Appendix D

Disaster and Crisis Communication Course Syllabus

COURSE DESCRIPTION
Disaster and Crisis Communication is designed for English majors in the Professional Writing option. In this course, students will focus on how scientific, technical, and professional communication influence, and are influenced by, public discourse. Drawing on strategies of rhetorical criticism, students will gain an understanding of the persuasive value of style, arrangement, and delivery by investigating their professional roles in helping to structure public debate. Specifically, this course will focus on writing in and about addressing global issues such as climate change, disasters via risk and crisis communication. Communicating during a crisis has never been so important given the challenges of the current world. We will also explore practical strategies that any organization can develop to address situations of crisis that helps not only themselves but their community as well. In this course, we will interrogate:

• How can technical communicators contribute to disaster-related communications that are socially responsible?
• What does it mean to incorporate social justice in disaster-related communication?
• What are the current conversations that are ongoing regarding risk and crisis communication?
• What are the current public discourses surrounding disasters?

We will engage with these questions and learn to conduct a rhetorical analysis of various communications materials addressing the situation of a disaster. In addition, we will learn to conduct research, and design various products that could help in communicating crises. As with other Senior Seminars, the course will be reading and writing intensive, with a focus on abstract reasoning and deep engagement with theoretical texts.

COURSE OBJECTIVES
With successful completion of this course, you will be able to:

• analyze the social, political, and cultural effects of professional and
public discourse using principles of rhetorical criticism and concepts within risk and crisis communication;
• explain the interplay of rhetoric and ethics in formulating professional and public policies;
• draw logical connections across multiple texts, ideas, objects, and bodies;
• compose analyses in a variety of media about professional or public issues.

COURSE MATERIALS AND REQUIREMENTS
• We will read excerpted journal articles or book chapters/essays available via our online course site.
• Students should expect to spend an average of 6 hours per week on this 3-credit course, outside of our regularly scheduled class meeting times.
• Note that any group work assigned in this class may also require you to meet with your group outside of class time.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING
Below are the major assignments for the class.

Weekly Reading Response: 300 Points
You will have a total of ten weekly responses starting Week 2. You will be expected to write a 500-word reading response in which you will do the following: (a) synthesize, summarize, and analyze the readings assigned for the week and (b) connect these readings to the issue or the topic that you want to explore in this course.

Discussion Facilitation: 100 Points
For one class session, you will be responsible for facilitating discussion about that day’s reading assignment. The goal is to help us come to an understanding of what the reading was about, key concepts and ideas from the readings, and how the reading connects to other readings, ideas, and discussions.

Assignment #1: Rhetorical Analysis & Editing Wiki: 300 Points
1. Editing Wikipedia: In this assignment, based on your readings and research about a particular crisis, you will make edits to a Wikipedia page. These edits can be minor copyedit, adding references, check facts. This includes participating in edit-a-thon.
2. **Rhetorical Analysis of a Crisis:** In this assignment, you will conduct a rhetorical analysis of a particular crisis and the situation of the crisis. In your analysis I want you to think about what kinds of communication strategies were used to address this crisis both formally and informally.

**Assignment #2: Final Seminar Project: 300 Points**

For our final semester project, you will work in groups to conduct narrative inquiry and develop a communications strategy and a backgrounder on the crisis and immediate response. This will be followed by a digital exhibition.

**SCHEDULE WITH READING LIST**

This course is divided into various three themes. At the very beginning of the course, there is an introduction to various terms and terminologies. With the second theme, the students will learn about disaster and crisis specific research within rhetoric, technical communication, and beyond. The final theme is crisis and technology which focusses on uses of digital technologies in disaster response and research within those. Instructors can refine the readings based on the class requirements and change the assignment sequences. This course can be taught as an undergraduate/graduate level course. Moreover, there is workshop element to this course where students will engage learning about qualitative data collection and analysis methods within class time. Hence, instructors can modify those specific details as needed.

**Theme #1: Introduction to Disaster, Crisis Communication Terminologies**

Theme #1 will focus on introduction of key terms that are relevant to disaster and crisis communication and will focus on learning how to edit Wikipedia and how to conduct a rhetorical analysis of a disaster related communication.

**Week One: Introduction**

1. Introduction to the Course, Syllabus
2. Twigg, John. *Disaster Risk Reduction*. Chapter 1
3. ISDR Terminology on Disaster Risk Reduction

⇒ *Introduce Unit #1*
**Week Two: Types of Risk, Disasters & Intro to Crisis Communication**


⇒ Preparation for Wikipedia Workshop

**Week Three: Wikipedia Workshop & Understanding Risk /Crisis Comm**


**Week Four: Wiki Edi-a-Thon & Work Week**

1. Organize a Wikipedia Editing Workshop and Edit-a-Thon. (Note: This can be organized via CCCCs Wikipedia Initiative Members or via libraries at the institution)

⇒ Assignment I Part I Wiki editing report Due
Theme #2 Disasters and Humanitarian Crisis Research

Theme #2 will focus on Disasters and Humanitarian Crisis Research in which students will learn about various research that technical communication and communication scholars have done that includes primary and secondary research including the grassroots movement. Teachers will also introduce Assignment #2 that is focused on research, developing communication strategy, and creating a website.

Week Five: Rhetoric of Risk and Technical Communication


⇒ Introduce Assignment #2

Week Six: Disaster and Public Reactions


⇒ Conduct workshop on methodologies for Rhetorical Analysis
Week Seven: Disaster and Global Grassroots Movement


Week Eight: Workshop & Work Week

Conduct a writing workshop rhetorical analysis for one class period. The second-class period can be given as a work day. Workdays are designed for students to have a dedicated time to work on their project.

- Conduct a writing workshop on Rhetorical Analysis
- Assignment #1 Part-II: Rhetorical Analysis Due

Theme #3 Crisis and Technology

Theme #3 will focus on research and publications related to Crisis and Technology. Varieties of articles curated within this theme discusses disaster response and uses of technologies by various communities across the world. Students also will learn to write conduct research.

Week Nine: Social Media and Disaster


⇒ Introduce Qualitative Research Strategies, Data Collection

**Week Ten: Feminist Response to Disaster**

1. Mwebaza, Rose. “Gender, Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction.” UNDP Presentation.

⇒ Organize a writing workshop for research paper.

**Week Eleven: Designing a Digital Exhibition**

*Note to Teachers: Organize workshop on Designing Website for Exhibition. Teachers can partner with libraries at their institutions to organize this workshop.*

⇒ Assignment # 2: Part I: Research Paper Due

**Week Twelve: Public Health Crisis and Misinformation**

Week Thirteen: Effective Crisis Communication Strategies


Week Fourteen: Students Meet To discuss the Website & Communication Strategy Plans

*Students will meet to discuss their projects on Communications Strategy and the website design.*

Week Fifteen: Presentations

Week Sixteen: Final Seminar Project Due