Comm444901/Crisis Communication
3 Credits; Summer, 2016

Woods College of Advancing Studies
Summer 2016 Semester, June 27-August 5, 2016
Class Meeting Day and Time: M/W 6:00-9:15 p.m.

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Office Hours: M/W 5:30-6:00 p.m. and by appointment

Boston College Mission Statement
Strengthened by more than a century and a half of dedication to academic
excellence, Boston College commits itself to the highest standards of teaching and
research in undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs and to the pursuit
of a just society through its own accomplishments, the work of its faculty and staff,
and the achievements of its graduates. It seeks both to advance its place among the
nation’s finest universities and to bring to the company of its distinguished peers
and to contemporary society the richness of the Catholic intellectual idea of a
mutually illuminating relationship between religious faith and free intellectual
inquiry.

Boston College draws inspiration for its academic societal mission from its
distinctive religious tradition. As a Catholic and Jesuit university, it is rooted in a
worldview that encounters God in all creation and through all human activity,
especially in the search for truth in every discipline, in the desire to learn, and in the
call to live justly together. In this spirit, the University regards the contribution of
different religious traditions and value systems as essential to the fullness of its
intellectual life and to the continuous development of its distinctive intellectual
heritage.

Course Description
This course is designed to examine events and situations that actually or potentially
threaten the viability of an organization. Attention is devoted to developing an
effective crisis communication plan, speaking simultaneously to multiple
stakeholders, decision-making under pressure, and resolving--rather than litigating-
organizational problems. This course relies heavily on the case study method.
Among the case studies examined are the Tylenol product tampering incident, the
Exxon Valdez accident, the 2010 British Petroleum Oil spill, the Union Carbide
Bhopal gas leak, the Challenger Space Shuttle disaster, the Texaco racial slurs crisis,
school violence at Columbine High School, the recovery efforts during Hurricane
Katrina, the 2011 earthquake in Japan, and the 2012 school shootings in Newtown,
CT. This course fulfills the requirements for a writing-intensive seminar in the
Department of Communication at Boston College.
TEXTBOOK AND REQUIRED READING
Each student should have a copy of the following coursepack: Donald Fishman, *Crisis Communication* (Chestnut Hill, MA, BC Press, 2016). In addition, there may be a series of reading--as needed--placed on reserve at O’Neill Library or on Canvas. Reading should be complete on or before the dates listed, and students should be prepared to discuss intelligently the materials they have read.

CANVAS
Canvas is the Learning Management System (LMS) at Boston College, designed to help faculty and students share ideas, collaborate on assignments, discuss course readings and materials, submit assignments, and much more--all online. As a Boston College student, you should familiarize yourself with this important tool.

COURSE OBJECTIVES
1. Students will develop an understanding of the role of an image and the personality of a company during a crisis situation.

2. Students will be able to identify natural history theories, strategies-based theories, and miscellaneous theoretical approaches to crisis management.

3. Students will be able to bring the theory of mass communication to bear on the analysis of the media.

4. Students will be able to communicate effectively, orally and in writing.

COMPUTUATION OF THE COURSE GRADE
The approximate breakdown of points awarded during the course is as follows: Two-Thirds Term Examination, forty percent; Research Paper, forty percent; Evidence Kit, ten percent; and Class Participation, ten percent. Excessive absences during the semester will be cause for automatically lowering the final grade.

WCAS Grading System
The undergraduate grading system for the Woods College is as follows:

A (4.00), A- (3.67)
B+ (3.33), B (3.00) B- (2.67)
C+ (2.33), C (2.00), C- (1.67)
D+ (1.33). D (1.00), D- (.67)
F (.00)

All students can access final grades through Agora after the grading deadline each semester. Student who complete course evaluations can access grades earlier, as they are posted
**Deadlines and Late Work**
All work must be done on time to receive full credit. Assignments are due at the beginning of the class period on the specified dates. Late assignments will be graded accordingly.

**Course Assignments**
It is expected that you will spend 6 hours per week on out-of-class assignments and exercises. These are listed below. Please note that some weeks require more time and some weeks require less time, but the average is approximately 6 hours per week over the semester.

**Course Schedule**

Please bring your coursepack to class each time: Donald Fishman, *Readings in Crisis Communication* (BC Press, 2016).

**June 27:**  
Introduction to Crisis Communication  
(No Reading Due)  
• In Class Discussion of the GEICO Case

**June 29:**  
Fishman/Berg & Robb, "Crisis Management and the Paradigm Case," 77-93  
Fishman/Ten Berge, "The Tylenol Poisonings," 95-109

**July 4:**  
No Class: Independence Day

**July 6:**  
Fishman/William J. Small, "Exxon Valdez, How to Spend Billions and Still Get a Black Eye," 125-142  
Discussion of the 2010 British Petroleum Oil Spill
July 11:  
Fishman/Fink & Meyers, "Stage Analysis," 169-177
Fishman/Benoit, "Image Restoration Theory" (Strategies Theory), 179-188
Fishman/Birkland, 201-208, 209-240
Fishman/Downs, Issue-Attention Cycle, 241-253

July 13:  
No Class: Professor at Jesuit Conference at Loyola of New Orleans

July 18:  
Fishman/Technological Disasters, Lerbinger, 297-318; Vaughn, 325-334
Fishman/Natural Disasters, Lerbinger 335-367
Fishman/Sobel & Lesson (On FEMA), 375-393
Fishman/Lotke & Borosage (On FEMA), 395-406

Distribute Prep Sheet for Two-Thirds Term Examination; Discuss Evidence Kit

July 20:  
Fishman/Apologies, Tyler 143-165
Fishman/Benoit, 413-429
Fishman/Kobe Bryant, 433-437

Lecture on the Evidence Kit and Guidelines for the Research paper

July 25:  
Two-Thirds Term Examination
July 27: Evidence Kit is Due

July 29: Evidence Kit is Returned

August 1:
- Organizing the Research Paper;
- Continued Discussion of the Style Sheet;
- Writing Workshop

August 3:
- Research Papers are Due: Submit two copies of your research paper. Follow the Style Sheet guidelines discussed in class; see pages 507-519 of the coursepack

Students who want their papers returned should leave a stamped, self-addressed envelope, and I will mail the papers back to you as soon as possible.

Written Work

Woods College students are expected to prepare professional, polished written work. Written materials must be typed and submitted using the APA format. Develop your thoughts fully, clearly, logically, and specifically. Proofread all materials to ensure the use of proper grammar, punctuation and spelling. For writing support, please contact the Connors Family Learning Center.

ATTENDANCE

Class attendance is an important component of learning. Students are expected to attend all class session. When an occasion occurs that prevents a student from attending class, the student is responsible for contacting the instructor before the class meets. Students who miss class are still expected to complete all assignments and meet all deadlines. Many instructors grade for participation; if you miss class, you cannot make up participation points associated with that class. Makeup work may be assigned at the discretion of the instructor. If circumstances necessitate excessive absence from class, the student should consider withdrawing from the class. Four or more absences during the semester will drop one letter grade on the final grade.
Consistent with BC's commitment to creating a learning environment that is respectful of different backgrounds, we believe that every reasonable effort should be made to allow members of the university community to observe their religious holidays without jeopardizing their academic status. Students are responsible for reviewing course syllabi as soon as possible, and for communicating with the instructor promptly regarding any possible conflicts with observed religious holidays. Students are responsible for completing all class requirements for days missed due to conflicts with religious holidays.

ACCOMODATION AND ACCESSIBILITY

Boston College is committed to providing accommodations to students, faculty, staff and visitors with disabilities. Specific documentation from the appropriate office is required for students seeking accommodation in Woods College courses. Advanced notice and formal registration with the appropriate office is required to facilitate this process. There are two separate offices at BC that coordinate services for students with disabilities.

- The Connors Family Learning Center (CFLC) coordinates services for students with LD and ADHD
- The Disabilities Service Office (DSO) coordinates services with other disabilities.

Find out more about BC's commitment to accessibility at www.bc.edu/sites/accessibility.

SCHOLARSHIP AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Students in Woods College courses must produce original work and cite references appropriately. Failure to cite references is plagiarism. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not necessarily limited to, plagiarism, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, cheating on exams or assignments, or submitting the same material or substantially similar materials to meet the requirements of more than one course without seeking permission of all instructors concerned. Scholastic misconduct may also involve, but is not necessarily limited to, acts that violate the rights of other students, such as depriving another student of course materials or interfering with another student's work. Please see the Boston College policy on academic integrity for more information.