MCOM 5355: Seminar in Public Relations - Crisis PR & Communication
Summer I 2024

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Office: Boynton 201
Office Hours: Th: 12-5pm
Department: Mass Communication
Class meeting time and place: online

Course Description
MCOM 5355: Seminar in Public Relations: Explores problems and cases of planning, strategies and tactics including the creation and execution of public relations campaigns used by practitioners. Summer 2023 will focus specifically on crisis public relations and communications.

Course Contact Hours and Study Hours
MCOM 5355 “Seminar in Public Relations” (3 credits; fully online), spans 15 weeks, requiring students to engage the online modules for at least three hours per week, and covers foundational topics in crisis public relations and communications. The course consists of multiple weekly readings and reaction papers, quizzes, tests, APA-style papers, and/or application projects depending on the course material. For every hour a student spends engaging with the content, they spend at least two hours completing associated assignments and assessments.

Text and Materials
Ongoing Crisis Communication: Planning, Managing and Responding
W. Timothy Coombs
5th Edition
ISBN: 9781544331959

Program Learning Outcomes
1. Demonstrate the ability to write effectively across a variety of platforms appropriate to the discipline.
2. Gather, analyze, organize and synthesize discipline-appropriate research and communication information about it.
3. Understand the role of public relations and media in society.
4. Comprehend the legal and ethical principles relating to public relations.
5. Demonstrate the application of media technology, terminology and techniques.

Student Learning Outcomes
1. Define basic crisis public relations and communication terminology
2. Recognize different phrases of crisis management.
3. Find and explain current crises in communications in the United States
4. Understand how to apply crisis public relations concepts to current events for analysis

SFA Policies

Academic Integrity (4.1)

The Code of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity outlines the prohibited conduct by any student enrolled in a course at SFA. It is the responsibility of all members of all faculty, staff, and students to adhere to and uphold this policy.

Articles IV, VI, and VII of the new Code of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity outline the violations and procedures concerning academic conduct, including cheating, plagiarism, collusion, and misrepresentation. Cheating
includes, but is not limited to: (1) Copying from the test paper (or other assignment) of another student, (2) Possession and/or use during a test of materials that are not authorized by the person giving the test, (3) Using, obtaining, or attempting to obtain by any means the whole or any part of a non-administered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program, or using a test that has been administered in prior classes or semesters without permission of the Faculty member, (4) Substituting for another person, or permitting another person to substitute for one’s self, to take a test, (5) Falsifying research data, laboratory reports, and/or other records or academic work offered for credit, (6) Using any sort of unauthorized resources or technology in completion of educational activities.

Plagiarism is the appropriation of material that is attributable in whole or in part to another source or the use of one’s own previous work in another context without citing that it was used previously, without any indication of the original source, including words, ideas, illustrations, structure, computer code, and other expression or media, and presenting that material as one’s own academic work being offered for credit or in conjunction with a program course or degree requirements.

Collusion is the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing academic assignments offered for credit or collaboration with another person to commit a violation of any provision of the rules on academic dishonesty, including disclosing and/or distributing the contents of an exam.

Misrepresentation is providing false grades or résumés; providing false or misleading information in an effort to receive a postponement or an extension on a test, quiz, or other assignment for the purpose of obtaining an academic or financial benefit for oneself or another individual or to injure another student academically or financially.

**Withheld Grades Semester Grades Policy (5.5)**
Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the coursework because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course to compute the grade point average. For additional information, go to https://www.sfasu.edu/policies/course-grades-5.5.pdf.

**Students with Disabilities**
To obtain disability-related accommodations, alternate formats, and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services promptly may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/.

**Student Wellness and Well-Being**
SFA values students’ overall well-being, mental health and the role it plays in academic and overall student success. Students may experience stressors that can impact both their academic experience and their personal well-being. These may include academic pressure and challenges associated with relationships, emotional well-being, alcohol and other drugs, identities, finances, etc.

If you are experiencing concerns, seeking help, SFA provides a variety of resources to support students’ mental health and wellness. Many of these resources are free, and all of them are confidential.

**On-campus Resources:**
**The Dean of Students Office** (Rusk Building, 3rd floor lobby)
www.sfasu.edu/deanofstudents
936.468.7249
dos@sfasu.edu

**SFA Human Services Counseling Clinic** Human Services, Room 202
www.sfasu.edu/humanservices/139.asp
936.468.1041

**The Health and Wellness Hub** “The Hub”
Location: corner of E. College and Raguet St.
To support the health and well-being of every Lumberjack, the Health and Wellness Hub offers comprehensive services that treat the whole person – mind, body and spirit. Services include:

- Health Services
- Counseling Services
- Student Outreach and Support
- Food Pantry
- Wellness Coaching
- Alcohol and Other Drug Education

www.sfasu.edu/thehub
936.468.4008
thehub@sfasu.edu

Crisis Resources:
- Burke 24-hour crisis line: 1.800.392.8343
- National Suicide Crisis Prevention: 9-8-8
- Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1.800.273.TALK (8255)
- Crisis Text Line: Text HELLO to 741-741

Bailey’s Policies

I adhere to 11 general policies in all of my courses:

1. **No late work accepted**: I do not accept late work or late exams, quizzes, assignments, etc. Do not email me to ask for extensions on late work, making up missed classwork etc.

2. **No extra credit**: I do not provide extra credit on an individual basis. Any extra credit provided will be at my discretion and will be extended to the entire class.

3. **24/7 rule**: Your grades are just that- your grades. Not mine. If you have questions about a grade you earned on an assignment, I urge you to contact me about it (via email) to set up an appointment to come in and talk about it. I want you to know what you did wrong, and what you did right. However, please observe the 24/7 policy- take 24 hours after receiving a grade to cool off, try to understand your mistakes, and then shoot me an email. You will also have 7 days after a grade is posted to contact me to discuss or dispute it. After those 7 days, all grades will stand as is.

4. **No D2L emails**: Contact me via SFA email, not D2L email. My email address is thompsonba@sfasu.edu

5. **No doctor’s notes please**: I do not accept, want or need doctor’s notes for missed classes or assignments- your medical information is yours and is private. If you have an extended absence for hospitalization, etc. please go through the proper channels at the rights and responsibilities office.

6. **There are some emails I will not respond to**: I will not respond to any emails asking the following questions or making the following requests: 1) emails asking for grade changes 2) emails asking for final grades to be rounded up 3) emails asking for extensions on assignments with no hospitalization or extreme circumstance 4) emails asking for extra credit- any extra credit given by me will be given to all students and advertised in class or on D2L, not on an individual basis via email. – Essentially, emails asking me to show favor grade-wise to one student in a course over other students will not be returned. This is the primary way I will be working to ensure that all students have the same opportunities in my courses.

7. **Final grade rounding policy**: I will round final grades with a .5 or higher. I will not raise final grades with a .4 or lower for any reason. I will also not round “9” grades. Therefore, if you make an 89 in the class, do not email me asking if I will bump in to a 90. Unless you make an 89.5 or higher, I will not round.

8. **Grading Turnaround Time**: my turnaround time for grading assignments varies by the assignment type. For multiple choice quizzes or exams the turnaround time is approximately 48 hours. For substantial written assignments it is 2 weeks.

9. **Email Turnaround Time**: I do not answer emails after 5pm or before 8am Monday-Friday. If you email after those hours expect a reply within 48 hours. I also do not respond to emails on the weekends. I encourage each of you to set healthy boundaries when it comes to your own work-life balance.

10. **Emails + Grades**: I will only discuss grade issues/dispute via email in writing. This is to ensure a paper trail for both the student and myself.

11. **A is for Awesome**: Every student should not expect an A in my course. A is for exceptional work. B is for good work. C is for average work. A work goes above and beyond the requirements and shows true mastery of the content. A work impresses.

**Course Requirements**

In this course there will be 2 types of assignments: quizzes and reaction papers.
Quizzes
You will have 8 quizzes throughout the course of the semester. Each quiz is worth 5% of your overall final grade. The purpose of the quizzes is to check that you’ve read and understood the assigned content. The quizzes will be multiple choice and/or T/F in nature with the occasional short answer question. Quizzes will take a maximum of 20-30 minutes to complete but will average around 15 minutes. When you complete the quizzes is completely up to you- as long as they are all completed by **July 5 at 11:59pm**.

Reaction Papers
You will write 3 reaction papers during the course of the summer. When you turn them in is completely up to you- as long as they are all submitted by **July 5 at 11:59pm**.

Each reaction paper should be 3-4 full pages (excluding reference pages), double spaced, 12pt Times New Roman font. I prefer APA style for Mass Communication MA students, however, I recognize this course has students from various disciplines, so as long as you are consistent with the style of your discipline that is fine with me.

Your reaction papers should demonstrate 3 main things: 1) your understanding of and interest in a relevant and timely crisis happening in the world, 2) your understanding of relevant textbook material and additional peer-reviewed scholarly work relating to crisis communication and/or crisis public relations, and 3) your ability to articulate and relate and apply the relevant crisis to course and outside academic content.

Each reaction paper must cover a different crisis/topic.

If you are unsure about a specific topic or idea, please feel free to reach out via email!

I would also be more than happy to review your first reaction paper to ensure you are on the right track- I am here to help and guide you on your academic journey so please utilize me as a resource! 😊

No late work will be accepted for any reason. I will not accept any coursework via email.

Grading Policy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Breakdown</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reaction Papers (3 @ 20% each)</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes (8 @ 5% each)</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Final grade rounding policy:** I will round final grades with a .5 or higher. I will not raise final grades with a .4 or lower for any reason. I will also not round “9” grades. Therefore, if you make an 89 in the class, do not email me asking if I will bump in to a 90. Unless you make an 89.5 or higher, I will not round.

**I will not respond to any emails at the end of the semester where students ask for their grades to be changed or raised (without just cause such as professor addition error, etc.)**

I also will not calculate your grade for you, or tell you what you need to make on specific assignments to achieve a desired grade. All grades will be updated regularly in D2L, however, this website is a great resources for grade calculation as well: [https://thegradecalculator.com/](https://thegradecalculator.com/)

Attendance Policy

*There is no specific attendance policy for this course, however, students are expected to log into D2L and Connect regularly to complete work, read updates, engage with content, etc.*
Course Calendar

I reserve the right to make changes to the calendar at any time. Should I make changes, it is my responsibility as the professor to inform the students. Changes will be posted on D2L. The following calendar is an approximation of our schedule this semester. All due date times are CST.

This is essentially how I might break up the content in this course. As there is only one singular deadline, how you break up the content is your prerogative.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week #</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>June 3-9</td>
<td>Chapters 1 and 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>June 10-16</td>
<td>Chapters 3 and 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>June 17-23</td>
<td>Chapters 5 and 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>June 24-30</td>
<td>Chapters 7 and 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>July 1-7</td>
<td>Polish and complete all required reaction papers and ensure all quizzes are completed by July 5 @ 11:59pm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>