



DEPARTMENT OF JOURNALISM, MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION

MK2202 The Politics of Crisis Communication, 15 credits

Politisk kriskommunikation, 15 högskolepoäng

Second Cycle

Confirmation

This course syllabus was confirmed by Department of Journalism and Mass Communication on 2018-12-03 and was last revised on 2023-11-10 by Department of Journalism, Media and Communication to be valid from 2024-01-15, spring semester of 2024.

Field of education: Social Sciences 100%

Department: Department of Journalism, Media and Communication

Position in the educational system

The course can be offered as a freestanding course.

The course can be included in the following programmes: 1) Master's Programme in Political Communication (S2MKV)

The course can be part of the following programmes: 1) Master's program in political communication (S2MKV) and 2) Master's programme in political communication (S2MKG)

Main field of studies

Media and Communication Studies with Specialization in Political Communication

Media and Communication Studies

Specialization

A1N, Second cycle, has only first-cycle course/s as entry requirements

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Entry requirements

For admission to the course, the student must fulfill the requirements for first cycle studies.

Learning outcomes

On successful completion of the course the student will be able to:

Knowledge and understanding

explain key concepts and theories used in research in risk and crisis communication.

Competence and skills

analyse and critically review various actors' communication initiatives during a crisis with the help of suitable methods and theoretical premises.

evaluate risk and crisis communication based on public needs and interests and propose alternative communications initiatives.

based on decision-making roles, propose concrete communication measures in a given crisis situation.

Judgement and approach

independently evaluate the knowledge claims made in research on crisis communication.

independently evaluate risk and crisis communication initiatives based on ethical and democratic perspectives.

Course content

In the course, *The Politics of Crisis Communication*, risk and crisis communication is viewed from a societal and political perspective. The course looks at both the role of risks and crises in politics and how political actors such as authorities, parties and interest groups communicate during crises. The significance of crisis communication for whether and how a crisis has democratic implications is a key theme, as is how decision-makers, media and citizens communicate in the event of such crises.

On the course, we discuss how risk and crisis perceptions arise and are debated and defined by decision-makers, media and citizens. We touch upon the role and character of risk and crisis communication in different types of crises and during their different phases, the media's role in crisis situations, and how different actors act and communicate in crisis situations. The course highlights risk and crisis communication in various cultural contexts and utilises the diversity of the student group in the critical analysis of crisis cases from across the world. The students are also afforded the opportunity to use their theoretical knowledge of risk and crisis communication in a simulated crisis situation (crisis scenario) and in their own case study of a politically relevant crisis.

The course includes the following five modules:

A/ Analysing risks and crises is about what a risk and a crisis is and what characterises different types of risks and crises – e.g., how political scandals differ from social risks and crises such as terrorist attacks and global environmental catastrophes – and the various sequences and phases of crises. How a situation will be perceived as a crisis, how crises are politicised and used politically, and crises' political consequences, are central themes. Various societal conditions for crisis communication are discussed, such as how crises affect and are affected by citizens' trust in political institutions and media. The students will practice identifying different types of risks, crises and crisis sequences.

B/ The media's role in risk and crisis communication is about how different types of media – both traditional news media and social media – function in crisis situations. News media's functions with regard to information, review and communication between groups is a central premise. The role of social media and how they are used in crisis situations by different actors, including the public, are also discussed. How crises are represented in different types of media is a common theme and the students will practice the analysis of media content.

C/ Organisations' crisis management is about how organisations plan, organise and practice risk and crisis communication and the rhetoric employed by decision-makers in crisis situations. This module has a special focus on how actors in public and political organisations use crisis communication to create and retain trust and avoid criticism. During the module, the students practice proposing concrete communication measures in a fictitious crisis scenario.

D/Risk and crisis communication from a citizens' perspective focuses on the significance of risk and crisis communication for the public. How the public reacts, communicates and acts in crisis situations, how different groups differ in terms of media usage and how they communicate in crisis situations are all discussed. The students practice evaluating risk and crisis communication messages from a citizen perspective and propose alternative communication solutions.

E/ Case study of a crisis: during this module, the student carries out independent project work on their own crisis case in which risk and crisis communication is analysed and evaluated based on the various perspectives discussed during the course.

Form of teaching

A number of different tuition formats and learning activities are included in the course: reading of literature, seminars, lectures, supervision and group exercises/workshops. Study visits and guest lectures may also take place.

Language of instruction: English

Assessment

The course's exams correspond to the five modules (a-e) described above. The four first modules are assessed by means of the student actively participating in group discussions and contributing to a joint presentation of the conclusions from group discussions. In module (a), the students identify different risk and crisis types and sequences of events using theories. In module (b), the students analyse media depictions of a crisis. In (c), the students work with a fictitious crisis scenario and propose concrete communication measures based on the given situation. Finally, in module (d), the students analyse risk and crisis communication from a citizen perspective. The final examination (e) is individual and constitutes an independent project in which the student analyses and evaluates communication in a crisis situation based on the aspects of a-d (identifying risks and crises and organisations, media and citizens' perspectives of crises), which are handled during the course. This work is submitted as a written assignment.

component	Credits	Form	Grades
Risk and crisis analysis	1	Group, oral	Fail/Pass
Content analysis	2	Group, oral	Fail/Pass
Risk and crisis management exercise	2	Group, oral	Fail/Pass
Evaluation of risk and crisis communication	2	Group, oral	Fail/Pass
Case study	8	Individual, written	Fail/pass/Pass with Distinction

If a student, who has failed the same examined component twice, wishes to change examiner before the next examination, a written application shall be sent to the department responsible for the course and shall be granted unless there are special reasons to the contrary (Chapter 6, Section 22 of Higher Education Ordinance).

In cases where a course has been discontinued or has undergone major changes, the student shall normally be guaranteed at least three examination occasions (including the ordinary examination) during a period of at least one year from the last time the course was given.

Grades

The grading scale comprises: Pass with Distinction (VG), Pass (G) and Fail (U).

A three-scale grading system is used for the course: Pass with Distinction, Pass, and Fail. To receive a Pass for the course, you must receive at least a Pass for all modules.

To receive a Pass with Distinction, you must also receive a Pass with Distinction for the

individual case study (examination e).

Course evaluation

Course evaluations are made continuously, both orally and in writing. The results are compiled and used in the institution's ongoing quality assurance work.

Results and any changes to the course format shall be communicated both to the students who submitted evaluations and the students who are due to take the course.