CMNS 480

**COURSE NAME/NUMBER**

Communications

**FACULTY/DEPARTMENT**

UCFV

**UCFV CREDITS**

4

**COURSE DESCRIPTIVE TITLE**

Crisis Communications

**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.

**TOTAL HOURS PER TERM:**

60

**TRAINING DAY-BASED INSTRUCTION:**

Length of course: 

Hours per day: 

**STRUCTURE OF HOURS:**

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

**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:]


Recommended DVDs


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


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.