

## SAMPLE COURSE SYLLABUS

### Required Reading

Sund, Steven A. *Courage Under Fire: The Definitive Account from Inside the Capitol on January 6*. Paperback edition. Blackstone Publishing, December 3, 2024. ISBN 979-8874832681.

### Course Relevance

This book serves as a **first-person case study** on preparedness, crisis leadership, governance, and institutional performance during a rapidly evolving national emergency. Through the perspective of the operational leader responsible for protecting the U.S. Capitol on January 6, students will examine how **organizational structure, statutory authority, oversight, and interagency coordination** shape decision-making under extreme pressure.

The case provides a practical lens through which to analyze **leadership under uncertainty**, the consequences of delayed decision-making, and the impact of political, legal, and bureaucratic constraints during a high-consequence incident.

### Learning Outcomes Supported

Upon completion, students will be able to:

- Analyze leadership decision-making under conditions of uncertainty, time compression, and incomplete information
- Evaluate institutional accountability, oversight, and governance failures during crises
- Assess crisis communications across multiple agencies and levels of government
- Understand how FEMA's National Incident Management System (NIMS) and Incident Command System (ICS) doctrine can break down in practice
- Examine ethical leadership challenges during high-stakes, politically sensitive events
- Identify gaps in policy, authority, and preparedness that affect operational outcomes

### Suggested Instructional Uses

#### 1. Case Study Analysis

Students analyze the events described in the book as a real-world leadership case, focusing on:

- Command authority and decision rights
- Mutual Aid and Interagency coordination and friction points
- Resource allocation under constrained authority
- How oversight bodies, policies, and legal frameworks influence decision-making before and during a crisis



## 2. Guided Discussion Topics

- What decision-making authority did the operational commander have, and how did they use them?
- How did existing governance structures impact speed, clarity, and effectiveness of response?
- How should leaders navigate deference to oversight with the urgency of operational threats?
- What role did crisis communication (internal and external) play in shaping outcomes and public perception?

### Discussion Options to Support Learning Outcomes

Alternative Courses of Action (COA) Analysis

Policy, Law, and Authority Analysis

Assessment Options

- Written case analysis (policy memo or executive brief)
- Comparative analysis with other national or international crisis events
- Policy reform proposal addressing identified gaps
- Group tabletop exercise participation

### Exercise Options to Support Learning Outcomes

#### Exercise 1: Pre-Incident Planning Scenario

*Timeframe: 30–45 minutes*

Students assume leadership roles in advance of a large-scale special event with emerging intelligence indicators.

#### Exercise 2: Day-of Incident Response

*Timeframe: 45–60 minutes*

Students respond to a rapidly deteriorating security situation, constrained by policies and incomplete information.

#### Exercise 3: After-Action Review & Accountability

*Timeframe: 30 minutes*

Students conduct an after-action review under conditions of heightened oversight, public scrutiny, and institutional pressure