

The University of Maine

DigitalCommons@UMaine

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

University of Maine Departmental Records

Spring 2020

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences_CMJ 404 Risk Communication_Assignments, Exam & Syllabus

Laura Rickard

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/c19_las



Part of the [Higher Education Commons](#), [History Commons](#), [Journalism Studies Commons](#), and the [Medicine and Health Sciences Commons](#)

This Syllabus is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@UMaine. It has been accepted for inclusion in College of Liberal Arts and Sciences by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@UMaine. For more information, please contact um.library.technical.services@maine.edu.

Risk Communication

CMJ 404 ♦ Spring 2020 ♦ Department of Communication & Journalism
Tuesday/Thursday, 9:30 am – 10:45 am ♦ Dunn 401

Instructor: Dr. Laura Rickard

Office: Dunn 428 ♦ **Phone:** (207) 581-1843 ♦ **Email:** laura.rickard@maine.edu

Office Hours: Tuesdays, 11 am – 1 pm & by appointment

Office hours on Zoom:

Zoom Meeting ID: 394 365 010

<https://maine.zoom.us/j/394365010>

By phone: US: [+1 312 626 6799](tel:+13126266799) or [+1 646 876 9923](tel:+16468769923) or [+1 253 215 8782](tel:+12532158782) or [+1 301 715 8592](tel:+13017158592) or [+1 346 248 7799](tel:+13462487799) or [+1 408 638 0968](tel:+14086380968) or [+1 669 900 6833](tel:+16699006833)

Course Description

Wildfires, oil spills, Ebola outbreaks, water shortages, Superfund sites, hurricanes.... These and other “natural” and “human-made” risks confront us daily as we check social media, chat with our friends, or walk through our neighborhoods. What constitutes our perception of these risks, and how does our communication about them influence individual-level behaviors, and even societal-level policy decisions?

Risk communication uses social science theories and methods to understand the nature of public discourse around issues of environmental, health, and societal risk. The goal is generally to assess and shape the impact of that discourse on individuals or society in the context of organizational objectives. This three-credit course will emphasize understanding, applying, and comparing/contrasting theories and concepts of risk communication. To do so, we will examine several cases studies of recent issues designed to bring these concepts to life. Class will include lecture, discussion, and hands-on activities.

Instructional Materials and Methods

We will be using the following textbook:

Cho, H., Reimer, T., & McComas, K. A. (Eds.). (2015). *The SAGE handbook of risk communication*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Each week, you are responsible for the readings listed on the syllabus, both in the textbook and various articles, which are available on the course Blackboard site.

Course Reserve

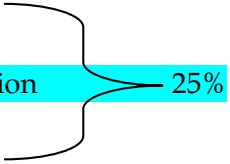
The textbook is available online via Fogler Library and linked to the course Blackboard site.

Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of the semester, students should be able to: (1) define the nature of risk: what it is, why it is so complex, and the various contexts in which it is encountered; (2) explain how various audiences react to, understand, and behave toward risks; (3) apply strategies and best practices for communicating risks to various audiences; and (4) apply critical reading, thinking, and writing skills to explore and articulate opinions on questions related to risk communication.

Grading and Course Expectations

Each element is worth the following percentage of your final grade:

- **Midterm Exam (in class): 20%**
 - **Final Exam (take home): 20%**
 - **Public Meeting 1: 15%**
 - **Public Meeting 2: 20%***
 - **Class Participation:**
 - Attendance
 - Weeks 1-8: in-person attendance
 - **Weeks 9 - 14: Blackboard discussion board participation**
 - **Weekly reading response (11)**
 - **+1 Assignment****
- 

More information on the assignments and in-class activities will be provided throughout the semester.

***The format of this meeting will change (i.e., there will be no face-to-face or Zoom component); however, there will still be a group work component. More instructions will be provided closer to the date of this assignment.**

****The +1 assignment no longer involves an oral presentation component; however, you must still complete the 1-2 page reflection along with finding a relevant "text."**

Course Policies

Please be sure to familiarize yourself with the following course policies:

Class Attendance

Weeks 1-8: I expect you to be in class on time, and for the entire class period, and I will take attendance. Occasionally, sickness, family emergencies, a job interview, etc. may cause you to miss a class. If you do, you are responsible for obtaining class notes and any materials distributed in class on the day(s) you missed. I do not accept doctors' notes, except in instances of prolonged or serious illness, or other extenuating circumstances; if in doubt, please talk to

me! **You may miss two classes with no penalty.** After that, I will deduct **5 points for each additional absence** from your total attendance & participation grade.

Weeks 9-14: With the university switching to online learning, the above attendance policy is no longer in place. Several changes have taken place:

1. I will hold one "live" class via Zoom every Tuesday at 9:30 am. In this class, I will basically go over that week's lecture as though we are in class. Attendance is **not** mandatory. If you can, please attend. I will make the Zoom link available in each week's course content (so the Zoom link for the lecture on April 14 can be found under "Week 12" under course content. If you attend, please feel free to interrupt, ask questions, or interact in whatever way you need to understand the material. Do note that attending this Zoom is optional. Here is a link to access Zoom tutorials:
<https://umaine.edu/citl/faculty-support/zoom/>
2. I will also post recorded lectures each week. Ideally, there will be two lectures each week (one covering the material from Tuesday, one covering the material from Thursday); however, I might break these down into smaller chunks. Make sure you watch these videos! You will be able to find them under the week in which they were held.
3. The Powerpoint slides and any additional materials such as videos will be posted separately. Again, you can find these in the week in which they were discussed.

Class Participation

A successful class environment is built on the mutual preparation, participation, and respect of the instructor and the students. Therefore, class participation is not simply "showing up." It's also your active engagement in class discussions as well as timely completion of your assignments. Perhaps you disagreed with a point raised by one of the authors, or maybe a particular concept confused you; these are the comments and questions to bring with you to class, and will make discussions lively and interesting! Since the lectures seldom summarize *all* of the information from readings, you will need to stay caught up, and will be expected to draw from these readings in your written assignments. I expect that you'll come to each class having closely read the material.

Weeks 1-8:

- **Small group activities.** During most class periods, you should expect to engage in small-group discussion with your classmates in assigned groups, and to be asked to share your and your peers' points-of-view with the larger class. Occasionally, you will also be asked to hand in an in-class assignment.
- **Readings.** Please complete the course reading in the order listed on the syllabus, beginning with the week's Case Study Guide (if applicable).
- **Weekly reading responses.** Most weeks, you will complete a reading response **on Blackboard, due by 8 pm on the Wednesday before Thursday's class.** These will be short, open-book opportunities for you to demonstrate your understanding of the concepts covered in the week's reading. The responses will also provide a venue for you to ask questions that you would like to see discussed in class, and help you to

practice responding to the types of questions that will be included on class exams. **Late responses will not be accepted.**

Weeks 9-14:

- **Weekly Blackboard posts.** These posts are due every **Thursday by midnight**. You will post your weekly reading response in the discussion board that belongs to that week. So, if you want to respond to the reading and lecture held on April 14, you will need to do so in the discussion board created under "Week 12".
What does a reading response entail?
 - ✓ It must discuss **four** things you took away from the reading and the lecture. **Two** must be from the reading, and **two** must be from the lectures. These can be things that stood out to you, things you thought were interesting, etc.
 - ✓ These four things (and these can be discussed in a bulleted format) must **each** contain a brief summary of the point and a discussion of why you thought this was interesting, relevant, or important
 - ✓ The reading response **may not be more than 150 words**.
 - ✓ You will post your reading responses in that week's discussion forum before **Thursday at midnight**.
- **Readings.** Please complete the course reading in the order listed on the syllabus, beginning with the week's Case Study Guide (if applicable).
- **Weekly reading responses.** As in Weeks 1-8, you will complete a reading response on Blackboard, but these are now due **Thursday at midnight**. These will be short, open-book opportunities for you to demonstrate your understanding of the concepts covered in the week's reading. The responses will also provide a venue for you to ask questions that you would like to see discussed in a future lecture, and help you to practice responding to the types of questions that will be included on the final class exam.
- **+1 assignment.** Find a "text" that connects to the week's theory/case and assigned readings. This could include: movies, music, YouTube videos, podcasts, newspaper articles, academic journal articles, blogs, TED talks, memes, Twitter threads, etc. Submit a typed (1-inch margin, double-spaced) 1-2 page summary of the +1 text, including: (a) Its relation to course concept(s) and/or case studies; and (b) a link (and/or full citation) to the text. *Note:* There will be no longer be an oral presentation portion of this assignment.

Assignments

Assignment due dates are noted on the schedule below. **Late assignments are not accepted.** Exceptions to this policy will be granted in the case of serious medical or personal issues. In this case, please discuss your situation with me as early as possible so that we can come up with a revised deadline. All assignments will be **submitted via Blackboard**, unless otherwise noted.

- **Citations.** I expect that you will adhere to the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA), 6th edition. A great online resource for your APA-related questions is the Purdue University Online Writing Lab (OWL) – see the link on the class Blackboard site. Do your best to follow this (or another) reference system when citing class readings or other sources, and ask if you are in doubt! Proofread your written

work carefully. Errors in spelling, format, grammar, and clarity of thought will affect the grading of all written work, as will failure to cite sources.

Grading

The following grading scale will be used to calculate your final grade:

Grading Scale	
A	93-100%
A-	90-92%
B+	87-89%
B	83-86%
B-	80-82%
C+	77-79%
C	73-76%
C-	70-72%
D	60-69%
F	59% or below
S	Satisfactory
U	Unsatisfactory
I	Incomplete
IF	Incomplete/Fail

Extra Credit

Up to five points of extra credit are available to each student, through the following outlets:

- Attend one of the CMJ Spring 2020 Colloquium Series talks (Mondays, 12-12:50 in Dunn 424): 2 points
- Write a 1-page reflection on a colloquium talk: 3 points
- Watch the Society for Risk Analysis recent webinar on responses to COVID-19 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fXdb8RUz2Vs&feature=youtu.be>) (2 points)
- Write a 1-page reflection on the webinar: 3 points

Librarian's Office Hours

Jen Bonnet, the liaison librarian for the Department of Communication and Journalism, will have weekly office hours via Zoom:

- The Zoom meeting ID is 916-437-883
- <https://maine.zoom.us/j/916437883>
- Telephone options: US: +1 646 876 9923 or +1 312 626 6799 or +1 346 248 7799 or +1 408 638 0968 or +1 669 900 6833 or +1 253 215 8782 or +1 301 715 8592

In Spring 2020, her office hours will be on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 1:30-2:30 pm. She will also be responsive on email to your questions (Jennifer.l.bonnet@maine.edu). This is an excellent opportunity to get help with research for your assignments, as well as develop your information literacy.

Academic Honesty Statement

Academic honesty is very important. It is dishonest to cheat on exams, to copy term papers, to submit papers written by another person, to fake experimental results, or to copy or reword parts of books or articles into your own papers without appropriately citing the source. Students committing or aiding in any of these violations may be given failing grades for an assignment or for an entire course, at the discretion of the instructor. In addition to any academic action taken by an instructor, these violations are also subject to action under the University of Maine Student Conduct Code. The maximum possible sanction under the student conduct code is dismissal from the University.

Students with Physical and Learning Disabilities

If you have a disability for which you may be requesting an accommodation, please contact Disabilities Services, 121 East Annex, 581-2319, as early as possible in the term.

Sexual Discrimination Reporting

The University of Maine is committed to making campus a safe place for students. Because of this commitment, if you tell a teacher about an experience of **sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, relationship abuse (dating violence and domestic violence), sexual misconduct or any form of gender discrimination** involving members of the campus, **your teacher is required to report** this information to the campus Office of Sexual Assault & Violence Prevention or the Office of Equal Opportunity.

If you want to talk in confidence to someone about an experience of sexual discrimination, please contact these resources:

For *confidential resources on campus*: **Counseling Center: 207-581-1392** or **Cutler Health Center: at 207-581-4000**.

For *confidential resources off campus*: **Rape Response Services: 1-800-310-0000** or **Spruce Run: 1-800-863-9909**.

Other resources: The resources listed below can offer support but may have to report the incident to others who can help:

For *support services on campus*: **Office of Sexual Assault & Violence Prevention: 207-581-1406, Office of Community Standards: 207-581-1409, University of Maine Police: 207-581-4040 or 911**. Or see the OSAVP website for a complete list of services at <http://www.umaine.edu/osavp/>

Course Schedule

Below is a *tentative* schedule for the semester. You are responsible to keep up on any revisions, which may be announced in class or posted on Blackboard. Readings will be available on Blackboard or in the textbook (see above).

Please note: In the event of an extended disruption of normal classroom activities, the format for this course may be modified to enable its completion within its programmed time frame. In that event, you will be provided an addendum to the syllabus that will supersede this version

TUESDAY	THURSDAY
<p>Week 1 January 21 - Introduction to the class and to each other</p>	<p>Jan. 23 - What is risk? How do we manage it? What is risk communication?</p> <p>Readings Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The three fixes: Technological, cognitive, and structural • Risk perception and communication unplugged: Twenty years of process <p>Assignment Due: <i>Weekly reading response - due by 8 pm on Wednesday (1/22)</i></p>
<p>Week 2 Jan. 28 - Risk Perception; Risk Compensation</p> <p>Readings Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seat Belts Case Study Guide • Textbook Chapter 1: Risk Perception • Risk compensation theory 	<p>Jan. 30 - Case Study #1: Seat Belts</p> <p>Readings Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Condoms and seatbelts • Hidden danger of seatbelts • Fifty years ago, "Unsafe at any speed" shook the auto world <p>Assignment Due: <i>Weekly reading response - due by 8 pm on Wednesday (1/29)</i></p>
<p>Week 3 Feb. 4 - Unrealistic Optimism; Norms</p> <p>Readings Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • College Drinking Case Study Guide • Optimistic biases about personal risks • Crafting normative messages to protect the environment 	<p>Feb. 6 - Case Study #2: College Drinking</p> <p>Readings Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What colleges need to know • Why colleges haven't stopped binge drinking • Truth in advertising <p>Assignment Due: <i>Weekly reading response - due by 8 pm on Wednesday (2/5)</i></p>

<p>Week 4 Feb. 11 – Judgmental Heuristics and Biases</p> <p>Readings Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitor Safety in National Parks Case Study Guide • Textbook Chapter 3: The feeling of risk: Implications for risk perception and communication • Judgment under uncertainty: Heuristics and biases 	<p>Feb. 13 – Case Study #3: Visitor Safety in National Parks</p> <p>Readings Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitor proficiency profiling in a national park <p>Assignment Due: <i>Weekly reading response – due by 8 pm on Wednesday (2/12)</i></p>
<p>Week 5 Feb. 18 – Strategic Messaging 1: Framing</p> <p>Readings Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate Change Case Study Guide • Textbook Chapter 15: Framing, the media, and risk communication in policy debates • Climate Change and the American Mind – April 2019 (Skim pp. 1-25) 	<p>Feb. 20 – Case Study #4: Climate Change</p> <p>Readings Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychological responses to the proximity of climate change <p>Assignment Due: <i>Weekly reading response – due by 8 pm on Wednesday (2/19)</i></p>
<p>Week 6 Feb. 25 – Strategic Messaging 2: Efficacy</p> <p>Readings Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HIV/AIDS Case Study Guide • Fear control and danger control: A test of the extended parallel process model • Exploring unintended consequences of risk communication messages 	<p>Feb. 27 – Case Study #5: HIV/AIDS</p> <p>Readings Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sociocognitive approaches for AIDS prevention • Brunch, margaritas, and good advice: How peer support helps those living with HIV <p>Assignment Due: <i>Weekly reading response – due by 8 pm on Wednesday (2/26)</i></p>
<p>Week 7 March 3 – Library research for Public Meeting Guest lecture: Jen Bonnet CLASS MEETS AT Fogler Library classroom <i>**Public Meeting #1 assignment distributed</i></p>	<p>March 5 – In-class midterm exam</p>

<p>Week 8 March 10 – In-class prep for Public Meeting #1</p> <p>Readings Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicating in a crisis, pp. 61-74 only 	<p>March 12 – Public Meeting #1</p> <p>Assignment Due: <i>Public Meeting #1 assignment – due by the start of class</i></p>
<p>March 17 – SPRING BREAK</p>	<p>March 19 – SPRING BREAK</p>
<p>Week 9 March 24 – SPRING BREAK</p>	<p>March 26 – Trust & Credibility; Social Amplification of Risk Study #6: Silicone Breast Implants [class meeting on Zoom @9:30 am]</p> <p>Readings Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Silicone Breast Implants Case Study Guide Perceived risk, trust, and democracy The social amplification of risk: A conceptual framework Evaluating the health risks of breast implants Trespass against us <p>Assignment Due: <i>Weekly reading response – due by midnight</i> <i>Blackboard discussion post – due by midnight</i></p>
<p>Week 10 March 31 – Procedural Justice; Public Engagement [class meeting on Zoom @9:30 am]</p> <p>Readings Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cancer Clusters Case Study Guide Textbook Chapter 22: Public engagement in risk-related decision making Social justice: Outcome and procedure 	<p>April 2 – Case Study #7: Cancer Clusters</p> <p>Readings Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public meetings about suspected cancer clusters The problem at Love Canal <p>Assignment Due: <i>Weekly reading response – due by midnight</i> <i>Blackboard discussion post – due by midnight</i></p>

<p>Week 11 April 7 – Theory: News Media and Risk [class meeting on Zoom @9:30 am]</p> <p>Readings Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Autism and Vaccines Case Study Guide • Textbook Chapter 14: Media portrayal of risk: The social production of news • The mass media and judgments of risk <p><i>**Public Meeting #2 assignment distributed</i></p>	<p>April 9 – Case Study #8: Autism and Vaccines</p> <p>Readings Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The real issue in vaccine safety • How anecdotal evidence can undermine scientific results • Could it happen here? Vaccine risk controversies and the specter of derailment <p>Assignment Due: Weekly reading response – due by midnight Blackboard discussion post – due by midnight</p>
<p>Week 12 April 14 – Group work for Public Meeting #2/Catch-up</p> <p>[Dr. Rickard will check in with each group via email or Zoom]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin research – see Library Guide • Review materials on Blackboard in Week 12 folder (including watching public meeting video) <p>[Work (a)synchronously with your group members] Librarian Jen Bonnet available via Zoom for consultation</p>	<p>April 16 – Group work for Public Meeting #2</p> <p>Assignment Due: Public Meeting #2 assignment – due by midnight</p>
<p>Week 13 April 21 – Identity, Social Media, & Risk [class meeting on Zoom @9:30 am]</p> <p>Readings Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risky Selfies Case Study Guide • Risk communication in social media • I tweet honestly, I tweet passionately: Twitter users, context collapse, and the imagined audience 	<p>April 23 – Case Study #9: Risky Selfies</p> <p>Readings Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cause of death: Selfie • The vigilante shaming influencers for bad behavior in national parks <p>Assignments Due: Weekly reading response – due by midnight Blackboard discussion post – due by midnight</p>

<p>Week 14 April 28 – Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication [class meeting on Zoom @9:30 am]</p> <p>Readings Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency Preparedness & Response Case Study Guide • Textbook Chapter 20: Crisis communication • Crisis and emergency risk communication as an integrative model <p><i>**Final exam (take home) assigned</i></p>	<p>April 30 – Case Study #10: Emergency Preparedness & Response</p> <p>Readings Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Textbook Chapter 16: Social media and risk communication • Zombies gone viral <p>Assignments Due: Weekly reading response – due by midnight Blackboard discussion post – due by midnight</p>
<p><i>Final exam due by 10 am on May 5th</i></p>	