Course Description

Explores strategies for leading and communicating effectively with both internal and external audiences during crisis situations. Discusses the development of a communication plan and how to craft and deliver messaging during the crisis situation.

Course Textbook


Course Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. Apply crisis communication theory to real-world crisis situations.
2. Evaluate leaders’ approaches to crisis communication and action.
3. Apply strategies for communicating and leading during times of uncertainty.
4. Apply strategies for communicating a message to neutralize risk or scandal.
5. Create opportunities for positive messaging in the midst of crisis in order to support the organization, its people, and its brand.
7. Create a leadership communication plan for a crisis situation.
8. Develop strategies for leading the organization toward crisis recovery and renewal.

Academic Integrity

Honesty and integrity are taken very seriously at Waldorf University. All students should be familiar with the Waldorf University Academic Integrity Policy (found in the current Student Handbook) and the consequences that will result from breaches of this policy.

Credits

Upon completion of this course, the students will earn three (3) hours of college credit.

Course Structure

1. **Unit Learning Outcomes:** Each unit contains Learning Outcomes that specify the measurable skills and knowledge students should gain upon completion of the unit.
2. **Unit Lesson:** Each unit contains a Unit Lesson, which discusses unit material.
3. **Reading Assignments:** Each unit contains Reading Assignments from one or more chapters from the textbook. Additional required readings from outside of the textbook are provided in Units I-III and V-VII. A Suggested Reading is listed in the Unit I Study Guide to aid students in their course of study. The reading itself may or may not be provided in the course, but students are encouraged to read the resource listed if the opportunity arises as it has valuable information that expands upon the lesson material. Students will not be tested on their knowledge of the Suggested Reading.
4. **Learning Activities (Non-Graded):** Unit IV includes a repository where you can share with classmates the Code of Ethics you prepared. You will be able to receive feedback from and provide comments to classmates. While this is not a graded activity, it can be a great opportunity to exchange ideas with peers.
5. **Key Terms:** Key Terms are intended to guide students in their course of study. Students should pay particular attention to Key Terms as they represent important concepts within the unit material and reading.

6. **Discussion Boards:** Discussion Boards are a part of all Waldorf courses. Information and specifications regarding these assignments are provided in the Course Policies listed in the Course Menu bar.

7. **Unit Assignments:** Students are required to submit for grading Unit Assignments in Units I-VIII. Specific information and instructions regarding these assignments are provided below. Grading rubrics are included with the Unit I-VIII Assignments. Specific information about accessing these rubrics is provided below.

8. **Ask the Professor:** This communication forum provides you with an opportunity to ask your professor general or course content related questions.

9. **Student Break Room:** This communication forum allows for casual conversation with your classmates.

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**Unit Assignments**

**Unit I Essay**

In a two-page essay, define organizational crisis. Your essay should do the following:

- describe the criteria leaders should use to determine whether an event constitutes a crisis event,
- explain the difference between risk and crisis, and
- briefly describe a crisis situation you have been involved in that meets the criteria you established in your definition.

See the grading rubric for additional guidelines. It is recommended that you use the rubric as a checklist as you draft the essay. Refer to the rubric often, and be sure to fulfill the requirements for all criteria listed.

Remember to use APA Style to format your essay.

Information about accessing the Blackboard Grading Rubric for this assignment is provided below.

**Unit II Case Study**

After reviewing the case described in Example 4.3 on pages 69-73 of your textbook, write a two- to three-page analysis using discourse of renewal theory as a framework to analyze the organization's crisis response. Using the online library, conduct any additional research necessary to fully evaluate the aspects of the crisis response described in the theory. Cite specific examples to support your points.

See the grading rubric for additional guidelines. It is recommended that you use the rubric as a checklist as you draft the essay. Refer to the rubric often, and be sure to fulfill the requirements for all criteria listed.

Remember to use APA Style to format your analysis.

Information about accessing the Blackboard Grading Rubric for this assignment is provided below.

**Unit III Case Study**

After reviewing the case described in Example 4.6 on pages 84–87 of your textbook, write a two- to three-page analysis by responding to the questions listed under “You Make the Call” on pages 87–88. Present your responses in a format you would use if you had been hired by Domino’s as a crisis communication consultant and were preparing this report to provide to the client directly. Ensure the content, tone, and presentation are appropriate for your intended audience.

See the grading rubric for additional guidelines. It is recommended that you use the rubric as a checklist as you draft the analysis. Refer to the rubric often, and be sure to fulfill the requirements for all criteria listed.

Remember to use APA Style to format your analysis.

Information about accessing the Blackboard Grading Rubric for this assignment is provided below.

**Unit IV Assignment**

**Code of Ethics**
Create a code of ethics for leaders responding to crisis events. The code must

- have at least 10 original, ethical guideline statements,
- include statements that are written in complete sentences (For example, accountability is a guiding principle, but it is not a specific guideline. Instead, an ethical guideline based on the principle of accountability might be, “We will publicly acknowledge errors in production, policy, or judgment that harmed stakeholders.”), and
- include guidelines that demonstrate you are applying course concepts.

For examples of codes of ethics, you can conduct a search for policies from organizations and industry associations similar to the one you have selected for the project. Be sure to review the codes ONLY to familiarize yourself with the types of statements that are included and the overall format.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** To complete the assignment, you must write original guidelines. Ensure that you do not plagiarize another policy by using guidelines contained in existing codes.

See the grading rubric for additional guidelines. It is recommended that you use the rubric as a checklist as you draft the code of ethics. Refer to the rubric often, and be sure to fulfill the requirements for all criteria listed.

Once you create the Code of Ethics, submit the document in Blackboard for grading through TurnItIn.

**OPTIONAL:** Post a copy of your code to the designated Code of Ethics Document Share—Not Required, and share it with your classmates. Provide feedback to classmates on their codes and discuss the overall effectiveness. Identify the advantages and challenges the guidelines might pose for leaders responding to crisis events.

**Unit V Assignment**

**Press Release**

Review Example 6.4 on pages 121–124 of your textbook. Assuming the role of the public relations director for King Car, create a press release in response to the second round of testing that came back positive for high levels of melamine.

The press release must

- show you relied on the 10 lessons in Chapter 5 as a guide to develop the content of the press release,
- include any relevant information described in the case study (conduct additional research on the case as needed),
- follow the press release format/template described in this unit’s lesson,
- include at least one quote from a King Car representative (attribute the quote to yourself as the PR director for King Car), and
- be no longer than two pages.

**NOTE:** Examples of press releases are included in this unit’s required readings. You can conduct a search for additional press releases to use as examples. Review the press releases ONLY to familiarize yourself with the structure and overall format. To complete the assignment, you must write an original press release. Ensure you do not plagiarize another press release by using content in any example press releases. (For more information about the consequences of plagiarism, please see Waldorf’s Academic Integrity Policy in the Waldorf University Online Programs Catalog, located at [http://www.waldorf.edu/Download-Information](http://www.waldorf.edu/Download-Information).)

See the grading rubric for additional guidelines. It is recommended that you use the rubric as a checklist as you draft the press release. Refer to the rubric often, and be sure to fulfill the requirements for all criteria listed.

**Unit VI Assignment**

**Presentation**

Review Example 4.1 on pages 60–63 of your textbook. Using the 10 lessons in Chapter 7 as a guide, assume the role of a crisis communications consultant hired by BP one month after the spill has been contained. Develop a PowerPoint or Prezi presentation (with at least eight slides) for BP leadership to use during a press conference that will be given within
the next week, with the purpose of employing positive messaging, repairing the company’s image, and explaining the company’s future plans. Use image repair theory (described in Chapter 2) as a framework for your approach.

NOTE ABOUT USING IMAGES IN PRESENTATIONS: When using images in a public presentation, you can use any of your own original images for which you own the copyright (such as photos you took yourself). If you search for images online, keep in mind that some photos might not be public domain (i.e., free to use). They could have a copyright that requires either permission or purchase to use. To avoid copyright infringement, it is best to use photos that you can clearly identify as public domain. Free stock photos (which are public domain photos and do not have a copyright) are available at [http://www.freeimages.com](http://www.freeimages.com/).

See the grading rubric for additional guidelines. It is recommended that you use the rubric as a checklist as you develop the presentation. Refer to the rubric often, and be sure to fulfill the requirements for all criteria listed.

Information about accessing the Blackboard Grading Rubric for this assignment is provided below.

**Unit VII Assignment**

**Social Media Policy**

Create a two- to three-page social media policy for an organization (of your choice) with the goal of positive messaging, neutralizing risk, and crisis prevention. Select the same organization as for the final project (creating a crisis communication plan). This social media policy will be incorporated into the final project as one section of the entire crisis communication plan. The format should follow the same format used in the crisis communication plan.

The policy must

- clearly identify the organization/target audience that the social media policy is written for.
- describe procedures regarding how employees (such as the PR director/spokesperson) should use social media when representing the organization. Explain how social media can be used for positive messaging, crisis prevention, and neutralizing risk. Add any other sections that might be relevant to your organization. Apply course concepts when you create the policy.
- include clear, detailed procedures using a format that is easy to follow.
- add any templates or worksheets that might be helpful for leaders to use.
- use text enhancements and visuals to emphasize and for clarity. In addition to basic enhancements, such as bold, underline, italics, caps, font/font size, and color-coding, you can include graphs, illustrations, or other visual elements.

**NOTE:** You can refer to examples of crisis communication plans from the Unit IV discussion to determine a format for the policy. Review these plans ONLY to familiarize yourself with the structure and overall format. To complete the assignment, you must write an original policy. Ensure you do not plagiarize another policy by using content in any example social media policies or crisis communication plans. (For more information about the consequences of plagiarism, please see Waldorf’s Academic Integrity Policy in the Waldorf University Online Programs Catalog, located at [http://www.waldorf.edu/Download-Information](http://www.waldorf.edu/Download-Information).)

See the grading rubric for additional guidelines. It is recommended that you use the rubric as a checklist as you draft the policy. Refer to the rubric often, and be sure to fulfill the requirements for all criteria listed.

Information about accessing the Blackboard Grading Rubric for this assignment is provided below.

**Unit VIII Final Project**

**Crisis Communication Plan**

Create a six- to eight-page crisis communication plan for leaders in a specific organization.

The plan must

- clearly identify the organization/target audience the plan is written for,
- create sections describing each type of potential crisis this organization might encounter and an appropriate response,
The sections should be tailored to your specific organization. For example, if your company produces a food product, *recalls* could be an important topic to address. Be sure to apply course concepts, including those related to positive messaging and crisis prevention/risk.

**NOTE:** Include the social media policy created during Unit VII as one section of the plan. You can update the policy and make any necessary revisions to the version you submitted in Unit VII.

- identify stakeholders who might be affected by the crisis,
  - Include procedures to communicate internally with those inside of the company and externally with stakeholders outside of the company.
- include clear, detailed procedures using a format that is easy to follow,
- add any templates or worksheets that might be helpful for the leaders to use when responding to a crisis event, and
- use text enhancements and visuals to emphasize and for clarity.
  - In addition to basic enhancements such as bold, underline, italics, caps, font/font size, and color-coding, you can include graphs, illustrations, or other visual elements.

**NOTE:** In Unit I, you developed a definition of an organizational crisis and you have been applying that definition to your written work throughout the term. This definition should become the basis for your crisis communication plan. In Unit II, you were introduced to several key crisis communication theories. Rely on these concepts to guide your plan. Both the definition you created in Unit I and the theories you learned about in Unit II should provide justification for your specific strategy. The Unit VIII readings (Chapter 12 of your textbook) elaborate on a key theory presented in the course: discourse of renewal theory. The four opportunities presented in the chapter are important aspects to consider as you develop the plan: 1) organizational learning, 2) ethical communication, 3) prospective rather than retrospective vision, and 4) effective organizational rhetoric.

You can refer to examples of crisis communication plans from the Unit IV discussion to determine a format for the plan. Review these plans ONLY to familiarize yourself with the structure and overall format. To complete the assignment, you must write an original plan. Ensure you do not plagiarize another plan by using content in any example crisis communication plans. (For more information about the consequences of plagiarism, please see Waldorf’s Academic Integrity Policy in the Waldorf University Online Programs Catalog, located at [http://www.waldorf.edu/Download-Information](http://www.waldorf.edu/Download-Information).)

See the grading rubric for additional guidelines. It is recommended that you use the rubric as a checklist as you draft the plan. Refer to the rubric often, and be sure to fulfill the requirements for all criteria listed.

Information about accessing the Blackboard Grading Rubric for this assignment is provided below.

### Submitting Course Papers/Projects

Once you have completed your papers/projects, submit your completed papers/projects by uploading through the Assignment tab in each unit. Do not e-mail your paper directly to your professor. By using the Assignment tab, your record will automatically be updated to indicate you have submitted your papers/projects and the assignment will be provided to your professor for grading. Instructions for submitting your assignment can be found under the Assignment tab in each unit.

### APA Guidelines

Waldorf University requires that students use APA style for papers and projects. Therefore, the APA rules for formatting, quoting, paraphrasing, citing, and listing of sources are to be followed. Students can find Waldorf’s Citation Guide in the myWaldorf Student Portal by clicking on the “Citation Guide” link under the “Resources” heading. This document includes examples and sample papers.

### Grading Rubrics

This course utilizes analytic grading rubrics as tools for your professor in assigning grades for all learning activities. Each rubric serves as a guide that communicates the expectations of the learning activity and describes the criteria for each level of achievement. In addition, a rubric is a reference tool that lists evaluation criteria and can help you organize your efforts to meet the requirements of that learning activity. It is imperative for you to familiarize yourself with these rubrics because these are the primary tools your professor uses for assessing learning activities.
Rubric categories include: (1) Discussion Board, (2) Assessment (Written Response), and (3) Assignment. However, it is possible that not all of the listed rubric types will be used in a single course (e.g., some courses may not have Assessments).

The Discussion Board rubric can be found within Unit I’s Discussion Board submission instructions.

The Assessment (Written Response) rubric can be found embedded in a link within the directions for each Unit Assessment. However, these rubrics will only be used when written-response questions appear within the Assessment.

Each Assignment type (e.g., article critique, case study, research paper) will have its own rubric. The Assignment rubrics are built into Blackboard, allowing students to review them prior to beginning the Assignment and again once the Assignment has been scored. This rubric can be accessed via the Assignment link located within the unit where it is to be submitted. Students may also access the rubric through the course menu by selecting the “Grades” link.

Again, it is vitally important for you to become familiar with these rubrics because their application to your Discussion Boards, Assessments, and Assignments is the method by which your instructor assigns all grades.

Communication Forums

These are non-graded discussion forums that allow you to communicate with your professor and other students. Participation in these discussion forums is encouraged, but not required. You can access these forums with the buttons in the Course Menu. Instructions for subscribing/unsubscribing to these forums are provided below.

Click here for instructions on how to subscribe/unsubscribe and post to the Communication Forums.

Ask the Professor

This communication forum provides you with an opportunity to ask your professor general or course content questions. Questions may focus on Blackboard locations of online course components, textbook or course content elaboration, additional guidance on assessment requirements, or general advice from other students.

Questions that are specific in nature, such as inquiries regarding assessment/assignment grades or personal accommodation requests, are NOT to be posted on this forum. If you have questions, comments, or concerns of a non-public nature, please feel free to email your professor. Responses to your post will be addressed or emailed by the professor within 48 hours.

Before posting, please ensure that you have read all relevant course documentation, including the syllabus, assessment/assignment instructions, faculty feedback, and other important information.

Student Break Room

This communication forum allows for casual conversation with your classmates. Communication on this forum should always maintain a standard of appropriateness and respect for your fellow classmates. This forum should NOT be used to share assessment answers.

Grading

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Boards (8 @ 2%)</td>
<td>16%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unit I Essay</td>
<td>8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Case Studies (2 @ 8%)</td>
<td>16%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignments (4 @ 8%)</td>
<td>32%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unit VIII Final Project</td>
<td>28%</td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
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Course Schedule/Checklist (PLEASE PRINT)

The following pages contain a printable Course Schedule to assist you through this course. By following this schedule, you will be assured that you will complete the course within the time allotted.
By following this schedule, you will be assured that you will complete the course within the time allotted. Please keep this schedule for reference as you progress through your course.

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<tr>
<th>Unit I</th>
<th>Defining Crisis Communication</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Review:</strong></td>
<td>□ Unit Study Guide</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Read:</strong></td>
<td>□ Chapter 1: Defining Crisis Communication</td>
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<td></td>
<td>□ Internet Reading: See Study Guide</td>
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<td>□ Suggested Reading: See Study Guide</td>
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<td><strong>Discuss:</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Submit:</strong></td>
<td>□ Essay by Tuesday, 11:59 p.m. (Central Time)</td>
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<td>Notes/Goals:</td>
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<th>Crisis Communication Theory in Practice</th>
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<td><strong>Review:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Read:</strong></td>
<td>□ Chapter 2: Understanding Crisis Communication Theory and Practice</td>
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<td>□ Chapter 4: Applying the Lessons to Produce Effective Crisis Communication (&quot;Example 4.3. Long-Term Complexities in the Tainted Odwalla Apple Juice Crisis,&quot; pp. 69-73)</td>
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<td><strong>Read:</strong></td>
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## Course Schedule

### Unit IV  
**Ethical Demands of the Leader**

**Review:**
- Unit Study Guide
- **Non-Graded Learning Activity** - Code of Ethics Document Share (Not Required) See BlackBoard

**Read:**
- **Discussion Board Response:** Submit your response to the Discussion Board question by Saturday, 11:59 p.m. (Central Time)
- **Discussion Board Comment:** Comment on another student's Discussion Board response by Tuesday, 11:59 p.m. (Central Time)

**Submit:**
- **Assignment** by Tuesday, 11:59 p.m. (Central Time)

### Notes/Goals:

### Unit V  
**Leading During Times of Uncertainty**

**Review:**
- Chapter 5: Lessons on Managing Crisis Uncertainty Effectively

**Read:**
- **Discussion Board Response:** Submit your response to the Discussion Board question by Saturday, 11:59 p.m. (Central Time)
- **Discussion Board Comment:** Comment on another student's Discussion Board response by Tuesday, 11:59 p.m. (Central Time)

**Submit:**
- **Assignment** by Tuesday, 11:59 p.m. (Central Time)

### Notes/Goals:

### Unit VI  
**Recovery and Renewal**

**Review:**
- Unit Study Guide

**Read:**
- Chapter 7: Lessons on Effective Crisis Leadership
- Chapter 8: Applying the Lessons for Developing Effective Crisis Leadership
- **Internet Reading:** See Study Guide

**Discuss:**
- **Discussion Board Response:** Submit your response to the Discussion Board question by Saturday, 11:59 p.m. (Central Time)
- **Discussion Board Comment:** Comment on another student's Discussion Board response by Tuesday, 11:59 p.m. (Central Time)

**Submit:**
- **Assignment** by Tuesday, 11:59 p.m. (Central Time)

### Notes/Goals:
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Notes/Goals:

| **Unit VIII**     |
| **Creating a Crisis Communication Plan** |
| **Review:**      |
| - Unit Study Guide |
| **Read:**        |
| - Chapter 12: Inspiring Renewal Through Effective Crisis Communication  |
| **Discuss:**     |
| - Discussion Board Response: Submit your response to the Discussion Board question by Saturday, 11:59 p.m. (Central Time)  |
| - Discussion Board Comment: Comment on another student’s Discussion Board response by Tuesday, 11:59 p.m. (Central Time)  |
| **Submit:**      |
| - Final Project by Tuesday, 11:59 p.m. (Central Time)  |

Notes/Goals: