

## COURSE SPECIFICATION DOCUMENT

<b>Academic School / Department:</b>	Communications and The Arts
<b>Programme:</b>	MA Advertising and Public Relations
<b>FHEQ Level:</b>	7
<b>Course Title:</b>	Crisis Communications
<b>Course Code:</b>	7106
<b>Total Hours:</b>	200
Timetabled Hours:	39
Guided Learning Hours:	21
Independent Learning Hours:	140
<b>Credits:</b>	20 UK CATS credits 10 ECTS credits 4 US credits

### **Course Description:**

This course focuses on crisis management planning and execution. Using international case studies as well as hypothetical situations, students learn effective crisis management strategies to anticipate and prepare for potential business and reputational crises, how to put processes in place to deal with the unforeseen, and how to manage crises 'on the front line'. The course delves into the key role of media relations in crisis management, including the creation of press conferences, media statements, and overall message management in both traditional and digital media contexts.

### **Prerequisites:**

MA Advertising and Public Relations students.

### **Aims and Objectives:**

- To critically explore key aspects of the practice of crisis communications, both internally and externally.
- To develop insight and critical understanding into the role of the media and other forms of PR activity in crisis communications and develop appropriate skills for media relations management.
- To develop and review professional skills in the research techniques, critical analysis, creative work and written and oral presentation skills required in crisis communications.
- To develop a sophisticated understanding of the role of creativity, teamwork, and cooperation in dealing with successful crisis communications campaigns.

- To explore contemporary debates about the role of advertising and public relations within the realm of crisis communications, placing this debate in an international context related to contemporary developments.

**Programme Outcomes:**

A2; A4; B3; B4; C3; D2; D4

**Learning Outcomes:**

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

- Display a sophisticated understanding of crisis communications, and the role that PR can play in its internal and external management
- Demonstrate how PR techniques can be combined and utilized to a maximum effect in crisis communications.
- Use effective written and presentation skills to develop strategies to debate issues connected to communications prior, during, and following crises.
- Demonstrate a critical appreciation of the role of the media in crisis communications and evidence the appropriate skills required for successful media relationships.

**Indicative Content:**

- An understanding of current and historic crisis communications both as it relates to internal and external communications.
- Examples of risk and crises situations, both in the UK and internationally, as well as a critical consideration of their management.
- An appreciation of effective public relations strategies to anticipate potential reputational crises, how to put processes in place to deal with the unforeseen, and how to manage crises 'on the front line'.
- An understanding of what makes for 'successful' crisis communications, utilising various evaluative techniques.
- Ethical, regulatory, and legal concerns.
- Written and oral communications in crisis management, including the creation of press conferences, media statements, sound bites, and overall message development for both traditional and social media.

**Assessment:**

This course conforms to the University Assessment Norms approved at Academic Board and located at: <https://www.richmond.ac.uk/university-policies/>

**Teaching Methodology:**

Teaching will include interactive lectures, supplemented with a range of audiovisual aids, designed to introduce students to the key concepts of professional practice. Guest speakers and activities will contribute alternative perspectives and experience. Students will develop their critical understanding of these concepts and their practical application through a range of workshops and group and individual exercises undertaken in class and out of class. Their group and individual presentations and written work will be discussed in feedback sessions which explore responses to issues arising from professional practice. The teaching will be supplemented with tutorials designed to address students' personal needs.

**Indicative Text(s):**

- Coleman, Amanda. (2023) *Crisis Communications Strategies: Prepare, Respond and Recover Effectively in Unpredictable and Urgent Situations*. London: Kogan Page.
- Coombs, W. Timothy & Sherry J. Holladay. (2022), *The Handbook of Crisis Communication*, (New York: John Wiley & Sons Ltd.)
- Griffin, Andrew. (2014), *Crisis, Issues, and Reputational Management: A Handbook for PR and Communications Professionals (PR in Practice)*, (London: Kogan Page)
- Hachtmann, F. (2023) *Crisis Response Advertising: Insights and Implications from COVID-19*. (London: Routledge)
- Hamid, S.N.A, et al. (2023) "Social Mediated Crisis Communications Model: A Solution for Social Media Crisis?" *AIP Conference Proceedings*, Vol. 25544 (1)
- O'Rourke, James & Jeffrey Smith. (2023), *Strategic Crisis Communication*, (New York: Routledge)
- Taekke, Jesper. (2017) "Crisis Communication and Social Media: A Systems and Medium Theoretical Perspective," *Systems Research and Behavioural Science*, Vol. 34 (2), p.182-194

**Journals**

*International Journal of Business Communication (EBSCO).*  
*Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management.*

See syllabus for complete reading list.

**Change Log for this CSD:**

Nature of Change	Date Approved & Approval Body (School or AB)	Change Actioned by Registry Services
Annual updates	June 2023	
Student engagement hours changed	Dec 2023	
Teaching Methodology changed	Dec 2023	
Total Hours Updated	April 2024	