



## COM 485 Crisis Communications

Summer 2024

**Course Credits:** 4

**Contact Hours:** 56 hours

**Instructor:** TBA

**Email:** TBA

### COURSE OBJECTIVES

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In this advanced crisis communication course, students explore managing communication during crises. Through theory, case analyses, and practical applications, they learn Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) and assess real-world cases for effective response strategies. They develop skills in crisis message crafting, media relations, and social media management, gaining proficiency to navigate complex scenarios with confidence.

Upon Completion of this Course, students will be able to:

1. Examine crisis communication approaches using real-world examples.
2. Create effective communication strategies customized to crisis scenarios.
3. Learn the fundamentals of crisis communication in companies.
4. Learn how to manage communication issues in the midst of an organizational crisis.
5. Learn practical strategies for successfully navigating and responding to crisis circumstances.

### PREREQUISITES

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N/A

### GRADING

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Grades will be determined by accumulating points, with 100 points being the maximum, as follows:



ITEM	POINTS
Quizzes	15 Points
Discussion	15 Points
Assignments	20 Points
Midterm	20 Points
Final Exam	30 Points
Total	100 Points

Late submissions will be graded at the end of the course. Grades will be assigned according to the following rule:

$A \geq 90 > B \geq 80 > C \geq 70 > D \geq 60 > F$ .

We reserve the right to make adjustments to the overall grading policy.

## **COURSE MATERIALS**

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### **Required Texts:**

W. Timothy Coombs, Sherry J. Holladay, *The Handbook of Crisis Communication*, 1<sup>st</sup> Wiley-Blackwell, 2012.

### **Recommended (Optional) Texts or Other Materials:**

None

## **COURSE TOPICS**

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MODULE	TASKS
Module 1	<b>Topics:</b> Topic 1: Parameters for Crisis Communication. Topic 2: Crisis Communication and Its Allied Fields. Topic 3: Crisis Communication Research in Public Relations Journals: Tracking Research Trends Over Thirty Years. Topic 4: Case Studies. <b>Assessments:</b> Quiz#1 Discussion#1



Module 2	<p><b>Topics:</b>  Topic 5: Textual Analysis.  Topic 6: Content Analysis.  Topic 7: Examining the Effects of Mutability and Framing on Perceptions of Human Error and Technical Error Crises: Implications for Situational Crisis Communication Theory.  Topic 8: Crisis Response Effectiveness: Methodological Considerations for Advancement in Empirical Investigation into Response Impact.</p> <p><b>Assessments:</b>  Quiz#2  Discussion#2</p>
Module 3	<p><b>Topics:</b>  Topic 9: Thirty Common Basic Elements of Crisis Management Plans: Guidelines for Handling the Acute Stage of “Hard” Emergencies at the Tactical Level.  Topic 10: Effective Public Relations in Racially Charged Crises: Not Black or White.  Topic 11: New Media for Crisis Communication: Opportunities for Technical Translation, Dialogue, and Stakeholder Responses.  Topic 12: Organizational and Media Use of Technology During Fraud Crises.</p> <p><b>Assessments:</b>  Midterm  Assignment#1</p>
Module 4	<p><b>Topics:</b>  Topic 13: Organizational Use of New Communication Technology in Product Recall Crises.  Topic 14: Crisis Communication, Complexity, and the Cartoon Affair: A Case Study.  Topic 15: Crisis Communicators in Change: From Plans to Improvisations.  Topic 16: Contingency Theory of Strategic Conflict Management: Directions for the Practice of Crisis Communication from a Decade of Theory Development, Discovery, and Dialogue.</p> <p><b>Assessments:</b>  Quiz#3  Discussion#3</p>



Module 5	<p><b>Topics:</b> Topic 17: Crisis-Adaptive Public Information: A Model for Reliability in Chaos. Topic 18: The Dialectics of Organizational Crisis Management. Topic 19: Considering the Future of Crisis Communication Research: Understanding the Opportunities Inherent to Crisis Events through the Discourse of Renewal. Topic 20: Pursuing Evidence-Based Crisis Communication.</p> <p><b>Assessments:</b> Final Exam Assignment#2</p>
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## ATTENDANCE

1) Class attendance is required. Missing classes without permission will lead to decrease in overall grade.

Missing less than two classes: no penalty.

Missing more than two classes: 7% will be taken off from the overall grade.

If the instructor reports a student's frequent missing of class to the Soochow University Academic Administration Office, the student might get a written warning and might be prohibited from attending final exam.

2) Participants in this course are expected to arrive in class promptly and adequately prepared. The primary objective of this course is to critically engage with the readings and the subject matter. Therefore, course participants are expected to have completed the reading prior to class and prepare thoughtful reflections/commentaries to share with fellow colleagues.

## LEARNING REQUIREMENTS

- 1) Late assignments are not acceptable and are subjected to grade deductions.
- 2) Assignments submitted in the wrong format will be counted as not submitted.
- 3) Failure to submit or fulfill any required course component results in failure of the class.
- 4) Make-up for midterm and final exams only with valid excuses, as defined by the University.
- 5) In order to earn a Certificate of Completion, participants must thoughtfully complete all assignments by stated deadlines and earn an average quiz score of 50%



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or greater.

### **TECHNOLOGY POLICY**

The use of electronic devices in class is distracting, both for the user and for the rest of the class. Only non-programmable calculators can be used in the tests and exam. Any attempts to use cell phones and other electronic communication devices will be seemed as cheating. Laptops are discouraged, unless you use them for activities DIRECTLY related to the course (eg., note taking, reading course documents).

### **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY**

Soochow University highly values the academic integrity and aims to promote the academic fairness, honesty and responsibility. Any academic dishonesty behaviors and any attempts to cheats and plagiarism will be reported to the university administration office. A written warning and the relevant penalties will be imposed. The record might be shown on the official university transcript.

### **DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION**

Soochow University is committed to maintaining a barrier-free environment so that students with disabilities can fully access programs, courses, services, and activities at Soochow University. Students with disabilities who require accommodations for access to and/or participation in this course are welcome.

Note:

Please contact the University Administrative Office immediately if you have a learning disability, a medical issue, or any other type of problem that prevents professors from seeing you have learned the course material.