



GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY
School of Continuing Studies
Public Relations and Corporate Communications

Crisis Communications (MPPR-810)

Dates: 5/22/2017 - 8/19/2017

Location: This course takes place online. Georgetown University School of Continuing Studies (SCS) uses Canvas as its Learning Management System. This course will be taught entirely through the Canvas platform. To learn more about Canvas, please go through the [Canvas Guide for Students](#).

Faculty: Jeff Flaherty

Virtual Office Hours: By appointment only. Contact me by email to set up an appointment.

Downloadable Syllabus

The complete syllabus is available in PDF (for download). If you do not have the free Adobe Reader to view the PDF file, please download at [Adobe](#).

COURSE DESCRIPTION

"It takes 20 years to build a reputation and five minutes to ruin it." Warren Buffett

In today's world of increased access to information, social media, and global news, responding to a crisis or threat to an organization's reputation has become more critical and immediate than ever before. Effective crisis communications can prevent or minimize the damage to an organization's reputation as the result of a crisis. The stakes are high and a strong crisis communicator needs to be prepared, nimble, and responsive.

This course is focused on the practical understanding and techniques of crisis communications learned and utilized over years of front-line experience. This class will equip students with the knowledge and practical skills necessary to prepare for and respond to incidents, issues and crises that can threaten the value of an organization's reputation.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Explain the value of a company's reputation and the importance of protecting it
2. Analyze the impact of social media on crisis communications
3. Identify best practices in crisis response preparation
4. Determine components of an effective crisis communications plan
5. Develop and write an effective strategic crisis response
6. Discuss and manage the personal impact that working on crises can have on a crisis communicator

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK

Fink, S. (2013). *Crisis communications: The Definitive Guide to Managing the Message*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill. ISBN 978-0-07-179921-8, eISBN 978-0-07-179922-5

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Technical Requirements

As an online student your "classroom" experience will be very different than a traditional student. As part of your online experience, you can expect to:

1. Communicate via email including sending attachments.
2. Navigate the internet using a Web browser.
3. Use office applications such as Microsoft Office or Google Docs to create documents..
4. Learn how to submit assignments in Canvas.
5. Communicate with peers using discussion boards and other platforms.
6. Upload and download saved files.
7. Have easy access to the Internet.
8. Navigate Canvas, including using the email component within Canvas.
9. Use a microphone to record audio through your computer.
10. Use an internal or external camera to record video through your computer.

In this course we will use Turnitin and Zoom.

- Turnitin is a writing assessment tool that is used to detect plagiarism and allows teachers to provide assignment feedback to students. [Instructions for Turnitin are available.](#)
- Zoom enables users to conduct synchronous ("real-time") conferences, presentations, lectures, meetings, office hours and group chats via audio, video, text chat and content sharing. [Instructions for Zoom are available.](#)

Computer Requirements

Students need to have sufficient technology and Internet access to complete this course. The requirements are listed by [Canvas in the Instructure Guides](#).

Audio and Video Capability

- You will need an internal or external microphone. Most computers now come with them built in.
- You will need an internal or external camera. Most computers now come with them built in.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS

This course is conducted entirely online, which means students do not have to be on campus to complete any portion of it. Students will participate in the course using Georgetown University's online learning management system called Canvas. Each Module will be released on a weekly basis every Friday at 11:59 pm (ET). Students are required to move through each module in sequential order.

Student Expectations

This course consists of 10 modules. You are expected to do the readings, watch the lecture videos, and to engage with the course material in depth. Your responsibilities include taking the module quizzes, completing the module assignments, and turning in your final plan. Participation is essential to your success in this class. In order to get full credit for participation, you will have to complete all of your module assignments and quizzes.

Time Expectations

Our online classes are designed to meet the same academic standards as our place-based (face-to-face) courses. You can think of each module equal to the same level of participation, commitment, and academic rigor as a face-to-face class. Students should plan on spending approximately 9-12 hours per week on the work for each online module.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

All students are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic and personal integrity in pursuit of their education at Georgetown. Academic dishonesty in any form is a serious offense, and students found in violation are subject to academic penalties that include, but are not limited to, failure of the course, termination from the program, and revocation of degrees already conferred. All students are held to the Honor Code.

The Honor Code pledge follows:

In the pursuit of the high ideals and rigorous standards of academic life, I commit myself to respect and uphold the Georgetown University Honor System: To be honest in any academic endeavor, and To conduct myself honorably, as a responsible member of the Georgetown community, as we live and work together.

Plagiarism

Stealing someone else's work is a terminal offense in the workplace, and it will wreck your career in academia, too. Students are expected to work with integrity and honesty in all their assignments. The Georgetown University Honor System defines plagiarism as "the act of passing off as one's own the ideas or writings of another." More guidance is available through the [Gervase Programs](#). If you have any doubts about plagiarism, paraphrasing, and the need to credit, check out [Plagiarism.org](#).

COURSE ACTIVITIES AND ASSIGNMENTS

Written work is due by the assigned due date on Canvas. **You must submit your weekly written assignment online by the time assigned in Canvas; DO NOT SEND YOUR PAPERS TO OTHER PERSONAL OR PROFESSIONAL EMAIL ADDRESSES.** Follow-ups and class participation is contingent on the timely submission of your initial responses.

Late Submission Policy:

As stated in the [Student Handbook](#), you must notify me and obtain my approval if you are unable to complete any assignment by the published submission deadline. Late assignments will not be accepted without valid reason/documentation, (e.g., medical condition, extenuating circumstance, etc.). Valid excuse is at the discretion of the instructor.

Assignments

Discussions: (30% of your grade)

Due: Modules 1, 2, 3(x2), 4, 5, 6, 7

Discussions with peers based on module topics, research, and course content

Writing Assignments: (25% of your grade)

Due: Modules 3, 5, 6, 7, 8

In-depth writing reflection, review and application of course topics and content

Quizzes, Reflections, and Activities: (15% of your grade)

Due: Modules Quizzes: 2, 4, 5, 10; Reflections 1, 7; Activities 4(x4)

Brief assessments to help reassure you of your learning and application of course material

Exams: (30% of your grade)

Due: Modules 6, 10

Two papers that model real-life scenarios in Crisis Communication

Citation Style

This course uses APA for all writing and research assignments. Resources for this citation style are available through

[Georgetown Library Citation Style Guide](#)

[APA Guidebook](#)

GRADING

Graduate course grades include A, A-, B+, B, B-, C and F. **There are no grades of C+, C- or D.**

Please reference the below grading scale:

A: 93-100%

A-: 90-92%

B+: 88-89%

B: 83-87%

B-: 80-82%

C: 70-79%

F: 69 and below%

ACCOMMODATIONS

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, individuals with disabilities are provided reasonable accommodations to ensure equity and access to programs and facilities. Students are responsible for communicating their needs to the Academic Resource Center, the office that oversees [disability support services](#), (202-687-8354; arc@georgetown.edu;) before the start of classes to allow time to review the documentation and make recommendations for appropriate accommodations. The University is not responsible for making special accommodations for students who have not declared their disabilities and have not requested an accommodation in a timely manner. Also, the University need not modify course or degree requirements considered to be an essential requirement of the program of instruction. For the most current and up-to-date policy information, please refer to the [Georgetown University Academic Resource Center website](#). Students are highly encouraged to discuss the documentation and accommodation process with an Academic Resource Center administrator.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Support Services

SCS offers a variety of support systems for students that can be accessed online, at the School of Continuing Studies downtown location, and on the main Georgetown campus:

- [Academic Resource Center](#)
- 202-687-8354 | arc@georgetown.edu

- [Counseling and Psychiatric Services](#)
- 202-687-6985

- [Institutional Diversity, Equity & Affirmative Action \(IDEAA\)](#)
- (202) 687-4798

Georgetown Library

Students enrolled in online School of Continuing Studies SCS coursework have access to the University Library System's eResources, including 500+ research databases, 1.5+ million ebooks, and thousands of periodicals and other multimedia files (films, webinars, music, and images). Students can access these resources through the [Library's Homepage](#) by using their University username (NetID) and password (this is the same login information used to access email, BlackBoard, etc.). The Library does not mail physical items to students.

SCS students may make an appointment with a librarian to discuss a research topic, develop a search strategy, or examine resources for projects and papers. Librarians offer an overview of and in-depth assistance with important resources for senior or master's theses, dissertations, papers and other types of research. Appointments are conducted using Google Hangout (video-conferencing function) through the Georgetown Gmail System or by telephone. This service is available to currently enrolled students who need assistance with Georgetown-assigned projects and papers. Please review the [Services & Resources Guide for Online Students](#) for additional information.

Research Guide

The [PRCC program has an extensive online Library Research Guide](#) designed for the subject and research specifications of our program. This Guide will give you direct access to the library resources central to your course research work.

Learning Resources

SCS offers a host of [learning resources](#) to its students. Two that you might find particularly helpful in this course are the [Writing Center](#) and [Refworks](#).

- The [Writing Center](#) offers professional writing support through its online peer tutoring service.
- [Refworks](#) is an online research management tool that aids in organizing, storing, and presenting citation sources for papers and projects.

Technical Support

Click on the Help link (on the bottom-left corner in Canvas) to reach Canvas Support, including the [Canvas Student Guide](#) and 24 hour Canvas Support Hotline at 855-338-2770.

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COMMUNICATIONS GUIDELINES

Netiquette Guidelines

To promote the highest degree of education possible, we ask each student to respect the opinions and thoughts of other students and be courteous in the way that you choose to express yourself. The topics in this course can be controversial and promote debate. Students should be respectful and considerate of all opinions.

In order for us to have meaningful discussions, we must learn to genuinely try to understand what others are saying and be open-minded about others’ opinions. If you want to persuade someone to see things differently, it is much more effective to do so in a polite, non-threatening way rather than to do so antagonistically. Everyone has insights to offer based on his/her experiences, and we can all learn from each other. Civility is essential.

Statement of Student Conduct, Civility, and Engagement

The School of Continuing Studies offers students the opportunity to engage with faculty, staff, and peers in ways that foster intellectual growth and development in their chosen field of study. It is important to recognize that each member of our community brings his or her own values, thoughts, perspectives, and experiences into each interaction. We expect students to behave in a manner that is civil and respectful of others, and appreciate the learning opportunities that come from engaging pluralistic perspectives in a dynamic educational environment.

Engagement within the SCS Georgetown community takes places in on-campus meeting spaces and classrooms, and extends to online learning platforms and forums. Students should be particularly mindful that participation in class discussions, group assignments, emails, blogs, and

social media reflect upon them personally, academically, and professionally. All viewpoints, editorials, and opinions expressed by students represent those students exclusively – and not the students' instructors, classmates, academic program, School, or University – even in cases when students are using Georgetown-affiliated systems like email, blogs, and online portfolios. The expectations for respect and civility are consistent for on-campus classes and spaces, as well as cyber, virtual, and online environments. Thus, civility and cybercivility are expected of all students, in all campus spaces.

SCS students are expected to adhere to the SCS guidelines for student conduct and the University Code of Student Conduct. In the event that a student's behavior is perceived to fall outside the stated SCS guidelines or may be a violation of the Code of Student Conduct, the matter may be referred to the Office of Student Conduct for further review and possible sanctioning. Such instances can include but are not limited to: disruption of official university functions (including teaching, research, administration), failure to comply with a directive issued by a University official, harassment and bullying, and incivility. For questions regarding the SCS student conduct expectations please review the policy in-full found in the [Graduate Professional Studies Student Handbook](#). For questions about the Code of Student Conduct, please review the information provided by the [Office of Student Conduct](#).

Communication with Peers

Notifications

In this course, we will use Canvas to send email for private messages. You can either check your messages in the Canvas system or set your notifications to your preferred method of contact. Please check your messages at least once per day. When submitting messages, please do the following:

- Put a subject in the subject box that describes the email content with your name and module.
- Do not send messages asking general information about the class, please [post those in the General Questions Discussion Board Forum](#).

Questions Forum

In online courses, everyone will likely have many questions about things that relate to the course, such as clarification about assignments and course materials. Please post these in the [General Question Discussion Board Forum](#), which you can access by clicking Discussions in the course navigation menu. This is an open forum, and you are encouraged to give answers and help each other.

Turnaround and Feedback

If you have a concern and send me a message, you can expect a response within two business days. Please allow five business days for assessment submission feedback.

Tentative Syllabus and Course Schedule

The syllabus may be subject to change based on emerging topics and other needs of the class. I will make every effort to provide as much advance notice as possible for any alterations.