

**JOUR 840 – Seminar in Risk Communication**  
Syllabus – Spring 2016

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**Office hours: Monday and Wednesday 11:00am – 12:00pm**

**Introduction:**

This seminar is designed to expose you to the theoretical background and the intricacies of risk communication, with focus on the strategic communication component, not the journalistic or public relations side of risk communication. From health crises to terrorism to environmental disasters, this course will allow you to explore several of modern day challenges facing mankind through a series of case studies and exercises emphasizing problem identification, target audience selection, message development, communication channel identification, reach and impact evaluation, etc.

**Course Overview:**

A graduate-level course on strategies for risk communication.

**Goals:**

Know-How. This course is aimed to introduce you to theoretical fundamentals, concepts and methods of strategic risk communication.

Hands-on Experience. Through a series of case studies, as well as direct involvement with the development of strategies for evaluating and communicating about risks, this course will prepare you to better understand comprehensive risk-related events and the associated communication events.

Problem-Solving and Professional Career. This course is aimed to prepare you with refined abilities to present and defend comprehensive academic presentations as well as complex strategic communication decisions in a clear and concise manner.

Writing Intensive Learning. This course will provide experience in academic manuscript writing and development through a series of research and reflection papers over the course of the semester.

Diversity: Some populations are more exposed to social, economic or environmental risks than others. Communication should be tailored to the specifics of each target audience, taking into consideration its ethnic, cultural, racial, social and economic diversity. The course will prepare you to identify and address diversity in the communication process as well as critically analyze how well diversity was used and addressed in other communication campaigns.

**Course Structure:**

This course is a graduate seminar. It is expected from you to conduct significant individual and team work. Class meetings are discussion intensive, so preparing for class by reading assigned materials is paramount.

Each week there will be a different topic on risk communication. Discussions will focus on both the theoretical foundation of the communication approach as well as the strategies and tactics used by communicators in each specific case.

You will have to prepare two complete manuscripts for the class – one individual on a topic of your choice and a collective manuscript, in which you will work together with your team members, on a topic that you all agree upon. The manuscripts should be ready for submitting to a journal – successful completion of the course requires that each one of you should have the two manuscripts submitted for review at an academic journal.

A self-reflection paper (3 pages) is due at the end of the course. The instructor will provide you with the details on this assignment on a timely manner.

**Course Requirements:**

1. Attend all class lectures and meetings.
2. Attend all team group meetings.
3. Read assigned material.
4. Participate in class discussions.
4. Complete all your individual and group assignments.
5. Prepare and submit your completed manuscripts to peer reviewed journals.

**Textbook**

There is no required textbook for this course. The following are highly recommended texts, websites and periodicals.

Risk Communication: A Mental Models Approach 1st Edition  
by M. Granger Morgan, Baruch Fischhoff, Ann Bostrom, Cynthia J. Atman

Highly Recommended Websites

(Note: Please let me know if the web site link has changed or is no longer working.)

<http://cdc.gov>

<http://www.gallup.com>

<http://www.nyt.com>

<http://www.who.int/risk-communication/en/>

Highly Recommended Periodicals

Wall Street Journal

New York Times

Washington Post

Any supplemental readings will be announced during the semester.

**Meetings with Visiting Professionals:**

We're blessed with talented alumni and others who take time to visit KU, to personally help you develop world-class skills and professionalism. You might have opportunities throughout the semester to meet with these professionals to visit about your project. For example, you might

discuss your communication strategy with a media specialist.

**Drafts:**

You will turn in numerous drafts of your manuscripts, starting with your concept paper, literature review and research questions, methodology, findings, discussion and conclusion.

Drafts are work in progress. Until your manuscripts are completed, all of your work is subject to updates, changes or other modifications. As you continue to add new information and sections to your manuscript, you may need to rework sections you had previously worked on. This is normal and should be expected.

Drafts are written. Discussion about your project often sounds one way, but looks differently when put on paper. Since the written part is the deliverable, your professor can evaluate only written work.

Drafts will be graded on thoroughness, completeness, and mechanics such as grammar, spelling, punctuation, timeliness, and overall quality.

Remember you're in the driver's seat. Your attention to detail, your resolve, your creativity and initiative and other leadership qualities will determine your final grade.

**Attendance and Lateness:**

You should view our class and team meetings as meetings with the client. Thus, if you want to keep this account and your job, you show up on time, prepared and ready to go. If you have to miss a class or meeting, you need to notify your professor as you know and in advance. Multiple and excessive absences or being late, or having to leave meetings early are not a positive reflection on you. Each absence or lateness will reduce your grade by one percent unless your professor grants an excused absence for special circumstances.

The bottom line is if you're not in class or attending client conference calls or professor or team meetings, your grade will be reduced regardless of the reason for your absence, lateness or schedule conflicts. (Medical emergencies are excluded.).

Your professor will also evaluate and grade your performance and contribution during the semester.

**Professionalism:**

Students are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner in all aspects of their campaign work. Personal fraternization with the client is prohibited.

**Academic Dishonesty and Misconduct:**

Academic honesty is fundamental to the activities and principles of a university. All members of the academic community must be confident that each person's work has been responsibly and honorably acquired, developed and presented. Any effort to gain an advantage not given to all students is dishonest whether or not the effort is successful.

Academic dishonesty and misconduct includes, but is not limited to, extensive use of materials from another author without citation or attribution; extensive use of verbatim materials from another author without citation or attribution; extensive use of materials from past assignments; and extensive use of assignments from other courses. When in doubt about plagiarism, paraphrasing, quoting or collaboration, consult the course instructor.

For exams, academic dishonesty and misconduct includes conferring with classmates during an exam in any way; copying or reading another's test; and using notes and other materials without permission of the instructor.

Academic dishonesty and misconduct also includes forgery; obstruction or disruption of teaching; physical abuse or safety threats; theft; property damage; disruptive, lewd or obscene conduct; abuse of computer time and university facilities; repeated failure to attend class when attendance is required; and repeated failure to participate or respond in class when participation is required.

The academic community regards academic dishonesty and misconduct as extremely serious. Violations of any of the principles outlined above may lead to consequences ranging from failing the course to probation to expulsion.

**Academic and Professional Ethics:**

The School of Journalism is committed to the highest standards of academic and professional ethics and expects its students to adhere to those standards.

Students are expected to observe strict honesty in academic programs and as representatives of school-related media. Students enrolled in media-related courses are expected to avoid any potential conflict of interest and should consult with faculty editors if there are questions about what might constitute a violation.

Violations of any of the principles outlined above may lead to consequences ranging from failing the course to probation to expulsion.

**Policy on Plagiarism and Fabrication/Falsification -- Adopted May 7, 2004:**

The William Allen White School of Journalism and Mass Communications does not tolerate plagiarism, fabrication of evidence and falsification of evidence.

Penalties for plagiarism, fabrication or falsification can include a failing grade for this course and expulsion from the School of Journalism and Mass Communications.

If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, fabrication or falsification, please consult the professor(s) of this course.

The following definitions are from Article II, Section 6, of the University Senate Rules and Regulations, revised FY98.

Plagiarism

Knowingly presenting the work of another as one's own (i.e., without proper acknowledgement of the source). The sole exception to the requirement of acknowledging sources is when the information or ideas are common knowledge.

Fabrication and Falsification

Unauthorized alteration or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.

**School Laboratories:**

The School provides computer and broadcast laboratories for student use. The computer lab in 105 Stauffer-Flint will be open the following hours during the semester: Sunday: noon to 10 p.m.; Monday-Thursday 5-10 p.m.; and Friday 9-5 p.m. Computers are available on a first-come, first-served basis.

The Weir Production Laboratory in the Dole Center will be open 10 a.m. – 8 p.m. Monday-Thursday and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Friday. Students may sign-up for editing time and equipment on a first-come, first-served basis through Outlook Web Access, [www.mail.ku.edu](http://www.mail.ku.edu). Instructions are available on the J-School Web site, [www.journalism.ku.edu](http://www.journalism.ku.edu). (Look under the “reservations” link on the right side of the page.) Students may reserve camera equipment no more than three hours at a time and editing equipment no more than two hours at a time.

All times are subject to change. For the first two full weeks of the semester, the Weir Production Laboratory will close at 5:00 p.m. Extended lab hours will be announced later in the semester.

There are adequate laboratory resources available for students who complete their assignments in a timely manner.

**Journalism School Policy on Classroom Attendance:**

"No student may add a journalism class after the 20th day of a semester.

"Students must attend their classes and laboratory periods. Instructors may take attendance into account in assessing a student's performance and may require a certain level of attendance for passing a course. Instructors may choose to drop students from a course, based on attendance, without consent.

"The School of Journalism reserves the right to cancel the enrollment of students who fail to attend the first class or laboratory meeting."

"The KU Office of Student Financial Aid is required by federal law to determine whether students who receive aid are attending each class in which they are enrolled. Instructors are required to report to that office absences of students who have stopped attending and names of those who have enrolled but never have attended. Students who do not attend classes may be required to repay federal and/or state financial aid.

"Students who receive any form of financial aid should learn all requirements including minimum hours of enrollment and grades to qualify for and retain that aid."

**Inclement Weather and Special Needs:**

In the event of inclement weather, the decision to cancel classes is made by KU officials. To determine whether snow or icy conditions have canceled classes, call 864-7669 (864-SNOW). The Office of Disability Resources (DR), 22 Strong Hall, 785-864-2620 (v/tty), coordinates accommodations and services for KU students with disabilities. If you have a disability for which you may request accommodation in KU classes and have not contacted DR, please do so as soon as possible. Please also contact me privately in regard to this course.

**Copying or Recording:**

Course materials prepared by the instructor, as well as content of all lectures presented by the instructor, are the instructor's property. Video and audio recording of lectures without instructor consent is prohibited. On request, the instructor usually will permit students to audio tape lectures, on the condition that these audio tapes are only used as a study aid by the individual making the recording. Unless the instructor gives explicit permission, recordings of lectures may not be modified and must not be transferred or transmitted to any other person, whether or not that individual is enrolled in the course.

**Religious Holidays:**

Students are excused for religious holidays. Please let your instructor know in advance if you have a conflict.

**Miscellaneous:**

This information is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor and/or the University.

**Grading Policy:**

Your grade in this course will be split between process and results. The professor reserves the right to raise a student's grade based on superior performance and contributions to the campaign or to lower a student's grade based on absenteeism, late work and attendance, poorly prepared work, not following through and lack or decreased professionalism. General attitude towards the professor, client and the rest of the class will also influence your final grade.

**Process: 40%**

In-process Drafts: 20%

You will turn in drafts of your manuscripts as you develop it throughout the semester and each of these drafts will be graded. The professor will let you know at least 14 days in advance when drafts are due. It is expected that your manuscripts will become more comprehensive and targeted throughout the semester, and your in-process draft grade will reflect the continual improvement represented in your drafts. Grammar, punctuation, thoroughness and attention to detail, high quality and overall mechanics of the draft will contribute to this grade. Key to improvement are the weekly meetings with your professor, your research and your individual initiatives and work ethics. Late drafts within 48 hours will lower your grade by 1% and drafts after 48 hours or missing will lower your grade by 2%.

Class Attendance: 5%

Class attendance will be worth 5% of your grade. Lack of individual involvement or participation will also lower your grade as appropriate.

Peer Evaluations/Participation: 10%

The quality of your work as a team member will be evaluated by your peers. Seriousness, work ethic, personal contribution to the project, timely delivery and participation will be ranked by your team members.

Self-reflection paper: 5%

A self-reflection paper on your work with the team and about the course (3 pages minimum) is due prior of doing the final presentation to the client. The instructor will give you details about the expected topics of your paper about two weeks prior to the final presentation.

**Results: 60%**

Individual manuscript: 30%

The professor will evaluate the individual manuscript. The manuscript has to be submitted for review to a peer-reviewed journal in order for the points to be awarded.

Collaborative manuscript: 30%

The professor will evaluate the collaborative manuscript. The manuscript has to be submitted for review to a peer-reviewed journal in order for the points to be awarded.

**Grades:**

Grades will be awarded based on the following percentage:

- A (94-100)
- A- (93-90)
- B+ (87-89)
- B (84-86)
- B- (80-83)
- C+ (77-79)
- C (74-76)
- C- (70-73)

**Timetable of topics.**

Date	Topic	Recommended readings
1/21	Welcome and introduction; What is risk communication? Structure of an academic paper. From idea to manuscript.	
1/28	Risk communication – an overview	<p>Shrivastava, S. R., Shrivastava, P. S., &amp; Ramasamy, J. (2016). Risk communication: An integral element in public health emergencies. <i>International Journal of Preventive Medicine</i>, 7(1), 12.</p> <p>O'Connor, A. M., Légaré, F., &amp; Stacey, D. (2003). Risk communication in practice: the contribution of decision aids. <i>Bmj</i>, 327(7417), 736-740.</p> <p>Ungar, S. (2014). Moral panic versus the risk society. <i>Understanding Deviance: Connecting Classical and Contemporary Perspectives</i>, 371.</p> <p><a href="http://www.soc.iastate.edu/sapp/Fischhoff.pdf">http://www.soc.iastate.edu/sapp/Fischhoff.pdf</a>  <a href="http://emergency.cdc.gov/cerc/">http://emergency.cdc.gov/cerc/</a></p>
2/4	Risk communication theory	<p><a href="http://www.start.umd.edu/sites/default/files/files/publications/UnderstandingRiskCommunicationTheory.pdf">http://www.start.umd.edu/sites/default/files/files/publications/UnderstandingRiskCommunicationTheory.pdf</a></p> <p>Pidgeon, N., Kasperson, R. E., &amp; Slovic, P. (2003). <i>The social amplification of risk</i>. Cambridge University Press.</p> <p>Morgan, M. G. (2002). <i>Risk communication: A mental models approach</i>. Cambridge University Press.</p>

2/11	Practicum – individual and collaborative research manuscripts. Topics selection. Identification of research questions.	
2/18	The Syrian Refugees Crisis	<p>Bačić Selanec, N. (2016). A Critique of EU Refugee Crisis Management: On Law, Policy and Decentralisation. <i>Croatian Yearbook of European Law and Policy</i>, 11, 73-114.</p> <p>Lim, Y. J. (2016). Application of international norms to social media: cases of Egypt and Libya. <i>Case Study and Case Report</i>, 6(1), 5-18.</p> <p>Cookson, S. T., Abaza, H., Clarke, K. R., Burton, A., Sabrah, N. A., Rumman, K. A., ... &amp; Naoum, M. (2015). Impact of and response to increased tuberculosis prevalence among Syrian refugees compared with Jordanian tuberculosis prevalence: case study of a tuberculosis public health strategy. <i>Conflict and health</i>, 18.</p> <p>Kirišci, K. (2014). Syrian Refugees and Turkey's Challenges: Beyond the Limits of Hospitality.</p>
2/25	The Ebola epidemic	<p>Gostin, L. O., Lucey, D., &amp; Phelan, A. (2014). The Ebola epidemic: a global health emergency. <i>Jama</i>, 312(11), 1095-1096.</p> <p>Smith, R. D. (2006). Responding to global infectious disease outbreaks: lessons from SARS on the role of risk perception, communication and management. <i>Social science &amp; medicine</i>, 63(12), 3113-3123.</p> <p>Holmes, B. J. (2008). Communicating about emerging infectious disease: The importance of research. <i>Health, Risk &amp; Society</i>, 10(4), 349-360.</p> <p>Reaves, E. J., Mabande, L. G., Thoroughman, D. A., Arwady, M. A., &amp; Montgomery, J. M. (2014). Control of Ebola virus disease—Firestone District, Liberia, 2014. <i>MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep</i>, 63(42), 959-965.</p> <p>Shrivastava, S. R., Shrivastava, P. S., &amp; Ramasamy, J. (2016). Risk communication: An integral element in public health emergencies. <i>International Journal of Preventive Medicine</i>, 7(1), 12.</p>
3/3	Practicum – individual and collaborative research manuscripts.	Due by the end of the week - Literature review draft
3/10	The Atomic Era	<p>Liu, J. T., &amp; Smith, V. K. (1990). Risk communication and attitude change: Taiwan's national debate over nuclear power. <i>Journal of Risk and Uncertainty</i>, 3(4), 331-349.</p> <p>Zhu, W., Wei, J., &amp; Zhao, D. (2016). Anti-nuclear behavioral intentions: The role of perceived knowledge, information processing, and risk perception. <i>Energy Policy</i>, 88, 168-177.</p> <p>Wang, Y., &amp; Li, J. (2016). A causal model explaining Chinese university students' acceptance of nuclear power. <i>Progress in Nuclear Energy</i>, 88, 165-174.</p>
3/17	Spring Break	Isaac Asimov

3/24	Hackers and hacks	<p>Shackelford, S. (2016). Protecting Intellectual Property and Privacy in the Digital Age: The Use of National Cybersecurity Strategies to Mitigate Cyber Risk. <i>Chapman Law Review</i>.</p> <p>Kim, G., &amp; Koo, H. (2016). The causal relationship between risk and trust in the online marketplace: A bidirectional perspective. <i>Computers in Human Behavior</i>, 55, 1020-1029.</p> <p>Chernov, D., &amp; Sornette, D. (2016). Causes of Risk Information Concealment. In <i>Man-made Catastrophes and Risk Information Concealment</i>(pp. 247-279). Springer International Publishing.</p> <p>Chung, I. J. (2011). Social amplification of risk in the Internet environment.<i>Risk Analysis</i>, 31(12), 1883-1896.</p>
3/31	Practicum – individual and collaborative research manuscripts.	Due by the end of the week - Methods and findings draft
4/7	Climate change	<p>Young, C., Rao, A., &amp; Rosamilia, A. (2016). Crisis and Risk Communications: Best Practices Revisited in an Age of Social Media. In <i>Communicating Climate-Change and Natural Hazard Risk and Cultivating Resilience</i> (pp. 27-36). Springer International Publishing.</p> <p>Sterman, J. D. (2008). Risk communication on climate: mental models and mass balance. <i>Science</i>, 322(5901), 532-533.</p> <p>Weingart, P., Engels, A., &amp; Pansegrau, P. (2000). Risks of communication: discourses on climate change in science, politics, and the mass media.<i>Public understanding of science</i>, 9(3), 261-283.</p> <p>Jones, R. N. (2001). An environmental risk assessment/management framework for climate change impact assessments. <i>Natural hazards</i>, 23(2-3), 197-230.</p>
4/14	Terrorism	<p>Morakabati, Y., &amp; Kapuściński, G. (2016). Personality, Risk Perception, Benefit Sought and Terrorism Effect. <i>International Journal of Tourism Research</i>.</p> <p>Villalobos, J. D., &amp; Sirin, C. V. (2016). The Relevance of Emotions in Presidential Public Appeals: Anger's Conditional Effect on Perceived Risk and Support for Military Interventions. <i>Presidential Studies Quarterly</i> (forthcoming).</p> <p>Sun, L. G., &amp; Jones, R. A. (2016). War Rhetoric and Disaster Transparency. In <i>Risk Analysis of Natural Hazards</i> (pp. 199-219). Springer International Publishing.</p>
4/21	No class – collaborative time to finish work on papers	Due by the end of the week - Final papers drafts
4/28	Individual and collaborative papers - final reviews	Due by the end of the week – proof that papers have been submitted to peer-review journals