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
Recommended Books:

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

Major Course Requirements
*Assignment descriptions/requirements appear on the 4th page of this syllabus.
Organizational History + Revisions 50 points
Collaboration Report #1 10 points
Risk Assessment: Part 1 + Revisions 50 points
Collaboration Report #2 10 points
Risk Assessment: Part 2 25 points
Collaboration Report #3 10 points
Risk Assessment: Part 3 25 points
Collaboration Report #4 10 points
Strategic Communication Action Plan + Revisions 100 points

Total Points: 290

Grade Calculation:
A 90-100% of the total points 261 points – 290 points
B 80-89% of the total points 232 points – 260 points
C 70-79% of the total points 203 points – 231 points
D 60-69% of the total points 174 points – 202 points
F 0-59% of the total points 000 points – 173 points
A Successful Course Experience

This course is writing-intensive and collaborative. It is designed to prepare you for work as a crisis manager or consultant. A successful experience in this course will depend on your individual commitment and work ethic. Tips:

- Share your professional goals with me
- Familiarize yourself with current events
- Be organized; Make note of deadlines and assignment requirements
- Ask questions
- Communicate openly, honestly, and in a timely manner with me and your team
- Visit with me regularly during the semester, rather than waiting until finals to ask questions or express concerns
- Lift up your peers; Communicate and work together to find a solution to problems
- When you must be absent, show your team the same respect that you show me; contact them in advance
- Be proactive about your work; complete course readings and begin assignments well in advance of the deadline
- Discuss concepts, share real-world examples, and participate in class discussions
- 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

How can I reach you to ask questions about class/assignments?

- For questions or information that may pertain to our entire class, please download the free GroupMe app to your phone and join our class: INSERT LINK (Note: Once you open the class chat, you can click the icon in the top right corner and “mute” the chat to avoid receiving notifications, but be sure to check daily so you don’t miss anything!)
- If you are unable to access the GroupMe app or if you have personal questions, please feel free to email me at michelle.maresh-fuehrer@tamucc.edu. I will respond to emails within 24 hours Monday-Friday. During the weekend, I will make every effort to respond to your email but cannot guarantee a timely response.
- I am also happy to meet with students more formally via a 1-on-1 session on Zoom. Please schedule a time to meet with me by visiting: https://calendly.com/mm-f/office

What are your expectations for my participation?

- This course is blended, so students must be “present” in the sense of responsibly checking e-mail, Blackboard and GroupMe notifications on a daily basis, engaging in class discussions, being a responsible and active team member, and making note of assignment deadlines. It is suggested that students carefully manage their time by scheduling specific blocks of time to dedicate to each of their classes on a daily basis.

What are your expectations for my assignments?

- It should go without saying that quality work is an expectation.
- It is expected that your work will be free from plagiarism and will indicate an understanding of course concepts.
- All assignments are due at the date and time shown on the course schedule. If an assignment is late or missed, the student will not receive credit for the assignment.
- If an assignment is turned in using a means other than that which is specified on the assignment page, the student will not receive credit for the assignment. Students should complete assignments on time to reduce the risk of complications, such as computer technical failure or loss of work.

What are your expectations for digital communications?

- My public relations courses are designed to prepare you for entry into the professional world. As a result, it is expected that you will communicate professionally with myself and your classmates.

  **When composing an e-mail:** Please make sure to include a brief subject line that conveys your purpose for writing, a greeting, a clear and concise message using proper spelling and grammar, and an appropriate closing. If you are attaching a file, please label the file clearly and use the body of your e-mail to explain what the file is and why you are sending it.

  **When communicating on GroupMe:** Group texts can be cumbersome if we do not use this technology professionally. Please use business hours to guide your messages (try not to send anything before 8 a.m. or after 6 p.m.). Before asking a question, scroll through the chat to see if it has already been addressed. Send one long message as opposed to a series of short messages. Only ask questions or share information that pertains to the entire group. For all other needs, please DM me directly.
What should I do if I cannot submit an assignment on time?
- Please email me to request an extension at least 24 hours before the assignment is due. I reserve the right to grant or deny extensions.

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 should adhere to the 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 understand the assignment guidelines, etc.), please contact me.

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.
- 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.

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.

### 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 a 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. Thursday, November 5 is the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” this term.

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.

Grade Appeals
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.

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.

Student Mental Health and Wellbeing
As a student, there may be times when personal stressors interfere with your academic performance and/or negatively impact your daily life. If you are experiencing emotional distress or mental health issues, please visit the Counseling Center located in the Driftwood Building during walk-in hours or call 361-825-2703. Counselors are available by phone 24/7 to assist students who are in crisis. Services are free and confidential. For access to self-help resources and anonymous mental health screenings, visit the Counseling Center website at https://counseling.tamucc.edu. In an emergency, call 911 or University Police at 361-825-4444.

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 + Revisions (25 points each = 50 points)
Students will be assigned to teams to complete a section of the Organizational History. Using feedback provided by the professor, students will be required to submit a revised document for inclusion in the final crisis communication plan.

Collaboration Report #1 (10 points)
Following the completion of the Organizational History, students will be asked to provide a report and reflection of their team’s collaborative effort.

Risk Assessment: Part 1 + Revisions (25 points each = 50 points)
Students will be assigned to teams to complete a section of the Risk Assessment. Using feedback provided by the professor, students will be required to submit a revised document for inclusion in the final crisis communication plan.
Collaboration Report #2 (10 points)
Following the completion of Risk Assessment: Part 1, students will be asked to provide a report and reflection of their team’s collaborative effort.

Risk Assessment: Part 2 (25 points)
Students will create a list of potential crises and assess the vulnerability of these crises using an existing typology.

Collaboration Report #3 (10 points)
Following the completion of Risk Assessment: Part 2, students will be asked to provide a report and reflection of their team’s collaborative effort.

Risk Assessment: Part 3 (25 points)
Students will discuss and revise the vulnerability assessment to create a master list of risks for the client.

Collaboration Report #4 (10 points)
Following the completion of Risk Assessment: Part 3, students will be asked to provide a report and reflection of their team’s collaborative effort.

Strategic Communication Action Plan (100 points)
Students will be assigned a crisis from the master list of risks and will work independently to create a strategic communication action (SCAP) 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.

**Extra Credit Assignment Description**
You will have the opportunity to earn 25 extra credit points by completing 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: 12/1
COMM-4335_B01 Schedule

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

**Week 1 (August 17-23)**

T-Topic: Introduction to Crisis Communication  
R-Topic: Initial Client Meeting  
Reading: Chapter 1  
Live Zoom Meeting with Client: Thursday, August 20 from 12:30-1:45 p.m. at [https://zoom.us/j/5853623834](https://zoom.us/j/5853623834)

**Week 2 (August 24-30)**

T-Topic: Organizational History Section Assignment  
R-Topic: Team Meeting  
Reading: Chapter 3

**Week 3 (August 31-September 6)**

T-Topic: Team Meeting  
R-Topic: Types of Crises  
Assignments:  
- Organizational History (due 9/3)  
- Collaboration Report #1 (due 9/3)

**Week 4 (September 7-September 13)**

T-Topic: Risk Assessment: Part 1 Section Assignment & Reputation Management  
R-Topic: Team Meeting  
Reading: Chapter 2

**Week 5 (September 14-September 20)**

T-Topic: Team Meeting  
R-Topic: Team Meeting  
Reading: Chapter 4  
Assignments:  
- Risk Assessment: Part 1 (due 9/24)  
- Collaboration Report #2 (due 9/24)  
- Risk Assessment: Part 2 (due 9/26)  
- Collaboration Report #3 (due 9/26)

**Week 6 (September 21-September 27)**

T-Topic: Vulnerability Assessment  
R-Topic: Team Meeting  
Reading: Chapter 5  
Assignments:  
- Risk Assessment: Part 3 (due 9/24)  
- Collaboration Report #4 (due 9/24)

**Week 7 (September 28-October 4)**

T-Topic: Planning & Prevention  
R-Topic: SCAP Section Assignment  
Reading: Chapter 5

**Week 8 (October 5-October 11)**
T-Topic: Crisis Response Strategies & Theories
R-Topic: Crisis Response Strategies & Theories
Reading: Chapter 5

Week 9 (October 12-October 18)

T-Topic: Holding Statements
R-Topic: Social Media Response
Reading: Chapter 5
Assignment: Strategic Communication Action Plan (due 10/15)

Week 10 (October 19-October 25)

T-Topic: Drills & Tabletop Exercises
R-Topic: Evaluation
Reading: Chapter 5

Week 11 (October 26-November 1)
Assignment: Organizational History Revisions (due 10/29)

Week 12 (November 2-November 8)
Assignments: Risk Assessment: Part 1 Revisions (due 11/8)

Week 13 (November 9-November 15)
Assignment: SCAP Revisions Due (due 11/15)

Week 14 (November 16-November 22)

T-Topic: Compiling the Crisis Plan
R-Topic: Compiling the Crisis Plan

Finals Week (December 1-December 6)
Assignment: Extra Credit Certification (due 12/1)
Assignment: Crisis Communication Plan/Presentation to Client (due 12/1)
Campus Safety Measures

To promote public safety and protect students, faculty, and staff during the coronavirus pandemic, Texas A&M University has adopted policies and practices for the Fall 2020 academic term to limit virus transmission. Students must observe the following practices while participating in face-to-face courses and course-related activities (office hours, help sessions, transitioning to and between classes, study spaces, academic services, etc.):

- **Self-monitoring**—Students should follow CDC recommendations for self-monitoring. **Students who have a fever or exhibit symptoms of COVID-19 should participate in class remotely and should not participate in face-to-face instruction.**

- **Face Coverings**—**Face coverings** (cloth face covering, surgical mask, etc.) must be properly worn in all non-private spaces including classrooms, teaching laboratories, common spaces such as lobbies and hallways, public study spaces, libraries, academic resource and support offices, and outdoor spaces where 6 feet of physical distancing is difficult to reliably maintain. Description of face coverings and additional guidance are provided in the [Face Covering policy](https://www.tamucc.edu/fall-2020/face-coverings-faq/) and [Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)](https://www.tamucc.edu/fall-2020/face-coverings-faq/) available on the [Provost website](https://www.tamucc.edu/fall-2020/face-coverings-faq/).

- **Physical Distancing**—Physical distancing must be maintained between students, instructors, and others in course and course-related activities.

- **Classroom Ingress/Egress**—Students must follow marked pathways for entering and exiting classrooms and other teaching spaces. Leave classrooms promptly after course activities have concluded. Do not congregate in hallways and maintain 6-foot physical distancing when waiting to enter classrooms and other instructional spaces.

- **To attend a face-to-face class, students must wear a face covering (or a face shield if they have an exemption letter).** If a student refuses to wear a face covering, the instructor should ask the student to leave and join the class remotely. If the student does not leave the class, the faculty member should report that student to the [Student Conduct office](https://www.tamucc.edu/student-conduct/) for sanctions. Additionally, the faculty member may choose to teach that day’s class remotely for all students.

TAMU-CC Face Coverings

TAMUCC Face Coverings Policy and FAQs:
[https://www.tamucc.edu/fall-2020/face-coverings-faq/](https://www.tamucc.edu/fall-2020/face-coverings-faq/)

Rule and Procedure:
[https://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/34.99.99.c0.02_use_of_face_coverings.pdf](https://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/34.99.99.c0.02_use_of_face_coverings.pdf)