Course Description

Stresses that managers must be in a position to communicate effectively during crisis situations. Knowledge and specific skills are presented in this course to assist managers with effective communication during stressful or emergency situations.

Course Textbook


Course Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. Explain the stages of a crisis.
2. Assess levels and types of risk and crisis for the purpose of appropriate communication.
3. Recommend effective communication in various crisis situations.
4. Compose a risk or crisis message utilizing key techniques for maximum effectiveness and response.
5. Recommend avenues for damage control when rumors, sabotage, or other complications interfere with effective crisis communication.
6. Demonstrate how to develop a relationship with the news media for the purpose of mass communication with the public.
7. Contrast the benefits and pitfalls of using social media and other technologies in risk and crisis communication.
8. Develop a communication plan for a crisis situation in your field.
9. Profile the audience intended to receive the risk or crisis communications to ensure maximum comprehension of messages.
Credits

Upon completion of this course, the students will earn three (3) hours of college credit.

Course Structure

1. **Unit Learning Objectives:** Each unit contains Unit Learning Objectives that specify the measurable skills and knowledge students should gain upon completion of the unit.
2. **Unit Lesson:** Each unit contains a Unit Lesson, which discusses unit material.
3. **Reading Assignments:** Each unit contains Reading Assignments from one or more chapters from the textbook. Supplemental Readings are provided in the Unit I, II, IV, and VII Study Guides to aid students in their course of study. Suggested Further Readings are listed in the Unit IV and VII Study Guide. The readings themselves are not provided in the course, but students are encouraged to read the resources listed if the opportunity arises as they have valuable information that expands upon the lesson material.
4. **Learning Activities (Non-Graded):** These non-graded Learning Activities are provided in Units I and III-VIII to aid students in their course of study.
5. **Key Terms:** Key Terms are intended to guide students in their course of study. Students should pay particular attention to Key Terms as they represent important concepts within the unit material and reading.
6. **Unit Assessments:** This course contains three Unit Assessments, one to be completed at the end of Units I-III. Assessments are composed of written response questions.
7. **Unit Assignments:** Students are required to submit for grading Unit Assignments in Units III-VIII. Specific information and instructions regarding these assignments are provided below. Grading rubrics are included with the Unit III-VIII Assignments. Specific information about accessing these rubrics is provided below.
8. **Ask the Professor:** This communication forum provides you with an opportunity to ask your professor general or course content related questions.
9. **Student Break Room:** This communication forum allows for casual conversation with your classmates.

CSU Online Library

There is a virtual library with resources, including both journals and ebooks, to support your program and your course at Columbia Southern University. eResources are accessible 24 hours a day/7 days a week from the CSU Online Library gateway page. To access the library, log into myCSU, and then click on CSU Online Library. Resources are organized in the library by title, but if you click on Research Guides, you will find eResources arranged by subject.

The Library Reference service is available 7 days a week; you can reach CSU’s virtual librarians by emailing thevirtuallibrarian@columbiasouthern.edu. These professional librarians will be glad to help you develop your research plan or to assist you in any way in finding relevant, appropriate, and timely information.

Librarian responses may occur within minutes or hours, but it will never take more than 24 hours for a librarian to send a response to the email address you have provided. Replies to reference requests may include customized keyword search strategies, links to videos, research guides, screen captures, attachments, a phone call, live screen sharing, and meeting room appointments, as well as other forms of instruction.

Unit Assignments

Unit III Assignment

**Communication Plan Outline**

Submit an outline of your Crisis Communication Plan due in Unit VII. The Crisis Communication Plan can be for an organization of your choice and should, at a minimum, cover the elements discussed in Chapter 8 of the Walaski textbook. Please refer to the Communication Plan rubric and the Communication Plan instructions found in the syllabus under the Unit VII Mini Project for specific assignment requirements as you complete your outline.

Write in complete sentences, and use APA formatting for any references used in your outline. (This means you must insert in-text citations in the outline and include a References page.) See the Success Center Resources page for information on outline formatting. In the CSU Student Portal, go to Success Center/Resources/Writing Resources/Writing Skills.

https://columbiasouthern.adobeconnect.com/ a1174888831/outlines/
Unit IV Assignment

Spokesperson Critique Paper

Watch the three video clips below:

- David Neeleman of Jet Blue explains February 14th: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1V2ff3easYc
- Patrick Doyle of Domino’s pizza apology for employee video prank: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xvg4-E2C8UE
- ASDA frontline employees’ personal reaction to former workmate behavior: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A5zs5fUhspE

Using information from the readings, reflect on the different spokespeople chosen to deliver the message, their level of sincerity, and the impact on the audience. In a three to five page paper, discuss your impressions, making sure to answer the following questions:

- What are the essential elements of a good and effective spokesperson in a crisis? Which of the spokespeople from the videos do you feel exhibited these characteristics best and why?
- Why is the “head and heart” principle important for spokespeople during a crisis? Compare and contrast the communication style between the CEOs of Jet Blue and Dominoes in light of this principle.
- Did hearing the message from frontline employees create a different impression on you than hearing the message from the CEO? Did the use of frontline employees support a positive image?
- Discuss why the media wants to speak with frontline employees during a crisis.

Unit V Assignment

Simulated News Conference Paper

Create a crisis situation related to your field, field of interest, or place of work, and simulate a press conference. Write a five to seven page paper including the following information:

- Introduction and description of your crisis including which stage of the crisis the press conference is taking place in.
- Description of how you will handle a press conference, including what types of media will attend, who will manage the start and finish of the conference, and who will be the designated spokesperson.
- Draft a statement that the spokesperson will present.
- Draft three trick questions that the reporters may potentially ask in this particular situation, and provide your answers to those trick questions.
- Create clear headings for each of the four sections of this paper.

Unit VI Assignment

Presentation to Executive Team

Imagine you are the head of Corporate Communication in an organization that has yet to embrace social media. Assemble a presentation for the Board/Executive Leadership Team to persuade them that social media is necessary for prudent and effective crisis management. Your goal is to gain their confidence, resources, and overall endorsement of your plans to include social media in the organization’s crisis response.

Presentation should be at least 10 slides in length with speaker notes included for each slide. There should also be a title slide and a presentation slide not included in the 10 slides. (Resources for effective PowerPoint presentations can be found on the Success Center’s Resources Page under Writing Resources and then Writing Skills: https://mycsu.columbiasouthern.edu/student/learningresources/online/writing_resources/WritingSkills/)

Make sure to include descriptions of at least three different social media tools, how each is being used to communicate during crisis management, and rules for how to get your message across efficiently, effectively, and succinctly using these tools.
Unit VII Mini Project

Crisis Communication Plan

Develop a crisis communication plan for an organization of your choice. Include a social media policy. You should combine the sections of the plan that you have already worked on throughout this course, being sure to make adjustments for any feedback you might have received from the professor.

Plan should be 7-10 pages long and include, at a minimum, the following items:

- Title page (with clear identification of organization)
- Statement of purpose
- Scope
- Situations and assumptions
- Audience profile
- Chains of command/approval processes (operations)
- Key communication strategies
- Delegation of responsibilities
- Evaluation of communication efforts
- Guidelines specific to social media use
- References

Unit VIII Assignment

Message Map

Create a message map for a crisis or risk situation in your field/organization. Identify who the stakeholders for the message are, potential stakeholder questions and concerns, key messages and supporting facts. (An example message map can be found on pg. 72 of the Walaski textbook.)

APA Guidelines

CSU requires that students use the APA style for papers and projects. Therefore, the APA rules for formatting, quoting, paraphrasing, citing, and listing of sources are to be followed. A document titled “APA Guide” is available for you to download from the APA Guide link, found in the Learning Resources area of the myCSU Student Portal. It may also be accessed from the Student Resources link on the Course Menu. This document includes examples and sample papers and provides links to The CSU Success Center and the CSU Online Library staff.

Blackboard Grading Rubrics

Assignment Rubrics

One or more assignments in this course utilizes a Blackboard Grading Rubric. A rubric is a tool that lists evaluation criteria and can help you organize your efforts to meet the requirements of an assignment. Your professor will use the Blackboard Grading Rubric to assign points and provide feedback for the assignment.

You are encouraged to view the assignment rubric before submitting your work. This will allow you to review the evaluation criteria as you prepare your assignments. You may access the rubric in “My Grades” through the “Tools” button in your course menu. Click the “View Rubric” link to see the evaluation criteria for the assignment. Upon receiving your assignment grade, you may view your grade breakdown and feedback in the rubric.

CSU Grading Rubric for Papers/Projects

The course papers will be graded based on the CSU Grading Rubric for all types of papers, unless otherwise specified within assignment instructions. In addition, all papers will be submitted for electronic evaluation to rule out plagiarism. Course projects will contain project specific grading criteria defined in the project directions. To view the rubric, click the Academic Policies link on the Course Menu, or access it through the CSU Grading Rubric link found in the Learning Resources area of the myCSU Student Portal.
Communication Forums

These are non-graded discussion forums that allow you to communicate with your professor and other students. Participation in these discussion forums is encouraged, but not required. You can access these forums with the buttons in the Course Menu. Instructions for subscribing/unsubscribing to these forums are provided below.

Once you have completed Unit VIII, you MUST unsubscribe from the forum; otherwise, you will continue to receive e-mail updates from the forum. You will not be able to unsubscribe after your course end date.

Click here for instructions on how to subscribe/unsubscribe and post to the Communication Forums.

Ask the Professor

This communication forum provides you with an opportunity to ask your professor general or course content questions. Questions may focus on Blackboard locations of online course components, textbook or course content elaboration, additional guidance on assessment requirements, or general advice from other students.

Questions that are specific in nature, such as inquiries regarding assessment/assignment grades or personal accommodation requests, are NOT to be posted on this forum. If you have questions, comments, or concerns of a non-public nature, please feel free to email your professor. Responses to your post will be addressed or emailed by the professor within 48 hours.

Before posting, please ensure that you have read all relevant course documentation, including the syllabus, assessment/assignment instructions, faculty feedback, and other important information.

Student Break Room

This communication forum allows for casual conversation with your classmates. Communication on this forum should always maintain a standard of appropriateness and respect for your fellow classmates. This forum should NOT be used to share assessment answers.

Grading

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unit Assessments (3 @ 12%)</td>
<td>36%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignments (5 @ 8%)</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unit VII Mini Project</td>
<td>24%</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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Course Schedule/Checklist (PLEASE PRINT)

The following pages contain a printable Course Schedule to assist you through this course. By following this schedule, you will be assured that you will complete the course within the time allotted.
# Course Schedule

By following this schedule, you will be assured that you will complete the course within the time allotted. Please keep this schedule for reference as you progress through your course.

## Unit I
**Introduction – General Concepts of Risk and Communication; Stages of a Crisis**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Review:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Unit Study Guide</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning Activities (Non-Graded): See Study Guide</td>
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</table>

**Read:**
- Risk and Crisis Communications: Methods and Messages
  - Chapter 1: Introduction
  - Chapter 2: General Concepts of Risk and Crisis Communications
  - Chapter 3: Communication Fundamentals and Theoretical Foundations
- Additional Required Reading: See Study Guide
- Supplemental Reading: See Study Guide

**Submit:**
- Assessment

**Notes/Goals:**

## Unit II
**Stages I and II of Media Reporting During a Crisis**

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Review:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Unit Study Guide</td>
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**Read:**
- The Four Stages of Highly Effective Crisis Management
  - Section II Introduction: Stages of a Crisis
  - Chapter 7: Stage One—Fact-Finding Stage
  - Chapter 8: Beware the ST Factor: Remember the Context
  - Chapter 9: Stage Two—Unfolding Drama
  - Supplemental Reading: See Study Guide

**Submit:**
- Assessment

**Notes/Goals:**

## Unit III
**Stages III and IV of Media Reporting During a Crisis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Review:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unit Study Guide</td>
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**Read:**
- The Four Stages of Highly Effective Crisis Management
  - Chapter 10: Stage Three—Finger-Pointing Stage = Blame Game
  - Chapter 11: Stage Four—Resolution and Fallout
  - Section II: Summary

**Submit:**
- Assessment
- Assignment

**Notes/Goals:**
# MSL 5200, Crisis Communication Management

## Course Schedule

### Unit IV

**Choosing and Preparing a Spokesperson**

**Review:**
- Unit Study Guide
- **Learning Activities (Non-Graded):** See Study Guide

**Read:**
- *The Four Stages of Highly Effective Crisis Management*
  - Section III: Spokespeople—Speed Matters and Perception is Everything
  - Chapter 12: Who?
  - Chapter 13: To CEO or not?
  - Chapter 14: Head and Heart
  - Chapter 15: Role of the Frontline
- **Required Viewing:** See Study Guide
- **Supplemental Reading:** See Study Guide

**Submit:**
- Assignment

**Notes/Goals:**

### Unit V

**Mainstream Media**

**Review:**
- Unit Study Guide
- **Learning Activities (Non-Graded):** See Study Guide

**Read:**
- *Risk and Crisis Communications: Methods and Messages*
  - Chapter 7: Working with the Media
- *The Four Stages of Highly Effective Crisis Management*
  - Chapter 17: Understanding Journalists’ Questions
  - Chapter 18: Techniques to Get Your Message Across
  - Chapter 19: Dealing with Difficult Questions
  - Chapter 20: Never Repeat the Poison: Avoid Negative Language
  - Chapter 21: How the Media Are Changing Rules for Interviews
  - Chapter 22: Lights, Camera, Action—The Interview
  - Chapter 23: Media Training

**Submit:**
- Assignment

**Notes/Goals:**

### Unit VI

**Social Media**

**Review:**
- Unit Study Guide
- **Learning Activities (Non-Graded):** See Study Guide

**Read:**
- *The Four Stages of Highly Effective Crisis Management*
  - Chapter 3: Social, Interactive, and Everywhere All the Time
  - Chapter 4: Social Media’s Role in Crisis
  - Chapter 6: Twitter: Is it a Fad or the “8-Bazillion Pound Gorilla?”
  - Section I: Summary
  - Chapter 29: Where? New Media Tools

**Submit:**
- Assignment

**Notes/Goals:**
### Unit VII
**The Crisis Communication Plan**

**Review:**
- Unit Study Guide
- **Learning Activities (Non-Graded):** See Study Guide

**Read:**
- *The Four Stages of Highly Effective Crisis Management*
- Chapter 16: Policy Guidelines for Social Media
- Appendix D: Nine Steps to a Crisis Communication Plan
- Appendix G: Social Media Resources for Crisis Communicators
- Appendix H: 30 Things You Should Not Share on Social Media
- Appendix J: Social Media Embracing the Opportunities, Averting the Risks

**Risk and Crisis Communications: Methods and Messages**
- Chapter 8: Developing a Risk and Crisis Communications Plan
- **Additional Required Reading:** See Study Guide
- **Supplemental Reading:** See Study Guide
- **Suggested Further Reading:** See Study Guide

**Submit:**
- Assignment

**Notes/Goals:**

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### Unit VIII
**Special Situations and Avoiding Mistakes**

**Review:**
- Unit Study Guide
- **Learning Activities (Non-Graded):** See Study Guide

**Read:**
- *Risk and Crisis Communications: Methods and Messages*
- Chapter 4: Crafting Risk and Crisis Messages—Setting Goals and Objectives and Audience Profiling
- Chapter 5: Crafting Risk and Crisis Messages—Developing the Words
- Chapter 6: Delivering the Message While Avoiding Common Mistakes
- Chapter 9: Special Risk and Crisis Communication Situations

**Required Viewing:** See Study Guide

**Submit:**
- Assignment

**Notes/Goals:**