g. Parameter for GenAI use)
1	Quizzes: Assessment will be based on the extent to which students describe learned knowledge both correctly and analytically.	1, 2, 3	30	
2	Case Study: Assessment will be based on the extent to which students apply major concepts and theories in analyzing and synthesizing the relevant cases.	2, 3	25	
3	Group Project – crisis communication plan for a "real client" organization: Assessment will be based on the extent to which students are capable of applying all that have been learned to conduct both primary and secondary research in developing a research-based campaign proposal that is both comprehensive and creative.	1, 2, 3, 4	35	
4	Class Participation: Students need to actively participate in in-class discussions and activities through providing examples, analyzing cases, and reflecting on other students' responses, etc.	1, 2, 3	10	

Continuous Assessment (%)

100

Examination (%)

0

Assessment Rubrics (AR)

Assessment Task

Quizzes

Criterion

Ability to grasp the knowledge and gain understanding of the concepts, theories, and strategies learned during the lectures, such as crisis prevention, preparing, recognizing, and responding, proactive management functions, and post-crisis stage

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

High

Good (B+, B, B-)

Significant

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Moderate

Marginal (D)

Basic

Failure (F)

Not even reaching marginal levels

Assessment Task

Case Study

Criterion

Capacity to explain principles of crisis communication and analyze a contemporary crisis case in a local or international organization via applying various models derived from communication and related fields in terms of the type, process, stages, and impacts of the crisis and the organization's responses and strategies

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

High

Good (B+, B, B-)

Significant

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Moderate

Marginal (D)

Basic

Failure (F)

Not even reaching marginal levels

Assessment Task

Group project

Criterion

Ability to work collaboratively to devise a crisis communication plan for a "real client" organization on a specific crisis that has not happened before, which should be both comprehensive and creative and focus on pre-gathered information, key messages, sample press release statement, and corrective actions

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

High

Good (B+, B, B-)

Significant

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Moderate

Marginal (D)

Basic

Failure (F)

Not even reaching marginal levels

Assessment Task

Class Participation

Criterion

Actively participating in in-class discussions and activities, such as appraising, analyzing, and reflecting upon crisis cases, discussing and devising possible solutions, and evaluating the impacts caused by crises

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

High

Good (B+, B, B-)

Significant

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Moderate

Marginal (D)

Basic

Failure (F)

Not even reaching marginal levels

Part III Other Information

Keyword Syllabus

Crisis communication, crisis management, issues management, risk communication, crisis communication and management plan, environmental scanning, public relations, types of crises, ethical and legal considerations

Reading List

Compulsory Readings

	Title
1	Coombs, Timothy (2015). Ongoing Crisis Communication: Planning, Managing, and Responding. Sage Publication. (3rd edition). ISBN: 978-1412983105
2	Lerbinger, O. (2012). The Crisis Manager: Facing Disasters, Conflicts, and Failures. Routledge. (2nd edition). ISBN: 9780415892285
3	《危机传播管理》（中国传媒大学出版社，2010年；ISBN: 7-30708-205-5）

Additional Readings

	Title
1	Sheehan, N. & Quinn-Allan, D. (eds) (2015) Crisis Communication in a Digital World. Cambridge University Press. ISBN: 9781107678231
2	George, A. M. (ed.) (2012) Case Studies in Crisis Communication : International Perspectives on Hits and Misses. Routledge. ISBN: 9780415889896
3	Wendling, C., Radisch, J. & Jacobzone, S. (2013) The Use of Social Media in Risk and Crisis Communication. OECD Publishing. 10.1787/5k3v01fskp9s-en doi
4	Zaremba, A. (2010). Crisis Communication: Theory and Practice. M.E. Sharpe. ISBN- 978-0765620514
5	Littlefield, R. & Sellnow, T. (eds) (2015). Risk and Crisis Communication: Navigating the Tensions between Organizations and the Public. Lexington Books. ISBN: 9781498517904
6	Ulmer, R., Sellnow, T. & Seeger, M. (2015). Effective Crisis Communication: Moving from Crisis to Opportunity. Sage. ISBN: 9781452257518