

PR 568: Crisis Management in Strategic Public Relations 3 Units

Spring 2023 – Mondays – 6:30-9 p.m.

Section: 21563D

Location: ANN 408

Instructor: Scott Kronick

Office: ANN classroom or lobby

Office Hours: By appointment via Zoom or phone or at ASC

Contact Info: Skronick@usc.edu, 213-352-6085 (mobile)

Pronouns: He, Him

Course Description

This course focuses on current and past crises, class case evaluation and solutions, theories and practices to addressing such crises.

The course will be conducted in three parts:

- Case discussion & evaluation
- Outside speaker commentary or in-class exercises
- Discussion of concepts and theories

Students will understand the difference between issues and crises and will learn the core principles to consider in addressing evolving or current crises. Skills will be discussed specifically in the preparation, management, and recovery from crises.

Crises to be evaluated cover multiple scenarios including those related to corporate crisis, cancel culture, environment disasters, employee death, global crises and more.

Students will be asked to prepare for each class through the reading of case studies, timely articles, and chapters from two relevant textbooks.

Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Identify the differences between issues and crises
- Assess crisis situations and their implications for communication
- Weigh response scenarios to determine possible solutions
- Apply the lessons and case experience to current jobs or future employment opportunities
- Explain the systems and processes that go into the professional management and recovery of crises
- Identify whom to talk to, what to consider, and where to go in addressing future crises.

Course Notes

Class notes will be posted on Blackboard following every class. Students are expected to review these notes to understand discussion topics and homework and reading assignments.

Description and Assessment of Assignments

Attending Class and Participation in Discussions

Attending class and participating in discussions are important aspects of this course. If you cannot attend class, please to let the instructor know in advance, as well as take responsibility to check Blackboard and make up missed assignments.

Class activities and interaction with your peers encourage creative dialogue and diversity of perspective, which help enhance your learning. It is expected that students will come to class having read the materials and be prepared to join class discussions, contributing questions and comments. We will incorporate certain crisis communications methods as part of our instructional tools. In these case discussions, students will put themselves in the shoes of an executive and take a position on what you to do. Meaningful participation in the discussion will require thorough and thoughtful reading of the assigned materials.

Creating a respectful and inclusive classroom environment in the context of race, gender, religion, and other personal identifiers is imperative as some topics covered in this course may involve sensitive subject matter.

Essays

There will be two written assignments. The first will be an essay identifying and crises and analyzing it for discussion in the subsequent class. This will be based on initial lessons previously discussed in class. The second will be the development of a media statement based on a crisis presented in class.

Midterm

For the midterm, students will be grouped in teams and participate in a mock crisis counselling situation. This may be an agency team counselling a client, a client responding to a crisis in a press conference, or a CEO addressing an employee town hall. The students will present their cases and the professor and other students will take part as the audience. This will require using skills learned in class to answer tough questions of the client, media or employees.

Final

The final will involve a submitted paper and a presentation based on mock crisis scenario. The students will need to incorporate course learnings throughout the semester in a presentation that addresses a multi-faceted response including messaging across multiple platforms, media strategy, intelligence and recovery. The team will also be asked to address what they would do to prepare for such issues and crises in the future.

Grading

a. Grading Breakdown

Description of assessments and corresponding points and percentage of grade.

Assessment Tool (assignments)	Points	% of Grade
Class Participation	150	15%
Essays (two)	200	20%
Midterm	250	25%
Final	400	40%
TOTAL	1000	100%

b. Course Grading Scale

Letter grades and corresponding point value ranges.

Letter grade and corresponding numerical point range		
95% to 100%: A	80% to 83%: B- (B minus)	67% to 69%: D+ (D plus)
90% to 94%: A- (A minus)	77% to 79%: C+ (C plus)	64% to 66%: D
87% to 89%: B+ (B plus)	74% to 76%: C	60% to 63%: D- (D minus)
84% to 86%: B	70% to 73%: C- (C minus)	0% to 59%: F

c. Grading Standards

Public Relations

“A” projects have writing near professional quality; one or no mistakes; clearly proofread and edited material. All required elements included (catchy headline, solid lead, varied vocabulary; supporting facts/figures; quotes as required). Excellent organization and flow; original thinking. Showed creativity in packaging/distribution method. High end of scale: publishable today as is.

“B” projects have two to five spelling, grammar or AP Style mistakes. One or more required elements missing or poorly displayed (i.e., boring headline; confusing lead, etc.). Shows potential as a good writer. Adhered to inverted pyramid. High end of scale will have at least one extraordinary element such as astonishing lead or little-known facts or pithy quote. Some creativity shown. Publishable with medium editing.

“C” projects have more than five errors (spelling, grammar, AP style). Poorly edited and/or proofread. May have adhered to inverted pyramid but strayed at beginning or end. Hackneyed elements such as trite headline or uninteresting lead. Little or no facts/figures included. Passive rather than active verbs become the norm. Little or no creativity shown. Publishable with major editing.

“D” projects have more than 10 errors (spelling, grammar). Needs to be completely rewritten. Poorly organized with little or no understanding of journalistic style/standards. Needs to work with writing coach.

“F” projects are not rewritable, late or not turned in. A grade of F also will be assigned for any plagiarized and/or fabricated material that is submitted.

d. Grading Timeline

The essays, midterm and final will be graded within one week of submission.

Assignment Rubrics

The general grading rubric for coursework falls under the Grading Standards section above.

Assignment Submission Policy

- All assignments are due on the date and time noted on the syllabus unless otherwise noted. Exceptions will be announced during class and noted via email.
- Submit your written submissions and presentations to Blackboard in standard Word format (generally 12-point type, double spaced unless otherwise noted) and NOT a pdf.
 - All papers must be footnoted as appropriate, with a source page at the end as appropriate.

Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

The Wall Street Journal (please follow this link for a free subscription: <https://libraries.usc.edu/databases/wall-street-journal>) ***Required Reading (on a daily basis)**

"Crisis Communications: The Definitive Guide To Managing The Message" by Steven Fink. Available for free online at USC Libraries --

https://uosc.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01USC_INST/273cqt/cdi_skillsoft_books24x7_bkb00056464

***Required Reading**

"Made To Stick": Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die by Chip and Dan Heath.

https://www.amazon.com/Made-Stick-Ideas-Survive-Others/dp/1400064287/ref=asc_df_1400064287/?tag=hyprod-20&linkCode=df0&hvadid=241920322233&hvpos=&hvnetw=g&hvrnd=11397083605783334070&hvpon=&hvptw=0&hvqmt=&hvdev=c&hvdvcml=&hvlocint=&hvlocphy=9061096&hvtargid=pla-434396151065&psc=1

Others/dp/1400064287/ref=asc_df_1400064287/?tag=hyprod-20&linkCode=df0&hvadid=241920322233&hvpos=&hvnetw=g&hvrnd=11397083605783334070&hvpon=&hvptw=0&hvqmt=&hvdev=c&hvdvcml=&hvlocint=&hvlocphy=9061096&hvtargid=pla-434396151065&psc=1

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***Required Reading (See Readings & Homework for Specific Chapters)**

Laptop Policy

All undergraduate and graduate Annenberg majors and minors are required to have a PC or Apple laptop that can be used in Annenberg classes. Please refer to the **Annenberg Digital Lounge** for more information. To connect to USC's Secure Wireless network, please visit USC's **Information Technology Services** website.

Add/Drop Dates for Session 001

(15 weeks: 1/9/2023 – 4/28/2023; Final Exam Period: 5/3-10/2023)

Link: <https://classes.usc.edu/term-20231/calendar/>

Last day to add: Friday, January 27, 2023

Last day to drop without a mark of "W" and receive a refund: Friday, January 27, 2023

Last day to change enrollment option to Pass/No Pass or Audit: Saturday, January 28, 2023 [All major and minor courses must be taken for a letter grade.]

Last day to add/drop a Monday-only class without a mark of "W" and receive a refund or change to Audit:

Tuesday, January 31, 2023

Last day to withdraw without a "W" on transcript or change pass/no pass to letter grade: Friday, February 24, 2023 [Mark of "W" will still appear on student record and STARS report and tuition charges still apply.]

*Please drop any course by the end of week three for session 001 (or the 20 percent mark of the session in which the course is offered) to avoid tuition charges.]

Last day to drop with a mark of "W": Friday, April 7, 2023

Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

A weekly schedule of the topics, readings, and deliverables for the course.

Important note to students: Be advised that this syllabus is subject to change - and probably will change - based on the progress of the class, news events, and/or guest speaker availability.

	Topics/Daily Activities	Readings and Homework (each reading and assignment corresponds to preparation for the following class) Note: Case readings and assignments may change and will be regularly updated to address crises of the moment.	Deliverable/ Due Dates
Week 1 Date: 1/9	Course Overview <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Class overview Personal introductions Case study discussions: Kanye West & Taylor Swift Crisis management overview Assignment: Preparation for 1/23 class 	Read: S Fink, Crisis Communications, Chapters 1-6. https://www.fastcompany.com/90802635/adidas-blew-the-kanye-controversy-but-your-brand-can-avoid-the-same-mistakes Assignment: https://nymag.com/intelligencer/2022/09/the-nfl-is-americas-best-crisis-management-company.html ; Watch movie: <i>Concussion</i> ; Prepare for NFL crisis discussion	
Week 2 Date: 1/16	Martin Luther King's Birthday <i>No Class</i>		
Week 3 Date: 1/23	Crisis Management Principles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Case discussion: NFL Guest speaker: NFL Crisis Advisor Crisis management principles: The what & who? discussion Crisis management scenarios 	Read: S Fink, Crisis Communications, Chapters 7-10. Assignment: Crisis case & response discussion preparation	1,000 Word Essay: Search and identify a crisis. Describe the situation. Analyze the "what & the who" is involved. Analyze the response. Due 1/30
Week 4 Date: 1/30	Crisis Management Principles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Case discussion: good/bad responses from class analysis Crisis management principles: The how – messaging overview Behavioral Science Intro 	Read: S. Fink, Crisis Communications, Chapters 11-13. BP case study review. Heath, Made To Stick, Intro & Chapter 1. Assignment: Behavioral science reading assignment; Watch <i>Deepwater Horizon</i>	
Week 5 Date: 2/6	Crisis Management Principles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Case discussion: BP Guest speaker: Chris Graves, Founder, Ogilvy Center for Behavioral Science 	Read: S. Fink, Crisis Communications Chapters 14-17; Heath, Made to Stick Chapter 2. Assignment: "Dealing With Death" case preparation	

	Topics/Daily Activities	Readings and Homework (each reading and assignment corresponds to preparation for the following class) Note: Case readings and assignments may change and will be regularly updated to address crises of the moment.	Deliverable/ Due Dates
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crisis management principles: The when & where 		
Week 6 Date: 2/13	Crisis Management Principles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case discussion: “Dealing With Death” • Developing a response • Delivering the message • Media discussion: Do’s & don’ts • Discuss midterm 	<u>Read:</u> S. Fink, Crisis Communications Chapters 18-20; Heath, Made To Stick, Chapter 3. <u>Assignment:</u> Midterm preparation -- Teams of 3, mock crisis counselling case, message delivery, press conference	
Week 7 Date: 2/20	Presidents’ Day – No Class		
Week 8 Date: 2/27	Midterm Presentation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student group vs. Professor participating in varied mock Q&A scenarios in which the students are either counseling a “client” for a crisis they are part of, or putting on a press conference, or addressing employees at an internal meeting. This will require using skills learned in class to answer tough questions of the client, media or employees. 	<u>Read:</u> S. Fink, Crisis Communications Chapters 21-23; Heath, Made to Stick, Chapter 4; Case evaluation TBD <u>Assignment:</u> Prepare questions for journalist panel. Identify and be prepared to discuss “apologies” emanating from crisis situations	
Week 9 Date: 3/6	The Court of Public Opinion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Journalist panel (broadcast, print, online) • Discussion: The apology 	<u>Read:</u> S. Fink, Crisis Communications Chapters 24-26; Heath, Made to Stick, Chapter 5 <u>Assignment:</u> Read & listen to stories evolving from the FTX crisis	
Spring Break	Spring Break – No Class on Monday, 3/13		

	Topics/Daily Activities	Readings and Homework (each reading and assignment corresponds to preparation for the following class) Note: Case readings and assignments may change and will be regularly updated to address crises of the moment.	Deliverable/ Due Dates
Dates: 3/13-3/17			
Week 10 Date: 3/20	Crisis/Issues Management in Web3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crisis case discussion: FTX • Guest speaker: Web3 expert with crisis experience • Corporate crisis management discussion 	Read: S. Fink, Crisis Communications Chapter 26-29; Made To Stick Chapter 6 Assignment: Study United Airlines crisis case	Write a 500-word analysis of the United Airlines case and how they could have managed the crisis better. Paper due 3/27
Week 11 Date: 3/27	Corporate Crisis Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crisis case: corporate crisis management • Guest Speaker: Airlines Crisis Management Expert • Global communications crisis challenges – messaging for multiple markets 	Read: S. Fink, Crisis Communications Chapters 30-32; Made to Stick Chapter Epilogue Assignment: Prepare media statement for multi-market crisis problem	
Week 12 Date: 4/3	Global Crisis Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-market case discussion • Guest speakers: Simon Webb, Crisis Leader, Ogilvy Public Relations, Asia Pacific, Debby Cheung, former President, Ogilvy Public Relations China • 3rd Party Validators • Cancel Culture discussion preparation 	Read: S. Fink, Crisis Communications Chapters 33-34; Cancel Culture reading assignment Assignment: Identify cancel culture cases and prepare to discuss scenarios and strategies	
Week 13 Date: 4/10	Cancel Culture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entertainment crises case discussion • Guest speaker: Howard Bragman, Entertainment Crisis Management Expert 	Read: Stakeholder Capitalism and ESG – A Guide for Communications Leaders published by the Page Society Assignment: Study timely and relevant ESG case study which will be addressed by the	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Class discussion: Timely cases involving cancel culture (#MeToo, Black Lives Matter, Anti-Semitism, etc.) 	<p>guest speaker, Michael Law, Founder and CEO of Summit Strategies</p>	
Week 14 Date: 4/17	Issues vs. Crises <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issues vs. Crises discussion Guest speaker: Michael Law, Founder and CEO, Summit Strategies “Involving Legal” Discussion Discuss final 	<p>Read: Timely case study involving a celebrity crisis with legal implications.</p> <p>Assignment: https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/14/technology/personaltech/how-to-deal-with-a-crisis-of-misinformation.html - Prepare for “Fake News” discussion</p>	
Week 15 Date: 4/24	The Legal POV; The Future of Practicing Crisis Communications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Case discussion: Current Case Guest Speaker: Entertainment Lawyer Combatting fake news Crisis essentials Advisory engagement Final preparation 	<p>Assignment: Final presentation scenarios will be provided, and students grouped in teams. Final presentation will need to be accompanied by a final paper issued on behalf of the team</p>	<p>Final paper will be due on May 8 from 7 to 9 p.m.</p>
FINAL EXAM Date: 5/8, 7-9 p.m.	Final Presentation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will be grouped together to come up with a response to a manufactured crisis scenario. They will need prepare subsequent communications response, including draft messaging for client review, an internal statement, media statement or news release, specific media targets/reporters, as well 		<p>Final presentations will be given May 8 from 7 to 9 p.m.</p>

	Topics/Daily Activities	Readings and Homework (each reading and assignment corresponds to preparation for the following class) Note: Case readings and assignments may change and will be regularly updated to address crises of the moment.	Deliverable/ Due Dates
	as social media tactics. The campaign will be presented in class, in addition to a paper outlining the overall strategy and tactics.		

Policies and Procedures

Internships

The value of professional internships as part of the overall educational experience of our students has long been recognized by the School of Journalism. Accordingly, while internships are not required for successful completion of this course, any student enrolled in this course that undertakes and completes an approved, non-paid internship during this semester shall earn academic extra credit herein of an amount equal to 1 percent of the total available semester points for this course. To receive instructor approval, a student must request an internship letter from the Annenberg Career Development Office and bring it to the instructor to sign by the end of the third week of classes. The student must submit the signed letter to the media organization, along with the evaluation form provided by the Career Development Office. The form should be filled out by the intern supervisor and returned to the instructor at the end of the semester. No credit will be given if an evaluation form is not turned into the instructor by the last day of class. Note: The internship must be unpaid and can only be applied to one journalism or public relations class.

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Conduct

The USC Student Handbook (https://policy.usc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/USC_StudentCode_August2022.pdf)

Academic Integrity

USC's Unifying Value of integrity is a foundational principle that inspires the community to match its values to its actions. Academic integrity is ultimately the sole guarantor of the legitimacy of one's education, and therefore, is vitally important not just for oneself, but for the entire USC community. The value of all USC degrees is negatively impacted by violations of academic integrity. In the classroom, general principles of academic integrity include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one's own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another's work as one's own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles.

Academic Integrity violations (academic dishonesty) include, but are not limited to:

Plagiarism and Cheating

- The submission of material authored by another person but represented as the student's own work, whether that material is paraphrased or copied in verbatim or near-verbatim form.

- Re-using any portion of one's own work (essay, term paper, project, or other assignment) previously submitted without citation of such and without permission of the instructor(s) involved.
- Improper acknowledgment of sources in essays or papers, including drafts. Also, all students involved in collaborative work (as permitted by the instructor) are expected to proofread the work and are responsible for all particulars of the final draft.
- Acquisition of academic work, such as term papers, solutions, or other assignments, from any source and the subsequent presentation of those materials as the student's own work, or providing academic work, such as term papers, solutions, or assignments that another student submits as their own work.

USC School of Journalism Policy on Academic Integrity

https://catalogue.usc.edu/preview_entity.php?catoid=16&ent_oid=3459

"Since its founding, the School of Journalism has maintained a commitment to the highest standards of ethical conduct and academic excellence. Any student found plagiarizing, fabricating, cheating on examinations, and/or purchasing papers or other assignments faces sanctions ranging from an "F" on the assignment to dismissal from the School of Journalism."

In addition, it is assumed that the work you submit for this course is work you have produced entirely by yourself, and has not been previously produced by you for submission in another course or Learning Lab, without approval of the instructor.

Students and Disability Accommodations:

USC welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. The Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter disability-related barriers. Once a student has completed the OSAS process (registration, initial appointment, and submitted documentation) and accommodations are determined to be reasonable and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be available to generate for each course. The LOA must be given to each course instructor by the student and followed up with a discussion. This should be done as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found at osas.usc.edu. You may contact OSAS at (213) 740-0776 or via email at osasfrontdesk@usc.edu.

Support Systems:

Counseling and Mental Health - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline - 988 for both calls and text messages – 24/7 on call

The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline (formerly known as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline) provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, across the United States. The Lifeline is comprised of a national network of over 200 local crisis centers, combining custom local care and resources with national standards and best practices. The new, shorter phone number makes it easier for people to remember and access mental health crisis services (though the previous 1 (800) 273-8255 number will continue to function indefinitely) and represents a continued commitment to those in crisis.

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-9355(WELL) – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender- and power-based harm (including sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and stalking).

Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX (EEO-TIX) - (213) 740-5086

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants.

Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

The Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) - (213) 740-0776

OSAS ensures equal access for students with disabilities through providing academic accommodations and auxiliary aids in accordance with federal laws and university policy.

USC Campus Support and Intervention - (213) 740-0411

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion - (213) 740-2101

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-1200 – 24/7 on call

Non-emergency assistance or information.

Office of the Ombuds - (213) 821-9556 (UPC) / (323-442-0382 (HSC)

A safe and confidential place to share your USC-related issues with a University Ombuds who will work with you to explore options or paths to manage your concern.

Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice - (323) 442-2850 or otfp@med.usc.edu

Confidential Lifestyle Redesign services for USC students to support health promoting habits and routines that enhance quality of life and academic performance.

Annenberg Student Success Fund

<https://annenbergl.usc.edu/current-students/resources/annenbergl-scholarships-and-awards>

The Annenberg Student Success Fund is a donor-funded financial aid account available to USC Annenberg undergraduate and graduate students for non-tuition expenses related to extra- and co-curricular programs and opportunities.

Annenberg Student Emergency Aid Fund

<https://annenbergl.usc.edu/current-students/resources/annenbergl-scholarships-and-awards>

Awards are distributed to students experiencing unforeseen circumstances and emergencies impacting their ability to pay tuition or cover everyday living expenses. These awards are not intended to cover full-tuition expenses, but rather serve as bridge funding to guarantee students' continued enrollment at USC until other resources, such as scholarships or loans, become available. Students are encouraged to provide as much information in their application, as well as contact their academic advisor directly with questions about additional resources available to them.

About Your Instructor

Scott Kronick

Scott is a 36-year veteran of Ogilvy & Mather, having started his career with Ogilvy Public Relations in New York in 1987. Today, Scott is a Senior Advisor to the firm, leading significant client engagements, particularly in the areas of issues and crisis management, corporate reputation, high visibility media campaigns and executive positioning.

He also runs his own consultancy advising clients on their emerging issues and opportunities, and he currently serves as the Page Society China Chairman.

Prior to his role as Senior Advisor, Scott was President and CEO, Asia-Pacific, responsible for the leadership and management of Ogilvy Public Relations' highly awarded Asia-Pacific network, covering 29 offices in 16 countries. It is the largest and most influential international public relations network in Asia, and the largest region in the company's global network. Scott ran the Asia network from a base in Beijing, China, where he lived for 26 years and received several industry awards.

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