

Crisis Communication CMPR6201

Course Outline

Description: Protect and maintain the reputation and image of your organization during a sudden emergency or ongoing issue. This course teaches you the most effective strategies and techniques for dealing with the media and key stakeholders in a time of crisis. You will learn how to build a crisis communication plan to allow you to respond quickly and effectively when a crisis hits, and will take part in crisis response scenarios to test your new skills.

Course Goals: To provide communication professionals and others interested in the world of reputation management an understanding of how crises unfold, how to prepare to respond when crisis hits, and how to work to stop the damage that often accompanies poor communication in a crisis.

Course Objectives: At the completion of this course students will be able to:

- Prepare yourself to lead and organize a communication plan and response to deal quickly and effectively with a reputational crisis.
- Learn the critical elements of communication planning that can be developed now, to allow for greater success when an inevitable crisis strikes.
- Understand the best practice approaches to communicate with media, the public and stakeholders under the added stress that crises introduce.

Attendance Requirements:

Students are required to attend 100% of class time in order to receive a completion for this course. A grade report can be printed from myWCS.

Code of Student Conduct:

The purpose of the Code of Student Conduct is to define the general standard of conduct expected of students registered at Western University, provide examples of behaviour that constitutes a breach of this standard of conduct, provide examples of sanctions that may be imposed, and set out the disciplinary procedures that the University will follow. For the complete Code of Student Conduct: <http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/board/code.pdf>.

Western Continuing Studies

Course Schedule:

Day 1

Morning

- 1. Introduction & Course Outcome Expectations**
- 2. Crisis Communications Principles**
 - Defining a Crisis
 - Review Memorable Crises – High Level
- 3. Role of the Communicator**
 - The Crisis Team
 - Priorities & Mindset
 - Audiences & Expectations
- 4. Evolving Realities of Social Media in a Crisis**
 - Individuals as media outlets, commentators
 - Why Response Time Shrinks, and Rumours Explode
 - Understanding How to Utilize Various Platforms

Lunch

Afternoon

- 5. Crisis Communication Planning**
 - How to Build a Crisis Communication Plan
 - Assess, Execute, Respond, Repair
- 6. Managing your response**
 - Developing key messages for various audiences
 - Framing Narrative and Responses
 - Leveraging Opportunities
- 7. Who delivers the news on your behalf ?**
 - Identifying spokespeople
 - Training candidates
 - Prep spokespeople for particular incidents
- 8. Class Case Study**
 - Students assess a Crisis Scenario.

Day 2

Morning

- 1. Review and Examine Another Crisis Case**
 - Examine various communication products to be considered in crisis response
 - Understand aspects of Crisis Plans, and implementation
 - Determine response; deal with complications, developments
- 2. Media is not the Enemy**
 - Expectations / Response
 - Identifying audiences, and corresponding channels
 - Key Message design and delivery

3. Defining Success in Managing Crises

Planning, Execution, Being Heard

4. Mopping Up and Measurement

Determining when Crisis has passed

Measuring Your Response

Repairing, Rebuilding, Revitalizing your Organization

Lunch

Afternoon

5. Case Studies in Breakout Groups

In groups, students will consider a Crisis case and then present a communication response to class

6. Presentation of Group Case Studies

Instructor and classmates evaluate the effectiveness of each

7. Review and Wrap up

Review Principles and Best Practices

Review unanswered questions, concerns

Review resources and resources of ongoing value

Evaluation Method:

As part of the course/instructor evaluation, a survey will be sent to you electronically by Continuing Studies. You will be asked the following questions. Please consider these throughout the course.

1. How would you rate your overall experience?
2. Please indicate your agreement with the following statements:
 - a. The course content was relevant and valuable.
 - b. The instructor conducted class sessions in an organized, well-planned manner.
 - c. The instructor explained concepts clearly.
 - d. The instructor displayed enthusiasm and energy in conducting class sessions.
 - e. The instructor made me feel comfortable in the learning environment.
 - f. The instructor encouraged my participation and interaction.