Health Risk & Crisis Communication
COMM 426
Spring 2016

Course Information
Class Days: Tuesdays & Thursdays
Class Times: 12:30–1:45pm
Class Location: SSW 2501
Office Hours: Tuesdays 2–4pm and by appointment
Office Hours Location: COMMUNICATION 243
Email: lsmartinez@mail.sdsu.edu

Course Overview
This course covers principles of competent communication in health related risks and crises. A substantial part of the course will be devoted to examining case studies of health risk and crisis communication. The purpose of this course is to provide a substantive foundation of relevant theories, research, practices, and current issues related to the role of communication in preventing, responding to, and coping with community health risks and crises. This course builds on topics introduced in COMM 321.

At the end of the course, you will be able to:
1. Articulate important concepts of risk and crisis communication theories and how they operate.
2. Identify and define various types, causes, and outcomes of disasters, crises, and health risks.
3. Describe various roles that communication and communicators assume during the prelude to, progression, and aftermath of a disaster, crisis, or increasing large-scale risk.
4. Create a theory-based communication plan for managing a risk or crisis in a real-world scenario.

Enrollment Information
Course Prerequisites: COMM 321. Admission to a major or minor in the School of Communication.

Adding/Dropping Procedures: Please contact the School of Communication office to add closed classes. You have until February 2 to drop/make adjustments to your schedule.

Course Materials
The following are required materials for the course:
2. Readings available on Blackboard. (BB)

Course Structure
The structure of the course will consist of lecture-discussions and in-class activities. All assignments for this course will be completed individually unless otherwise noted. Course materials such as the syllabus, instructions for assignments, and required readings not included in the textbook will be posted on BB.
Course Assessment and Grading

Assigned Readings
The required readings for this course will be drawn from the course textbook as well as from articles available on BB. Required readings are to be completed before class sessions. We will be using BB throughout the class. You are responsible for logging on to BB on a regular basis to access this material and keep up with class announcements.

Exams (50%)
Two exams will be given during the course of the semester. The exams will consist of a combination of multiple choice questions and true/false questions based on readings and lecture content. Questions will be designed to go beyond testing knowledge in order to assess ability to apply and integrate course content. The exams will take place during allotted times in the classroom, therefore it is essential to attend class and do all the readings.

Communication Plan Proposal and Research Presentation (25%)
Students are expected to submit a communication plan proposal applying knowledge gained throughout the semester. This assignment will require you to develop a communication plan using theories learned in class to manage a risk or crisis in a real-world scenario. Students will complete this project individually or with up to two other students. If submitting with a partner, both students will receive the same grade. A proposal guide with instructions for completing this assignment will be available on BB. At the end of the semester, students will also prepare a presentation based on their communication plan proposal. Students who submitted a communication plan proposal with a partner are expected to co-present and will receive the same grade for the presentation. Presentations will occur during the time allotted for the final exam. More information about this assignment will be forthcoming.

Quizzes/Weekly Assignments (12.5%)
You will have weekly opportunities to demonstrate your mastery of readings and course content. These “opportunities” are unannounced and will take the form of a quiz or a writing assignment in class. If you miss the quiz or fail to turn in a written assignment, you cannot make it up. Your lowest quiz/weekly assignment score will be dropped from your final grade.

Participation (12.5%)
Your class participation will count for 12.5% of your overall course grade. Each student will start with a perfect participation score of A, but you may lose points for disregarding the classroom rules.

Classroom Rules & Consequences:

1. Be seated and ready to begin class at the scheduled hour.
2. Be prepared to participate in class discussions about the assigned material.
3. Be courteous and listen to classmates and the professor. Students should talk only when called on or when volunteering to participate in class discussion.
4. Refrain from disruptive conduct, including telephones, instant messaging, emailing, playing audio or video files and excessive walking.

If a student is tardy, unprepared for class, not courteous and quiet, or disruptive more than once, the student’s participation grade will be lowered by one mark (example: B to B-).

On a final note, grades are based on the work completed between the first and last day of class. There is nothing you can do after the last day of class (e.g., extra credit, research, etc.) to affect your grade.
Grading Policy:

Grading is based on two exams, quizzes/in-class assignments, a communication plan, presentation, and class participation. Grades in this course will be determined in the following manner with the following due dates:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mid-term Exam</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>March 10, 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>April 21, 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication Plan Proposal</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>May 3, 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication Plan Presentation</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>May 12, 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes/Weekly assignments</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 400 points

Grading Scale:

Grades are calculated on a straight scale—there will be no curve. Grades will be converted from points to percentages to calculate grades as follows:

A = 93-100% = 368-400 = Consistently Excellent Work
A- = 90-92% = 358-367 = Consistently Excellent Work
B+ = 88-89% = 350-357 = Good or Inconsistently Excellent Work
B = 83-87% = 330-349 = Good or Inconsistently Excellent Work
B- = 80-82% = 318-329 = Good or Inconsistently Excellent Work
C+ = 78-79% = 310-317 = Average or Inconsistent Work
C = 73-77% = 291-309 = Average or Inconsistent Work
C- = 70-72% = 278-290 = Average or Inconsistent Work
D+ = 68-69% = 270-277 = Below Average or Poor Work
D = 63-67% = 251-269 = Below Average or Poor Work
D- = 60-62% = 238-250 = Below Average or Poor Work
F = 0-59% = 001-237 = Irrelevant, Missing, and/or Poor Work

*You can expect most of the class to earn a B or C. Some students will earn an A and a few students could earn a D or F.

**A does NOT stand for average; A work is high quality work that does more than address the bare minimum requested in a prompt.

Attendance/Participation Policy, Late and Make-up Work:

The most important elements of the course will be presented during class time and you are responsible for any material covered. This is an upper-level course so attendance at every class is expected. As this class only meets once per week, missing even just one day is equivalent to missing three class periods. Although attendance is not required, only students present during class are eligible to earn participation points, give presentations, and complete pop-quizzes and in-class activities. Please be on time for class. Summary course lecture notes will be posted on BB after each class.

In terms of exams, each test is to be taken on the designated exam date. Rescheduled exams are not allowed except in truly extraordinary circumstances beyond the student's control. In the rare event that an emergency arises, it is the student's complete responsibility to 1) inform the professor prior to the exam time, and 2) provide the professor with written documentation of the emergency. Job interviews, spring break trips, and family vacations do not constitute an emergency. Late assignments or papers will be docked half a letter grade for each day after the due date.
Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with a disability and believe you will need accommodations for this class, it is your responsibility to contact Student Disability Services at (619) 594-6473. To avoid any delay in the receipt of your accommodations, you should contact Student Disability Services as soon as possible. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive, and that accommodations based upon disability cannot be provided until you have presented your instructor with an accommodation letter from Student Disability Services. Your cooperation is appreciated.

Academic Honesty

The University adheres to a strict policy regarding cheating and plagiarism. These activities will not be tolerated in this class. Become familiar with the policy (http://www.sa.sdsu.edu/srr/conduct1.html). Any cheating or plagiarism will result in failing this class and a disciplinary review by Student Affairs.

Examples of Plagiarism include but are not limited to:

- Using sources verbatim or paraphrasing without giving proper attribution (this can include phrases, sentences, paragraphs and/or pages of work)
- Copying and pasting work from an online or offline source directly and calling it your own
- Using information you find from an online or offline source without giving the author credit
- Replacing words or phrases from another source and inserting your own words or phrases
- Submitting a piece of work you did for one class to another class

If you have questions on what is plagiarism, please consult the policy (http://www.sa.sdsu.edu/srr/conduct1.html) and this helpful guide from the Library: (http://infodome.sdsu.edu/infolit/exploratorium/Standard_5/plagiarism.pdf). Also please read the policy at the end of the syllabus. There will be a question on the final exam about the academic dishonest policy of the School of Communication.

Turnitin

Students agree that by taking this course all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. You may submit your papers in such a way that no identifying information about you is included. Another option is that you may request, in writing, that your papers not be submitted to Turnitin.com. However, if you choose this option you will be required to provide documentation to substantiate that the papers are your original work and do not include any plagiarized material.

CourseKey

CourseKey Student Engagement App is required for this course:
Each student will be required to purchase The CourseKey ($25 for your first course and $5 per course after). Please see the insert at the very end of the syllabus on how to set up and install the application on your smart device. Registration information can be accessed via https://portal.thecoursekey.com/home/?addCode=ck167nu or by using the code ck167nu.

January 28th 2016 will be the first day we will begin using the application and will be required from this day forward.
### Course Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 21</td>
<td>Introduction to course</td>
<td>Syllabus and course overview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 26</td>
<td>Defining risk and crisis communication</td>
<td>RC Chapters 1 &amp; 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 28</td>
<td>Quantifying risk</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>February 2</td>
<td>Public perceptions of risk</td>
<td>RC Chapter 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 4</td>
<td>Risk communication theory</td>
<td>SJöberg 2000 (BB)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 16</td>
<td>Risk communication theory</td>
<td>Sandman 2012 (BB) – pp. 1-57 only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 18</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>Bøyer et al 2007 (BB)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 23</td>
<td>Principles of risk communication</td>
<td>RC Chapter 4 &amp; 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 25</td>
<td>Constraints on risk communication</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 1</td>
<td>Case studies: Industrial accidents</td>
<td>Ulmer et al 2011 (BB) pp. 90-104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 3</td>
<td>Case studies: Industrial accidents</td>
<td>Prepare and submit questions to include in midterm exam</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 8</td>
<td>Review Session Midterm Exam</td>
<td>Study for Midterm exam</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 10</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>March 15</td>
<td>Case studies: Foodborne illness</td>
<td>RC Chapter 23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 17</td>
<td>Case studies: Foodborne illness</td>
<td>Ulmer et al 2011 (BB) pp. 105-136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 22</td>
<td>Case studies: Terrorism</td>
<td>RC Chapter 22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 24</td>
<td>Case studies: Terrorism</td>
<td>Ulmer et al 2011 (BB) pp. 138-152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 29</td>
<td>SPRING BREAK (NO CLASS)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>March 31</td>
<td>SPRING BREAK (NO CLASS)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 5</td>
<td>Case studies: Natural disasters</td>
<td>RC Chapter 21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 7</td>
<td>Case studies: Natural disasters</td>
<td>Ulmer et al 2011 (BB) pp. 154-180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 12</td>
<td>Case studies: Financial crises</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>April 14</td>
<td>Case studies: Financial crises</td>
<td>Ulmer et al 2011 (BB) pp. Prepare and submit questions to include in final exam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 19</td>
<td>Review Session Final Exam</td>
<td>Study for Final exam</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 21</td>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 26</td>
<td>Communication plan workshop</td>
<td>Work on communication plan proposal</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 28</td>
<td>Communication plan workshop</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 3</td>
<td>Risk &amp; Communication Campaigns</td>
<td>RC Chapter 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 5</td>
<td>Ethical Demands &amp; Issues in Crises</td>
<td>Communication plan proposal due May 3, 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 12</td>
<td>Presentations – Scheduled during final exam time</td>
<td>Prepare communication plan presentations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*** Please note that the instructor reserves the right to adjust the syllabus according to the needs of the class.

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**Academic Dishonesty Policy of the School of Communication**

In any case in which an instructor identifies evidence for charging a student with violation of academic conduct standards or plagiarism, the presumption will be with that instructor’s determination. The instructor(s) will confer with the School Director to confirm the evidence. Once confirmed, the student will be informed and presented with the evidence. Some conditions and terms below clarify the School policy and procedure.
**Intellectual property:** The syllabus, lectures and lecture outlines, are intellectual property of the instructor, which means that any organized recording for anything other than personal use, duplication, distribution, or profit is a violation of copyright and fair use laws.

**Proper source attribution:** Proper attribution occurs by specifying the source of content or ideas. This is done by (a) providing quotation marks around text, when directly quoted, and (b) clearly designating the source of the text or information relied upon in an assignment.

**Intellectual contents:** Intellectual contents include all forms of ‘text’ produced by another person or persons. It includes: writings, course syllabi, course lectures and recordings of lectures, visual information such as models, videos, lyrics, software, etc.

**Secondary citations:** Secondary citation is not strictly a form of plagiarism, but in blatant forms, it can present similar ethical challenges. A secondary citation is citing source A, which in turn cites source B, but it is source B’s ideas or content that provide the basis for the claims the student intends to make in the assignment. For example, assume that there is an article by Jones (2006) in the student’s hands, in which there is a discussion or quotation of an article by Smith (1998). Assume further that what Smith seems to be saying is very important to the student’s analysis. In such a situation, the student should always try to locate the original Smith source. In general, if an idea is important enough to discuss in an assignment, it is important enough to locate and cite the original source for that idea. There are several reasons for these policies: (a) Authors sometimes commit citation errors, which might be replicated without knowing it; (b) Authors sometimes make interpretation errors, which might be ignorantly reinforced (c) Therefore, reliability of scholarly activity is made more difficult to assure and enforce; (d) By relying on only a few sources of review, the learning process is short-circuited, and the student’s own research competencies are diminished, which are integral to any liberal education; (e) By masking the actual sources of ideas, readers must second guess which sources come from which citations, making the readers’ own research more difficult; (f) By masking the origin of the information, the actual source of ideas is misrepresented. Some suggestions that assist with this principle:

- When the ideas Jones discusses are clearly attributed to, or unique to, Smith, then find the Smith source and citation.
- When the ideas Jones is discussing are historically associated more with Smith than with Jones, then find the Smith source and citation.
- In contrast, Jones is sometimes merely using Smith to back up what Jones is saying and believes, and is independently qualified to claim, whether or not Smith would have also said it; in such a case, citing Jones is sufficient.
- Never simply copy a series of citations at the end of a statement by Jones, and reproduce the reference list without actually going to look up what those references report—the only guarantee that claims are valid is for a student to read the original sources of those claims.

**Self-plagiarism:** Students often practice some form of ‘double-dipping,’ in which they write on a given topic across more than one course assignment. In general, there is nothing wrong with double-dipping topics or sources, but there is a problem with double-dipping exact and redundant text. It is common for scholars to write on the same topic across many publication outlets; this is part of developing expertise and the reputation of being a scholar on a topic. Scholars, however, are not permitted to repeat exact text across papers or publications except when noted and attributed, as this wastes precious intellectual space with repetition and does a disservice to the particular source of original presentation by ‘diluting’ the value of the original presentation. Any time that a writer simply ‘cuts-and-pastes’ exact text from former papers into a new paper without proper attribution, it is a form of self-plagiarism. Consequently, a given paper should never be turned in to multiple classes. Entire paragraphs, or even sentences, should not be repeated word-for-word across course assignments. Each new writing assignment is precisely that, a new writing assignment, requiring new composition on the student’s part.

**Specific exemplary infractions and consequences:**

- **Course failure:** Reproducing a whole paper, paragraph, or large portions of unattributed materials without proper attribution, whether represented by: (a) multiple sentences, images, or portions of images; or (b) by percentage of assignment length, will result in assignment of an “F” in the course in which the infraction occurred, and a report to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities (CSRR).

- **Assignment failure:** Reproducing a sentence or sentence fragment with no quotation marks, but with source citation, or subsets of visual images without source attribution, will minimally result in an “F” on the assignment, and may result in greater penalty, including a report to the CSRR, depending factors noted below.
• **Exacerbating conditions—Amount:** Evidence of infraction, even if fragmentary, is increased with a greater:
  (a) number of infractions; (b) distribution of infractions across an assignment; or (c) proportion of the assignment consisting of infractions.

• **Exacerbating conditions—Intent:** Evidence of foreknowledge and intent to deceive magnifies the seriousness of the offense and the grounds for official response. Plagiarism, whether ‘by accident’ or ‘by ignorance,’ still qualifies as plagiarism—it is all students’ responsibility to make sure their assignments are not committing the offense.

• **Exceptions:** Any exceptions to these policies will be considered on a case-by-case basis, and only under exceptional circumstances.

**Additional Stipulations for Graduate Students & GTAs:** If, following a review with a Communication graduate student, a faculty member and School Director determine academic dishonesty has occurred, the evidence will be submitted to the Center of Student Rights and Responsibilities (CSRR). The report “identifies the student who was found responsible, the general nature of the offense, the action taken, and a recommendation as to whether or not additional action should be considered by the campus judicial affairs office” (CSRR Website\(^1\)). The student will be permitted to continue as a student in the Communication graduate program and as a Teaching Associate (if so assigned), until such time as CSRR due process has taken its course. If CSRR rules in favor of the student, the student’s status in the program will continue. If due process rules against the student, then the student will immediately be dropped from all classes in the Communication graduate program and any Teaching Associate position in the School will be terminated. Graduate students may voluntarily withdraw from classes and Teaching Associate duties when charges are brought forward. The School’s Director must be notified in writing. Students who voluntarily withdraw, notify the director in a timely manner, and who are subsequently found not guilty of plagiarism may be reinstated without prejudice at the start of the next semester.

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\(^1\) [http://csrr.sdsu.edu/academics1.html](http://csrr.sdsu.edu/academics1.html)
CourseKey Student Engagement App:

1st Course - $25.00

Additional Courses - $5.00

REGISTRATION EMAIL INSTRUCTIONS:

This course will be using CourseKey (www.thecoursekey.com) - a higher education, classroom engagement software that is designed to boost attendance, increase lecture interaction, and facilitate peer-2-peer learning. The app combines features that help the professor more efficiently manage the class and allows students to connect more effectively outside of class.

You will be able to use the iOS application or any smart device (smartphone, tablet, laptops, etc.) with a web browser. If you do not have a smart device please contact the support team at support@thecoursekey.com so that arrangements can be made to accommodate you.

- App Store Link: CourseKey – Student iOS App

You can visit the CourseKey Youtube channel for the Student Quick Start Guide which outlines how you will register for a student account, as well as providing a brief overview to get you registered for the class. The first day of class we will go over the integration of the software and how attendance and participation will be graded.

Please follow these instructions to create your account and register for the course through the application. If you require assistance you can find the CourseKey support team from 9:00 am - 5:00 pm PST, M-F in the Zahn Innovation Center (EBA-419).

Step 1: Create Account

To sign up use the following link to create your account: https://portal.thecoursekey.com/signup

- You will then be able to create an account, entering your first and last name.
- Enter your email that you can access (you will receive a confirmation link).
- Enter a secure password that you will remember and re-enter it.
- Select your campus/school and then enter SCHOOL ISSUED ID – This is your REDID
- Click on the link to read the terms of service and privacy policy and after reading click the box.
- Click “SIGN UP” and you will receive an email shortly after with a verification link.
  - If you don’t receive an email, check your spam or junk folders and make sure to add CourseKey to your inbox.
- Click on the verification link in the email and then click “VALIDATE” to activate your CourseKey account.

Step 2: Register for the Course

To register for the event simply log in at: https://portal.thecoursekey.com/login

- Once logged in, click “Add a Course” and type “INSERT COURSECODE” and you will see the CSUPERB 2016 event.
  - You can also search for the professor name and class through the search option.
- Click “Yes” to add the event and you are now ready to participate in the weekend events.