

LINGNAN UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF MARKETING AND INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS
MKT2245 Crisis Communication and Social Media (Section 1)
Term 2, 2025-26

Every Friday, 09:30am-12:15pm, at MBG11

Instructor: Prof. Hilda KEUNG (hildakeung@ln.edu.hk)

Brief Course Description

Crisis communication is the strategic management of information delivery by commercial and non-commercial organizations when facing critical emergencies, in order to minimize damage and maximize public trust. In the digital age, social media are increasingly used by organizations to convey information during crises and interact with diverse stakeholders at a fast speed. This course enables students to understand how to better utilize social media in crisis communication. In the course, students also discuss social-mediated crisis communication from cultural, ethical and socially responsible perspectives, as well as its use in developing long-term stakeholders' relationships and for maintaining customer loyalty.

Aims

This course's purpose is to allow students to develop written and verbal social-mediated crisis communication skills with the application of relevant concepts, theories, strategies and/or tactics.

This course aims to enable students to:

1. Compare the advantages and disadvantages of crisis communication through traditional mass-media channels (e.g., TV and printed newspapers) and social media (e.g., YouTube and Instagram).
2. Apply relevant theories and concepts to demonstrate written and verbal social-mediated crisis communication skills.
3. Analyze the effectiveness (vs. ineffectiveness) and appropriateness (vs. inappropriateness) of crisis communication strategies and tactics via social media.
4. Demonstrate an understanding of the socially responsible and ethical issues and use of social-mediated crisis communication.
5. Understand the importance of how social-mediated crisis communication may optimize loyalty between organizations and stakeholders.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the course, students should be able to:

1. Analyse the importance and role of social-mediated crisis communication with the application of relevant concepts and theories (LO1).
2. Distinguish between uncontrolled (editorial) and controlled (advertorial) social media to disseminate informative and persuasive communication to stakeholders in a trustworthy and transparent way (LO2).
3. Design written social-mediated crisis communication for commercial and non-commercial organizations with respect for cultural considerations and with sincerity and professionalism (LO3).
4. Demonstrate verbal crisis communication skills in responding to editorial social media and stakeholders during global, regional, and local crises (LO4).
5. Evaluate the effectiveness and ineffectiveness of crisis communication strategies and tactics, as well as the appropriateness and inappropriateness of spokesperson skills from an ethical and socially responsible perspective (LO5).

Teaching Method

Lectures will be supplemented by discussion and role-play activities individually, in pairs or groups. Teaching materials assisted with videos and real cases will help students build up verbal and written crisis communication skills on social media.

Students are expected to engage in discussion, debates, and role-play activities proactively, in order to enhance their practical social-mediated crisis communication skills. Through participation, students are expected to demonstrate their teamwork spirit and individual performance.

Also, lectures will discuss theories and concepts, as well as debatable strategies and tactics based on research-based articles and current issues and cases. Students are expected to show their comprehension, referencing skills and critical analysis with evidence support for their in-class participation and assessments.

Measurement of Learning Outcomes

1. In-class exercises / participation assess students' knowledge and understanding of concepts, theories, strategies and tactics of crisis communication on social media (LO1, LO2, LO3, LO4, LO5).
2. An individual critique with research examines the ability of students to apply concepts, theories, strategies and tactics to real-world cases with reference skills, in order to argue the effectiveness (vs. ineffectiveness) and appropriateness (vs. inappropriateness) of social-mediated crisis communication, as well as make valid recommendations (LO1, LO2, LO3, LO5).
3. A group role-play project assesses students' practical verbal social-mediated crisis communication skills after they work as a Crisis Communication Team to prepare written corresponding materials (LO1, LO2, LO3, LO4, LO5).
4. An individual role-play practicum assesses students' practical written and verbal social-mediated crisis communication skills that can show their effective and efficient use of social media in crisis communication (LO1, LO2, LO3, LO4, LO5).
5. An individual self-reflection essay assesses students' self-evaluation on cultural, ethical and socially-responsible insights; as well as their application of concepts, theories, strategies and/or tactics of social-mediated crisis communication (LO1, LO2, LO3, LO5).

Measurement of Learning Outcomes	Weights	Learning Outcomes				
		LO1	LO2	LO3	LO4	LO5
In-class exercises/ Participation	10%	√	√	√	√	√
Individual Critique with Research	30%	√	√	√		√
Group Role-Play Project	30%	√	√	√	√	√
Individual Role-Play Practicum	15%	√	√	√	√	√
Individual Self-Reflection Essay	15%	√	√	√		√

Remark: Assessment rubrics are enclosed at the end.

Assessments

Continuous Assessments:

<i>In-Class Exercises / Participation</i>	10%
<i>Individual Critique with Research</i>	30%
<i>Group Role-Play Project</i>	30%
<i>Individual Role-Play Practicum</i>	15%
<i>Individual Self-Reflection Essay</i>	15%
Total	100%

1. In-Class Exercises/ Participation (10%)

Brainstorming or role-play exercises will be arranged **in class** for students individually, in pairs, or in groups. This provides students with opportunities to practice various verbal and/or written social-mediated communication skills and theory-application skills. Students debate what they learned through case studies. Students get participation marks for attendance, punctuality, cooperation, and sincerity.

In-class interactive participation during each lesson is assessed.

2. Individual Critique with Research (30%)

Students evaluate a real global or local crisis on social media by writing a critique paper on its effectiveness (vs. ineffectiveness) and appropriateness (vs. inappropriateness) with theories, concepts, strategies, tactics, and skills learned in the course. They are required to suggest professional and feasible recommendations with references, data and evidence support.

Individual Critique with Research - Deadline: by 2pm, 12 Feb 2026 via Turnitin on Moodle

3. Group Role-Play Project (30%)

Students form a group. Each member takes the role of a crisis communication team. All group members demonstrate their verbal communication skills on a *mock* social media platform, facing editorial social media and stakeholders, which is similar to a live broadcast. Each group will have a unique crisis scenario. Other students serve as stakeholders, including consumers, editorial social media, and complainants/ victims, to ask challenging and constructive questions to the group.

Demonstration of verbal and written social-media crisis communication skills, as well as the application of concepts, theories, strategies and/or tactics are required. Each group is required to submit their prepared stakeholder analysis, press statements, key messages, taglines, and lines-to-take. Role-plays will be recorded for review and grading. In addition, peer evaluation will be conducted to ensure equal contribution of group members.

Group Role-Play Project Submission Files - Deadline: by 2pm, 8 April 2026 via Turnitin on Moodle
*** All students are required to conduct Group Role-Play Project in class physically on 10 April and 17 April 2026**

4. Individual Role-Play Practicum (15%)

Students individually take the role of a spokesperson to demonstrate both written and verbal social-mediated crisis communication on a *mock* social media platform. Each student is required to newly produce a short video together with a written social media post. Students' own videos and posts should show their informative and persuasive crisis communication skills in professional ways. Each student will tackle a crisis scenario that is different from their group role-play projects.

Individual Role-Play Practicum - Deadline: by 2pm, 30 March 2026 via Turnitin on Moodle

5. Individual Self-Reflection Essay (15%)

Students individually self-evaluate their learning experience in this course, e.g., application of concepts, theories, strategies, tactics and/or skills learned. Students should self-judge their use of social media in crisis

communication from cultural, ethical, and/or socially responsible perspectives, as well as stakeholder relations and customer loyalty.

Individual Self-Reflection Essay - Deadline: by 2pm, 18 April 2026 via Turnitin on Moodle

Textbook: Not Applicable. Please encourage referring to a variety of references and editorial news Required / Essential Readings

Jin, Y., & Austin, L. L. (Eds.). (2022). *Social media and crisis communication* (Second edition.). Routledge.

Fearn-Banks, K. (2017). *Crisis communications: a casebook approach* (Fifth edition.). Routledge.

Zaremba, A. J. (2010). *Crisis communication: theory and practice*. M.E. Sharpe.

Recommended/Supplementary Readings

Coleman, A. (2023). *Crisis communication strategies: prepare, respond and recover effectively in unpredictable and urgent situations* (Second edition.). Kogan Page.

Coombs, W. T., & Holladay, S. J. (Eds.). (2023). *The handbook of crisis communication* (Second edition.). Wiley Blackwell.

Diers-Lawson, A. (2020). *Crisis communication: managing stakeholder relationships*. Routledge.

Frandsen, F., & Johansen, W. (Eds.). (2020). *Crisis communication*. De Gruyter Mouton.

Ndlela, M. N. (2019). *Crisis communication: a stakeholder approach*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Park, S., & Choi, J.-A. (2023). Comparing public responses to apologies: examining crisis communication strategies using network analysis and topic modeling. *Quality & Quantity*, 57(4), 3603–3620. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11135-022-01488-5>

O'Rourke, J. S., & Smith, J. A. (2023). *Strategic crisis communication*. Routledge.

Sheehan, M., & Quinn-Allan, D. (Eds.). (2015). *Crisis communication in a digital world* (1st ed.). Cambridge University Press.

Singh, J., Crisafulli, B., Quamina, L. T., & Xue, M. T. (2020). 'To trust or not to trust': The impact of social media influencers on the reputation of corporate brands in crisis. *Journal of Business Research*, 119, 464-480. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2020.03.039>

Walaski, P. (2011). *Risk and crisis communications methods and messages*. John Wiley & Sons.

Important Notes:

- (1) Students are expected to spend a total of 6 hours (i.e. 3 hours of class contact and 3 hours of personal study) per week to achieve the course learning outcomes.
- (2) Students shall be aware of the University regulations about dishonest practice in course work, tests and examinations, and the possible consequences as stipulated in the Regulations Governing University Examinations. In particular, plagiarism, being a kind of dishonest practice, is "the presentation of another person's work without proper acknowledgement of the source, including exact phrases, or summarized ideas, or even footnotes/citations, whether protected by copyright or not, as the student's own work". Students are required to strictly follow university regulations governing academic integrity and honesty.
- (3) Students are required to submit writing work(s) using Turnitin.

- (4) To enhance students' understanding of plagiarism, a mini-course "Online Tutorial on Plagiarism Awareness" is available on <https://pla.ln.edu.hk/>.
- (5) Students must adhere to the University's guidelines and practices when using Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools. The official documents "Guidelines for Using GAI Tools at Lingnan University" and "Best Practices for Ethical and Responsible Use of GAI Tools in Course Assessments" can be found here: <https://www.ln.edu.hk/tlc/generative-artificial-intelligence/gai-guidelines-best-practices>

See Next Page for Class Schedule

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Term 2, 2025-26

Every Friday, 09:30am-12:20pm, at MBG11

Date (2026)	Indicative Learning Contents – MKT2245 doesn't aim at training students to be a social media influencer	Deadline/ Note
9 Jan	Course Introduction Current Trends of Crisis Communication and Social Media e.g., 5 stages of crisis communication; Crisis communication plans and teams, etc.	In-class interactive participation during each lesson is assessed
16 Jan	Classical crises vs. Contemporary crises driven by the use of social media globally, regionally, and locally Types of Crises	
23 Jan	Uncontrolled (Editorial) vs. Controlled (Advertorial) Social Media Theories and Concepts relevant to Crisis Communication	
30 Jan	Debatable Strategies and Tactics Used in Social-Mediated Crisis Communication Individual Critique with Research – Briefing	Individual Critique w Research Due: 12 Feb 2026, 2pm
6 Feb	Stakeholder Management and Relationship	
13 Feb	Spokesperson's Characteristics and Roles Individual Role-Play Practicum – Briefing	
20 Feb	No class, 16 Feb to 20 Feb - Chinese New Year (Public Holiday)	
27 Feb	Written Social-Mediated Crisis Communication e.g., Writing Skills of Press Statements, Key Messages, and Lines-to-take Group Role-Play Project – Briefing	
6 Mar	Verbal and NON-verbal Social-Mediated Crisis Communication (1)	
13 Mar	Verbal and NON-verbal Social-Mediated Crisis Communication (2)	
20 Mar	Personal, Entrepreneurs' and Social Media Influencers' Crisis Communication	
27 Mar	Cultural Consideration, Ethical Judgment, and Legal Liability in Social-Mediated Crisis Communication Individual Self-Reflection – Briefing	Individual Role-Play Practicum Due: 30 March 2026, 2pm
3 Apr	No class, 3 April to 7 April, Easter and Ching Ming Festivals (Public Holiday)	
10 Apr	Group Role-Play Project (1)	Individual Self-Reflection Due: 18 Apr 2026, 2pm
17 Apr	Group Role-Play Project (2)	

Remark: The indicative learning contents may be adjusted based on students' learning progress

Assessment Rubric for In-Class Exercises / Participation (10%)

Traits	Weight	Mastering (8 – 10 marks)	Practising (5 – 7 marks)	Emerging (0 – 4 marks)
Understandings of concepts, theories, strategies, tactics and skills learned	30%	Higher level of competence to: • Show comprehension skills • Show application skills	Moderate level of competence to: • Show comprehension skills • Show application skills	Room for improvement to: • Show comprehension skills • Show application skills
Motivation of showing creativity and generating suggestions	30%	Higher level of motivation to: • Show personal ideas and brainstorm • Suggest new ideas and solutions to solve problems in the cases	Moderate level of motivation to: • Show personal ideas and brainstorm • Suggest new ideas and solutions to solve problems in the cases	Room for improvement to: • Show personal ideas and brainstorm • Suggest new ideas and solutions to solve problems in the cases
Class engagement and manners	20%	• Proactively contribute to class by offering meaningful ideas and asking questions • Largely display maturity and respect for others	• Moderately contribute to class by offering meaningful ideas and asking questions • Moderately display maturity and respect for others	• Limited contribution to class by offering meaningful ideas and asking questions • Limited display of maturity and respect for others
Attendance and promptness	20%	• Attend all class activities • Arrive punctually	• Regularly attend class activities • Most arrives punctually	• Lower attendance rate • Weaker time management
Total	100%	Total Marks = (Marks obtained for each criterion) x (weight for each criterion)		

Assessment Rubric for Individual Written Critique with Research (30%)

Traits	Weight	Mastering (8 – 10 marks)	Practicing (5 – 7 marks)	Emerging (0 – 4 marks)
Ability to recognize and analyze effectiveness (vs. ineffectiveness) and appropriateness (vs. inappropriateness) of social-mediated crisis communication implemented by the chosen case	30%	Higher level of competence to: • Recognize relevant social-mediated crisis communication implemented by the case • Analyze and compare effectiveness (vs. ineffectiveness) and appropriateness (vs. inappropriateness) of social-mediated crisis communication executed by the case	Moderate level of competence to: • Recognize relevant social-mediated crisis communication implemented by the case • Analyze and compare effectiveness (vs. ineffectiveness) and appropriateness (vs. inappropriateness) of social-mediated crisis communication executed by the case	Room for improvement to: • Recognize relevant social-mediated crisis communication implemented by the case • Analyze and compare effectiveness (vs. ineffectiveness) and appropriateness (vs. inappropriateness) of social-mediated crisis communication executed by the case
Relevance and Creativity of recommendations with the application of theories, concepts, strategies, tactics and skills learned in the course	30%	Higher level of competence to: • Apply relevant theories, concepts, strategies, tactics and/or skills with reasoning recommendation • Generate personal ideas and make valid recommendations showing feasible solutions to problems	Moderate level of competence to: • Apply relevant theories, concepts, strategies, tactics and/or skills with reasoning recommendation • Generate personal ideas and make valid recommendations, showing feasible solutions to problems	Room for improvement to: • Apply relevant theories, concepts, strategies, tactics and/or skills with reasoning recommendation • Generate personal ideas and make valid recommendations, showing feasible solutions to problems
Critical judgment from perspectives of culture, ethics, and social responsibility	20%	Higher level of competence to: • Explain details with valid Judgment • Show their sense of culture, ethics, and social responsibility	Moderate level of competence to: • Explain details with valid Judgment • Show their sense of culture, ethics, and social responsibility	Room for improvement to: • Explain details with valid Judgment • Show their sense of culture, ethics, social responsibility
Organization of information resources and referencing skills	20%	Higher level of competence to: • Collect information from a variety of reliable sources such as library and research databases • Organize and paraphrase information from various sources • Complete in-text citations and a reference list	Moderate level of competence to: • Collect information from a variety of reliable sources such as library and research databases • Organize and paraphrase information from various sources • Complete in-text citations and a reference list	Minimal efforts on: • Collecting information from a variety of reliable sources such as library and research databases • Organizing and paraphrasing information from various sources • Complete in-text citations and a reference list
Total	100%	Total Marks = (Marks obtained for each criterion) x (weight for each criterion)		

Assessment Rubric for Group Role-Pay Project (30%)

Traits	Weight	Mastering (8 – 10 marks)		Emerging (0 – 4 marks)
Ability to demonstrate relevant and appropriate verbal social-mediated communication skills	30%	Higher level of competence to: • Show verbal social-mediated communication skills that can best fit with the case • Demonstrate self-confidence, sincerity and professionalism	Moderate level of competence to: • Show verbal social-mediated communication skills that can best fit with the case • Demonstrate self-confidence, sincerity and professionalism	Room for improvement to: • Show verbal social-mediated communication skills that can best fit with the case • Demonstrate self-confidence, sincerity and professionalism
Ability to demonstrate written social-mediated communication skills	30%	Higher level of competence to: • Show written social-mediated communication skills, including stakeholder analysis, a press statement, key messages and lines-to-take professionally • Exhibit literacy skills that are appropriate in compassionate tones • Evaluate with cultural, ethical, & social-responsible senses	Moderate level of competence to: • Show written social-mediated communication skills, including stakeholder analysis, a press statement, key messages and lines-to-take professionally • Exhibit literacy skills that are appropriate in compassionate tones • Evaluate with cultural, ethical, & social-responsible senses	Room for improvement to: • Show written social-mediated communication skills, including stakeholder analysis, a press statement, key messages and lines-to-take professionally • Exhibit literacy skills that are appropriate in compassionate tones • Evaluate with cultural, ethical, & social-responsible senses
Ability to work with teammates as a Crisis Communication Team	20%	Higher level of competence to: • Show their strong commitment to the Crisis Communication Team • Take adequate roles in the Crisis Communication Team	Moderate level of competence to: • Show their strong commitment to the Crisis Communication Team • Take adequate roles in the Crisis Communication Team	Minimal efforts on: • Showing their strong commitment to the Crisis Communication Team • Taking adequate roles in the Crisis Communication Team
Ability to respond to stakeholders' constructive questions	20%	Higher level of competence to: • Understand characteristics of different stakeholders • Respond to different stakeholders with sincerity and professionally	Moderate level of competence to: • Understand characteristics of different stakeholders • Respond to different stakeholders with sincerity and professionally	Room for improvement to: • Understand characteristics of different stakeholders • Respond to different stakeholders with sincerity and professionally
Total	100%	Total Marks = (Marks obtained for each criterion) x (weight for each criterion)		

Assessment Rubric for Individual Role-Play Practicum (15%)

Traits	Weight	Mastering (8 – 10 marks)		Emerging (0 – 4 marks)
Ability to demonstrate relevant and appropriate verbal social-mediated communication skills	25%	Higher level of competence to: • Show verbal social-mediated communication skills that can best fit with the case • Demonstrate self-confidence, sincerity and professionalism	Moderate level of competence to: • Show verbal social-mediated communication skills that can best fit with the case • Demonstrate self-confidence, sincerity and professionalism	Room for improvement to: • Show verbal social-mediated communication skills that can best fit with the case • Demonstrate self-confidence, sincerity and professionalism
Ability to demonstrate written social-mediated communication skills	25%	Higher level of competence to: • Show written social-mediated communication skills, including stakeholder analysis, a press statement, key messages and lines-to-take professionally • Exhibit literacy skills that are appropriate in compassionate tones • Evaluate with cultural, ethical, & social-responsible senses	Moderate level of competence to: • Show written social-mediated communication skills, including stakeholder analysis, a press statement, key messages and lines-to-take professionally • Exhibit literacy skills that are appropriate in compassionate tones • Evaluate with cultural, ethical, & social-responsible senses	Room for improvement to: • Show written social-mediated communication skills, including stakeholder analysis, a press statement, key messages and lines-to-take professionally • Exhibit literacy skills that are appropriate in compassionate tones • Evaluate with cultural, ethical, & social-responsible senses
Motivation of showing creativity and generating solutions	30%	Higher level of motivation to: • Show personal ideas and brainstorm • Suggest new ideas and solutions to solve problems in the cases • Show respect for originality	Moderate level of motivation to: • Show personal ideas and brainstorm • Suggest new ideas and solutions to solve problems in the cases • Show respect for originality	Room for improvement to: • Show personal ideas and brainstorm • Suggest new ideas and solutions to solve problems in the cases • Show respect for originality
Responding to stakeholders with compassion, sincerity, and professionalism	20%	Higher level of competence to: • Understand characteristics of different stakeholders • Respond to different stakeholders with compassion, sincerity, and professionally	Moderate level of competence to: • Understand characteristics of different stakeholders • Respond to different stakeholders with compassion, sincerity, and professionally	Room for improvement to: • Understand characteristics of different stakeholders • Respond to different stakeholders with compassion, sincerity, and professionally
Total	100%	Total Marks = (Marks obtained for each criterion) x (weight for each criterion)		

Assessment Rubric for Individual Self-Reflection Essay (15%)

Traits	Weight	Mastering (8 – 10 marks)	Practising (5 – 7 marks)	Emerging (0 – 4 marks)
Ability to apply the most pertinent strategies and tactics for making self-evaluations and/or self-improvements	30%	Higher level of competence to: • Show clear understanding of strategies and tactics • Make critical self-evaluations and valid self-improvements • Develop new, feasible and creative ideas	Moderate level of competence to: • Show clear understanding of strategies and tactics • Make critical self-evaluations and valid self-improvements • Develop new, feasible and creative ideas	Room for improvement to: • Show clear understanding of strategies and tactics • Make critical self-evaluations and valid self-improvements • Develop new, feasible and creative ideas
Critical self-judgment from perspectives of culture, ethics, and social responsibility	25%	Higher level of competence to: • Explain details with valid Judgment • Show their sense of culture, ethics, and social responsibility	Moderate level of competence to: • Explain details with valid Judgment • Show their sense of culture, ethics, and social responsibility	Room for improvement to: • Explain details with valid Judgment • Show their sense of culture, ethics, social responsibility
Critical self-judgment on stakeholder relation and customer loyalty	25%	Higher level of competence to: • Explain details with valid self-judgment on stakeholder relation and customer loyalty	Moderate level of competence to: • Explain details with valid self-judgment on stakeholder relation and customer loyalty	Room for improvement to: • Explain details with valid self-judgment on stakeholder relation and customer loyalty
Ability to apply the most pertinent concepts and theories learned	10%	Higher level of competence to: • Show clear understanding of concepts and theories • Link closely relevant concepts and theories with examples and details	Moderate level of competence to: • Show clear understanding of concepts and theories • Link closely relevant concepts and theories with examples and details	Room for improvement to: • Show clear understanding of concepts and theories • Link closely relevant concepts and theories with examples and details
Organization of information resources and referencing skills	10%	Higher level of competence to: • Collect information from a variety of reliable sources such as library and research databases • Organize and paraphrase information from various sources • Complete in-text citations and a reference list	Moderate level of competence to: • Collect information from a variety of reliable sources such as library and research databases • Organize and paraphrase information from various sources • Complete in-text citations and a reference list	Minimal efforts on: • Collecting information from a variety of reliable sources such as library and research databases • Organizing and paraphrasing information from various sources • Complete in-text citations and a reference list
Total	100%	Total Marks = (Marks obtained for each criterion) x (weight for each criterion)		

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