COMM 5335.001—Advanced Crisis Communication

Spring Semester 2020

Wednesday: 7:00pm-9:30pm, Classroom: OCNR-222

Instructor: Dr. Sining Kong

Office: Bay Hall 372

Office Phone: 361-825-2729

Email: sining.kong@tamucc.edu

Office Hours: Monday to Thursday: 9:30am -11:30 am or by appointment

Course Description:

This course is designed to introduce you to the theory and application of crisis management (and issue/risk management). Students will learn how to distinguish between various types of crises, how to respond to a crisis and develop a crisis management plan. The goal of this course is to apply both theoretical and practical principles of crisis management to various situations.

Your Objectives for the Course:

- Acquire an overall understanding of the nature of organizational crises and effective crisis management principles
- Learn about the role of crisis communication theory in explaining how organizations prepare and respond to crises.
- Understand other allied fields: issues management, risk management, risk communication and reputation management.
- Be able to plan crisis communication plans for organizations.
- Be able to apply knowledge of crisis management to your own research.

Required Textbook:


(You can download it from: https://b-ok.cc/)
Course Assignments & Grade Distribution

Online Discussion 240 points
Discussion Leader 100 points
Research Paper Idea 100 points
Bibliography 100 points
Crisis Communication Plan 100 points
Presentation of Final Paper 100 points
Final Crisis Paper 400 points
Class Attendance and Participation 120 points

Total: 1260 points

Grading Scales:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A (90% of the total points)</td>
<td>1134 points -- 1260 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B (80% of the total points)</td>
<td>1008 points -- 1133 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C (70% of the total points)</td>
<td>882 points -- 1007 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D (60% of the total points)</td>
<td>756 points -- 881 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F (50% of the total points)</td>
<td>000 points -- 755 points</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Distribution of Course Grade:

Online Discussions (12 x 20 points = 220 points total): Preceding some of our class meetings, we will initiate class discussion online. Each student will post a reaction to a reading-specific prompt in the Blackboard Discussion Forum area by the end of the day before the scheduled class meeting. Each student will then post at least one response to a fellow classmate's reaction before the beginning of class. The discussion should be your analysis of the readings, NOT summarization of the readings. You can discuss similar phenomena, cases, or challenge the readings. You can also bring your own experience into online discussions. At the end of your discussion post, you should include two items – a relevant question that can be used for class discussion and a short description of something you do not understand in the readings. The
The length of the discussion post should be about one page (double space, Times New Roman, 12 points).

**Discussion Leader (100 points):** Each student will take responsibility for two of our scheduled readings. You and your teammate will need to create a short in-class presentation of approx. 20-30 min., followed by 30+ minutes of an open discussion facilitated by the presenter. Both should be based on the reading you select. A more detailed description of these presentations is available on Blackboard.

**Crisis Communication Plan (100 points):** You will develop a crisis communication plan in small groups. Your crisis communication plan will focus on pandemic flu. As a team, you will select the specific organization you design the plan for, but I will designate the type of organization you must select (corporate, government, or nonprofit) based upon your preferences. We will discuss the format for the crisis communication plan in class. Your crisis communication plan is due on

**Research Paper Idea (100 points):** Each student should submit a one-page single space paper to describe your research idea. What is your burning question? How are you going to answer the research question? This will establish your research topic and allow for the instructor to offer you feedback and guidance.

**Bibliography (100 points):** Each student should submit a bibliography related to your research paper. The bibliography should follow APA style and have at least 10 articles.

**Presentation of Final Paper (100 points):** Students will present their research paper to the class. The presentation should include introduction, literature review, method.

**Final Crisis Paper (400 points):** Each student will write a research paper on crisis topic approved by the instructor that will serve as the culminating work for the class. This will be explained further in a description available on Blackboard and reviewed in class.

**Attention & Participation (100 points):** Each student is expected to be attentive and, ideally, to participate in class discussion when appropriate. This grade will reflect how well you accomplish these goals.

**Course Policies:**

- **Arrive on time and stay until the end of class.** Please be on time and do not leave class early. Leaving early is disruptive to your team members and the rest of classmates. If a special situation (like a doctor’s appointment) requires that you leave class early, please let instructor know before the class.

- **All assignments are due at the midnight of the due date (11:59pm).** In general, students will not be allowed to turn in assignments after the assigned due date. If you will be absent on the date an assignment is due, it is your responsibility to work with the instructor to establish a date and time you will hand in your assignment (before the due date). Exceptions to this policy will be limited to documented exceptional circumstances. Important dates have been announced in advance in the syllabus so that students can
schedule other activities around these deadlines. Exceptions will be rare and at the
discretion of the instructor. If late work is accepted, it will be graded at a lower value
than work turned in on time.

- **Not letting technology distract you and others from focusing on class.** (Cellphones
and other electronic devices must be turned off or turn into silent mode during class. No
texting during class. Laptop use is only permitted for note taking or group project.
Students whose laptop use is disruptive to class (distracting to the instructor or other
students) will be asked to discontinue their laptop use or leave the classroom.)

- **MAKEUPS & LATE ASSIGNMENTS:**
  Late submission will be subject to 10% points deduction. Dates have been announced in
  advance in the "Weekly Course Plan" so that students can schedule other activities
  around these deadlines. Exceptions will be rare and made only in cases of extraordinary,
documented circumstances (e.g., doctor notes), as determined by the instructor.

**Classroom/professional behavior**

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 VII 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, electronic classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.

**Statement of Civility**

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi has a diverse student population that represents the
population of the state. Our goal is to provide you with a high quality educational experience that
is free from repression. You are responsible for following the rules of the University, city, state
and federal government. We expect that you will behave in a manner that is dignified, respectful
and courteous to all people, regardless of sex, ethnic/racial origin, religious background, sexual
orientation or disability. Behaviors that infringe on the rights of another individual will not be
tolerated.

**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.

**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 you 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 Honesty/Plagiarism**

**Definition:** In an instructional setting, plagiarism occurs when a writer deliberately uses someone else’s language, ideas, or other original (not common-knowledge) material without acknowledging its source. Plagiarism is a violation academic expectations, but it is sometimes difficult to understand what plagiarism actually is. Often, students commit unintentional plagiarism (not citing sources properly, for example), because they are unaware of the standards that apply. Plagiarism includes:

- Using the work of another as your own,
- Downloading or purchasing ready-made essays off the web and using them as your own,
- Using resource materials without correct documentation,
- Using the organization or language of a source without using quote marks and proper citation.
- Turning in a researched project without citing sources in an appropriate documentation style.

When you are confused about citation of quotes or ideas, please visit the Writing Center or me to get help. Information on MLA documentation rules and APA documentation rules is available at Purdue University’s OWL: [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/), and from our local Writing Center at CASA.

**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.C0.03, 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.C0.03, Student Grade Appeal Procedures. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Dean’s office in the college in which the course is taught or the Office of the Provost. These documents are accessible through the University Rules Web site at:
http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.c0.03_student_grade_appeals.pdf.
## Tentative Topics, Dates and Assignments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1/22 W</td>
<td>Course introduction and overview of class syllabus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Crisis Management</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1/29 W</td>
<td>Chapter 1: A need for more crisis management knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Chapter 3: Proactive Management Functions and Crisis Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2/05 W</td>
<td>Chapter 4: The Crisis Prevention Process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Chapter 8: Crisis Response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Crisis Detection &amp; Crisis Preparation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2/12 W</td>
<td>Chapters 5, 6 &amp; 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Crisis Communication Theories</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>3/11 W</td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research Paper Idea Due

Crisis Communication Plan Due

Spring Break

Crisis Response
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Course Component</th>
<th>References</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>04/08  W</td>
<td>Chapter 8: Crisis Response</td>
<td>Chapter 9: Postcrisis Concerns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>04/29  W</td>
<td>Research Paper Discussion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>05/06  W</td>
<td>Research Paper Presentation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>05/13  W</td>
<td><em>Research Paper Due</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>