Course Description
An application of crisis communication (including organizational research, risk and vulnerability assessment, strategic communication, and performance and damage evaluation) through the development and presentation of a crisis communication plan for a local organization.

Student Learning Objectives
Upon successful completion of the course, students should be able to:
- Discuss principles and theories of crisis communication practice.
- Understand the elements of pre-crisis, crisis, and post-crisis communication.
- Critically examine current crisis communication cases.
- Apply crisis communication research and develop an effective crisis communication plan.

Required or Recommended Readings

Major Course Requirements
*Assignment descriptions appear on the 4th page of this syllabus*
Organizational History 100 points
Risk Assessment 100 points
Strategic Communication Action Plan 200 points
Evaluation/Final Process 75 points
Final Crisis Communication Plan 100 points
Participation (15 days at 5 points) 75 points
Total Points: 650

Grade Calculation:
A 90% of the total points 585 points – 650 points
B 80% of the total points 520 points – 584 points
C 70% of the total points 455 points – 519 points
D 60% of the total points 390 points – 454 points
F 50% of the total points 000 points – 389 points

A Successful Course Experience
A successful experience in this course will depend on your individual commitment and work ethic. I encourage all students to visit with me frequently throughout the semester, rather than waiting until the end of the semester to ask questions or express concerns. As in most courses, students should be proactive about their work and ready to discuss concepts and share examples during class. Furthermore, a professor who is familiar with their students is better able to help their students accomplish their personal goals, so make yourself known! If you have suggestions that will enrich your learning experience, please let me know.

Course Policies
Am I required to attend this course?
- Prompt arrival, attendance, and participation are all vital to your success in this course. Students are expected to attend all class meetings and contribute to the classroom experience by actively listening, asking questions, sharing examples, participating in discussions, and taking part in class activities.
- Attendance and participation will be graded. Each student will earn 5 points for every class session that they attend. If students attend but do not participate in class, I reserve the right to assign 0 points for the day. In all fairness, students will be notified that their lack of participation will result in 0 points before points are assigned.

**What are your expectations for my assignments?**
- It should go without saying that quality work is an expectation. As a Communication student, it is expected that you will have effective writing and speaking skills and that you will seek my help if you need assistance in these areas. It is also expected that your work will be free from plagiarism and will show that you are thinking “beyond the textbook.”
- All assignments are due at the beginning of class on the date shown on the course syllabus, unless otherwise noted. If otherwise noted, assignments are due on the exact date and at the exact time noted on the assignment. If an assignment is late or missed, the student will not receive credit for the assignment.
- Assignments should be turned in as a hard copy unless otherwise noted. If an assignment is turned in using a means other than hard copy, the student will not receive credit for the assignment. Students should complete assignments on time to reduce the risk of emergencies, such as running out of ink, paper, losing their work, or not having access to a printer or computer.

**What should I do if I am going to be absent?**
- In the event of an absence, I must be notified before the missed class period in order for the absence to be excused. If I am not notified before the missed class period, the absence will be considered unexcused unless the student provides documentation for an excused absence (i.e., athletics, family emergencies, illness, university-sponsored travel). In this case, I reserve the right to determine whether an absence is excused.
- Late work will only be accepted for excused absences and must be completed within 7 days of the missed deadline.
- Regardless of the status of an absence, when a student is absent they are responsible for obtaining the information that was missed during class in a timely manner. Students should visit Blackboard to obtain notes and assignment pages. Students may also wish to select a classmate(s) at the beginning of the semester that will agree to help with this task.

**I have a question about one of my grades, what should I do?**
- Should a student have a question about their grade on a particular assignment, I follow the 24/7 rule: students must approach me no sooner than 24 hours and no later than 7 days after the assignment has been returned. Once 7 days have passed, the topic will be closed for discussion.

**What type of citations should I use in my writing and speaking assignments?**
- All assignments that require scholarly citations should adhere to the most current edition of the AP Stylebook.

**I need help with my work, what should I do?**
- Should any situation arise, where I can be of assistance (i.e., you do not have a printer; you do not understand the assignment guidelines, etc.), please e-mail me or come talk to me.
- I am happy to help students with their understanding of assignments by reading through one draft of each class assignment; however, I will not be able to provide adequate assistance within 48 hours of a deadline, so students should be proactive about starting their assignments and seeking feedback early.

**What are the rules for classroom conduct?**
- I treat my classroom as a small community; thus, we will maintain a harassment-free environment that is welcoming to different viewpoints and ideas. Any profane or inappropriate ethnic, gender, racial, age, appearance, and/or lifestyle-related comments will not be accepted. Any student who violates this policy will be asked to leave the classroom.
- Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, as an academic community, requires that each individual respect the needs of others to study and learn in a peaceful atmosphere. Under Article III of the Student Code of Conduct, classroom behavior that interferes with either (a) the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or (b) the ability of other students to profit from the instructional program may be considered a breach of the peace and is subject to disciplinary sanction outlined in article VIII of the Student Code of Conduct. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior may be instructed to leave the classroom. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including classrooms, online classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.
Where can I find class notes and assignment pages?
- In line with the University’s efforts to be more environmentally responsible, you will need to access our course page on Blackboard to download class notes and assignment pages. If you have concerns about this for any reason, please come visit with me so we can identify a solution together.

Where can I reach the instructor to ask questions about class?
- You may reach me in person or by phone in my office during office hours or via e-mail. I will respond to e-mail within 24 hours Monday-Friday. During the weekend, I will make every effort to respond to your e-mail, but cannot guarantee a timely response.
- I am happy to be friends on social media, but please do not ask questions about class on social media channels.

### Academic Advising

The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. Degree plans are prepared in the CLA Academic Advising Center. The University uses an online Degree Audit system. Any amendment must be approved by the Department Chair and the Office of the Dean. All courses and requirements specified in the final degree plan audit must be completed before a degree will be granted. The CLA Academic Advising Office is located in Driftwood #203. For more information please call 361-825-3466 or log onto http://cla.tamucc.edu/advising/.

### Academic Integrity/Plagiarism

University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, falsification, forgery, complicity or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one’s own work.) In this class, academic misconduct or complicity in an act of academic misconduct on an assignment or test will result in a failing grade (0) on the assignment. Any student receiving more than one “0” for academic dishonesty or plagiarism will fail the course and may be expelled from the program.

Note: All violations of academic honesty will be reported to the Dean and Office of Student Affairs who maintains document of such offenses for at least 5 years.

### Disabilities Accommodations

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall 116.

If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.

### Dropping a Course

I hope that you never find it necessary to drop this or any other class. However, events can sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. Please consult with your academic advisor, the Financial Aid Office, and me, before you decide to drop this course. Should dropping the course be the best course of action, you must initiate the process to drop the course by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class. **Wednesday, November 15 is the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” this term.**

### Grade Appeals

As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures. These documents are accessible through the University Rules Web site at http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html. For complete details on the process of submitting a formal...
grade appeal, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean’s Office.

**Statement of Academic Continuity**
In the event of an unforeseen adverse event, such as a major hurricane and classes could not be held on the campus of Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi; this course would continue through the use of Blackboard and/or email. In addition, the syllabus and class activities may be modified to allow continuation of the course. Ideally, University facilities (i.e., emails, web sites, and Blackboard) will be operational within two days of the closing of the physical campus. However, students need to make certain that the course instructor has a primary and a secondary means of contacting each student.

**Assignment Descriptions**

**Please do not use these guidelines to begin your work early, as they are incomplete. Full descriptions and grading rubrics will be provided to you in advance of the respective due dates.**

**Organizational History (100 points)**
Students will be required to write a thoughtful explanation of our client organization’s crisis response goals and objectives and philosophy toward crisis response. Students will also be required to conduct background research on the client organization, specifically identifying information on their crisis history and the employee hierarchy/communication structure and stakeholder expectations for their organization. Students will be required to submit their revisions for each section of the crisis communication plan.

**Risk Assessment (100 points)**
Students will be required to conduct a risk assessment for the client organization; specifically, giving attention to past crises that have occurred at the organization and crises that have occurred at similar organizations. Students will create a master list of potential crises and conduct a vulnerability assessment of these crises together as a class. Students will be required to submit their revisions for each section of the crisis communication plan.

**Strategic Communication Action Plan (200 points)**
Using what they have learned via class discussion, the textbook, and organizational research, students will create a strategic communication action plan for the organization in regard to the master list of crises generated in the Risk Assessment. This plan will require audience analysis, composing a crisis team, creating a contact list, generating a prevention plan, and creating templates for the necessary PR documents (press releases, statements, etc.). Students will be required to submit their revisions for each section of the crisis communication plan.

**Evaluation/Final Process (75 points)**
Students will be split into teams to complete various assignments required for inclusion in the crisis communication plan including, but not limited to: creating crisis communication logs and a contact list, developing tabletop exercises, establishing an evaluation plan, compiling and editing the crisis communication plan, binding the crisis plan, and presenting the crisis plan to the client. Students will be required to submit their revisions for each section of the crisis communication plan.

**Final Crisis Communication Plan (100 points)**
Students will be required to submit revisions (worth 25 points each) to their Organizational History, Risk Assessment, Strategic Communication Plan, and Evaluation Plan documents to be compiled into a full Crisis Communication Plan for the client organization. A group of approximately 10 students will represent the class in a presentation of the plan to the client. All students are required to attend this presentation.

**Participation (15 days at 5 points = 75 points)**
Students will receive 5 points for each class period that they attend and actively participate; the professor reserves the right to assign partial or no credit should students attend, but not be actively engaged in the class.
**COMM-4335_001 Schedule**

**This schedule is tentative and subject to change. All changes will be to the benefit of the student.**

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Discussion</th>
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| **Tuesday, August 29** | READ: Chapter 1  
DISCUSS: Introduction to Crisis Planning/Course Project | |
| **Tuesday, September 5** | READ: N/A  
DISCUSS: Initial Client Meeting | Initial Client Meeting |
| **Tuesday, September 12** | READ: Chapter 3  
DISCUSS: Organizational History | |
| **Tuesday, September 19** | READ: Chapter 2  
DISCUSS: Types of Crises | Organizational History Due |
| **Tuesday, September 26** | READ: Chapter 4  
DISCUSS: Risk Assessment | |
| **Tuesday, October 3** | READ: Chapter 4  
DISCUSS: In-Class Vulnerability Assessment | Risk Assessment Due |
| **Tuesday, October 10** | READ: Chapter 5 (p. 55-68)  
DISCUSS: Planning, Prevention, & Response | Organizational History Revisions Due by 7:00pm (E-mail) |
| **Tuesday, October 17** | READ: Chapter 5 (p. 68-97)  
DISCUSS: Response/Social Media Response | |
| **Tuesday, October 24** | READ: Chapter 5  
DISCUSS: Scripts for Responding to Crises (SCAP) | Risk Assessment Revisions Due by 7:00pm (E-mail) |
| **Tuesday, October 31*** | READ: N/A  
DISCUSS: N/A | Strategic Communication Action Plan Due |
| **Tuesday, November 7** | READ: Chapter 6  
DISCUSS: Evaluation Plan | |
| **Tuesday, November 14** | READ: N/A  
DISCUSS: N/A | Evaluation Due by 7:00pm (E-mail) |
| **Tuesday, November 21*** | READ: N/A  
DISCUSS: N/A | SCAP Revisions Due by 7:00PM (E-mail) |
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| Tuesday, November 28 | READ: N/A  
DISCUSS: Workshop  
Evaluation Revisions Due by 7:00pm (E-mail) |
| Tuesday, December 5 | READ: N/A  
DISCUSS: Open Classroom (Practice Presentations)  
Optional Practice Presentation |
| Tuesday, December 12 (4:30 - 7:00pm) | READ: N/A  
DISCUSS: N/A  
Crisis Communication Plan/Presentation Due |