

WWS 594d: Crisis Management

Spring 2004

D R A F T

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Office Hours:
Tu & Th 11-12:30pm

Course Overview

The course will explore the challenges faced by public sector decision-makers faced with the management of crises. Using literature in the field, domestic and international case studies, as well as the perspectives of those who have had to manage crises, the course will explore the issues of risk assessment and crisis avoidance, crisis team management, and post-crisis recovery from political, managerial, and psychological perspectives.

Course requirements include active class participation (25%), performance in a group project (25%), and a final paper analyzing a crisis and the issues associated with its management (50%).

Readings will be available on e-reserve and at Stokes. Students must complete all readings before each class and be prepared to discuss the materials. Large portions of several books will be assigned and students may wish to consider their purchase:

Louse K. Comfort (Ed.), *Managing Disaster*, Dike, 1988

Peter Hodgkinson and Michael Stewart, *Coping with Catastrophe (2nd Ed.)*,
Routledge 1991, Chapters 1 (Survival and Bereavement), 5 (Treating Post-
traumatic Stress and Abnormal Grief) and 6 (Disaster Workers)

Judith Herman, M.D., *Trauma and Recovery*, Basic Books, 1992.

Richard Neustadt and Ernest R. May, *Thinking in Time*, Free Press, 1986.

Bruce T. Blythe, *Blindsided: A Manager's Guide to Catastrophes in the
Workplace*, Portfolio, 2002.

Course Syllabus

Class One (March 25): Overview and Themes

The first half of this class will include a brief overview of the course syllabus and requirements, and then move to discussion of the key themes of the course: definition, prevention, communications, organization, and learning. A typology of crises will be established as an analytic template to be used throughout the course. The second half will examine the key strategies in crisis prevention, including risk assessment and the use of crisis simulations.

Louse K. Comfort (Ed.), *Managing Disaster*, Dike, 1988. “Designing Policy for Action,” “Structuring Problems for Policy Action” “Current Policy and Implementation Issues in Disaster Preparedness,”

Christine M. Pearson and Judith A. Clair, “Reframing Crisis Management” in *Academy of Management Review*, 1998, Vol. 23, No. 1

Kathleen Tierney, Michael Lindell and Ronald Perry, *Facing the Unexpected*, Joseph Henry Press/National Academy Press, 2001. Chapters 1-2 & 5.

Class Two (April 1): Organizing for Crisis

This class will examine the organizational issues associated with crisis management, including management tools of special use for short-lived organizations. This first half of the course will examine the literature on such organizational strategies, including team management tools. In the second half, a case study of a large organization’s response to a crisis will be examined.

Peter Hodgkinson and Michael Stewart, *Coping with Catastrophe (2nd Ed.)*, Routledge 1991, Chapter 3 (Organizing for Disaster)

Louse Comfort (Ed.), *Managing Disaster*, Dike, 1988. “Management Issues in Emergency Response,” “Decision-making under Disaster Conditions”

Ben Morgan and Clint Bowers, “Teamwork Stress: Implications for Team Decision-making” in Richard Guzzo and Eduardo Salas (eds.), *Team Effectiveness and Decision-making Organizations*, Jossey-Bass 1995.

Steven Fink, *Crisis Management*, Author’s Guild Backprint, 2002. Chapters 3 (Anatomy of a Crisis), 7 (Crisis Management Plans), 16 (Decision-making under Crisis-Induced Stress)

Ian Mitroff, *Managing Crises Before They Happen*, American Management Association, 2001. Chapter 3 (A Best Practice Model).

Karl Weick and Kathleen Sutcliffe, *Managing the Unexpected*, Jossey-Bass, 2001. Chapters 1-3.

Class Three (April 8): Communications and Psychological Aspects of Crisis Management

In this class, we will be joined by a guest with special expertise in the psychological issues associated with crisis management and recovery as well as with the design of communications strategies for public sector leaders during and immediately after a crisis. There will be some focus on the policy and management issues associated with the impact of crisis on children. The discussion will include a special examination of recent and well-known cases.

Guest: Dr. Michael Cohen, President, The Michael Cohen Group

Bruce T. Blythe, *Blindsided: A Manager's Guide to Catastrophes in the Workplace*, Portfolio, 2002. Part One: Response.

Annette LaGrace, Wendy Silverman, Eric Vernberg and Michael Roberts, *Helping Children Cope with Disasters and Terrorism*, American Psychological Association, 2002. Chapter 1 (Children Experiencing Disasters) and 14 (The Aftermath of Terrorism)

Peter Hodgkinson and Michael Stewart, *Coping with Catastrophe (2nd Ed.)*, Routledge 1991, Chapters 1 (Survival and Bereavement), 5 (Treating Post-traumatic Stress and Abnormal Grief) and 6 (Disaster Workers)

Judith Herman, M.D., *Trauma and Recovery*, Basic Books, 1992.

Class Four (April 15): The Politics of Crisis – and Crises in Politics

This class will examine the political context of crisis, including the balancing of risk management costs with other program needs before a crisis, and the blame process that often occurs after a crisis, and how each affect the management of a crisis. We will look at a crisis in a political environment, and be joined by a young veteran of several political settings.

Possible Guest: Jeremy Ben-Ami

Mark Bovens and Paul 't Hart, *Understanding Policy Fiascoes*, Transaction Publishers, 1986. Chapter 4 (Misfortune or Mismanagement).

Aaron Wildavsky, *Searching for Safety*, Transaction Books, 1988. Chapter 10 (The Secret of Safety Lies in Danger).

Louse Comfort (Ed.), *Managing Disaster*, Dike, 1988. "Ethical Issues in Emergency Management"

Class Five (April 22): Crisis Case

This class may be reserved to focus on an exercise in crisis management.

Class Six (April 29): Learning from Crisis

This final class will examine the lessons organizations learn from crises, both substantive, and managerial, and how those lessons are internalized in the culture of the organization.

Richard Neustadt and Ernest R. May, *Thinking in Time*, Free Press, 1986.

Kent Weaver, "The Politics of Blame" *Brookings Review*, 1997