

**Crisis Communication**  
**AMS 3350-001**  
**Course Syllabus**  
**Spring 2013**

**Day/Times:** Tuesday/Thursday 1-2:15 PM  
**Location:** HH 2.502

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**Professor Contact Information**

**Dr. Lynn Winstead Mabe**  
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**Office Hours:**  
    **Tuesdays** 10 am – 1pm

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**Course Description**

This class is about crisis communication. It will focus on the definition of crisis and the elements of crisis communication, crisis response, ethical communication in crisis, response to risk and various forms of crisis events will also be a primary focus. It is designed to teach about the components of crisis communication issues through lectures, assigned readings, film/video screenings and writing assignments. Achievement of these goals, though, is primarily up to you. Not only do you need to attend carefully to readings, class discussions, and video presentations, you need to THINK about these materials and ideas.

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**Student Learning Objectives/Outcomes**

At the end of this course, students will be expected to have learned and be able to articulate the following:

1. The definition and components of crisis events and communication prior to, during and after a crisis.
  2. The different ways of handling various levels of crisis.
  3. The ethical considerations in planning for and responding to crisis events.
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**Required Texts & Materials**

Ulmer, R.R., Sellnow, T.L. & Seeger, M.W. (2011). 2nd edition. *Effective Crisis Communication: Moving From Crisis to Opportunity*. Sage: Thousand Oaks, CA.

Coombs, W. T. (2012) 3rd edition. *Ongoing Crisis Communication: Planning, Managing, and Responding*. Sage: Los Angeles, CA.

Crisis communication related current events and outside media regarding crisis communication issues.

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	<b>Tuesdays</b>	<b>Thursdays</b>
<b>Week 1</b>	<b>January 15th</b>	<b>January 17th</b>
	Class Expectations, Syllabus, Policies and Procedures	Group Meetings, Read Chapter 1 & 2 Coombs Presentation Preparations & Current Event Paper
<b>Week 2</b>	<b>January 22nd</b>	<b>January 24th</b>
	Coombs Chapters 1 & 2 Presentations	Group Meetings, Read Chapter 3 & 4 Coombs Presentation Preparations & Current Event Paper
<b>Week 3</b>	<b>January 29th</b>	<b>January 31st</b>
	Coombs Chapters 3 & 4 Presentations	Group Meetings, Read Chapter 5 & 6 Coombs Presentation Preparations & Current Event Paper
<b>Week 4</b>	<b>February 5th</b>	<b>February 7th</b>
	Coombs Chapters 5 & 6 Presentations	Group Meetings, Read Chapter 7, 8 & 9 Coombs Presentation Preparations & Current Event Paper
<b>Week 5</b>	<b>February 12th</b>	<b>February 14th</b>
	Coombs Chapters 7, 8 & 9 Presentations	Work on Test
	<b>****TEST 1 POSTED****</b>	Read Ulmer et al Chapters 1 & 2
<b>Week 6</b>	<b>February 19th</b>	<b>February 21st</b>
	Ullmer, Sellnow & Seeger: Chapters 1 & 2 Presentations	Group Meetings, Read Chapter 3 & 4 Ulmer et al. Presentation Preparations & Current Event Paper
	<b>**Hard Copy of Test Due Beginning of Class**</b>	
<b>Week 7</b>	<b>February 26th</b>	<b>February 28th</b>
	Ullmer, Sellnow & Seeger: Chapters 3 & 4 Presentations	Group Meetings, Read Chapter 5 & 6 Ulmer et al. Presentation Preparations & Current Event Paper
<b>Week 8</b>	<b>March 5th</b>	<b>March 7th</b>
	Ullmer, Sellnow & Seeger: Chapters 5 & 6 Presentations	Group Meetings, Read Chapter 7 & 8 Ulmer et al. Presentation Preparations & Current Event Paper
<b>Week 9</b>	<b>March 12th</b>	<b>March 14th</b>
	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>
<b>Week 10</b>	<b>March 19th</b>	<b>March 21st</b>
	Ullmer, Sellnow & Seeger: Chapters 7 & 8 Presentations	Group Meetings, Read Chapter 9 & 10 Ulmer et al. Presentation Preparations & Current Event Paper
		<b>CURRENT EVENT TOPIC PAPER DUE AT MIDNIGHT UPLOADED TO ELEARNING</b>
<b>Week 11</b>	<b>March 26th</b>	<b>March 28th</b>
	Ullmer, Sellnow & Seeger: Chapters 9 & 10 Presentations	Group Meetings, Read Chapter 11 & 12 Ulmer et al. Presentation Preparations
<b>Week 12</b>	<b>April 2nd</b>	<b>April 4th</b>
	Ullmer, Sellnow & Seeger: Chapters 11 & 12 Presentations	Group Meetings, Read Chapter 13 Ulmer et al. Presentation Preparations
<b>Week 13</b>	<b>April 9th</b>	<b>April 11th</b>
	Ullmer, Sellnow & Seeger: Chapter 13 Presentations	Make Ups and Catch Ups
<b>Week 14</b>	<b>April 16th</b>	<b>April 18th</b>
	Make Ups, Catch Ups, Test Review	Work on Test
	<b>****TEST 2 POSTED****</b>	
<b>Week 15</b>	<b>April 23rd</b>	<b>April 25th</b>
	<b>**TEST DUE IN INSTRUCTOR'S OFFICE 2PM**</b>	
<b>Week 16</b>	<b>April 30th</b>	<b>May 2nd</b>
	University Scheduled Reading Days and Exams	
<b>Week 17</b>	<b>May 7th</b>	<b>May 9th</b>
	University Scheduled Reading Days and Exams	

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## Grading and Course Requirements

20%	Attendance AND Participation
20%	Group Presentation and Summary Paper
20%	Exam 1
20%	Exam 2
20%	Current Event Crisis Paper

**Attendance AND Participation:** Students are required to attend class. You will be given an attendance/participation grade for every class. You will basically start out with an attendance/participation grade of 100. If you miss one Tuesday class meeting/discussion, you will still have a 100 because there is one "free" absence. After that first absence, 10 pts will be deducted from the grade of 100, and for every Tuesday class absence after that, another 10 pts will be deducted. Please note that absences and lack of participation will have a significant impact on your grade. This portion of the class makes up 20% of your grade. Participation is more than just showing up; it is getting engaged in the discussion and actively learning. Points will be taken off of your participation grade for talking/whispering to other students while I or another student is presenting material to the class. Sometimes it is necessary to miss class. Each of us must make a choice in this regard, so consider it your choice to miss class. The attendance and participation policy has been outlined so you should be aware of the related grading criteria. There is no need to contact me about missing class unless there is some specific circumstance that you would like for me to be aware of. Also, please do not call or email me to ask me what you missed. You should check elearning for any class assignments. You are responsible for all class information regardless of whether you were able to attend or not. In addition to checking elearning, I suggest that you exchange emails and phone numbers with at least two people so that you can contact a classmate for information. FORWARD YOUR UTD EMAIL TO YOUR REGULAR EMAIL ACCOUNT IF YOU DO NOT CHECK YOUR UTD ACCOUNT DAILY! **PLEASE NOTE:** leaving early, coming late and lack of participation will affect your grade. Attendance, being on time, staying through class and participating ALL factor into your attendance and participation grade. Do not make the mistake of thinking you can come into class with 10 minutes left and be counted fully present, or that you can leave after being there for 10 minutes and be counted as present. Leaving early and arriving late will be noted and an appropriate penalty will be applied to the attendance/participation grade.

**Group Presentation:** Every week 2 chapters will be covered by a group of students who will be assigned to present key topics/concepts from the chapters for the week as a group presentation. You will be required to bring in an outside resource to illustrate the concepts, show as an example, etc. (using a current event, a website, or something in the media related to the chapter) assigned for that date. This will be a major portion of the class grade (20%). The grading criteria for this presentation will be presented by the instructor and explained and please reference the teacher grading rubric and the handout for how this assignment is graded. Each student in the group presentation will rate all of the other students on 5 criteria regarding participation and effort towards the completed group presentation. The average of the student ratings will be averaged with the teacher score of the overall quality, effort and relevance of the presentation. If a student is absent on the day of the group presentation that they are supposed to present, the ONLY make up opportunity will be an individual presentation at the end of the semester on a topic relevant to interpersonal communication of the professor's choosing, and the highest grade available will be an 70 (30 point penalty for not doing the group presentation). Please see the handout for more information about the group presentation.

**Late Work:** PLEASE NOTE: Assignments are due at the beginning of class. They are considered late if they are handed in after roll has been called. Again, anything “due” this semester is due at the beginning of class and is considered late after roll has been called; 10 pts off after roll has been called and 10pts off every day late after that.

**Exams:** There will be two exams. They are comprehensive and worth 20% of your grade EACH and are ALL ESSAY and will be posted online through elearning. The bulk of the questions are taken from readings and presentations but it is important to pay attention to videos and participate in class discussions. I sometimes draw from these sources as well to design the test. I will explain more about the test taking procedures in class as the time for that draws closer. **PLEASE SEE ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE FOR WHEN THE HARDCOPIES ARE DUE!** Again, see the late work policy above. Also, any student collaboration of ANY KIND on tests will result in a zero and a referral to the Dean over academic integrity for investigation and potential disciplinary and academic penalties.

**Class Expectations:** Texting, Instant Messaging, Chatting and just generally using an electronic device to AVOID paying attention will result in points being taken off of your participation grade.

**Classroom Citizenship:** Disrespect of any student or of the professor will not be tolerated. This behavior will be reflected in the Class Participation Grade. We are here to listen, with an open mind, and learn; i.e.: to be good citizens.

**Elearning:** Elearning is a major source of communication and involvement in this class. You will use elearning for various activities and assignments. For example, class emails, engaging in class discussions on the discussion board, weekly assignments and other various activities in this class. Please make yourself familiar with elearning if you are not already. It will be an essential part of this class.

**Current Event Crisis Paper:** Pick a current crisis event and give an overall summary of the event and then RELATE THE CRISIS to the chapter lessons/stages, etc. that we have discussed up to that point in the class. This should be an **8-10 page paper, in APA format** and you must relate the components of your chosen current event topic to a **MINIMUM of TEN components** previously discussed in class. **The paper is due uploaded to elearning by MIDNIGHT THURSDAY MARCH 21<sup>ST</sup>.** Therefore, you can relate the current event to the entire Coombs book and to chapters 1-10 from the Ullmer, Sellnow & Seeger book. **YOU MUST SIGN UP FOR A TOPIC** and will be penalized if you repeat a topic that someone else already chose. **Topic sign up will be through a class sign-up sheet with the instructor** so you can see all the other topics chosen and will be on a first come, first serve basis. **YOU MAY NOT CHANGE YOUR TOPIC** once you have signed up for it. I promise you there are enough crisis events to go around. The “current event” must have occurred AFTER NOVEMBER 1, 2012. There are crisis events in the media EVERY day. If you have any questions or concerns about your topic please come and ask me.

**Email:** The University of Texas at Dallas recognizes the value and efficiency of communication between faculty/staff and students through electronic mail. At the same time, email raises some issues concerning security and the identity of each individual in an email exchange. The university encourages all official student email correspondence be sent only to a student’s U.T. Dallas email address and that faculty and staff consider email from students official only if it originates from a UTD student account. This allows the university to maintain a high degree of confidence in the identity of all individual corresponding and the security of the transmitted information. UTD furnishes each student with a free email account that is to be used in all communication with university personnel. The Department of Information Resources at U.T. Dallas provides a method for students to have their U.T. Dallas mail forwarded to other accounts. **PLEASE FORWARD YOUR UTD EMAIL TO YOUR REGULAR EMAIL ACCOUNT IF YOU DO NOT CHECK YOUR UTD ACCOUNT DAILY!**

**Cell Phones, Laptops, Tablets, Etc.:** Phones on silent and put away!! I have a teenager; I know what “secret texting” looks like. I have a teenager; I know what surfing the internet vs. typing something academic looks like. I have a teenager; I know what scrolling through Facebook, twitter, tumblr and all those other sites looks like. I have a teenager; I know what YouTube and just generally jacking around on a computer or phone looks like. Take note here! You will not know when I mark you down for texting, typing a paper for a different class during my class, playing online poker, messaging with your friends on Facebook. I will just write down on the roll sheet for that day the specifics of the activity you were “otherwise engaged in” and will take points off of your attendance/participation grade. I would tread lightly if you come to see me about your attendance/participation grade. Because I promise you will be met with something like the following, “On 2/1 you were texting, on 2/8 you were on Facebook, on 2/15 you were watching YouTube videos.....”. I do pay attention to these activities and points will be deducted from your grade. I WANT you to pay attention; I WANT you to listen and learn. It MATTERS to me. ☺

***Policy on Scholastic Dishonesty: I have a zero tolerance policy on cheating and plagiarism. Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University.***

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## **Policies and Procedures for Students**

The University of Texas at Dallas provides a number of policies and procedures designed to provide students with a safe and supportive learning environment. Brief summaries of the policies and procedures are provided for you at <http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies> and include information about technical support, field trip policies, off-campus activities, student conduct and discipline, academic integrity, copyright infringement, email use, withdrawal from class, student grievance procedures, incomplete grades, access to Disability Services, and religious holy days. You may also seek further information at these websites:

[http://www.utdallas.edu/BusinessAffairs/Travel\\_Risk\\_Activities.htm](http://www.utdallas.edu/BusinessAffairs/Travel_Risk_Activities.htm)  
<http://www.utdallas.edu/judicialaffairs/UTDJudicialAffairs-HOPV.html>  
<http://www.utsystem.edu/ogc/intellectualproperty/copypol2.htm>  
<http://www.utdallas.edu/disability/documentation/index.html>

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These descriptions and timelines are subject to change at the discretion of the Professor!!