

**MBA P731
International Human Service Operations
WINTER 2023 Course Outline**

**DeGroot School of Business
Thursday 7:00 – 10:00 PM
McMaster University**

COURSE OBJECTIVE

Crises are a fact of organizational and business life. From a small, not-for-profit organization to any global, multinational corporation, crises can suddenly disrupt an organization's ability to efficiently and effectively achieve its mission. Organizational crises rapidly consume unbudgeted financial and human resources and diminish an organization's reputation and goodwill. The economic, social, and political fallout from organizational crises have been significant: The price tag for Volkswagen's emissions scandal was more than \$18 billion; to clean up BP's Gulf of Mexico spill cost the company \$20 billion; the Maple Leaf Foods contamination caused a loss of market value of \$136 million.

Therefore, the objectives for this course are:

1. To understand the nature and importance of crises and crisis management from a systemic and leadership perspective.
 2. To gain diagnostic skills to detect and prevent escalation of negative organizational issues into uncontrollable crisis situations.
 3. To learn the distinguishing features of crisis preparedness and methods to advance their adoption in human systems.
 4. To understand the prime challenges to enhancing crisis preparedness and some methods of change management to counter these conditions
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INSTRUCTOR AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Cynthia Breen, PhD (c), MCM, APR
Professor, Public Relations

breenc2@mcmaster.ca

Office: Virtually
Office Hours: Available on request

Student TA
TA

TAsMACID@mcmaster.ca

Office:

Office Hours: Mon 1-4pm
Tel: (905) 525-9140 x27438

COURSE ELEMENTS

Credit Value: 3	Leadership: Yes	IT skills: No	Global view: Yes
Avenue: Yes	Ethics: Yes	Numeracy: No	Written skills: Yes
Participation: Yes	Innovation: Yes	Group work: Yes	Oral skills: Yes
Evidence-based: Yes	Experiential: Yes	Final Exam: Yes	Guest speaker(s): Yes

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course provides leaders with conceptual tools to successfully master high-pressure, complex crisis scenarios. Topics include managing issues and media, dealing with activists and interest groups, and surviving legal, legislative, and regulatory challenges. Class time will be comprised primarily of lectures, discussion, guest speakers, and in-class crisis simulations. Evaluation components include class participation, written case analyses, and an essay.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon completion of this course, students will better understand:

- the determinants of crisis preparedness;
- how organizational decision-making is affected by complexity and uncertainty;
- how to develop and implement a crisis management and communications system;
- how to develop a strategic crisis management plan;
- how to develop a communications plan for an organization in a crisis.

REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS AND READINGS

Avenue registration for course content, readings and case materials

- <http://avenue.mcmaster.ca> \$ FREE
- Coombs, Ongoing Crisis Communication: Planning, Managing, and Responding \$107.50
Publisher : SAGE Publications, Inc; 6th ed. edition (Jan. 7 2022)
- Crandall, Crisis Management: Leading in the New Strategy Landscape \$65.89
Publisher : Independently published (Nov. 1 2020)

OPTIONAL COURSE MATERIALS AND READINGS

Crisis Communications in Canada: A Practical Approach, Second Edition.

- ISBN 978-0919852709
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EVALUATION

Learning in this course results primarily from in-class discussion and participation of comprehensive business cases as well as out-of-class analysis. The balance of the learning results from the lectures on strategic concepts, from related readings, and from researching your presentations, cases, assignments, simulation decisions and projects. All work will be evaluated on an individual basis except in certain cases where group work is expected. In these cases, group members will share the same grade adjusted by peer evaluation. Your final grade will be calculated as follows:

Components and Weights

<i>Mid-term Exam</i>	15%
<i>Crisis Simulations</i>	20%
Case Study Reviews/Reflections	25%
Final Exam	20%
Participation	20%
Total 100%	

NOTE: The use of a McMaster standard calculator is allowed during examinations in this course. See McMaster calculator policy at the following URL:

www.mcmaster.ca/policy/Students-AcademicStudies/UndergraduateExaminationsPolicy.pdf

Grade Conversion

At the end of the course your overall percentage grade will be converted to your letter grade in accordance with the following conversion scheme:

LETTER GRADE	PERCENT	POINTS
A+	90-100	12
A	85-89	11
A-	80-84	10
B+	75-79	9

B	70-74	8
B-	60-69	7
F	00-59	0

Course Deliverables

Mid-Term Exam

Contribution to Final Course Mark: 15%
An essay, take home exam

Crisis Simulations

Contribution to Final Course Mark: 20%

There will be five in-class crisis simulations held during the term and your participation and strategic involvement during four of those simulations will be graded during those simulations.

- Simulation #1 – Small Group Exercise (not graded)
- Simulation #2 – Multiple Stakeholder Exercise (5%)
- Simulation #3 – Crisis Media Conferences (5%)
- Simulation #4 – Multiple Interaction Exercise (5%)
- Simulation #5 – The Final Crisis Simulation (5%)

Case Study Reviews/ Reflections

Contribution to Final Course Mark: 25%

Over the course of the term, case studies will be assigned for your review and assessment. A series of questions/insights/comments will accompany each case study. You will be expected to post your responses on Avenue to Learn by the stated deadline.

Final Exam

Contribution to Final Course Mark: 20%
A take home exam on crisis

Participation

Contribution to Final Course Mark: 20%

As MBA/MA students, each of you should come to class ready to participate in class discussions. This participation can take many forms—probing for more in-depth information, case-study analysis, etc. Participation marks are geared primarily to the quality of the contribution. That is, I am not looking for someone to simply talk in class to gain credit, but rather to attempt to add value to the discussion with other students, with me, or with outside speakers.

ACTIVITY	DELIVERY	DESCRIPTION	TOOL(S)
Lecture Core Content	Asynch	Recorded lecture vids (~10min. each)	Voiceover PPT in Echo360
Readings	Asynch	Tied to weekly discussion prompts	Readings linked in Avenue, from coursepack, or in assigned textbook
Tutorials	Synch	1hr. live session with TA; discuss readings and participate	Zoom or WebEx
Group Discussions	Both	Synch: Breakout rooms during lecture Asynch: Microsoft Teams private groups	Synch: Zoom or WebEx Asynch: Microsoft Teams
Live Lectures	Synch	1hr. live session; opportunity to elaborate on content, present challenges, engage discussion	Zoom or WebEx

Instructors and TAs will feel free to cold-call on anyone at any time. Hence, it is imperative that you prepare for each and every case and reading. In general, contributions are evaluated in an ascending order from physically but not mentally present, to good chip shots, to quite substantial comments, to case cracking contributions. Debate and challenge are important activities that help in the learning process and the willingness of individuals to engage in such activities with their classmates is appreciated. However, using air-time involves an obligation to actually contribute. None of us has time for recitation of case facts, bland summaries of prior discussion, and so on, that are devoid of implications. Before you speak, always answer the question so-what? Participation will NOT be graded by counting each contribution a student makes. Participation will be graded by examining the quality of contributions in each class.

COMMUNICATION AND FEEDBACK

Students that are uncomfortable in directly approaching an instructor regarding a course concern may send a confidential and anonymous email to the respective Area Chair or Associate Dean:

<http://mbastudent.degroot.mcmaster.ca/contact/anonymous/>

Students who wish to correspond with instructors or TAs directly via email must send messages that originate from their official McMaster University email account. This protects the confidentiality and sensitivity of information as well as confirms the identity of the student. Emails regarding course issues should NOT be sent to the Administrative Assistant.

Instructors are encouraged to conduct an informal course review with students by Week #4 to allow time for modifications in curriculum delivery. Instructors should provide evaluation feedback for at least 10% of the final grade to students prior to Week #8 in the term.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity.

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, located at:

www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained.
2. Improper collaboration in group work.
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations

AUTHENTICITY/PLAGIARISM DETECTION

Some courses may use a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal authenticity and ownership of student submitted work. For courses using such software, students will be expected to submit their work electronically either directly to Turnitin.com or via an online learning platform (e.g. A2L, etc.) using plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) so it can be checked for academic dishonesty.

Students who do not wish their work to be submitted through the plagiarism detection software must inform the Instructor before the assignment is due. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to the plagiarism detection software.

All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld (e.g., on-line search, other software, etc.). For more details about McMaster's use of Turnitin.com please go to www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity.

COURSES WITH AN ON-LINE ELEMENT

Some courses may use on-line elements (e.g. e-mail, Avenue to Learn (A2L), LearnLink, web pages, capa, Moodle, ThinkingCap, etc.). Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of a course using these elements, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course.

The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in a course that uses on-line elements will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure, please discuss this with the course instructor.

ON-LINE PROCTORING

Some courses may use online proctoring software for tests and exams. This software may require students to turn on their video camera, present identification, monitor and record their computer activities, and/or lock/restrict their browser or other applications/software during tests or exams. This software may be required to be installed before the test/exam begins.

CONDUCT EXPECTATIONS

As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the [Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#) (the "Code"). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, **whether in person or online**.

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students' access to these platforms.

MISSED ACADEMIC WORK

Missed Mid-Term Examinations / Tests / Class Participation

Please do not use the online [McMaster Student Absence Form \(MSAF\)](#) as this is for Undergraduate students only. The MBA program will not accept an MSAF.

When students miss regularly scheduled term work which contributes 10% or more to the final grade, for legitimate reasons as determined by the Student Experience – Academic Office (SEAO), the activity necessary to compensate for the missed work will be determined by the course instructor. The compensatory activities assigned will vary with the nature of the course and the missed requirement. They include, but are not restricted to, an alternative assignment, a rescheduled midterm exam, or re-weighting the marks for the missed component to other mark components. Documentation explaining such missed work must be provided to the SEAO within five (5) working days of the scheduled date for completion of the work.

Acceptable reasons for missed work, along with the [Petition for Missed Term Work](#) and the [MBA Student McMaster University Student Health Certificate](#), can be found on the DeGroote MBA Student website (mbastudent.degroote.mcmaster.ca). Please direct any questions about acceptable documentation to the MBA Academic Advisors (askmba@mcmaster.ca).

University policy states that a student may submit a maximum of three (3) [Petition for Missed Term Work](#) per academic year, after which the student must meet with the Director of the program.

If term work is missed without an approved reason, students will receive a grade of zero (0) for that component.

Missed Final Examinations

Students must be available for the duration of the posted exam period regardless of their personal exam schedule. This is to ensure student availability throughout the entire exam period in the event that an exam must be rescheduled due to unforeseen circumstances (university closure, power outage, storm policy, etc.). A student who misses a final examination without valid reason will receive a mark of 0 on the examination.

Students who have missed a final exam for a valid reason can apply to the SEAO to write a deferred examination by submitting an [Application for Deferring a Final Exam](#) with supporting documentation. The application must be made within five days of the scheduled exam.

The [Application for Deferring a Final Exam](#) and the [MBA Student McMaster University Student Health Certificate](#) can be found on the DeGroot MBA Current Student website (mbastudent.degroot.mcmaster.ca)

Deferred examination privileges, if granted, are normally satisfied during the examination period at the end of the following semester. In select cases, the deferred examination may be written at a time facilitated by the SEAO and agreed to by the course instructor.

Requests for a second deferral or rescheduling of a deferred examination will not be considered.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Student Accessibility Services (SAS) offers various support services for students with disabilities. Students are required to inform SAS of accommodation needs for course work at the outset of term. Students must forward a copy of such SAS accommodation to the instructor normally, within the first three (3) weeks of classes by setting up an appointment with the instructor. If a student with a disability chooses NOT to take advantage of an SAS accommodation and chooses to sit for a regular exam, a petition for relief may not be filed after the examination is complete. The SAS website is:

<http://sas.mcmaster.ca>

Students who are leveraging accommodation for tests and exams are supported by the SEAO. These exams are written at the Ron Joyce Centre and do not take place in the Tim Nolan Testing Centre. Correspondence for accommodations is managed via the DSBSAS@mcmaster.ca email address. Students must communicate their intent to leverage accommodations on a test or exam a minimum of 10 business days prior to the assessment.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION FOR RELIGIOUS, INDIGENOUS OR SPIRITUAL OBSERVANCES (RISO)

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the [RISO](#) policy. Students should submit their request to the SEAO **normally within 10 working days** of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

COPYRIGHT AND RECORDING

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, **including lectures** by University instructors.

The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

POTENTIAL MODIFICATION TO THE COURSE

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check their McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

RESEARCH USING HUMAN SUBJECTS

ONLY IF APPLICABLE

Research involving human participants is premised on a fundamental moral commitment to advancing human welfare, knowledge, and understanding. As a research intensive institution, McMaster University shares this commitment in its promotion of responsible research. The fundamental imperative of research involving human participation is respect for human dignity and well-being. To this end, the University endorses the ethical principles cited in the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans:

<http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca>

McMaster University has mandated its Research Ethics Boards to ensure that all research investigations involving human participants are in compliance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement. The University is committed, through its Research Ethics Boards, to assisting the research community

in identifying and addressing ethical issues inherent in research, recognizing that all members of the University share a commitment to maintaining the highest possible standards in research involving humans.

If you are conducting original research, it is vital that you behave in an ethical manner. For example, everyone you speak to must be made aware of your reasons for eliciting their responses and consent to providing information. Furthermore, you must ensure everyone understands that participation is entirely voluntary. Please refer to the following website for more information about McMaster University's research ethics guidelines:

<http://reo.mcmaster.ca/>

Organizations that you are working with are likely to prefer that some information be treated as confidential. Ensure that you clarify the status of all information that you receive from your client. You **MUST** respect this request and cannot present this information in class or communicate it in any form, nor can you discuss it outside your group. Furthermore, you must continue to respect this confidentiality even after the course is over.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COURSE POLICIES

Your registration and continuous participation (e.g. on A2L, in the classroom, etc.) to the various learning activities of MBA XXXX will be considered to be an implicit acknowledgement of the course policies outlined above, or of any other that may be announced during lecture and/or on A2L. **It is your responsibility to read this course outline, to familiarize yourself with the course policies and to act accordingly.**

Lack of awareness of the course policies **cannot be invoked** at any point during this course for failure to meet them. It is your responsibility to ask for clarification on any policies that you do not understand.

COURSE SCHEDULE

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WEEK	DATE	ASSIGNMENT
1	Thursday, January 11	Introduction, Review of Syllabus Setting the Stage for Crisis Management and Communication Issues, risk and crisis management approaches READINGS: Crandall Chapters 1; Flynn, Into the Vortex (A2L)
2	Thursday, January 18	A Framework for Crisis Management READINGS: Crandall Chapters 2-3; Coombs Chapter 1 Flynn, Crisis Leadership (A2L) ACTIVITY: Crisis Simulation #1 – Small Group Crisis Response
3	Thursday, January 25	Avoiding the Unavoidable READINGS: Crandall Chapters 4, 6; Coombs Chapter 3 DUE: Case 1
4	Thursday, February 1	Crisis Recognition and Planning READINGS: Crandall Chapter 5; Coombs Chapter 7 GUEST SPEAKER
5	Thursday, February 8	Containment and Resolution READINGS: Crandall Chapter 9; Coombs Chapters 4-6 <i>Midterm - Due Next Class.</i> ACTIVITY: Crisis Simulation #2 – Multiple Stakeholder Exercise
6	Thursday, February 15	Risk Communication READINGS: Adler & Kranowitz, A Primer on Perceptions of Risk, Risk Communications and Building Trust. DUE: Midterm Exam
7	Thursday, February 22	READING WEEK – NO CLASS
8	Thursday, February 29	The Management of Organizational Crises READINGS: Flynn, Authentic Crisis Leadership (A2L), Crandall, Chapter 10 Guest Speaker

9	Thursday, March 7	Social Media Crisis Communications <i>Guest Speaker</i> DUE: Case 2
10	Thursday, March 14	Responding to a Crisis READINGS: Coombs Chapter 8 ACTIVITY: Crisis Simulation #3 -- Crisis Media Conference Simulation
11	Thursday, March 21	Telling Your Story and Learning from Your Mistakes READINGS: Crandall Chapter 8, Coombs Chapter 2 ACTIVITY: Crisis Simulation #4 – Multiple Interaction Exercise
12	Thursday, March 28	DEVELOPING THE CRISIS MINDSET READINGS: Crandall Chapter 11, Coombs Chapter 9 & Epilogue <i>Final Exam to Be Handed Out in Class and Posted on A2L - Due Final Class.</i> DUE: Case 3
13	Thursday, April 4	ACTIVITY: Crisis Simulation #5 – The Final Crisis simulation
14	Thursday, April 11	DUE: Final Exam