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Associate Professor of Public Relations  
Office: Bay Hall 329  
Hours: T 2-4PM, Wednesday 1:45-4PM, Thursday 11:30-12:15PM, & By Appointment  
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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.

Texts/Readings

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

GroupMe: This semester, students at the Metropolitan State University of Denver (Denver, Colorado)—led by Ms. Michelle Baum, APR—will be joining us in creating a crisis communication plan for a real-world client. To facilitate this collaborative learning experience, please download the GroupMe app on your phone and/or computer and join our group text. Your phone number and e-mail address will not be revealed: [https://groupme.com/join_group/40553600/misIDt](https://groupme.com/join_group/40553600/misIDt)

Assignments:

Assignment descriptions appear on the 4th and 5th pages of this syllabus

Collaborative Meeting Reports (5 reports at 5 points) 25 points  
Organizational History 100 points  
Risk Assessment: Part 1 (Team) 25 points  
Risk Assessment: Part 2 (Individual) 50 points  
Risk Assessment: Part 3 (Class) 25 points  
Strategic Communication Action Plan 200 points  
Evaluation/Final Process 75 points  
Organizational History Revisions 25 points  
Risk Assessment: Part 1 Revisions 25 points  
Strategic Communication Action Plan Revisions 25 points  
Evaluation/Final Process Revisions 25 points  
Participation (20 days at 5 points) 100 points

Total Points: 700

Grade Calculation:

A 90% of the total points 630 points – 700 points  
B 80% of the total points 560 points – 629 points  
C 70% of the total points 490 points – 559 points  
D 60% of the total points 420 points – 489 points  
F 50% of the total points 360 points – 419 points
A Successful Course Experience

A successful experience in this course will depend on your individual commitment and work ethic. Tips:
- Visit with me regularly during the semester, rather than waiting until finals to ask questions or express concerns
- Be proactive about your work; complete course readings and spend time familiarizing yourself with current events
- Discuss concepts, share real-world examples, and ask questions during class
- Talk to me about your professional goals
- Lift each other up; if you or a peer are struggling, communicate and work together to find a solution
- Be organized; make note of deadlines and avoid procrastination
- Communicate openly, honestly, and in a timely manner with your team(s)
- Put the client first: Our work will be used by a real company and this project should be taken seriously

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 student in a Communication course, 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 using the method (hard copy, e-mail copy, etc.) noted on the assignment page. If an assignment is turned in using a method other than what is specified, 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 notified after the missed class period, the absence will be considered unexcused unless the student provides documentation for the absence (i.e., athletics, family emergencies, illness, university-sponsored travel). In this case, I reserve the right to determine whether an absence is considered excused.
- Late work will only be accepted for excused absences and must be completed within 7 days of the missed deadline to receive credit.
- Regardless of the status of an absence, students are responsible for obtaining the information that was missed during class and communicating with their team members 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, http://www.apstylebook.com
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.

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.

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

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.
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 Appeals 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.

Organizational History (100 points)

Students will be assigned to teams with each team being responsible for a section of the Organizational History: background research on the client organization; civic/philanthropic activities of the organization; Internet/media/social media presence of the organization; community perceptions of the organization; leadership hierarchy; stakeholder identification and expectations; and its mission statement, crisis philosophy, and goals for the crisis communication plan.

Risk Assessment: Part 1 [Team] (25 points)

Students will be assigned to teams with each team being responsible for a section of the first part of the Risk Assessment: past crises that have occurred at the organization, and crises that have occurred at similar organizations.

Risk Assessment: Part 2 [Individual] (50 points)

Students will work independently to create a master list of potential crises and a vulnerability assessment of these crises using an existing typology.

Risk Assessment: Part 2 [Class] (25 points)

Students will form small groups to revise the vulnerability assessment together as a class.

(continued on next page)
Strategic Communication Action Plan (200 points)
Students will be assigned a crisis from the vulnerability assessment master list and will work independently to create a strategic communication action plan for this crisis. In the SCAP, students will describe the crisis scenario, recommend preventive measures, identify affected stakeholder groups, and develop templates and statements (incorporating crisis communication strategy and theory) for responding to stakeholder groups during and after the crisis.

Evaluation/Final Process (75 points)
Students will be split into various configurations (teams, individuals, partners) to complete various assignments required for completing the crisis communication plan document including, but not limited to: creating crisis communication logs and a contact list, developing tabletop exercises, establishing an evaluation plan, proofreading the crisis plan, and presenting the crisis plan to the client. A group of approximately 10 students will represent the class in a presentation of the plan to the client during the final class meeting. All students are required to attend this presentation.

Organizational History Revisions (25 points)
The original Organizational History document will be graded and constructive feedback will be provided to students. Using this feedback, students will be required to address each of the edits and submit a revised document for inclusion in the final crisis communication plan.

Risk Assessment: Part 1 [Team] Revisions (25 points)
The original Risk Assessment: Part 1 [Team] document will be graded and constructive feedback will be provided to students. Using this feedback, students will be required to address each of the edits and submit a revised document for inclusion in the final crisis communication plan.

Strategic Communication Action Plan Revisions (25 points)
The original Strategic Communication Action Plan document will be graded and constructive feedback will be provided to students. Using this feedback, students will be required to address each of the edits and submit a revised document for inclusion in the final crisis communication plan.

Evaluation/Final Process Revisions (25 points)
The original Evaluation/Final Process documents will be graded and constructive feedback will be provided to students. Using this feedback, students will be required to address each of the edits and submit a revised document for inclusion in the final crisis communication plan.

Participation (20 days at 5 points = 100 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.

Collaborative Meeting Reports (5 reports at 5 points = 25 points)
Throughout the semester, students will work within their teams to complete assignments. After each team meeting, students will submit a meeting report that lists the date of the meeting, the participants in attendance for the meeting, each student’s assigned role in completing the project and the deadline for each student’s work.

Extra Credit Assignment Descriptions

Twitter Semester-Long Extra Credit Assignment (15 tweets at 0.6 points per tweet + 1 bonus reward = up to 10 points)
You will have the opportunity to earn extra credit on content days! Steps:
1. Create a Twitter account.
   a. If you already have an account, you are welcome to use your personal account if you feel comfortable
   b. You may create an account for this course if you’d prefer that we don’t see your personal tweets
   c. Make sure that your name appears somewhere (such as in the bio) so we know it’s you
2. Follow your professor of record so they can see your posts: Dr. Maresh-Fuehrer = @TheDRofPR
3. Compose at least 1 tweet per content day about class material. You can post:
   a. Something interesting that you learned in class that day
   b. Something interesting that you learned from your readings that day
   c. An example of a concept we learned in class that day
   d. Commentary about a current crisis that we haven’t discussed in class
4. At the end of your post use #CrisisCollab and #TAMUCC
5. Posts are due no later than 11:59PM
6. You will receive 0.6 extra credit points for each valid day that you post. This is a total of 9 possible points. Valid days are:
   a. Tuesday, August 28
   b. Thursday, August 30
   c. Tuesday, September 4
   d. Thursday, September 6
   e. Tuesday, September 18
   f. Thursday, September 20
   g. Tuesday, October 2
   h. Thursday, October 4
   i. Thursday, October 11
   j. Tuesday, October 16
   k. Thursday, October 18
   l. Tuesday, October 23
   m. Thursday, October 25
   n. Thursday, November 8
   o. Tuesday, November 13
   p. Bonus: If you post on at least 13 valid content days, you will earn an additional 1 point

You may also be interested in following these accounts/hashtags:
- TAMU-CC: @IslandCampus
- MSU-Denver: @msudenver / @msudenverJTC / #RoadrunnerPride
- Professor Baum: @Mettle_Michelle
- Client: @givechildrensco

**FEMA Certification Extra Credit Assignment** (1 certification at 25 points = 25 points)
You will have the opportunity to earn extra credit by competing one of the following FEMA courses.
- Public Information Officer Awareness: [https://training.fema.gov/is/courseoverview.aspx?code=IS-29](https://training.fema.gov/is/courseoverview.aspx?code=IS-29)

To receive credit, students should e-mail a copy of the certificate to their professor of record upon successful completion of the training course. The deadline for submitting a certificate to earn extra credit is: Thursday, November 29.
**TAMU-CC COMM-4335_001 Schedule**

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Tasks</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, August 28</td>
<td>READ: Chapter 1</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DISCUSS: Introduction to Crisis Communication</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, August 30</td>
<td>READ: N/A</td>
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<td></td>
<td>DISCUSS: Class Sync/OH Section Assignment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, September 4</td>
<td>READ: Chapter 3</td>
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<td></td>
<td>DISCUSS: Class Sync/Organizational History</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Initial Client Meeting</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, September 6</td>
<td>READ: Chapter 3</td>
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<td></td>
<td>DISCUSS: Organizational History</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, September 11</td>
<td>READ: N/A</td>
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<td></td>
<td>DISCUSS: N/A</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Collaborative Meeting Report Due</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, September 13</td>
<td>READ: N/A</td>
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<td></td>
<td>DISCUSS: N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Collaborative Meeting Report Due</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, September 18</td>
<td>READ: Chapter 2</td>
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<td></td>
<td>DISCUSS: RA Section Assignment/Types of Crises</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Organizational History Due</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, September 20</td>
<td>READ: Chapter 4</td>
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<td></td>
<td>DISCUSS: Risk Assessment/Reputation Management</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, September 25</td>
<td>READ: N/A</td>
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<td></td>
<td>DISCUSS: N/A</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Collaborative Meeting Report Due</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Reading</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, September 27</td>
<td>READ: N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, October 2</td>
<td>READ: Chapter 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, October 4</td>
<td>READ: Chapter 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, October 9</td>
<td>READ: N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, October 11</td>
<td>READ: Chapter 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, October 16</td>
<td>READ: Chapter 5</td>
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<td>Thursday, October 18</td>
<td>READ: Chapter 5</td>
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<td>Tuesday, October 23</td>
<td>READ: Chapter 5</td>
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<td>Thursday, October 25</td>
<td>READ: Chapter 5</td>
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<td>Tuesday, October 30</td>
<td>READ: N/A</td>
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<td>Thursday, November 1</td>
<td>READ: N/A</td>
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<td>Tuesday, November 6</td>
<td>READ: N/A</td>
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<td>Thursday, November 8</td>
<td>READ: Chapter 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, November 13</td>
<td>READ: Chapter 6</td>
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<td>Date</td>
<td>Event Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, November 15</td>
<td>Collaborative Meeting Report Due</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, November 20</td>
<td>Thanksgiving Holiday – No Class Evaluation/Final Process Due (Deadlines Vary, But Begin on This Date – Consult Assignment Page)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, November 22</td>
<td>Thanksgiving Holiday – No Class</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, November 27</td>
<td>Revisions Due: SCAP Practice Presentation/Finalize Crisis Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, November 29</td>
<td>Revisions Due: EVAL Practice Presentation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, December 4</td>
<td>Crisis Communication Plan Due Presentation to Client Due</td>
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