

Ginsburg Ingerman Overseas Students Program
Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

Spring 2017
Media, Risk and Disasters

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Course Description:
The course examines various theoretical and practical issues concerning the roles and functions of media and media representations regarding risk and disasters. Throughout the course, we will analyze and review general issues and specific case studies concerning media involvement in disasters across the globe. In addition, we will look at the new challenges faced by the media and emergency organizations, in light of new technologies and the ability of citizens to generate their own immediate impressions and interpretations during, and in the aftermath of a disaster.

Course Objectives:
1. Students will be able to understand the critical role that media play during a disaster
2. Students will be able to understand key concepts in Risk and Crisis communication
3. Students will be able to analyze the challenges and opportunities that social media generates before, during and in the aftermath of a disaster
4. Students will be able to learn from specific case studies of media and disasters from Israel and abroad and will develop a set of analytical skill

Field of Education:
Risk and Crisis Communication, Disaster studies, Social media, Public Relations

Course Structure:

Total # of Credits: 2
ECTS (European Credit Transfer System): 3

Teaching Method:
The course will be conducted through a combination of formal lectures, small study groups and class discussions. The lectures will be based on weekly reading assignments. In addition to these readings, we will watch a number of
documentaries and study other materials in relation to the course subjects and objectives.

**Course Requirements**

Compulsory attendance YES

**Pre-requisites:** No previous courses required

**Structure of Final Course Grad**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>70%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student presentation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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**Note:**
- Work handed in late, will not be graded!
- Penalties and course policies should be clearly articulated (i.e. students will have their final grade lowered an entire grade level if they miss more than 2 class meetings unexcused)

**Course Requirements:**

- Reading professional literature: 2 hours per week
- Preparation of class presentation: 3 - 5 hours
- Class Presentation: 15 minutes
- Midterm Essay: 4-6 hours
- Final Exam: 5 - 10 hours
- Active participation: Every lesson

**Course Schedule Layout:**

**Week 1**

**Weekly subject title:** Disasters in the media - Introduction

**Weekly brief description:** What is a disaster? Why media representations of disasters are important?

**Readings:**


Week 2

Weekly subject title: “Breaking news” - media events and “marathons of disasters”

Weekly brief description: What are the political and social effects of live coverage of disasters and terror attacks? In what ways are such live broadcasts different from media events that are organized?

Readings:


Week 3

Weekly subject title: Infotainment - disasters as entertainment

Weekly brief description: How does TV coverage of disasters become a form of entertainment?

Readings:

Watch: Dan Gilroy's "Nightcrawler" (2014)


Week 4

Weekly subject title: Disasters in the popular media

Weekly brief description: How are representations of disasters in popular culture relevant to our understanding of disasters and their cultural significance?

Readings:

Cornea Christine (2013), Introduction: Discourse of Disaster, in Dramatising Disaster: Character, Event, Representation (Christine Cornea and Rhys Owain Thomas, eds). Newcastle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars.

Week 5

Weekly subject title: Audiences – responses to the media representation of risk and disasters

Weekly brief description: How do audiences respond and participate in the media coverage of disasters?


Week 6

Weekly subject title: Media Roles - Before, during and after the disaster

Weekly brief description: How the media deal with disaster events is important for emergency organizations as the coverage may influence the management of the disaster, before, during and in the aftermath of the disaster

Readings:


Week 7

Weekly subject title: Public Relations and the management of the crisis

Weekly brief description: During a crisis the media and the public look very critically at the emergency organizations and the government, this is both a challenge and an opportunity for the organizations’ public relations.
Readings:


Week 8
Weekly subject title: Covering Disasters - Journalists and traumas

Weekly brief description: The act of covering a disaster is often traumatic for the journalists who face the full scale of the tragedy. What are the personal effects of covering disasters?

Readings:


The Dart Center for Journalism and Trauma, a project of the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism (at- https://dartcenter.org/ )

Week 9
Weekly subject title: Social media and Citizen Journalism

Weekly brief description: Citizen Journalism and the way almost anyone can broadcast images and audio from the disaster area, and to the disaster area, create a new media and social reality with new opportunities and challenges for dealing with disasters

Readings:


**Week 10**
**Weekly subject title:** Israeli Media - War and terrorism in Israel

**Weekly brief description:** Israeli media coverage of war and terrorism has real political and cultural outcomes. In this week’s lecture we will talk about the internal and external consequences of such a reality.

**Readings:**


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**Week 11**
**Weekly subject title:** The Israeli case - continued

**Weekly brief description:** In this lecture, we will continue to discuss the Israeli case in relation to ‘breaking news’ and ‘live coverage’ of disasters.

**Readings:**


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**Week 12**
**Weekly subject title:** Media and Disasters in the Age of Post Truth

**Weekly brief description:** In this lecture, we will reflect on the current reality of post truth and the difficult and challenging realities of war, conflict and disasters that such media and the political reality generate.

**Readings:**

Watch: HyperNormalisation, 2016 BBC documentary by British filmmaker Adam Curtis.

**Week 13**  
**Weekly subject title:** Review of the course and preparation for the exam

**Weekly brief description:** We will dedicate this lecture to a review of the course materials and explain the aims and expectations of the final exam.