

## Emergency Management Communications

### AP/DEMS 3704 Section A Fall 2023 Term F

#### Course Information

Course Instructor: Alain Normand  
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Phone: N/A  
Office Hours & Location: by appointment

Course Time & Days: Wednesday, 19h00  
Class Location: DB 007  
Course eClass site: To be confirmed

#### Teaching Team

TA to be announced later

#### Land Acknowledgment

York University recognizes that many Indigenous Nations have longstanding relationships with the territories upon which York University campuses are located that precede the establishment of York University. York University acknowledges its presence on the traditional territory of many Indigenous Nations. The area known as Tkaronto has been care taken by the Anishinabek Nation, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, and the Huron-Wendat. It is now home to many First Nation, Inuit, and Métis communities. We acknowledge the current treaty holders, the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. This territory is subject of the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement to peaceably share and care for the Great Lakes region.

#### Course Overview

#### Course Description

Introduces students to the essentials of all stages of emergency management communications. Relying heavily on case studies, this course teaches the theory of effective communications, particularly in a crisis context. Students will also develop their own presentation/media skills.

## Course Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, students will have developed abilities in three ways:

- Cognitive: Understand and apply knowledge - By the end of this course, the student will be able to complete a comprehensive Emergency Information plan.
- Psychomotor: Create and present communication material - By the end of this course, the student will be able to design messages specific to various emergency situations.
- Affective: Modify and adapt attitude - By the end of this course, the student will be able to develop a personal approach to become effective crisis communicators.

## Course Format and Organization

- In class instruction, three (3) hours a week
- Office hours by appointment to provide additional information as required
- Course manual essential for readings prior to class and for reference
- Mostly lectures with some discussions in class
- Individual and team assignments to be detailed separately

## Topic covered

Public awareness and education, media coordination, social media and emergencies, crisis communications strategies, interviews/scrums/press conferences, public alerting, internal communications, public confidence, crisis communications teams, call centres, public inquiries/board of inquiry, debriefing, amateur radio, messenger and audience, perception and persuasion, incident management system.

## Technical Requirements

Laptop/computer required to access online course content and TopHat course manual.

Interview, and Press Conference assignments to be videotaped. Anyone having issues with being on camera should inform the instructor in advance for alternate options.

Several platforms will be used in this course (e.g., eClass, TopHat, etc.) through which students will interact with the course materials, the course director/TA, as well as with one another.

Here are some useful links for student computing information, resources, and help:

- [Student Guide to eClass](#)
- [Zoom@YorkU Best Practices](#)
- [Zoom@YorkU User Reference Guide](#)
- [University Information Technology \(UIT\) Student Services](#)
- [Student Guide to eLearning at York University](#)

To determine Internet connection and speed, there are online tests, such as [Speedtest](#), that can be run. If you need technical assistance, please consult the [University Information Technology \(UIT\) Student Services](#) web page. For more specific assistance, please write to [askit@yorku.ca](mailto:askit@yorku.ca).

### **Course Policy on Student Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI)**

#### **Use permitted with citation and in accordance with assessment instructions**

Students may only use generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools in this course so long as the following two conditions are met:

- Specific generative AI tools are used in accordance with the written guidelines provided for each assessment or activity, and
- The use of generative AI is documented and cited following citation instructions given in the syllabus.

Use of generative AI outside these two conditions will constitute academic dishonesty under York University's [Senate Policy on Academic Honesty](#). As a student in this course, it is your responsibility to understand when and how generative AI tools can be used to complete your assessments and activities. If you do not know whether an online resource or tool can be used in this course, please contact your instructor for guidance.

### **Course Communication Plan and Office Hours**

- Course announcements will be issued via eClass and may be repeated at the beginning of your in-person class.
- Discussion forums on eClass will enable student to share opinions and information on course content.
- Questions about the course and course materials will be answered mostly in class but messages sent to the instructor via eClass are also an option. Use of forums is also encouraged.
- As the instructor has no office on campus, any required for in person meetings outside of classroom hours will have to be arranged by appointment. Email the instructor to set up an appointment.

## Course Expectations

To succeed in this class students should consider:

- Completing the weekly reading prior to class from the TopHat ebook course manual
- Reading additional documents as posted online in eClass
- Attending class each week for the full three hours
- Submitting assignment on time and in accordance with instructions
- Participating in class discussions and forums

## Course Evaluation

Assessment	Due Date	Weight %	Course Learning Outcome
Interview case study	October 29-20	15%	Interview preparation, public speaking skills
Press release	October 20	10%	Writing skill, working with media
Essay	November 10	25%	Critical thinking, communication plan, analysis
Press Conference	November 15	15%	Teamwork, communication skills, presentation skills
Mid-term quiz	October 4	10%	Course content comprehension, key concepts
Participation	December 6	5%	In class discussions participation, contribution to forums and course manual questions
Final exam	To be confirmed	20%	Communication plan development, writing skills, critical thinking
		<b>100%</b>	

## Assessment Descriptions

### Individual assignments

- Interview: simulation on a real-life situation that the student selects and studies (Emphasis on the message and sender). The student will play the role of the spokesperson and will be interviewed by the course director posing as a reporter. All interviews will be done in person at date and time pre-scheduled with the instructor. Interviews will be videotaped to enable marking. The video tape will be accessible to the student on demand and will be erased at the end of the course.
- Press release: students will write a press release/media release on the situation used for their interview using methodology and principles presented in class
- Essay: Written report on a topic selected from a list of questions to be provided during class

### Team assignment

- Press Conference to present governmental or corporate crisis response actions and their impact on the citizens of the community or the clients of the corporation, based on a real emergency selected by the group. Teams of four or five students. We aim to present these to the class as a simulated online press conference by each team with an opportunity for the rest of the class to represent the media. (Note: Presentations will be video recorded to create a realistic environment) A question period must be planned as part of this assignment. (Emphasis on organisation, message, and empathy)

### Case studies selection

- Students will use the list provided as suggestions for case studies
- Other situations and personal experience may be accepted but to be cleared by course director first
- Must be emergency management related, and have a strong communications planning component
- Presentation should be based on accepted principles
- Communications are based on what should have happened, not what actually occurred.

### Final exam

- Scenario provided where the student is the Public Information Officer for the situation
- Students must plan the management of the public information for this emergency including:
  - Assigning roles and responsibilities
  - Developing key messages

- Planning information strategy with events and deadlines
- Prepare briefing notes for the EOC including rationale for the approach and the messages selected

### **Submitting Assignments**

- Mid-term quiz will be done in class on hard copy and handed in after 45 minutes from start of class.
- Press release must be submitted online via e-class.
- Essay must be submitted via Turnitin software. (Note: students have the right to refuse using Turnitin to submit assignments. However, the instructor has the responsibility to ensure academic integrity in all submitted documents so essays submitted online directly through eClass will be going through additional verification by the instructor and the TA.)
- The interview assignment will be done in person and videotaped for marking. No written material required for this assignment.
- The press conferences will be done in class and videotaped for marking. No written material required for this assignment.

Marks will be deducted for late submission at a rate of 5% per day late.

### **Late Work Policy**

Marks will be deducted for late submission at a rate of 5% per day late.

### **Missed Tests and Exams**

Any missed test or exam will translate in a mark of 0. Any justification for missing a test or exam must be submitted directly to the instructor and will be assessed on a case by case basis.

## Grading

The grading scheme for this course conforms to the 9-point system used in undergraduate programs at York University. For a full description of the York grading system, visit the York University [Academic Calendar](#).

GRADE	GRADE POINT	PERCENT RANGE	DESCRIPTION
A+	9	90-100	Exceptional
A	8	80-89	Excellent
B+	7	75-79	Very Good
B	6	70-74	Good
C+	5	65-69	Competent
C	4	60-64	Fairly Competent
D+	3	55-59	Passing
D	2	50-54	Marginally Passing
E	1	(marginally below 50%)	Marginally Failing
F	0	(below 50%)	Failing

## How to Use Citations

Citations are required for the Essay assignment only. Citations will not be required for any of the other assignments. Your personal input, analysis, and opinion is what we are looking for in all other assignments.

For the essay assignment, my preference is for the APA style but I will allow other reference styles as per the resources provided here:

- [SPARK Student Papers & Academic Research Kit](#)
- [Chicago Style Overview, YorkU Libraries](#)
- [MLA Style Overview, YorkU Libraries](#)
- [APA Style Overview, YorkU Libraries](#)
- [Drop-in Research Support, YorkU Libraries](#)
- [Writing Centre](#)

## Course Schedule: Weekly Readings and Activities

### Required Course Materials

- The course manual is provided through a TopHat eBook registration.
- You will receive an invitation to purchase the book via email at the start of the class with instructions on how to access it.

### Optional Materials

Optional readings will be posted on eClass and updated as required.

### Course Schedule

Week/Module Dates	Readings and Activities	Assessment Due Dates	Module/Unit Learning Outcomes
Week 1 September 6	Chapter 1 and 2, Introduction, the Messenger		Understanding the basics of communication and the qualifications of the messenger
Week 2 September 13	Chapters 3 and 4, the Audience		Understanding the audience; perception vs scientific facts
Week 3 September 20	Chapter 4, Coding and decoding		Preparing the message for maximum efficiency
Week 4 September 27	Chapter 5. Transmission modes		Understanding how messages get transmitted to the public
Week 5 October 4	Chapter 6, Media management	Mid-term quiz, 10%	Understanding how media works and how to prepare



<b>Week 6</b> <b>October 18</b>	Chapter 7, Social media	Press release (10%): Must be posted on eClass by midnight on October 20	Understanding the impact of social media in emergency management
<b>Week 7</b> <b>October 25</b>	Chapter 8, Pre-emergency communication	Interviews (15%): in person interviews over the weekend of October 28 and 29, five minutes per student, by appointment	Strategies to engage the public in emergency preparedness
<b>Week 8</b> <b>November 1</b>	Chapter 9, Emergency Communication		Roles and responsibilities for communication during emergencies
<b>Week 9</b> <b>November 8</b>	Chapter 10, post emergency communication	Essay (25%): must be posted to Turnitin by midnight on November 10, -5% off per day late	Knowing how to follow-up after the emergency is over
<b>Week 10</b> <b>November 15</b>	Press conferences	Press conferences (15%): live presentation to the rest of the class	Practical application and developing public speaking skills
<b>Week 11</b> <b>November 22</b>	Chapter 11, Communication plans		Learning to develop crisis communication plans
<b>Week 12</b> <b>November 29</b>	Chapter 12, The future of emergency communication	Prepare for the final exam worth 20%	Being ready for change

## Course Policies

All students are expected to familiarize themselves with the following information:

<https://www.yorku.ca/laps/sas/academic-resources/common-course-policies/>

- [Student Rights & Responsibilities](#)
- [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#)

**Please also review the following course policies:**

### Academic Integrity

In this course, we strive to maintain academic honesty to the highest extent possible. Please familiarize yourself with the meaning of academic integrity by completing [SPARK's Academic Integrity module](#) at the beginning of the course. Breaches of academic honesty range from cheating to plagiarism (i.e., the improper crediting of another's work, the representation of another's ideas as your own, etc.). All instances of academic dishonesty in this course will be reported to the appropriate University authorities and can be punishable according to the [Senate Policy on Academic Honesty](#).

### Turnitin

To promote academic integrity in this course, students will normally be required to submit their written assignments to Turnitin (via the course's eClass site) for a review of textual similarities and the detection of possible plagiarism. In so doing, students will allow their material to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used only for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin service are described on the Turnitin.com website. York students may opt out of using Turnitin. If you wish to opt out, you should contact your instructor as soon as possible.

### Accessibility

While all individuals are expected to satisfy the requirements of their program of study and to aspire to achieve excellence, the University recognizes that persons with disabilities may require reasonable accommodation to enable them to perform at their best. The University encourages students with disabilities to register with [Student Accessibility Services](#) to discuss their accommodation needs as early as possible in the term to establish the recommended academic accommodations that will be communicated to Course Directors through their Letter of Accommodation (LOA).

Please let your instructor know as early as possible in the term if you anticipate requiring academic accommodation so that we can discuss how to consider your accommodation needs within the context of this course. Sufficient notice is needed so

that reasonable steps for accommodation can be discussed. Accommodations for tests/exams normally require three (3) weeks (or 21 days) before the scheduled test/exam to arrange.

### **Religious Observance Accommodation**

York University is committed to respecting the religious beliefs and practices of all members of the community, and making reasonable and appropriate [accommodations to adherents for observances of special significance](#). Should any of the dates specified in this syllabus for course examinations, tests, or deadlines conflict with a date of religious significance, please contact the instructor within the first three (3) weeks of class. If the date falls within the formal examination periods, you must complete and submit a [Religious Accommodation for Examination Form](#) at least three (3) weeks before the start of the exam period.

### **Intellectual Property**

Course materials are designed for use as part of this particular course at York University and are the intellectual property of the instructor unless otherwise stated. Third-party copyrighted materials (such as book chapters, journal articles, music, videos, etc.) have either been licensed for use in this course or fall under an exception or limitation in Canadian copyright law. Students may not publish, post on an Internet site, sell, or otherwise distribute any course materials or work without the instructor's express permission. Course materials should only be used by students enrolled in this course.

Copying this material for distribution (e.g., uploading material to a commercial third-party website) may lead to a charge of misconduct according to York's [Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#), the [Senate Policy on Academic Honesty](#), and/or legal consequences for copyright violations.

### **Student Conduct in the Learning Environment**

York University is committed to fostering teaching and learning environments that are free of disruptive and/or harassing behaviour, are physically safe, and conducive to effective teaching and learning. Students and instructors are expected to maintain a professional relationship characterized by courtesy, civility, and mutual respect and to refrain from actions disruptive to such a relationship. Individuals who fail to adhere to such standards and who violate University or public law may be subject to disciplinary action by the University.

For more information, see the policies on [Disruptive and/or Harassing Behaviour in Academic Situations](#), the [Student Conduct and Responsibilities](#), and the [Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#).

### **Netiquette for eClass and Online Learning**

Students and instructors have a joint responsibility to create and maintain a welcoming and inclusive learning environment. All students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the [Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#). Please review and familiarize yourself with behaviours that support “netiquette” in virtual classrooms by consulting the [Guide to Netiquette](#) and [Student Guide to eLearning](#).

### **Student Notice of Recording for Online Teaching and Learning**

Activities for this course involve recording, in partial fulfillment of the course learning outcomes. Images, audio, text/chat messaging that have been recorded may be used and/or made available by the University to students enrolled in the course and those supporting the course for the purpose of materials review, for assessment, etc. Recordings will be managed according to the University’s Common Record Schedule and will be securely destroyed when no longer needed by the University. Your personal information is protected in accordance with York University’s [Guidelines on Access of Information and Protection of Privacy](#) and the [Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act](#). Access to online materials, including recordings or live meetings, is subject to York University’s [Senate Policy on Computing and Information Technology Facilities](#).

The University will use reasonable means to protect the security and confidentiality of the recorded information, but cannot provide a guarantee of such due to factors beyond the University’s control, such as recordings being forwarded, copied, intercepted, circulated, disclosed, or stored without the University’s knowledge or permission, or the introduction of malware into computer system which could potentially damage or disrupt the computer, networks, and security settings. The University is not responsible for connectivity/technical difficulties or loss of data associated with your hardware, software, or Internet connection.

By engaging in course activities that involve recording, you are consenting to the use of your appearance, image, text/chat messaging, and voice and/or likeness in the manner and under the conditions specified herein. In the case of a live stream recording, if you choose not to have your image or audio recorded, you may disable the audio and video functionality. If you choose to participate using a pseudonym instead of your real name, you must disclose the pseudonym to your instructor in advance to facilitate class participation.

You are not permitted to disclose the link to/URL of an event or an event session recording or copies of recording to anyone, for any reason. Recordings are available only to authorized individuals who have been directly provided the above instructions/link for their use. Recordings for personal use, required to facilitate your learning and preparation of personal course/lecture notes, may not be shared with others without the permission of the instructor or event coordinator, and may not be published, posted, linked to, or otherwise made available online, including on social media feeds, even if those feeds are private.

## Health and Safety

All York students and instructors share responsibility for the safety and well-being of the community while on York's campuses. Please continue to check [YUBetter Together](#) for the latest information on health and safety.

## Student Support and Resources

To help you succeed academically, York University offers a wide range of resources and services. Everything from writing workshops and peer mentorship to wellness support and career guidance is available to fulfill our LA&PS students' needs. Explore the links below to access these on-campus resources:

- [Academic Advising](#) is available to provide students support and guidance in making academic decisions and goals.
- [Student Accessibility Services](#) are available for support and accessibility accommodation when required.
- [Student Counselling, Health & Wellbeing](#) offers workshops, resources, and counselling to support your academic success.
- [Peer-Assisted Study Sessions \(PASS\) Program](#) provides student study sessions for students to collaborate and enhance their understanding of course content in certain courses.
- [Student Numeracy Assistance Centre at Keele \(SNACK\)](#) supports students in courses involving math, stats, and Excel.
- [The Writing Centre](#) provides multiple avenues of writing-based support including drop-in sessions, one-to-one appointments, a Multilingual Studio, and an Accessibility Specialist.
- [ESL Open Learning Centre \(OLC\)](#) supports students with building proficiency in reading, writing, and speaking English.
- [Learning Skills Services](#) provides tips for time management, effective study and learning habits, keeping up with coursework, and other learning-related supports.
- [Learning Commons](#) provides links to supports for time management, writing, study skills, preparing for exams, and other learning-related resources.

- [Roadmap to Student Success](#) provides students with timely and targeted resources to help them achieve academic, personal, and professional success.
- [Office of Student Community Relations \(OSCR\)](#) is responsible for administering the [Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#) and provides critical incident support.
- [goSAFE](#) is staffed by York students and can accompany York community members to and from any on-campus location, such as the Village Shuttle pick-up hub, parking lots, bus stops, or residences.

For a full list of academic, wellness, and campus resources visit [Student Support & Resources](#).