

CMST 3345 – Crisis Communication
MW 2:30 p.m. – 3:55 p.m.
Instructor: Anita Brown
Email: Abrown@uttyler.edu
Phone: 903-566-7364
Best way to contact me: Email
Office: CAS 223
Office Hours: T/Th 9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. and by appointment

Course Description: This course will examine the importance of crisis communication within various crisis contexts as well as examine the relationship among crisis-related theories, research, and practice. Effective crisis communication strategies will be evaluated as related to a variety of different crisis types, such as organizational reputation crisis, natural disasters, public health crises, disease outbreaks, chemical spills, environmental disasters, crisis associated with workplace violence, and others. Communication processes across pre-crisis, crisis, and post-crisis stages will be examined.

Student Learning Outcomes: By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Articulate how communication can prevent, cause, accelerate, and/or assist in the recovery from a crisis event.
2. Create a crisis communication plan.
3. Describe of the defining features of crisis communication (versus that of risk communication, for example) and articulate the meaning and practice of crisis communication for various crisis events, across various contexts.
4. Choose relevant communication theories to fit a crisis situation and apply said theories to the crisis context for analysis.
5. Use the best practices in crisis communication to critique a crisis communication response.
6. Analyze the ethical, cultural, and social implications of a crisis event.
7. Identify crisis communication scholars.

Course Requirements

1. Required Readings:

- A. Effective Crisis Communication: Moving from Crisis to Opportunity by Ulmer, Sellnow, and Seeger. 4th edition. ISBN: 9781506315737
- B. Additional readings as assigned in class.

2. Required Programs/Software/Technology

- A. Microsoft Word or comparable word processing software.
 - i. You may use Google Docs or Pages but your assignment **MUST** be exported to a .DOC or .DOCX format before submission.

- ii. You **may not** utilize notepad or notes on your phone. If you submit a screenshot of your notepad on your phone or tablet, you will receive a zero for the assignment.

Evaluation and Grade Calculation -

Assignments	70%
Final Project	30%
<hr/>	
Total	100%
Percent	Letter Grade
90% - 100%	A
80% - 89%	B
70-79%	C
60-69%	D
59% and below	F

1. Assignments (70%) **Student learning outcomes - 1, 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7**
 - a. Journals: Students will write journals that address and analyze different applications, historical contexts, types, theories, etc. of crisis communication. The purpose of the journals is to help students explore their understanding of crisis communication and its relation to our world.
 - b. Reading outlines/discussions: Students will complete reading outlines and participate in discussions that correspond with each assigned reading. The purpose of the outlines is for students to create material that helps further their understanding of the contents of the course and to help them gain insight from their classmates through discussions.
2. Final Project (30%) **Student learning outcomes – 2, 4, 5, & 6**
 - a. Students will work together in groups to create a crisis communication plan. They will then execute part of their plan in a crisis simulation press conference so they can demonstrate and test the knowledge they’ve gained through the semester. The execution will consist of holding a mock press conference where the team will be asked to communicate about a crisis event. The other team will act as the press and audience for the team holding the press conference and will be required to ask challenging questions to test the crisis communication responses.

Class Policies and Expectations

1. **Classroom Policies and Expectations**
 - A. Work hard - learning requires constant reading, researching, thinking, discussing, and working with your classmates and me. Everyone has something important to contribute. My job is to present new information and prepare a climate in which you can contribute your own special knowledge. Your job is to be prepared to contribute.

- B. Participate – you must be an active part of the course to succeed. You will also have to give effort outside of class.
 - C. Treat each other with respect and display common classroom courtesies.
 - 1. You are responsible for your attitude and how you treat others. I will not tolerate name calling, fighting, students belittling each other for differing opinions, etc. I expect you to act like adults, show each other respect, and to challenge yourself and each other to learn/understand opinions you may not agree with. If you are not treating individuals with respect or are causing a distraction, you will be asked to leave the classroom.
 - D. Grading – The grading process begins with the assumption that the work is good, which earns a grade within the range of a “B.” To earn an A, you must show exceptional understanding of the material, utilizing additional sources, examples, and original thought. This means going beyond stating the obvious, the simple answer, or what Google says. Additionally, poor organization, not following assignment instructions, grammar/spelling, lack of depth and thought, failing to illustrate an understanding of the material, etc. will result in your grade being lowered.
 - E. The use of cellphones, tablets, or other device use during class times is not allowed unless the need is specified by me (i.e. during an activity). You are not permitted to use cellphones for note taking, check social media, view/work on material for another course, or simply browse the internet during class times.
 - 1. I understand emergencies and the need to take a call or text. If this must happen, be discreet, do not disturb others, do not let it get in the way of your learning, and DO NOT abuse this.
 - 2. If the only device you have to take notes on is your phone, I will provide you with a notebook to take notes during class.
 - F. I use Canvas and email to communicate, post assignments and readings, present feedback and provide a space for you to communicate with your classmates. I expect you to check both daily and stay aware of what is coming up.
 - 1. It is highly recommended that you download the Canvas application and adjust your settings to allow for notifications.
 - G. Communicate - If you have a problem with anything throughout the semester... getting an assignment in on time, needing to be absent from a class, getting your book, checking out equipment, or anything I'm doing as a professor... talk to me about it. I cannot help you or fix the problem if I am unaware of it.
 - H. Hold me to the same standards and expectations that I hold you to.
- 2. Attendance Policy**
- A. Attendance in this course is required and students are expected to attend class during each scheduled meeting. If you miss a meeting, it is your responsibility to make up anything you may have missed outside of meeting times, such as completing in-class activities at home, getting any material that may have been handed out during class, and ensuring you are aware of anything that may have been assigned or discussed. Additionally, if you miss a class and want lecture notes, you are responsible for getting these from a classmate (with the exception

of special accommodations set up through the university). I will not be recording lectures this semester.

3. Assignment Policies

- A. Assignments do have deadlines and these deadlines need to be met. It is your responsibility to utilize time outside of class in an effective manner so you can ensure that you submit each assignment before the due date and time.
 - a. For many assignments, not all, the submission folder will stay open for one week after the due date. Any assignments turned in after the due date will receive a point per day deduction. Specific point values that will be deducted each day can be found on the assignment overviews on Canvas. It is your responsibility to know when the assignment is due for full credit, when the assignment closes, and the number of points that will be deducted each day for late submissions. Assignments will not be accepted after this final date.
- B. Assignments and due dates may be changed at the instructor's discretion with fair notice to students.
- C. I will not accept assignments via email unless there are issues with Canvas and the email includes your assignment and a screenshot of the Canvas malfunction.
- D. Merely completing all assignments does not guarantee that you will pass the course. You must put forth effort and show an understanding of the material to earn a satisfactory grade.
- E. Spelling, grammar, and neatness count and you will lose points on assignments if your submissions are not edited.
- F. You are required to utilize APA format for any assignment that requires the utilization of outside sources.
- G. I will not accept screenshots of assignments. Unless otherwise indicated, all assignments must be typed, formatted to be a .DOC or .DOCX (Pages, Google Drive, and other online word processors must be exported to this specific format), and submitted via Canvas.
- H. Assignments will be discussed in class, students will be given a course schedule, Canvas includes a syllabus function that outlines upcoming due dates, due dates can be seen listed on each assignment under the assignment tab in Canvas, assignment due dates can be added to your Canvas calendar, and each due date will be listed in the course modules. There are SEVERAL ways to determine what is coming up due in class. It is your responsibility to be aware of what is coming up due and to stay on top of your assignments.
- I. Students will adhere to the highest standards of academic honesty. Plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated. A student who is caught doing either will earn a "0" for that assignment and will be subject to academic and disciplinary action. If a student is caught a second time, they will automatically fail the course.
 - a. In addition to UT Tyler's Student Conduct and Discipline policy, plagiarism/cheating includes the use of papers or other materials previously submitted in my classes or other professor's classes, as well as video and

audio recordings. I expect you to submit work created specifically for this class during this semester.

Course Schedule

Date	Agenda	Due today
Week One		
M 8/22	<p><u>Course introduction</u> - Syllabus, schedule, assignment overview, etc.</p> <p>Assign: <u>Read:</u> Introduction & Ch. 1 (pages 1 – 16) <u>Reading outline:</u> Introduction & Ch. 1 due Monday, 8/29 <u>Journal:</u> Initial understanding of crisis communication due Monday, 8/29</p>	
W 8/24	<p><u>Lecture:</u> Defining crisis communication</p>	
Week Two		
M 8/29	<p><u>Lecture:</u> Defining crisis communication</p> <p>Assign: <u>Read:</u> Ch. 2 (pages 17 – 28) <u>Reading outline:</u> Ch. 2 due Wednesday, 9/7 <u>Journal:</u> Crisis Communication Theories due Wednesday, 9/7</p>	<p><u>Reading outline:</u> Introduction & Ch. 1</p> <p><u>Journal:</u> Initial understanding of crisis Communication</p>
W 8/31	<p><u>Group discussion:</u> Ch. 1</p> <p><u>Lecture:</u> Understanding crisis communication & practice</p>	
Week Three		
M 9/5	Labor Day – No classes	

W 9/7	<p><u>Lecture:</u> Understanding crisis communication & practice</p> <p>Assign: <u>Read:</u> Ch. 3 (pages 29 – 48) <u>Reading outline:</u> Ch. 3 due Wednesday, 9/14</p>	<p><u>Reading outline:</u> Ch. 2</p> <p><u>Journal:</u> Crisis Communication Theories</p>
Week Four		
M 9/12	<p><u>Group discussion:</u> Ch. 2 <u>Lecture:</u> Effective crisis communication</p>	
W 9/14	<p><u>Lecture:</u> Effective crisis communication</p> <p>Assign: <u>Read:</u> Ch. 4 (pages 49 – 72) <u>Reading outline:</u> Ch. 4 due Wednesday, 9/21 <u>Journal:</u> “You Make the Call” Ch. 4 due Wednesday, 9/21</p>	<p><u>Reading outline:</u> Ch. 3</p>
Week Five		
M 9/19	<p><u>Group discussion:</u> Ch. 3 <u>Lecture:</u> Producing effective crisis communication</p>	
W 9/21	<p><u>Lecture:</u> Producing effective crisis communication</p> <p>Assign: <u>Read:</u> Ch. 5 & 6 (pages 73 – 110) <u>Reading outline:</u> Ch. 5 & 6 due Wednesday, 9/28 <u>Journal:</u> “You Make the Call” Ch. 6 due Wednesday, 9/28</p>	<p><u>Reading outline:</u> Ch. 4</p> <p><u>Journal:</u> “You Make the Call” Ch. 4</p>
Week Six		
M 9/26	<p><u>Group discussion:</u> Ch. 4 <u>Lecture:</u> Managing crisis uncertainty effectively</p>	

<p>W 9/28</p>	<p><u>Lecture:</u> Managing crisis uncertainty effectively</p> <p>Assign: <u>Read:</u> Ch. 7 (pages 111 – 124) <u>Reading outline:</u> Ch. 7 due Wednesday, 10/5 <u>Journal:</u> Crisis Leadership due on Wednesday, 10/5</p>	<p><u>Reading outline:</u> Ch. 5 & 6</p> <p><u>Journal:</u> “You Make the Call” Ch. 6</p>
Week Seven		
<p>M 10/3</p>	<p><u>Group discussion:</u> Ch. 5 & 6 <u>Lecture:</u> Effective crisis leadership</p>	
<p>W 10/5</p>	<p><u>Lecture:</u> Effective crisis leadership</p> <p>Assign: <u>Read:</u> Ch. 8 (pages 125 – 148) <u>Reading outline:</u> Ch. 8 due Wednesday, 10/12 <u>Journal:</u> “You Make the Call” Ch. 8 due Wednesday, 10/12</p>	<p><u>Reading outline:</u> Ch. 7</p> <p><u>Journal:</u> Crisis Leadership</p>
Week Eight		
<p>M 10/10</p>	<p><u>Group discussion:</u> Ch. 7 <u>Lecture:</u> Developing effective crisis leadership</p>	
<p>W 10/12</p>	<p><u>Lecture:</u> Developing effective crisis leadership</p> <p>Assign: <u>Read:</u> Ch. 9 (pages 149 – 158) <u>Reading outline:</u> Ch. 9 due Monday, 10/24</p>	<p><u>Reading outline:</u> Ch. 8</p> <p><u>Journal:</u> “You Make the Call” Ch. 8</p>
Week Nine		
<p>M 10/17</p>	<p><u>Group discussion:</u> Ch. 8 <u>Activity:</u> Start stop continue <u>Discuss:</u> Final group project <u>Project:</u> Preliminary group work for project</p> <p>Assign: <u>Project:</u></p>	

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Group progress report #1 due Monday, October 31 2. Group progress report #2 Monday, November 14 3. Crisis simulation on Monday, 11/28 and Wednesday, 11/30 4. Crisis communication plan due Monday, 11/28 by the start of class 5. Group evaluations due Friday, 12/2 	
W 10/19	<u>Lecture:</u> Learning through failure	
Week Ten		
M 10/24	<u>Lecture:</u> Learning through failure Assign: <u>Read:</u> Ch. 10 (pages 159 – 170) <u>Reading outline:</u> Ch. 10 due Monday, 10/31 <u>Journal:</u> Risk vs. crisis communication due Monday, 10/31	<u>Reading outline:</u> Ch. 9
W 10/26	<u>Group discussion:</u> Ch. 9 <u>Lecture:</u> Risk communication	
Week Eleven		
M 10/31	<u>Lecture:</u> Risk communication Assign: <u>Read:</u> Ch. 11 (pages 171 – 182) <u>Reading outline:</u> Ch. 11 due Monday, 11/7 <u>Journal:</u> Crisis communication and ethics due Monday, 11/7	<u>Reading outline:</u> Ch. 10 <u>Journal:</u> Risk vs. crisis communication <u>Project:</u> Group progress report #1
W 11/2	<u>Group discussion:</u> Ch. 10 <u>Lecture:</u> Responding to the ethical demands of crisis	
Week Twelve		

M 11/7	<p><u>Lecture:</u> Responding to the ethical demands of crisis</p> <p>Assign: <u>Read:</u> Ch. 12 (pages 183 – 194) <u>Reading outline:</u> Ch. 12 due Monday, 11/14</p>	<p><u>Reading outline:</u> Ch. 11</p> <p><u>Journal:</u> Crisis communication and ethics</p>
W 11/9	<p><u>Group discussion:</u> Ch. 11</p> <p><u>Lecture:</u> Facilitating renewal through effective crisis communication</p>	
Week Thirteen		
M 11/14	<p><u>Group discussion:</u> Ch. 12</p> <p><u>Lecture:</u> Facilitating renewal through effective crisis communication</p> <p>Assign: <u>Journal:</u> Final thoughts due on Friday, 12/2</p>	<p><u>Reading outline:</u> Ch. 12</p> <p><u>Project:</u> Group progress report #2</p>
W 11/16	Workday for final project	
Week Fourteen		
<p>Thanksgiving break – No class meetings Monday, 11/21 – Friday 11/25</p>		
Week Fifteen		
M 11/28	<u>Project:</u> Crisis simulation	<u>Project:</u> Crisis communication plan due the start of class
W 11/30	<u>Project:</u> Crisis simulation	

F 12/2		<u>Project:</u> Group evaluations <u>Journal:</u> Final thoughts
Week Sixteen		
Final's Week – No class meetings		