Undergraduate Course Syllabus

Course Information:
Crisis Communication
CMN 3360 CRN: 40034
Term and Year: Spring 2018, Second Half Session, 3/5-4/28
Credit Hour: 3
Course Format: Online
Location: https://nuonline.neu.edu
Course Prerequisite, Co-requisite, or other Requirement: CMN 1100 and CMN 2310

Instructor Information:
Full Name: Dr. Janice M. Barrett
Email Address: j.barrett@northeastern.edu; jbarrett96@hotmail.com
Virtual Office Hours: Call me @ 617-243-2062 or email me to schedule a phone appointment

Course Description:
This course introduces students to the important implications of effective internal and external communication during crises. The course examines proactive and reactive approaches to crisis communication from an academic and practical perspective. Elements of effective crisis communication plans and tactics are considered. Throughout the course, students are given the opportunity to analyze several crisis situations.

Expectations:
• Workload
  o One (1) academic credit requires 50 minutes a week of classroom or faculty instruction and about two hours of out of class student work for a 15-week course; 100 minutes a week of classroom or direct faculty instruction and about 3.5 hours of out of class student work for a 7.5-week course.
  o For a three-credit course, students should expect 2.5 hours a week of classroom or faculty instruction and a minimum of 5 hours of out of class student work for a 15-week
course; 5 hours of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of 10 hours of out of class student work for a 7.5-week course.

Attendance/ Participation policy:
The participation grade is based on your attention to course readings and content, exemplified by consistent and productive contributions to online class discussions, active participation in online exercises, and completion of homework, reading and written assignments. Participation is worth 20% of the total course grade. Quality of contributions, not quantity or length, will determine your participation grade. All responses to discussion questions are due no later than midnight of the Saturday on the week they are posted. Students must post at least one primary response to a discussion question and at least one response to other students’ posts.

Policy on late/incomplete work: Deadlines are firm.
If you hand in a late paper, expect 5 points off (e.g. from a B to a B-) for each day it is late. If a paper is more than one week overdue, expect an F for that assignment. Exceptions are made only in situations such as a medical emergency, but documentation from the medical provider must be submitted. No rewriting or resubmission of assignments allowed.

Communication with instructor: my response time is within usually 48 hours; best way to reach me is email; phone calls in afternoons are best.

Course Materials:

Required:

http://library.northeastern.edu/get-help/citations-bibliographies

Other Materials You can select any 2 of these Harvard Business School cases posted on BB for your 2 crisis analysis papers:

NASA after Challenger: Restoring an Image. HBS #9-591-009
Exxon: Communications after Valdez. HBS # 9-593-014
Johnson & Johnson: The Tylenol Tragedy. HBS #9-583-043
Media Policy - What Media Policy? HBR reprint # 94407
Intel’s Pentium: When the Chips are Down (A) # 9-595-058 & (B) # 9-595-059
The Perrier Recall: A Source of Trouble (A) # 9-590-104, and The Perrier Relaunch, (B) # 9-590-130
Student Learning Outcomes:
Based on satisfactory completion of this course, a student/learner should be able to:

- Understand and apply the language of the field to explain conceptual frameworks for risk assessment and crisis communication in written assignments.
- Describe in writing the relationship of crisis communication to principles of communication, organizational culture, and new forms of media.
- Apply best practice approaches to organizational crisis situations in written crisis analysis reports and communication plans.
- Design an effective crisis communication plan recommending solutions to efficiently address a crisis situation.

Grading/Evaluation Standards:
In the Assignments folder, click on the View/Complete Assignment link to view and submit each assignment.

Some assignments in this course are analyzed by TurnItIn (an Internet-based service that analyzes originality in written submissions) and the course instructor to ensure students have submitted original work for all assignments in this class during this term and to ensure submitted work complies with Northeastern University’s academic integrity expectations.

IN ADDITION, students may NOT use/reuse or “recycle” a paper or project submitted in another class for any assignment in this course. This includes students who may be retaking this same course for a different grade—that is to say students may not resubmit papers from the previous class. Students who want to rework a similar topic from another course, and do so in a substantially different way, should consult with the Instructor prior to moving forward with a topic/project.

Once your assignment has been graded, you will be able to view the grade and feedback provided by clicking on My Grades in the Tools module from the Northeastern University Online Campus tab.

Final course grades will be assigned on the following basis:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Numerical Equivalent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94-100</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-93.99</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89.99</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>84-86.99</td>
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### Grade Breakdown:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>Discussions</td>
<td>Throughout the semester, you will participate in discussion board forums. You will respond to one of the questions I posted to the discussion board by your course instructor prior to midnight EST on Thursday. Your secondary response to one of your classmates’ posts within each of the discussion threads must be posted by the corresponding Saturdays at midnight EST. Students must acknowledge a classmate’s comments in their posts. Each of your responses to the forums, and to the contributions of other students in the class, should be thoughtful and insightful and approximately 100-150 words in length. <strong>NOTE:</strong> Comments such as “I agree” or “good point” or other brief replies of no substance will not count towards your weekly post total. All postings are expected to be professional in tone, clear, comprehensible, competently produced and delivered and the content should reflect an understanding of the lectures and assigned readings.</td>
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<td>Written HW Assignment</td>
<td>Complete any one of the four written assignments (approx. 250 words) in response to one of the exercises in the text that I have assigned on the syllabus. <strong>Due on Sat night at midnight EST in week 2</strong></td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>Crisis Analyses</td>
<td>Complete two written analyses (approximately 500 words each) that examine real-life organizational crisis situations. These situations are based on the scenarios described in the HBS cases that I have listed on the syllabus &amp; posted in the course materials on BB. You will critique the company/individual in terms of what was done well and what perhaps could have been done better and why. <strong>Due on Sat night at midnight EST in weeks 4 and 6.</strong></td>
<td>20 points each = 40</td>
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**Organizational Crisis Communication Plan**

Select a company you are familiar with and develop a comprehensive written crisis communication plan (final draft approximately 1500-1750 words) based on the specific company and industry culture, risks, and stakeholders, etc. Refer to Guidelines posted on BB for what should be included in your plan.

**OR**

Write a 5-7 page research paper, which counts 30% of final grade. Choose a topic to describe and analyze that relates to one of the weekly topics – either a fairly crisis or a crisis-prone issue – and analyze how it was handled, based on course materials. Refer to Rubric on BB as a guide for the format to follow.

**Due: in week 7 on Saturday at midnight EST**

| Total | 100% |

**Course Schedule:**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Exercises/Assignments with due date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>3/5 -3/11</td>
<td>Introductions and Course Overview</td>
<td>Chapter 1: Foundation for Crisis Communication</td>
<td>*Complete discussion board contributions.</td>
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<td>Crisis Communication and Organizational Communication</td>
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<td>5 Foundational Planks</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3/12 -3/18</td>
<td>Types of Crises</td>
<td>Chapter 2: Defining Crisis Communication</td>
<td>*Complete discussion board contributions.</td>
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<td>Myths about Crises Key Terms</td>
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<td>*Complete and submit Written HW Assignment #1. Choose 1 (one) question to answer on p.16, on p.73, on p.131 OR on p.188.</td>
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<td><strong>Due on Sat. night at midnight EST</strong></td>
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<td>Week</td>
<td>Dates</td>
<td>Topics</td>
<td>Chapter</td>
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| 3    | 3/19-3/25 | Communication Theory  
Practical Theory  
Systems Theory  
Cultural Theory  
Classical Theory  
Human Resource Theory  
Critical Theory | Chapter 3: Organizational Theory and Crisis Communication | *Complete discussion board contributions. |
| 4    | 3/26-4/1  | Crisis Planning: Step by Step  
Proactive Planning for Crisis  
Stakeholder Theory/Inoculation Theory  
Globalization and Ethnocentrism | Chapter 4: Planning for Crisis | *Complete discussion board contributions.  
*Complete and submit Crisis Analysis of HBS case - #1.  
Due on Sat. night at midnight EST |
| 5    | 4/2-4/8    | Restoring Image: Theory and Approaches  
Understanding Responses and Learning from Failure | Chapter 5: Responding to Crisis | *Complete discussion board contributions. |
| 6    | 4/9-4/15   | Effective Meeting Strategies  
Meeting Agendas and Processes  
Primary & Secondary Conflict Interventions  
Leadership Styles | Chapter 7: Crisis Communication Teams | *Complete discussion board contributions.  
Complete and submit Crisis Analysis of HBS case - #2.  
Due on Sat. night at midnight EST |
| 7    | 4/16-4/21  | Misconceptions Regarding Speaking Skills  
Reducing Anxiety  
Analyzing the Audience | Chapter 8: Training the Spokesperson | *Complete discussion board contributions.  
*Complete and submit Organizational Crisis Communication Plan or Research Paper to instructor for |
### Speaking Styles

- Structuring Messages
- Delivering the Message

### feedback and assessment purposes.

**Due on Sat. night at midnight EST**

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<td>4/22-4/24</td>
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### End-of-Course Evaluation Surveys:

Your feedback regarding your educational experience in this class is very important to the College of Professional Studies. Your comments will make a difference in the future planning and presentation of our curriculum.

At the end of this course, please take the time to complete the evaluation survey at [https://neu.evaluationkit.com](https://neu.evaluationkit.com). Your survey responses are **completely anonymous and confidential**. For courses 7.5 weeks in length or shorter, surveys will be open one week prior to the end of the courses; for courses greater than 7.5 weeks in length, surveys will be open for two weeks. An email will be sent to your HuskyMail account notifying you when surveys are available.

### Academic Integrity:

A commitment to the principles of academic integrity is essential to the mission of Northeastern University. The promotion of independent and original scholarship ensures that students derive the most from their educational experience and their pursuit of knowledge. Academic dishonesty violates the most fundamental values of an intellectual community and undermines the achievements of the entire University.

As members of the academic community, students must become familiar with their rights and responsibilities. In each course, they are responsible for knowing the requirements and restrictions regarding research and writing, examinations of whatever kind, collaborative work, the use of study aids, the appropriateness of assistance, and other issues. Students are responsible for learning the conventions of documentation and acknowledgment of sources in their fields. Northeastern University expects students to complete all examinations, tests, papers, creative projects, and assignments of any kind according to the highest ethical standards, as set forth either explicitly or implicitly in this Code or by the direction of instructors.

Go to [http://www.northeastern.edu/osccr/academic-integrity-policy/](http://www.northeastern.edu/osccr/academic-integrity-policy/) to access the full academic integrity policy.
**Student Accommodations:**

The College of Professional Studies is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities to students with documented disabilities (e.g. mental health, attentional, learning, chronic health, sensory, or physical). To ensure access to this class, and program, please contact The Disability Resource Center (http://www.northeastern.edu/drc/) to engage in a confidential conversation about the process for requesting reasonable accommodations in the classroom and clinical or lab settings. Accommodations are not provided retroactively so students are encouraged to register with the Disability Resource Center (DRC) as soon as they begin their program. The College of Professional Studies encourages students to access all resources available through the DRC for consistent support.

**Library Services:**

The Northeastern University Library is at the hub of campus intellectual life. Resources include over 900,000 print volumes, 206,500 e-books, and 70,225 electronic journals. For more information, visit http://library.northeastern.edu/.

**Tutoring Services:**

Tutoring can benefit skilled professionals and beginning students alike. NU offers many opportunities for you to enhance your academic work and professional skills through free one-on-one academic support on and off campus. Tutoring is available in multiple subject areas.

For more information, visit http://www.cps.neu.edu/student-resources/tutoring-services.php.

**Northeastern University Online Technical Help:**

Get immediate 24/7 technical support for NU Online by calling 855-836-3520 or visiting the online Support Center. Support via e-mail is also available within one business day at NUOnline@neu.edu.

**Undergraduate Catalog:**

The College of Professional Studies Undergraduate Catalog is a reference/resource with information about curricula, resources, and academic and student policies.
For more information, visit http://www.cps.neu.edu/student-resources/.

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