

**Emergency Management Communications
AP/ADMS 3704 F
Fall 2026**

Course Information

Course Instructor: Alain Normand
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Phone: no phone number on campus
Office Hours & Location: online by
appointment, no office on campus

Course Time & Days: Wednesday
19h00-22h00
Class Location: DB 0005
Course eClass site:
<https://eclass.yorku.ca/course/view.php?id=161720>

Land Acknowledgment

First Nations peoples have lived on this part of Turtle Island for millennia, stewarding the land, the water and all that contributes to life in this region. Today, the culture and presence of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples enrich the lands and people of this territory.

More than two centuries ago, the Mississauga people welcomed settlers to this territory, providing sustenance and engaging in trade and commerce. Between 1781 and 1820, eight treaties were signed between the Crown and the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, who opened their territory to settlement. Today, York University's Keele Campus is located on Toronto Purchase Treaty, No. 13 lands and is situated on the traditional territory of the Huron-Wendat and Haudenosaunee.

Treaty history is foundational, and it is our collective responsibility to honour the land, as we honour and respect those who have gone before us, those who are here and those who have yet to come. We are grateful for the opportunity to be learning, working and thriving on this land, and we commit to learn the truth and be active in the process of reconciliation.

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.

Pre-Requisites: None

Course Credit Exclusions (CCE): N/A

Primary Learning Outcome from DEM Program Learning Outcomes

Communicate accurately and reliably, orally and in writing to a wide range of audiences, including government, businesses/ industry, professional associations and the public at large by using various media and communication technologies to facilitate educational campaigns, knowledge-sharing and decision-making and to provide efficient and timely communications during emergencies and disasters.

Course Learning Objectives

- 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 in order to become an effective crisis communicator:

Topics 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.

Course Format and Organization

In-class lectures augmented by assigned readings from the course manual or from hand-outs provided online. In-class discussions encouraged heavily and will make use of polling software and twitter. Chat and online discussions will also be arranged through e-class web site.

Instructor Office Hours and Communication Guidelines

The instructor has no office on campus but will usually arrive a half hour before class starts and stay for an extra half hour after class to make time for students having questions and issues. Student will use the e-class forums to discuss topics and communicate but use of WhatsApp and other media is optional. An emergency phone number will be provided to students during the course in order to reach the course director.

Technical Requirements

Several platforms will be used in this course (e.g., eClass, Prezi, 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](#)
- [eLearning Getting Started \(LA&PS eServices\)](#)
- [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.

Course Evaluation

- 1 Interview case study, 15%, due date October 31
- 1 Press release 10%, due date October 25
- 1 Essay 25%, due date November 22
- 1 Team press conference 15%, due date November 25
- Mid-term quiz 10%, due date October 7
- Participation 5%, evaluation by end of classes based on attendance & participation to class discussion, also responses to eclass forums
- Final exam 20%, date to be determined

Assignments:

- Individual assignments
1. 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 live by appointment at a date and campus location to be determined. This activity is done outside of classroom time. (Note: interviews will be recorded to create a realistic environment and provide an opportunity for students to evaluate themselves)
 2. Press release: students will write a press release/media release on the situation used for their interview using methodology and principles presented in class
 3. Essay: Written report on a topic selected from a list of questions to be provided during class

- Team assignment
- 1. 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

Late Work Policy

No extensions will be permitted as the instructions and requirements for the assignments are provided well in advance. Assignments submitted after the due date will be subject to a 5% deduction for each day late. Special accommodations will be discussed individually with the students concerned.

How to Use Citations in this Course

The preferred citation style is APA version 7 but other versions and other styles approved by YorkU will be accepted.

Resources to help with citations:

- [I need to cite and reference, Learning Commons](#)
- [Drop-in Research Support](#), YorkU Libraries
- [Writing Centre](#)
- [SPARK Student Papers & Academic Research Kit](#)

Grading

The grading scheme for this course conforms to the 9-point system used in undergraduate programs at York University. The sum of raw grade scores can be used as an indicator for a student's progress. Please note that the raw scores will not necessarily translate directly to a student's final score. The reason is that specified grade distribution profiles that have been established for AP/ADMS and DEMS courses by the School for Administrative Studies and by the Faculty for Liberal Arts and Professional Studies. Final course grades may be adjusted to conform to Program or Faculty grade distribution profiles. 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	40-49	Marginally Failing
F	0	0-39	Failing

Course Schedule: Weekly Readings and Activities

Important Dates

Explore the York University [Academic Calendar](#) to find a list of important dates, such as class start/end dates, drop deadlines, holidays and more.

Required Course Materials

- Textbook: Emergency Information Management, Normand, A, June 2017, ebook, TopHat Publishers (join code to be provided at a later date), \$82

Optional Materials

- Handout using e-class and electronic distribution only (green policy, save trees)

Course Schedule

Fall 2026 session - Lessons plan

Week	Overview	Class discussion	Assignments
<i>Topic title</i>	<i>Topics presented</i>	<i>In class Wednesday evening 19h00 discussion</i>	<i>If due this week</i>
Important note: topics and case studies may change to reflect more current situations at the time of the session			
Week one: September 9 <i>Session title:</i> Introduction, the Messenger	>Introduction >Syllabus >Communication Basics >The messenger	Communication chain failures	Profiles: Getting to know you
<i>Learning Outcome(s): {understand and apply knowledge}</i>	Understanding the basics of communication and the qualifications of the messenger		
Week two: September 16 <i>Session title:</i> The Audience	>The audience >Perception and outrage >Approaches to reaching groups	Risk communication gap	
<i>Learning Outcome(s): {understand and apply knowledge}</i>	Understanding the audience; perception vs scientific facts		

Week three: September 23 <i>Session title:</i> Coding and decoding	>Public confidence >Key messages >Com. Vs crisis com. >Strategies & policies >Persuasion	The WE fiasco	
<i>Learning Outcome(s):</i> <i>{modify and adapt attitude}</i>	Preparing the message for maximum efficiency		
Week four: September 30 <i>Session title:</i> Transmission modes	>Direct vs indirect >Sources >Public Alerting >Traditional media	Never cry wolf	(Prepare for the October 7 quiz)
<i>Learning Outcome(s):</i> <i>{understand and apply knowledge}</i>	Understanding how messages get transmitted to the public		
Week five: October 7 <i>Session title:</i> Media management	>Press releases >Interviews and scrums >Press conferences >Traps and pitfalls, bridging	No comment	Quiz (10%): 30 minutes limit to complete, short answers
<i>Learning Outcome(s):</i> <i>{understand and apply knowledge}</i>	Understanding how media works and how to prepare		
October 14	READING WEEK		
Week six: October 21 <i>Session title:</i> Social Media Guest speaker to be confirmed	>Social media use in EM >Crowdsourcing >Accuracy >Speed	Fake news	Press release (10%): Must be posted on eclass by midnight on October 25
<i>Learning Outcome(s):</i> <i>{modify and adapt attitude}</i>	Understanding the impact of social media in emergency management		
Week seven: October 28 <i>Session title:</i> Pre-emergency communication	>Public awareness >Public education >Stakeholder relations >Public engagement	Neighbourhood preparedness plans	Interviews (15%): in person interviews over the weekend of October 31 and November 1, five minutes per student, by appointment
<i>Learning Outcome(s):</i> <i>{create and present communication material}</i>	Strategies to engage the public in emergency preparedness		

Week eight: November 4 <i>Session title:</i> Emergency Communication <i>Guest Speaker to be confirmed</i>	>Amateur Radio>Incident management>Information centres>Public/Emergency Information Officer (PIO/EIO)	COVID communication: overload?	
<i>Learning Outcome(s): {understand and apply knowledge}</i>	Roles and responsibilities for communication during emergencies		
Week nine: November 11 <i>Session title:</i> Post-emergency communication	>Log-keeping >Scribes >Debriefing >Reporting >Public inquiries	Science and facts vs politics and profit	Essay (25%): must be posted to Turnitin by midnight on November 22, -5% off per day late
<i>Learning Outcome(s): {understand and apply knowledge}</i>	Knowing how to follow-up after the emergency is over		
Week ten: November 18 <i>Session title:</i> Communication plans	>The communication plan: putting it all together >Preparing for the final exam >Course recap	<i>(to be determined based on needs at that time)</i>	
<i>Learning Outcome(s): {create and present communication material}</i>	Learning to develop crisis communication plans		
Week eleven: November 25 <i>Session title:</i> Press conferences class presentations	>Press conferences	<i>(note press conferences will take up the full three hours of the class time)</i>	Press conferences (15%): team presentations to the rest of the class
<i>Learning Outcome(s): {create and present communication material}</i>	Practical application and developing public speaking skills		
Week twelve: December 9 <i>Session title:</i> The future of emergency communication	>Complete press conferences if necessary >Future outlook >Changing technology >Public expectation	Your career plans	Prepare for the final exam worth 20%
<i>Learning Outcome(s): {modify and adapt attitude}</i>	Being ready for change		

December 10 to 23 (to be confirmed)	FINAL EXAM (date to be confirmed) >Scenario will be provided, develop a comprehensive crisis communication plan for the scenario by following questions from exam sheet, three hour limit, open book exam.
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Course Policies

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

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

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is a fundamental and important value of York University. To maintain a fair and honest learning environment, you are responsible for understanding and upholding academic integrity in all courses and academic activities. You are encouraged to connect with reliable [on-campus resources](#) that support your coursework and academic honesty. To better understand the serious consequences of breaching academic honesty policies, familiarize yourself with the [Senate Policy on Academic Conduct](#). You can learn more about upholding academic integrity in your courses by exploring [SPARK: Academic Integrity Module](#), [LA&PS Academic Honesty](#) and [Academic Integrity for Students](#).

Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI)

Students are not permitted to use generative artificial intelligence (AI) in this course. Submitting any work created (in whole or part) through the use of generative AI tools will be considered a violation of York University's [Senate Policy on Academic Conduct](#). Using AI apps such as ChatGPT, GPT-3, DALL-E, translation software among others to complete academic work **without your instructor's knowledge or permission**, is considered to be a breach of academic honesty. For more information, please review [AI Technology & Academic Integrity: Information for Students](#).

If you're not sure whether using an AI app for your academic work is acceptable, it is recommended that you:

- Carefully review the guidelines for your assessments
- Check for any messages from your instructor on eClass
- Ask your instructor or TA if they are permitting the use of these tools

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

York University is committed to creating a learning environment which provides equal opportunity to all members of its community. If you anticipate or experience any barriers to learning in this course, please discuss your concerns with your instructor as early as possible. For students with disabilities, contact [Student Accessibility Services](#) to coordinate academic accommodations and services. Accommodations will be communicated to Course Directors through a Letter of Accommodation (LOA). 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 days of religious significance](#). Should any of the dates specified in this syllabus for course assignments, tests, or deadlines conflict with a date of religious significance, please contact the instructor not less than two (2) weeks (or 14 days) prior to the date for which accommodation is sought. If the requested accommodation is for an exam or falls within the formal examination periods, you must complete and submit a [Religious Accommodation Agreement](#) at least three (3) weeks (or 21 days) 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 Conduct](#), and/or legal consequences for copyright violations.

Student Support and Resources

York University offers a wide range of student supports resources and services, including everything from writing workshops and peer mentorship to wellness support and career guidance. 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.
- [Centre for Indigenous Student Services](#) offers a community space with academic, spiritual, cultural, and physical support, including writing and learning skills programs.
- [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.

- [Peer Mentorship](#) helps students transition through their first year by connecting them with upper-year students. The mentors can help find supports and resources. They also lead a community hub on campus.
- [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](#).