UCFV
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE of the FRASER VALLEY

OFFICIAL COURSE OUTLINE (page 1)

COURSE IMPLEMENTATION DATE: September 2008
COURSE REVISED IMPLEMENTATION DATE:
COURSE TO BE REVIEWED: November 2011
(four years after UPAC approval) *(month, year)*

OFFICIAL UNDERGRADUATE COURSE OUTLINE INFORMATION

Students are advised to keep course outlines in personal files for future use.
Shaded headings are subject to change at the discretion of the department – see course syllabus available from instructor

CMNS 480	Communications	4
COURSE NAME/NUMBER	FACULTY/DEPARTMENT	UCFV CREDITS

Crisis Communications
COURSE DESCRIPTIVE TITLE

CALENDAR DESCRIPTION:

Crises are unexpected threats for which response time is short. Their origins can be natural (as with ice storms or tsunamis) or human (as with acts of terrorism or oil spills). This course uses Canadian and foreign examples to explore how to (and how not to) deal with serious challenges to public safety. To do so, it draws on both theoretical and practical approaches to communicating with diverse audiences in crisis situations.

Note: This course is offered as CMNS 480 and MACS 480. Students may take only one of these for credit.

PREREQUISITES: 60 university-level credits, including six credits of lower-level MACS or CMNS or a combination.
COREQUISITES: None
PRE or COREQUISITES:

SYNONYMOUS COURSE(S):
(a) Replaces: **NA**
(b) Cross-listed with: **MACS 480**
(c) Cannot take: **MACS 480** for further credit.

SERVICE COURSE TO: *(department/program)*
NA

TOTAL HOURS PER TERM: **60**

STRUCTURE OF HOURS:

Lectures:	**20**	Hrs
Seminar:	**20**	Hrs
Laboratory:		Hrs
Field experience:		Hrs
Student directed learning:	**20**	Hrs
Other (specify):		Hrs

TRAINING DAY-BASED INSTRUCTION:
Length of course:
Hours per day:

OTHER:
Maximum enrolment: **25**
Expected frequency of course offerings: Annually
(every semester, annually, every other year, etc.)

WILL TRANSFER CREDIT BE REQUESTED? (lower-level courses only)	☐ Yes	☐ No
WILL TRANSFER CREDIT BE REQUESTED? (upper-level requested by department)	☒ Yes	☐ No
TRANSFER CREDIT EXISTS IN BCCAT TRANSFER GUIDE:	☐ Yes	☒ No

Course designer(s): **Eric Spalding, PhD, Madeleine Hardin, MA in assoc. with Peter Anderson, SFU**
Department Head: **Lynn Kirkland Harvey** Date approved: **Sept. 26, 2007**
Supporting area consultation (UPACA1) Date of meeting: **Oct. 5, 2007**
Curriculum Committee chair: **Moira Kloster** Date approved: **Oct. 12, 2007**
Dean/Associate VP: **Eric Davis** Date approved: **Oct. 12, 2007**
Undergraduate Program Advisory Committee (UPAC) approval Date of meeting: **Nov. 23, 2007**

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Understand and identify the emergency management structure in British Columbia;
- Recognize the communication process in the context of a crisis or disaster;
- Demonstrate the basic requirements of a disaster response plan;
- Identify public relations protocols in disaster situations;
- Understand how authorities manage public perceptions of crises;
- Recognize the conditions under which authorities define a social problem as a crisis;
- See how the public and private sectors use the threat of a crisis to effect policy changes.

METHODS: *(Guest lecturers, presentations, online instruction, field trips, etc.)*

Lectures

Video/DVD presentations

Student presentations

Student assignments

In-class discussion

In-class tabletop exercises

METHODS OF OBTAINING PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT RECOGNITION (PLAR):

☐ Examination(s) ☒ Portfolio assessment ☐ Interview(s)

☐ Other (specify):

☐ PLAR cannot be awarded for this course for the following reason(s):

TEXTBOOKS, REFERENCES, MATERIALS:

[Textbook selection varies by instructor. An example of texts for this course might be:]

Coombs, W. Timothy (2006). *Ongoing Crisis Communication: Planning, Managing, and Responding*, 2nd edition. Sage Publications.

Emergency Management Division, Justice Institute of BC (2002). *Introduction to Emergency Management In British Columbia*. Provincial Emergency Program, Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, Province of British Columbia.

Recommended DVDs

Overview: David Frost, host (1995). *History of the 20th Century: Disasters.* Princeton, NJ: Films for the Humanities and Sciences.

Hurricane Katrina: Lee, Spike, director (2006). *When the Levees Broke.* HBO Home Video.

Human-made disaster I: Tracey, Lindalee, et al., director (2004). *Bhopal: The Search for Justice.* Montreal: National Film Board of Canada.

Human-made disaster II: Partners in Motion (2006). *The Second Narrows Bridge Collapse*. Montreal: National Film Board of Canada.

Snowstorms and forest fires: Partners in Motion (2004). *Fire and Ice*. Montreal: National Film Board of Canada.

2004 Tsunami: Acaster, Lara, et al., director (2005). *Tsunami, The Wave That Shook the World*. Boston: WGBH.

SUPPLIES / MATERIALS:

None

STUDENT EVALUATION:

[An example of student evaluation for this course might be:]

20% Reading-based midterm exam
20% Assignment 1 (hazard identification and the role of communication in mitigation)
20% Assignment 2 (communication response to a disaster scenario)
20% In-class presentation
20% Final exam or final project

COURSE CONTENT:

[Course content varies by instructor. An example of course content might be:]

This course explores issues surrounding communication in times of crisis. It explores both critical/theoretical approaches as well as practical/applied approaches to crises and crisis communication.

Foundations

- Crisis definitions -- the differences between an emergency and a crisis;
- The social construction of crises and crisis management;
- Emergency planning concepts, practices, and trends.

Crisis Management

- Emergency communication and coordination centres;
- Public communication in disasters;
- Public relations and crisis communication in organizational settings;
- Media coverage: what crises to emphasize and which ones to commemorate.

Role of Government

- Responsibilities of local, provincial, and federal governments and their programs in the context of crisis communication;
- The implications of crises for policy development;
- The connection between social class and government response in times of crisis.

New Issues

- New research initiatives: the development of new disaster management information networks;
- Emerging issues in communication and crisis management.