



## Graduate Course Syllabus

### COM 657: Crisis Communication in a 24/7 World

Center: Online

#### Course Prerequisites

COM 500 or COM 510

#### Course Description

The pervasiveness of social media, 24-hour news coverage, and mobile communications has transformed the role of public relations specialists. What constituted 'private' has become increasingly public given individuals' immediate access to multiple platforms and technologies to publish sensitive information. Protecting a brand and maintaining a consistent message in the maelstrom of broadcasted opinions is certainly more difficult than ever before. This course addresses the topics of public relations ethics and crisis management through the investigation of landmark cases and hypothetical crisis scenarios, preparing students to develop crisis management, prevention, and response skills crucial for today's media environment.

#### Course Outcomes

- Recognize and respond to crisis communication challenges by successfully implementing ethically sound strategies on new media platforms that maintain a positive brand image
- Develop an authentic response to crisis management situations through a cogent analysis of relevant case studies and real-time scenarios
- Employ innovative technologies and tactics to disseminate messages to specific target audiences about political officials, corporations, and public figures
- Evaluate social media trends and related audience reactions with an open-minded, empathetic treatment of different cultural perspectives
- Develop a responsible message integrating a contemporary knowledge base of public relations ethics, brand imaging, and contemporary media strategies

#### Required Materials

Using your learning resources is critical to your success in this course. Please purchase directly through the [SNHU Online Bookstore](#) rather than any other vendor. Purchasing directly from the bookstore ensures that you will obtain the correct materials and that the IT Service Desk, your advisor, and the instructor can provide you with support if you have problems.

*The Handbook of Crisis Communication*

Coombs, W.T., and Holladay, S.J. (editors)

### **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**

As indicated in our core values, SNHU is committed to “embrace diversity where we encourage and respect diverse identities, ideas, and perspectives by honoring difference, amplifying belonging, engaging civilly, and breaking down barriers to bring our mission to life.”

This may or will be reflected in SNHU’s curriculum as we embrace and practice diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) to provide the most transformative experience for our students, faculty, and staff. Because topics pertaining to DEI can be sensitive, please remember that embodying and practicing diversity, equity, and inclusion is one of our core values that you will encounter throughout the academic experience. In higher education, we are expected to think and engage critically. Use a growth mindset to embrace the diverse readings, course assignments, and experiences of your peers and faculty.

For more information about DEI at SNHU, please visit our website at the [Office of Diversity and Inclusion](#).

### **Instructor Availability and Response Time**

Your class interaction with the instructor and your classmates will take place on a regular, ongoing basis. Your instructor will be actively engaged within the course throughout the week. You will normally communicate with your instructor in the weekly discussions or the General Questions discussion topic so that your questions and the instructor’s answers benefit the entire class. You should feel free, however, to communicate with your instructor via SNHU email at any time, particularly when you want to discuss something of a personal or sensitive nature. Your instructor will generally provide a response within 24 hours. Instructors will post grades and feedback (as applicable) within seven days of an assignment’s due date, or within seven days of a late submission.

### **Grade Distribution**

Assignment Category	Number of Graded Items	Point Value per Item	Total Points
Discussions	10	25	250
Short Papers	6	40	240
Final Project			
Milestone One	1	35	35
Milestone Two	1	85	85
Milestone Three	1	90	90
Final Project Submission	1	300	300
			<b>Total Course Points: 1,000</b>

This course may also contain practice activities. The purpose of these non-graded activities is to assist you in mastering the learning outcomes in the graded activity items listed above.

## University Grading System: Graduate

Grade	Numerical Equivalent	Points
A	93–100	4.00
A-	90–92	3.67
B+	87–89	3.33
B	83–86	3.00
B-	80–82	2.67
C+	77–79	2.33
C	73–76	2.00
F	0–72	0.00
I	Incomplete	
IF	Incomplete/Failure *	
W	Withdrawn	

\* Please refer to the [policy page](#) for information on the incomplete grade process.

### Grading Guides

Specific activity directions, grading guides, posting requirements, and additional deadlines can be found in the Assignment Guidelines and Rubrics section of the course.

### Weekly Assignment Schedule

All reading and assignment information can be found within each module of the course. Assignments and discussion posts during the first week of each term are due by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time. Assignments and discussion posts for the remainder of the term are due by 11:59 p.m. of the student's local time zone.

In addition to the textbook readings that are listed, there may be additional required resources within each module.

Module	Topics and Assignments
1	Defining Crisis Communication <i>The Handbook of Crisis Communication</i> , Introduction and Chapters 1, 2, and 3 1-1 Discussion: Getting Started 1-2 Discussion: Changes in Communication 1-3 Final Project Document Review 1-4 Milestone One: Crisis Communication Evaluation Draft
2	Different Approaches by Different Sectors <i>The Handbook of Crisis Communication</i> , Chapters 4, 5, 6, and 7 2-1 Discussion: Going Viral 2-2 Short Paper: Public Perception

Module	Topics and Assignments
3	<p>The Impact on Stakeholders During and After a Crisis</p> <p><i>The Handbook of Crisis Communication</i>, Chapters 8, 9, 10, 29, and 31</p> <p>3-1 Discussion: Remembering the Internal Stakeholders</p> <p>3-2 Practice: Messaging for Internal Stakeholders</p> <p>3-3 Short Paper: Understanding Stakeholder Needs</p>
4	<p>Planning for a Crisis</p> <p><i>The Handbook of Crisis Communication</i>, Chapters 11 and 12</p> <p>4-1 Discussion: Essential Planning for PR/Crisis Communication</p> <p>4-2 Short Paper: Reaching Your Audience Quickly</p>
5	<p>Controversial Cases</p> <p><i>The Handbook of Crisis Communication</i>, Chapters 13, 15, 16, and 17</p> <p>5-1 Discussion: The Impact of Social Media on PR and Crisis Management</p> <p>5-2 Milestone Two: SWOT Analysis Draft</p>
6	<p>Technology and Crisis Communication</p> <p><i>The Handbook of Crisis Communication</i>, Chapters 14, 18, 19, and 20</p> <p>6-1 Discussion: Media Options</p> <p>6-2 Short Paper: Tweeting Today</p>
7	<p>When the Crisis Becomes Global</p> <p><i>The Handbook of Crisis Communication</i>, Chapters 21, 22, and 23</p> <p>7-1 Discussion: It's a Small World</p> <p>7-2 Short Paper: Global Brand Crisis</p>
8	<p>The Contingency Theory</p> <p><i>The Handbook of Crisis Communication</i>, Chapters 25, 26, and 27</p> <p>8-1 Discussion: Adaptability in Communications</p> <p>8-2 Milestone Three: Campaign Redesign Draft</p>
9	<p>Communicating Before a Crisis and Embracing Public Relations</p> <p><i>The Handbook of Crisis Communication</i>, Chapters 28, 29, 30, and 32</p> <p>9-1 Short Paper: Successful Brand Awareness</p>
10	<p>The Organizational Approach</p> <p><i>The Handbook of Crisis Communication</i>, Chapters 36, 37, 38, and 39</p> <p>10-1 Discussion: Managing the Corporate Image</p> <p>10-2 Final Project Submission: Crisis Communication Plan</p>

### Attendance Policy

Online students are required to submit a graded assignment/discussion during the first week of class. If a student does not submit a graded assignment/discussion during the first week of class, the student is automatically dropped from the course for non-participation. Review the [full attendance policy](#).

### Late Assignments Policy

Meeting assigned due dates is critical for demonstrating progress and ensuring appropriate time for instructor feedback on assignments. Students are expected to submit their assignments on or before the due date. Review the [full late assignment policy](#).

## **SNHU Student Handbook**

Review the [student handbook](#).

### **ADA/504 Compliance Statement**

Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU) is dedicated to providing equal access to individuals with disabilities in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and with Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, as amended by the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) of 2008.

SNHU prohibits unlawful discrimination on the basis of disability and takes action to prevent such discrimination by providing reasonable accommodations to eligible individuals with disabilities. The university has adopted this policy to provide for prompt and equitable resolution of complaints regarding any action prohibited by Section 504, the ADA, or the ADAAA.

For questions about **support services, documentation guidelines, general disability issues, or pregnancy accommodations**, please visit the [Online Accessibility Center](#) (OAC).

As a student, you must complete an interactive intake process, with supporting documentation, in order to be granted accommodations. Once reasonable accommodations are approved by the OAC, you will receive an accommodations letter. You are then responsible for sharing the letter with your instructor. Accommodations are not retroactive.

If you feel you've been subject to discrimination on the basis of disability, by any party, you may file a complaint or grievance. For more information on the ADA/504 Grievance Policy, go to the [Disability and Accessibility Services](#) website.

### **Academic Integrity Policy**

Southern New Hampshire University requires all students to adhere to high standards of integrity in their academic work. Activities such as plagiarism and cheating are not condoned by the university. Review the [full academic integrity policy](#).

### **Copyright Policy**

Southern New Hampshire University abides by the provisions of United States Copyright Act (Title 17 of the United States Code). Any person who infringes the copyright law is liable. Review the [full copyright policy](#).

### **SNHU Withdrawal Policy**

Review the [full withdrawal policy](#).

### **Southern New Hampshire University Policies**

More information about SNHU policies can be found on the [policy page](#).