Course Description
Examines crisis communication from the perspective of academic researchers and practitioners. Includes the analysis of crisis communication research, reviews the elements of an effective crisis communication plan, and centers on case study analysis of best and worst practices in crisis planning, prevention, and response.

Student Learning Objectives
Upon successful completion of the course, students should be able to:
- Distinguish between the various types of crises.
- Understand the elements of pre-crisis, crisis, and post-crisis communication.
- Identify effective strategies/best practices for preventing, managing, and responding to crises.
- Argue for the importance of a crisis team and crisis plan.
- Complete a case study that is worthy of a conference presentation and/or publication.

Required Textbook


Website: Course assignments, discussion notes, and other pertinent messages will be posted on Blackboard. Students should verify that they receive Blackboard notifications and should check for messages daily.

Major Course Requirements
Assignment descriptions/requirements appear on the 4th page of this syllabus.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment Description</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Points (7 at 5 points)</td>
<td>35</td>
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<tr>
<td>Case Study Proposal</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Crisis Communication Plan Mini Exercises (3 at 20 points)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Case Study Paper &amp; Presentation</td>
<td>125</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation (9 days at 5 points)</td>
<td>45</td>
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Total Points: 290

Grade Calculation:
- A 90% of the total points: 261 points – 290 points
- B 80% of the total points: 232 points – 260 points
- C 70% of the total points: 203 points – 231 points
- D 60% of the total points: 174 points – 202 points
- F 50% of the total points: 000 points – 173 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.
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. July 23 is the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” this term.

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, students 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 6th edition of the APA style manual. If you do not have access to this manual, please visit: [http://library.nmu.edu/guides/userguides/style_apa.htm#website](http://library.nmu.edu/guides/userguides/style_apa.htm#website)

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 using social media channels.

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 automatic failure (grade of “0”) of 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 whom maintains documentation of such offenses for at least 5 years.

Academic Advising
Students pursuing the Master of Arts in Communication will be paired with a graduate faculty member advisor in their first semester. Students should contact their advisors within the first two weeks of a semester to arrange a meeting during which degree plans, tracks, and opportunities for professional development should be discussed. If there is any question regarding whom a student’s academic advisor is, the student should contact Dr. Stephanie Rodriguez, Graduate Coordinator, for assistance (stephanie.rodriguez@tamucc.edu; 361-825-5753). To finalize your degree plan and register for graduation, you must also meet with the Graduate Student Academic Advisor in the Academic Advising Center for the College of Liberal Arts. This office is located in Driftwood 203E and can be reached at (361) 825-3466.

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.
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.

Grade Appeal Process

As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.03, Student Grade Appeals, 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.C2.03, Student Grade Appeals. These documents are accessible online at: http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.C0.03_student_grade_appeals.pdf. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean’s office in the college in which the course is taught. For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal in CLA, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html.

Assignment Descriptions

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

Discussion Points (7 at 5 points; 35 points)
Each student will be required to participate in discussion about the assigned course readings each class period. Students should bring a typed copy of 5 questions, notable quotes, or examples that correspond to the reading. They should use this information to participate and discussion and will be required to submit the typed copy at the end of class.

Case Study Proposal (25 points)
The final outcome of this course will be a case study paper that is worthy of presentation at a conference and/or publication in a journal. Each student will be asked to briefly propose their paper topic, list articles that they will read to help inform their paper, and outline a chronology of events that led to and resulted from the crisis event they have chosen to analyze. Students will also include a timeline for the work that they will do to complete the paper.

Crisis Communication Plan Mini Exercises (3 at 20 points; 60 points)
Students will be asked to complete a mini mock crisis communication plan for a company of their choice. This assignment is comprised of 4 steps that are designed to give students practical experience in crisis communication planning. These assignments can be placed in job portfolios.

Case Study Paper and Presentation (100 points for paper and 25 points for presentation; 125 points)
Each student will be required to write a 15-20 paged (not including title, abstract, references, and supporting documents) case study paper examining a recent crisis event. In this paper, students will: highlight a crisis event, discuss the strategies used by the organization, and critique these strategies with a discussion of the ways that the organization could improve their crisis prevention and response. Students will present their papers to the class in a conference panel setting.

Participation (9 days at 5 points each; 45 points)
Participation will be graded. Each student will earn 5 points for every class session that they attend and participate. If students attend but do not participate in class, I reserve the right to assign 0 points for the day. Students should sign the sign-in sheet before they leave the classroom—the professor will not be responsible for “remembering” that a student attended a class that they did not sign in for.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Read/Study/Discuss</th>
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| **Monday, July 2** | READ: Chapter 1 (C); Chapter 11 (LRA)  
DISCUSS: A Need for Crisis Communication |
| **Wednesday, July 4 (NO CLASS – INDEPENDENCE DAY HOLIDAY)** | READ: N/A  
DISCUSS: N/A |
| **Tuesday, July 3 & Thursday, July 5** | READ: N/A  
DISCUSS: N/A  
Case Study Research |
| **Monday, July 9** | READ: Chapter 2 (C); Chapter 2 (LRA); Chapter 13 (LRA)  
DISCUSS: Social Media & Crisis Communication  
Discussion Points #1 |
| **Wednesday, July 11** | READ: Chapter 3 (C); Chapter 4 (LRA); Chapter 4 (LRA)  
DISCUSS: Proactive Methods  
Discussion Points #2  
Case Study Proposal |
| **Tuesday, July 11 & Thursday, July 12** | READ: N/A  
DISCUSS: N/A  
Case Study Research |
| **Monday, July 16** | READ: Chapter 4 (C); Chapter 5 (LRA); Chapter 15 (LRA)  
DISCUSS: Crisis Prevention  
Discussion Points #3  
Crisis Communication Mini Exercises #1 & #2 |
| **Wednesday, July 18** | READ: Chapter 5 (C); Chapter 6 (LRA); Chapter 16 (LRA)  
DISCUSS: Crisis Preparation I  
Discussion Points #4 |
| **Tuesday, July 17 & Thursday, July 19** | READ: N/A  
DISCUSS: N/A  
Case Study Research |
| **Monday, July 23** | READ: Chapter 7 (C); Chapter 8 (LRA); Chapter 17 (LRA)  
DISCUSS: Crisis Recognition  
Discussion Points #5 |
| **Wednesday, July 25** | READ: Chapter 8 (C); Chapter 9 (LRA); Chapter 19 (LRA)  
DISCUSS: Crisis Response  
Discussion Points #6 |
| **Tuesday, July 24 & Thursday, July 26** | READ: N/A  
DISCUSS: N/A  
Crisis Communication Mini Exercise #3 |
| **Monday, July 30** | READ: Chapter 9; Chapter 10 (LRA); Chapter 21 (LRA)  
DISCUSS: Postcrisis Concerns  
Discussion Points #7 |
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Read</th>
<th>Discuss</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday, August 1</td>
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<td>Case Study Presentations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, July 31 &amp; Thursday, August 2</td>
<td>READ: N/A</td>
<td>DISCUSS: N/A</td>
<td>Case Study Paper</td>
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