COM 562: Crisis Communication in Global Contexts

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Welcome *Crisis Communication in Global Contexts*

Overview

In a world increasingly ridden with risks and crises, the world of public information and public communications officers is becoming both more important and more complex. Incidents challenging and disrupting an organization's mission include employee misconduct, product tampering, violence in the workplace, civil unrest and protest, weather and natural disasters among a host of industry-specific crises. Without proper planning, an organization can be taken by surprise how quickly they land in the middle of a major story and unprepared to properly manage a crisis including especially the need for public information. What is more, these crises often 'grow' very quickly to involve national and international dimensions. Even the issues faced by small, local organizations / entities contain national and global components. And handled poorly, these situations can quickly spin what seems like out of control and become hard for managers to 'get ahead of' again.' Through the activities in Strategic Communication in a Global Age, you will be better prepared to plan for and execute crisis communication and management in ways which protect the continuity of your organization's image and mission.

Learning Objectives/Goals

Through the individual and class activities in *Crisis Communication in Global Contexts* students will

- Develop a **Crisis Communication Plan.** Students will choose an industry context (e.g., health care) or specific organization (e.g., hospital or community health outreach). Using that context/organization as the basis for their Crisis Communication Plan, including:
    - Determining and documenting current status of organizational image and principal mission/objectives
    - Distinguishing among crises, risks, stakeholder management and outrage management activities
    - Assessing most likely threats to the context/organization
    - Developing best practices for communicating with the public generally and for specific types of incidents
    - Documenting all critical information necessary for managing public information
    - Utilizing appropriate incident command system tools and processes
    - Managing social media for effective public information

COM 562
Crisis Communication in Global Contexts

Course Instructor: Todd Norton

Please contact the instructor through this course space. Use the Communicate Link/Tab to access internal email or the discussion board. If you must contact the instructor outside the course space, use the following contact information:

Email Address: tmnorton@wsu.edu

Text and Resources: There is no textbook for this course. Electronically accessible resources are listed in the course schedule.

Course Overview

In a world increasingly ridden with risks and crises, the world of public information and public communications officers is becoming both more important and more complex. Incidents challenging and disrupting an organization's mission include employee misconduct, product tampering, violence in the workplace, civil unrest and protest, weather and natural disasters among a host of industry-specific crises. Without proper planning, an organization can be taken by surprise how quickly they land in the middle of a major story and unprepared to properly manage a crisis including especially the need for public information. What is more, these crises often 'grow' very quickly to involve national and international dimensions. Even the issues faced by small, local organizations / entities contain national and global components. And handled poorly, these situations can quickly spin what seems like out of control and become hard for managers to 'get ahead of' again.' Through the activities in Strategic Communication in a Global Age, you will be better prepared to plan for and execute crisis communication and management in ways which protect the continuity of your organization's image and mission.

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Course Work

Crisis Communication Plan:

Each student will prepare a professionally-oriented report on the context or organization of their choosing. Paper will conform to the following structure: 20 page in length, single spaced (12 point space between paragraphs), 12 point font with 1" margins on all sides. It will have a minimum of 20 references from reputable journals, professional publications or web pages from sector-appropriate publications.

Students will choose a sector/organization based on their professional aspirations, submit the proposed topic to the discussion board where it will be reviewed by your peers for suitability. Once revised per peer feedback and approved by the instructor, students will dedicate the entire semester developing their Crisis Communication Plan through structured progress relevant units and activities.

Crisis Communication Plan will include the following sections:

1. Determining and documenting current status of organizational image and principal mission/objectives
    - Four pages, documenting of (a) sector / organization, (b) its mission and subsequent functions/objectives, and (c) identity and image.

2. Distinguishing among crises, risks, stakeholder management and outrage management activities
    - No specific section for this unit. Information is reviewed and to be used in the unit 3: assessing most likely threats.

3. Assessing most likely threats to the context/organization
    - Four pages, documenting likely threats to your chosen context/organization.
    - Documentation should include short review of relevant literature (including from Unit 2, above) and case studies to demonstrate the likelihood of occurrence and impact to your context/organization.

4. Continuity of Operations Planning
    - Four pages, Cataloging and prioritizing resources, capacities and skills available to organization in the case of disrupted service. Organizations can be caught off guard during both expected and unexpected events because they lack plans to help them continue critical operations. Even a simple snowstorm can leave people working from home, which, in turn, can outstrip the capacity of servers and workflow as people need to remotely log onto desktops and lack access to critical information. Continuity of Operations planning reduces the impact of these events by cataloging and prioritizing critical resources, skills and capacities.

5. Developing best practices for communicating with the public generally and for specific types of incidents. This assignment occurs in two stages.
    - First, two-three pages outlining and briefly describing best practices for incident management generally. Think of this in terms of a 'top ten' practices which public information officers should think about and practice in nearly all types of incidents.
    - Second, a one page summary of best practices for specific incidents your context/organization will likely face.

6. Documenting all critical information necessary for managing public information
    - Roughly two pages, documenting critical information for incident management. The purpose of this assignment is to deliberate what information you and other critical personnel have to manage an incident. Incidents often do NOT occur during normal operating hours. Or, incidents disrupt our capacity to communicate through normal channels. This means we need to have a lot of information (emergency plans, contact information, and credentials to access websites) available to us in a variety of ways (hard copy, cloud computing, digital copies on our person).

7. Utilizing appropriate incident command system tools and processes

- Three-four pages, outline and describe your organizational preparedness for incident management including the relationship between response, management and executive policy groups (among others as applicable).

8. Managing social media for effective public information
   - Three-four pages identifying appropriate platform for and use of social media. Different contexts and organizations need different things from use of social media and face different potential challenges in their use of these outlets for public information. For example, public safety agencies may not prefer Facebook because of the potential harm caused from spreading mis-information and may prefer Twitter for its ability to 'push' information out to followers (and therefore 'control the message' more).

     Furthermore, social media need not (and probably should not) be used solely for crisis management. Likely, crisis communication will need to be integrated into the daily social media strategies of the context/organization. In this section of the Crisis Communication Plan, students will utilize the general objectives and assets developed in earlier parts of the plan and develop a set of objectives for use and management of social media in crisis situations.

9. Editing Crisis Communication Plan

Content Evaluation Discussion Posts:

For each weekly unit you will prepare and discuss any questions you have regarding the materials. We will manage discussion as an ongoing thread with two distinct due dates: Initial posts due by Monday at 11:59 PM Pacific time; responses and peer feedback due by Wednesday at 11:59 PM Pacific time (see course schedule below). Each student is expected to post a total of 25 content evaluations posts including 12 original posts, worth 100 points total in your final grade.

Instructor Interaction

I will be available on email on a regular basis with responses guaranteed within 24 hours of receipt. And, I will be in the online class available for discussion three times/week for interaction and feedback.

Late Work Policy

No late assignments will be accepted without prior approval by the course Instructor. All unit posts and assignments must be submitted by 11:55 pm the night of the day they are due. See the course schedule for exact due dates.

Grading

Course Work	Points
Discussion Posts	100
CPP, section 1: Mission & Image	100
CPP, section 3: Likely Threats	100
CPP, section 4: COOP	100
CPP, section 5: Best Practices part 1	100
CPP, section 5: Best Practices part 2	100
CPP, section 6: Critical Incident Information	100
CPP, section 7: Incident Command System	100
CPP, section 8: Social media plan	100
Crisis Communication Plan	100

Grade	Points	Grade	Points
A	92-100	C	72-77
A-	90-91	C-	70-71
B+	88-89	D+	68-69
B	82-87	D	60-67
B-	80-81	F	Less than 60
C+	78-79		

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Incomplete Grade Policy

Incompletes are granted only with permission of the instructor and are subject to the following guidelines:

1. Students must request an incomplete in writing or by e-mail from the instructor before the end of the semester.
2. The request must be signed and dated by the student (or identified by student's e-mail address), and must explain the reasons behind the request for the incomplete.
3. In order to be considered for an incomplete, there are two main conditions:
   o a student must complete a minimum amount of the assigned course work. Specifically, a student must complete 75 percent of the course work.
   o a student must have a mathematical possibility of passing the class. A passing grade is 60 percent or above for the entire course.
4. If extraordinary circumstances (e.g., family emergency, serious illness) are involved and are documented to the instructor's satisfaction, the professor/ instructor retains the discretion to grant an incomplete even if the minimum conditions outlined above are not met.

If an incomplete is granted, the standard WSU policy applies (i.e., ALL work must be completed within one full year from the end of the enrollment semester at issue. Otherwise, an automatic grade of "F," or failing, will be entered on the student's transcript).

Course Schedule

For course work due dates, please view the Course Schedule. Expand the **Content** folder in the Map menu on the left by clicking the plus sign (+), then select **Course Schedule**.

Academic Regulations

Students enrolled in online courses are subject to the same University academic regulations as on-campus students. For the most accurate and up to date information start with your home campus Web site. For information specific to Academic Regulations please use the Website search function.

- WSU Online & Pullman Campus: http://wsu.edu/
- WSU Spokane: http://spokane.wsu.edu/
- WSU Tri-Cities: http://www.tricity.wsu.edu/
- WSU Vancouver: http://www.vancouver.wsu.edu

MIDTERM GRADE POLICY

Midterm grades will be submitted for students enrolled in undergraduate courses by 5:00 p.m. on the Wednesday of the eighth week of the fall and spring semesters.

For courses that are letter graded, midterm grades may reflect the full range of letter grades (A-F) or may use the C or F grade only. Specifics for this course are located at the top of the grading section. (If this information is missing please contact your instructor.)

- C and F are defined as follows:
    - A **C** midterm grade is given to any student who is making satisfactory progress.
    - An **F** midterm grade is given to any student whose progress is not acceptable and who needs to discuss his/her progress with the instructor.

The assessment should not be interpreted as a formal grade, but rather as an indication of the student's progress to date. Midterm grades are advisory and do not appear on the student's permanent record, the WSU transcript.

Student Privacy

As a University student, you have legal rights under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) for protection of your academic records. For a complete explanation of these rights, visit the URL associated with your home campus in the Academic Regulations section or http://www.registrar.wsu.edu/Registrar/Apps/FERPA.ASPX.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is the cornerstone of the university. You assume full responsibility for the content and integrity of the academic work you submit. You may collaborate with classmates on assignments, with the instructor's permission. However the guiding principle of academic

integrity shall be that your submitted work, examinations, reports, and projects must be your own work. Any student who violates the University's standard of conduct relating to academic integrity will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct and may fail the assignment or the course. You can learn more about Academic Integrity on your campus using the URL listed in the Academic Regulations section or http://online.wsu.edu/current_students/ar_integrity_plagiarism.aspx. Please use these resources to ensure that you don't inadvertently violate WSU's standard of conduct.

Any course-related materials, presentations, lectures, etc. are the instructor's intellectual property and may be protected by copyright. The use of University electronic resources (e.g., Angel) for commercial purposes, including advertising to other students to buy notes, is a violation of WSU's computer abuses and theft policy (WAC 504-26-218).

Online Collaboration

Threaded discussion posts in online course spaces are an integral part of the online learning environment. In certain courses, assessment of discussion posts is included as part of the final grade. You will be expected to participate in the online discussions in a way that engages with the topic and with the other participants. An overview of the criteria used in this course to evaluate your participation through your original and response posts is provided in the online course space, if applicable.

WSU is committed to the rights of all community members to freedom of expression and academic freedom. In order to protect the rights of all participants and to preserve the educational tone of online course spaces, the following rules apply:

1. Postings must comply with the University's policy on appropriate use of computing resources, including those regarding harassment and discrimination. Behavior prohibited by the Standards of Conduct for Students, is not permitted.
   - WSU Online & Pullman Campus: http://www.wsu.edu/ElectronicPolicy.html
   - WSU Spokane: http://spokane.wsu.edu/students/
   - WSU Tri-Cities: http://www.tricity.wsu.edu/current.htm
   - WSU Vancouver: http://studentaffairs.vancouver.wsu.edu/student-affairs/student-handbook

Instructors have the authority to remove posts that violate these rules. Continued postings in violation of these rules may result in removal of access rights, course failure, and, when appropriate, referral to the Office of Student Conduct.

Netiquette Tips:

- A feeling of safety is basic for any collaborative dialogue. Think about what you write and how it might be interpreted by the reader.
  - It is difficult to "read" emotion in online discussions – be clear, use emoticons or concisely express your feelings (e.g., "ha, ha")

- o Use of capitals sends the message that YOU ARE SHOUTING!
- Give positive feedback (good idea, thanks), be polite, and avoid hostile or curt comments.
- Apply the same standards you would follow in a face-to-face classroom discussion.

Critical Thinking

The ability to think and write critically is an essential skill in many walks of life. Critical thinking skills are developed and refined through practice, self-reflection, and the critique and support of peers and instructors. Throughout this course you will have many opportunities to exercise your analytical thinking, synthesize information, and apply knowledge to real-life situations. The course developer or your instructor may have provided a critical thinking rubric in this course space, if applicable, to assess your own writing and that of other students. Please review it carefully before completing each activity.

Disability Accommodations

Reasonable accommodations are available in online classes for students with a documented disability. All accommodations must be approved through your WSU Disability Services office. If you have a disability and need accommodations, we recommend you begin the process as soon as possible.

For more information contact a Disability Specialist on your home campus:

- WSU Online & Pullman: 509-335-3417 http://www.accesscenter.wsu.edu,Access.Center@wsu.edu
- Spokane: http://spokane.wsu.edu.html
- Tri-Cities: http://www.tricity.wsu.edu/disability/
- Vancouver: 360-546-9138 http://studentaffairs.vancouver.wsu.edu/student-resource-center/disability-services

Technical Support

If you need technical assistance, please expand the **Content** folder in the Map menu on the left by clicking the plus sign (+), then select **Technical Support**.

WSU Online Student Support

The WSU Online Web site (http://online.wsu.edu) has all the non-content and administrative related information you need to be a successful online learner. Login using your WSU Network ID and password to access your personalized information.

- Student Services information is available to provide assistance with any non-advising administrative questions
- Study tips and resources give you a good head start in assuring success with your course are also located on the Web site.

Library Support

All students enrolled in Washington State University online courses can use the WSU Libraries online databases and receive reference and research assistance from their home campus. Students can also borrow books and other circulating material and access full text journal articles.

- General Library Links by campus: http://www.wsulibs.wsu.edu/electric/

Review the Libraries' Online Information for more guidance.

- [Online Library Tour for Pullman Campus Undergraduates](#)
- [Online Library Tour for WSU Online Campus Students](#)

eTutoring

As a WSU student you have **FREE unlimited** access to eTutoring.org, a tutoring platform that enables students and tutors to collaborate in an online environment. This is not a course requirement, but simply an available resource that you may utilize as needed. With three ways to access a tutor you can choose the one that best fits your needs.

- Writing Lab tutors will respond to papers in ANY academic subject, including history, anthropology, sociology, and everything else. If you're working on a paper for ANY of your courses our tutors can help you. Just submit your paper, ask specific questions on the submission form and a tutor will respond within 24-48 hours.
- eChat rooms allow students to meet with tutors in one-on-one tutoring sessions via a fully interactive, virtual online environment.
- Students can also leave specific questions for an eTutor in any of our subjects by taking advantage of our eQuestions option. Our tutors will respond to your question within 24-48 hours.

The list of available tutoring subjects can be found on the http://etutoring.org/login.cfm?institutionid=176 site. Current subjects include Accounting, Anatomy & Physiology, Biology, Chemistry, Math and Calculus, Medical Coding, MS Office 2007, Physics, Spanish, Statistics, Web Development and Writing!

Academic Calendar

Please review the current Academic Calendar to become familiar with critical deadlines on your campus. Visit the WSU Academic Calendar page: http://www.registrar.wsu.edu/Registrar/Apps/AcadCal.ASPX. and select your home campus from the drop down menu.

On Campus Safety

Washington State University is committed to maintaining a safe environment for its faculty, staff, and students on all campuses. Safety is the responsibility of every member of the campus community and individuals should know the appropriate actions to take when an emergency arises. In support of our commitment to the safety of the campus community the University has developed a Campus Safety Plan. It is highly recommended that you visit this web site http://oem.wsu.edu/ to become familiar with the information provided as well as the site for your specific campus if applicable.

- WSU Pullman: http://safetyplan.wsu.edu
- WSU Spokane: http://spokane.safetyplan.wsu.edu/
- WSU Tri-Cities: http://www.tricity.wsu.edu/safetyplan/
- WSU Vancouver: http://www.vancouver.wsu.edu/safety-plan

Advanced Food Safety and Quality
Course Schedule

Week	Unit	Lesson	Assignment	Due Date
1/9	1	Role and Scope of Crisis Communication Plans in Incident Management and Public Information	Questions and Discussion about how the various components of the semester progress toward a Crisis Communication Plan	1/11
			Post your "Introduce Yourself" Discussion	1/13
			Respond to Peer Discussion Questions & Discussion	1/13
1/16	1	Role and Scope of Crisis Communication	Submit context/organization ideas for CPP development	1/16

			Plans in Incident Management and Public Information	Post responses to context/organization ideas	1/18
				Finalize context/organization for every student	1/20
1/23	1	Organization mission and image		Initial post and working draft of mission and image for chosen context/organization	1/23
				Responses to	1/25
				Respond to Peer Discussion Questions	1/27
1/30	2	Distinguishing Crisis, Risk Advocacy, Stakeholder and Outrage Management and factors impacting human response		Initial posts about types of incidents and human responses	2/1
				Respond to Peer Discussion Questions	2/3
2/6	3	Assessing likely threats to chosen context/organization		Initial post and working draft of likely threats document	2/6
				Responses to likely threats document.	2/8
				Submit likely threats document	2/10
2/13	4	Continuity of Operations Planning		Submit discussion of COOP	2/13
				Post Responses to COOPs	2/15
2/20	4	COOP		Submit draft of COOP	2/20
				Post responses to COOP	2/22
2/23	5	Best Practices		Post discussions about Best Practices for Public Information	2/23
				Submit responses to Best Practices discussion	2/25
2/28	5	Best Practices		Post draft of Best Practices, part 1	2/28
				Post responses to Best Practices,	2/30

			part 1	
			Submit final Best Practices, part 1	3/2
3/5	5	Best Practices	Submit draft of Best Practices, part 2	3/5
			Submit responses to Best Practices, part 2	3/7
			Submit final Best Practices, part 2	3/9
3/12		Spring Break		
3/19	6	Critical Information for Incident Management	Post Discussion of Critical Information components	3/19
			Post responses to critical information	3/23
			Post final critical information document	3/25
3/26	7	Incident Command System	Post Discussion of ICS 100, 200, and 700	3/26
			Post responses to ICS	3/28
			Post certification of ICS	3/30
4/2	8	Social Media Planning	Post discussion of Social Media for public information	4/2
			Post responses to discussions	4/4
4/9	8	Social Media	Post draft of Social Media Plan	4/9
			Respond to Peer Discussion Questions	4/11
			Post Social Media Plan	4/13
4/16	9	Crisis Communication Plan	Post Crisis Communication Plans	4/16
			Post feedback on CPPs	4/18

			Post final drafts of CPPs	4/20
4/23	9	Sensory evaluation	Respond to Peer Discussion Questions	4/27