

## **E412/E512 Risk Communication - Section 7926 – Spring 1998**

Monday/Wednesday 2:30 - 3:45 p.m. Room PV278

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Office Hours: MW 1-2:15; or by appointment

### **Course Goals and Content:**

Risk communication is needed anytime a hazard exists or a potentially hazardous situation occurs and people must be informed. These situations occur in industrial settings (in Hazard Communication Programs for workers), between industrial plants and their neighbors, and between government agencies and citizens potentially affected by hazards (natural and man-made). (Note, this is not an exhaustive list of examples.)

This course will introduce the student to risk communication: what's involved, when it might be needed, communication planning, and how to carry out a risk communication program. The class includes presentation of information, role-playing, and class discussion. Everyone will also work on, and present, a project on some aspect of risk communication.

### **Texts:**

*Improving Risk Communication* (National Risk Council) (Grad only)

*Effective Risk Communication* (V.T. Covello, D.B. McCallum, M.T. Pavlova)(Grad required)

OR

*Improving Dialogue with Communities: A Risk Communication Manual for Government* (NJ DEP) (Note: This is a section in *Effective Risk Communication*, so you don't need to buy both, but must at least have this one.)

Handouts

Articles that will be put on reserve in the library as appropriate.

### **Requirements:**

- Attendance is mandatory. You must notify me if you are not attending class, or tell me afterwards what happened. If you are assigned to a role in a role play, you must warn me and arrange for someone to switch with you. This is your responsibility, not mine. The switch, however, must be approved by me in order to ensure that the roles are equivalent. Failure to arrange for a replacement means a grade of '0' for that role play.

- You are expected to participate in discussions. This is hard for some people; I will facilitate participation in the beginning by calling on people.
- You are expected to have read the assignments BEFORE class. Class discussion will be based on the readings.
- You are expected to fulfill all assignments. Assignments are due at the start of class. Late papers will be marked down.
- Each role play group is expected to meet with me the week of February 9 to discuss your scenarios.
- Each project group is expected to meet with me before spring break and the week of April 6 to discuss your projects.

**Assignments:**

- 1 Initial Bibliography
- 1 Role Play Scenario (group assignment)
- 1 Role Playing (major role)
- 1+ Role Playing (supporting roles)
- 1 Group Project
- 1 Journal
- 1 3-5 Page Evaluation
- 4+ Role- Play Evaluations (2-3 pages +)

**Grading:**

- 20% Class participation (You must attend class and contribute to discussions - ½ of these points will be based strictly on attendance)
- 20% Final Project (50% group grade, 50% individual grade)
- 20% Role Play Preparation and Group scenario (You will receive a group grade [50%] based on the final scenario and an individual grade [50%] based on your participation in the preparation of the scenario, and the quality of the work that is yours.)
- 10% Role Playing
- 25% Remaining Assignments (Bibliography, Evaluations)
- 5% Journal

There is no final examination.

## **Details of Assignments:**

### **Initial Bibliography (Due Wednesday - 1/21/98):**

Use a database (Polltox, Nexis/Lexis, MedLine or even the card catalog) to research potential role-playing topics of interest. Hand in a bibliography covering the topic you researched. (This can simply be the printed results of your database search.) After class discussion based on the classes research, a total of 5 topics will be chosen, which will be developed into scenarios by the individual groups. Be prepared to discuss your topic, the different facets, the groups (“stakeholders”) involved, the potential for controversy or problems in a communication scenario. Everyone will have a turn discussing their potential topics - be prepared to talk on your topic for about 1 minute. Be prepared and be brief!

### **Preparation of Role Play Scenarios:**

As a group do the full background research on the topic so that you understand all aspects of the situation, who knew/knows what, how well understood are the risks, what are the risks (and to whom), and what are the goals of the individual parties involved. Outline how you (as a group) will set up the scenario for another group: who will know what, etc.

### **Instructions For Setting Up The Risk Communication Scenario -**

1. Define the situation, understand and explain the risks - what types of risks are involved and to whom they are risks
2. Understand the points of view in the conflict
3. Evaluate potential approaches to neutralizing the conflicts
4. Write it up as a case - as a group
5. Include a listing of the characters involved. In a paragraph or so (depending on the character and what he/she has to know and do) explain:
  - who the character is in the scenario
  - what their knowledge base is, especially as it concerns the information in the scenario
  - what their feelings are about the situation **and why**

Each Character should have his/her own briefing page(s) in addition to the main scenario information. You may need to include resource information for the character to use while role playing. They will need to read this ahead of time, so it must be part of the briefing information for that character.

I will partially influence the numbers of characters in each scenario based on the numbers needed given the class size and what type of scenario you are writing. This will be defined during and after the group meetings with me the week of February 9. In general, assume each scenario needs approximately (class size/5) number of characters.

**MANDATORY:**

Include a page listing who did what re: research, crafting and decisions, writing, typing, editing. Scenarios without this section will automatically lose points (minimum 5 points).

**REMEMBER:**

**The scenario is a formal writing exercise and must be well written and formally formatted. It must include a Table of Contents, an Introduction, a formal description of the role play to be carried out, a Characters section, and a Bibliography. Bibliographic material should be complete: Include the names (last names, first initials acceptable) of all authors, the full titles of the articles and journals, the page numbers (start and end), full journal references (i.e. volume numbers, etc), and the source, if it was obtained from a database or off the Web. Web data MUST include access date, as the data is liable to change any time or day. It is best to make a hard copy of all Web data, and include the Web address, the authors of the page, and the organizations (if any) sponsoring the page(s). All interviews (personal or by phone) must be cited and include the date of the interview, the person's position, and their firm/place of employment or organization with which they work. Books should include copyright date, publisher, and publisher's location, in addition to author/editor information.**

**Grading of the Role Play:**

The group grades will depend on organization, completeness, clarity and quality of the writing, and the coherence of the scenario. Individual grades will depend on the quality and clarity of the writing in the part(s) contributed by that person, as well as on the contribution of that person to the work that went into developing the scenario.

**Role-Play:**

Each person will participate in at least one role-play designed by another group. In general expect to participate in at least one "major" (i.e. responsible for communication management in some way) role, and at least one "supporting" role. Individuals will be assigned roles, and given appropriate and sufficient background information for that role. You will receive your information the week before, and will be expected to have thought out how you plan to play your role. You will be graded on your willingness to participate, and your attempt to fulfill the role well (i.e. play out the role appropriately). You will not be graded on how good an actor you are.

(Assignment details continued after class schedule)



**E400/E555 Risk Communications - Class Schedule Spring 1996 MW 2:30 - 3:45 PV  
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Day/Date	Topic	Readings
	<i>Assignments Due*</i>	
	class.	* Journals are due <b>every day</b> in
M 1/12	Introduction/ What is Risk Communication	
W 1/14	What is Risk Communication	IDWC 1-9 <span style="float: right;"><i>RC in</i></span>
	<i>your life</i>	
	Introduction to Role Playing and Evaluations	MPM 1-4 ERC ch 17 111-116*** IRC 1-29***
M 1/19	No Class - Martin Luthor King Day	
W 1/21	What is Risk?	IDWC 5-9,31-40,57-68
	<i>Bibiographies</i>	
	Assign Groups - DON'T MISS CLASS	ERC ch 12 83-86*** IRC 30-53***
M 1/26	The new Risk Management Paradigm	Handout fr. Pres. Coun. On RM IDWC 69-73 ERC ch 6 45-49, ch 21 77-81*** IRC 214-268***
W 1/28	Presenting Technical Information: Perception	IDWC 57-83
	<i>Perception Exercise</i>	
		MPM 10-54 (on reserve and in ERC) IRC 54-71, 269-281***
M 2/2	It's All in Whom You Seem to be	MPM 4-9 IRC 108-142, 299-304***
W 2/4	Role Play 1	IDWC 41-56 <span style="float: right;"><i>Prepare</i></span>
	<i>for Role Play</i>	
M 2/9	Role Play Evaluations	<span style="float: right;"><i>Role</i></span>
	<i>Play Evaluation 1 Due</i>	
W 2/11	Presenting Technical Information: Uncertainty	IDWC 69-73
	<i>Uncertainty in your life Exercise</i>	
		MPM 29-33 ERC ch 18 117-125*** IRC 108-142***

M 2/16	Alternative Dispute Resolution <i>for Role Play</i>	Handout	<i>Prepare</i>
	Negotiation Mini-Role Play		
W 2/18	Risk Messages <i>messages Exercise</i>	Handout	<i>Risk</i>
	Presenting Information	ERC ch 19 127-134*** IRC 72-107***	
M 2/23	Handling the Media <i>Exercise</i>	Handout	<i>Media</i>
		ERC ch 20 137-42***	
W 2/25	Planning RC Strategies <i>Play Scenarios Due</i>	Handout	<i>Role</i>
		ERC ch 5 37-43*** IRC 143-182, 283-298***	
M 3/2	Tape in Class# The Company Perspective, Fine Points of Presentation		
W 3/4	Evaluating your RC Strategy <i>Assigned</i>	Handout	<i>Roles</i>
	<i>Strategy Exercise Due</i>	IRC 299-308***	<i>RC</i>
M 3/9	Role Play 2		
W 3/11	Role Play 2 Evaluation <i>Evaluation 2 Due\</i>		
M 3/16	No Class - Spring Break		
W 3/18	No Class- Spring Break		
M 3/23	Role Play 3		
W 3/25	Role Play 3 Evaluation <i>Evaluation 3 Due</i>		
M 3/30	Role Play 4		
W 4/1	Role Play 4 Evaluation <i>Evaluation 4 Due</i>		
M 4/6	Role Play 5		
W 4/8	Role Play 5 Evaluation <i>Evaluation 5 Due</i>		
M 4/13	Role Play 6		



**Role Play Evaluations:**

There are 4 evaluations required. You may write more if you want to improve your grade and drop grades already received. The first three must be formally written as described below (next paragraph). The last three may take other forms. The alternative evaluations must consider some aspect of communication in the scenario, but can be alternative in style (i.e. a letter, a memo, a brief...). You may also focus on any single character in the role play, and not necessarily the communicator.

Formal Evaluations: After each role play, think about it again. In the evaluation I expect you to critique what the communicator did well, what he/she didn't do so well, and any suggestions for strategies to facilitate the communication. I expect no more than 3 pages on each role play.

**Journal:**

Everyone: Every day after class, (including tonight), write a paragraph about your thoughts about class and how it relates to what you observe around you in your life. Whenever you work on an assignment for class, jot down your thoughts on what you worked on (include the date). When you work on or think about the role play scenarios write down: what the group (or you, in the beginning) is/are considering and discussing, what have you (as an individual, and as a group) learned, what are you (as an individual) considering about the potential problems, the process, and about potential solutions to the problems you perceive. Also write down what you have done (as you do it) to contribute to the establishment of the role-playing scenario and the project, if you do the project in a group (rather than as an individual). This will help me assign individual grades for the final project. All journal assignments for the previous week are to be typed and handed in at the start of next class. I expect no more than one page per class, preferably ½ page.

*Graduate students: Graduate students are also to write down their thoughts after/during reading the assignment in IRC and ERC. Please take no more than 1 or so pages for this part of your journal. This is also due at the start of class each week.*

**Class Project:**

Individually, or in groups, you must plan, carry out, write up, and present a project relating to some aspect of risk communication. It can be an evaluation of public perception about some hazard (i.e. a survey), a video presentation (example: laboratory hazards), a risk communication-related booklet (examples: Radon hazards). (Note: this is not a comprehensive list of the possibilities.)

You must meet with me to approve the project, your outline of how you will proceed, and your progress (in the beginning of April). Failing to keep me informed of your progress will affect the final grade.

**Final Evaluations:**

Write a 3-5 page evaluation of the course, what went well, what you learned, and what helped you learn it. I want constructive criticism to help me improve the course in the future. This will not be graded, but you do not receive your grade unless and until it is handed in.

**Potential Scenarios** (Consider these when heading off to do your initial bibliography):

- Industry/Chemical Company/Complaining Neighbors - re: smell or dust
- Mosquito/Med Fly Spray Programs
- Contaminated Well/Farm Country
- Hazardous Transport (Waste, Radioactive)
- Eating fish from the Great Lakes by native fishermen or sports fishermen
- Nuclear Power
- Earthquakes/Tornados/Hurricanes/Ice Storms
- Flooding
- Irascible Viruses
- Water Treatment - Hydroelectric Dam - in potential earthquake country
- Local Fisheries impact downstream from a dam
- Pesticides in Baby Food
- Mountain Climbing
- Overfishing in the Atlantic or Pacific Northwest
- Walking in Canyons & Fjords in Flash Flood Regions
- Surgery (consider surgical implants)
- Forest management styles and the potential threat to neomigratory songbirds
- Hazardous Waste Siting

## Questionnaire

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Grad/Undergrad: \_\_\_\_\_

Taken Risk Decision Analysis?

Communications-related background?

Science-related background?

Experience with risk communication situations?

What is risk?

Where is risk in your life?

What is involved in risk communication?