



EXTENDED CAMPUS

COLLEGE *of* PROFESSIONAL
and CONTINUING STUDIES

COMM 5393-101: Risk Assessment and Communication

Note: The information on the site location and hours below is for informational purposes **only**. This course will be held online using platforms and methods based on the professor's choice. **Please contact your professor for more information on actual meeting times.**

Course Description:

This course offers an overview of risk and crisis communication theory and research.

Class Dates and Format Information:

Dates: November 2-8, 2020
Format: Online, contact the professor for more information
Last day to enroll or drop without penalty: October 4, 2020

Site Director:

Location: Washington, D.C. Liaison Office - 2189 Crystal Plaza Arcade, Arlington, VA, 22202.

Hours: Monday - Friday 6:00 p.m.-9:30 p.m.; Saturday 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m.; Sunday 8:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Email: apwashington@ou.edu. Phone: 703-418-4800.

Professor Contact Information:

Course Professor: Elena Bessarabova, PhD
Mailing Address: Department of Communication
University of Oklahoma
Norman, OK 73019
Telephone Number: (240) 478-8198 (cell)
Fax Number: (405) 325-7625
E-mail Address: ebess@ou.edu
Professor availability: The professor will be available via e-mail to students before and after the class sessions. On-site office hours are half an hour before and after each class session, by appointment.

Textbook(s) and Instructional Materials:

Materials posted on the OU Canvas learning management system: Access Canvas at <https://canvas.ou.edu>, enter your OU NetID and password, and select course to access material. If you require assistance with Canvas, please click on the Help icon. You can search the Canvas guides, chat with Canvas support, or contact OU IT.

Course Objectives:

The primary goal of this course is to provide an overview of theory and research in the field of risk and crisis communication, focusing specifically on cognition, emotion, risk perceptions, risk/crisis management and communication analysis.

Assignments, Grading and Due Dates:

Readings:

You should have read the bulk of the readings before the course begins. Here is the list of the readings assigned for the course.

Monday:

- What is risk/crisis? What is risk/crisis communication?
 - Fischhoff, Watson, & Hope, 1984; Plough & Krimski, 1987

Tuesday:

- Approaches to communicating risk.
 - Lundgren & McMakin, 2009 (CH2 and CH6);

Wednesday:

- Risk perceptions.
 - Slovic, Fischhoff, & Lichtenstein, 1982; Kahneman, 2013

Thursday:

- Risk and emotion.
 - Bessarabova, Banas, & Bernard, 2020

Friday

- Cultural influences.
 - Harris, 1976; Gladwell, 2008;

Saturday:

- Audience analysis and message design. Terrorism.
 - Lundgren & McMakin, 2009 (CH8); Kruglanski & Fishman, 2009

Sunday:

- Research presentations.
 - You will present the proposals for your post-seminar paper.

Course Assignments:

Summary/Reflection Assignments.

A summary/reflection of each reading assigned for that particular day will be due starting on the first day of class. This paper should be a single-spaced, one page-long submission. This assignment is to be uploaded on Canvas (see "Summary/Reflection" dropdown) by 6:00 pm on the day for which a given reading is assigned.

Homework Assignments.

I will post narrated lectures that will include homework assignments. You'll have to listen through the lectures to find out what the assignment is. This assignment is to be uploaded on Canvas (see "Homework" dropdown) by 6:00 pm on the day for which a given topic is assigned.

Post-Seminar Paper.

You will be asked to write a term paper relevant to the material discussed in this class. Source material may include and/or expand on the reading list provided for this course. You will be asked to provide an analysis and communication recommendations of an existing risk/crisis including:

1. Problem definition
2. Audience analysis
3. Communication recommendations

The paper must follow APA format, have a separate title page, include a 100-word abstract, have 13-15 pages of text, and include a complete reference section. Students will first submit a short proposal (via email or a Zoom meeting) introducing the topic they wish to address and some potential sources beyond the list supplied. Once the proposal has been accepted, students may begin work on the paper. All work must be original and be properly prepared and referenced in APA format.

Grading:

This is a letter-graded course: A, B, C, D, or F.

Assignment	Due Date	Percent of Grade
Summary/Reflection	By 6:00 p.m. on the day that a given reading is assigned	30%
Homework	By 6:00 p.m. on the day that a given topic is assigned	30%
Post-Seminar Paper	November 29, 2020	40%

Notice: Failure to meet assignment due dates could result in a grade of I (Incomplete) and may adversely impact Tuition Assistance and/or Financial Aid.

POLICIES AND NOTICES

Attendance/Grade Policy

Attendance and participation in interaction, individual assignments, group exercises, simulations, role playing, etc. are valuable aspects of any course because much of the learning comes from discussions in class with other students. It is expected that you attend all classes and be on time except for excused emergencies.

Excused absences are given for professor mandated activities or legally required activities such as emergencies or military assignments. It is the policy of the University to excuse absences of students that result from religious observances and to provide without penalty for the rescheduling of examinations and additional required class work that may fall on religious holidays. Unavoidable personal emergencies, including (but not limited to) serious illness; delays in getting to class because of accidents, etc.; deaths and funerals, and hazardous road conditions will be excused.

If you are obtaining financial assistance (TA, STAP, FA, VA, Scholarship, etc.) to pay all or part of your tuition cost, you must follow your funding agency/institution's policy regarding "I" (Incomplete) grades unless the timeline is longer than what the University policy allows then you must adhere to the University policy. Students who receive Financial Aid must resolve/complete any "I" (Incomplete) grades by the end of the term or he/she may be placed on "financial aid probation." If the "I" grade is not resolved/completed by the end of the following term, the student's Financial Aid may be suspended making the student ineligible for further Financial Aid.

Students are responsible for meeting the guidelines of Tuition Assistance and Veterans Assistance. See the education counselor at your local education center for a complete description of your TA or VA requirements.

Academic Integrity and Student Conduct

Academic integrity means honesty and responsibility in scholarship. Academic assignments exist to help students learn; grades exist to show how fully this goal is attained. Therefore all work and all grades should result from the student's own understanding and effort.

Academic misconduct is any act which improperly affects the evaluation of a student's academic performance or achievement. Misconduct occurs when the student either knows or reasonably should know that the act constitutes misconduct. Academic misconduct includes: cheating and using unauthorized materials on examinations and other assignments; improper collaboration, submitting the same assignment for different classes (self-plagiarism); fabrication, forgery, alteration of documents, lying, etc...in order to obtain an academic advantage; assisting others in academic misconduct; attempting to commit academic misconduct; destruction of property, hacking, etc...; intimidation and interference with integrity process; and plagiarism. All students should review the Student's Guide to Academic Integrity at http://integrity.ou.edu/students_guide.html

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. All students should review policies regarding student conduct at <http://studentconduct.ou.edu/>

Accommodation Statement

The University of Oklahoma is committed to making its activities as accessible as possible. For accommodations on the basis of disability, please contact your local OU Site Director.

Adjustment for Pregnancy/Childbirth-Related Issues

Should you need modifications or adjustments to your course requirements because of documented pregnancy-related or childbirth-related issues, please contact me as soon as possible to discuss. Generally, modifications will be made where medically necessary and similar in scope to accommodations based on temporary disability. Please see <http://www.ou.edu/content/eoo/faqs/pregnancy-faqs.html>.

Title IX Resources

For any concerns regarding gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, stalking, or intimate partner violence, the University offers a variety of resources, including advocates on-call 24/7, counseling services, mutual no-contact orders, scheduling adjustments, and disciplinary sanctions against the perpetrator. Please contact the Sexual Misconduct Office at smo@ou.edu or (405) 325-2215 (8-5), or the Sexual Assault Response Team at (405) 615 -0013 (24/7) to report an incident. To learn more about Title IX, please visit the Institutional Equity Office's website at <http://www.ou.edu/content/eoo.html>

Course Policies

Advanced Programs policy is to order books in paperback if available. Courses, dates, and professors are subject to change. Please check with your OU Site Director. Students should retain a copy of any assignments that are mailed to the professor for the course. Advanced Programs does not provide duplicating services or office supplies.

Any and all course materials, syllabus, lessons, lectures, etc. are the property of professor teaching the course and the Board of Regents of the University of Oklahoma and are protected under applicable copyright.

For more information about Advanced Programs, visit our website at: <http://www.goou.ou.edu/>

INSTRUCTOR VITA

Elena Bessarabova, Ph.D.

Education

- 2010 – Ph. D. in Communication from the University of Maryland at College Park
- 2004 – M. A. in Organizational Communication from the University of Texas at Austin
- 1998 – B. A. with Honors in Linguistics and Education from Kuban State University (Krasnodar, Russia)

Current Positions

- Associate Professor, University of Oklahoma, Norman, OK
- Advanced Programs professor since 2010

Frequently Taught Advanced Programs Courses

- COMM 6433 Seminar in Intercultural Communication
- COMM 5253 Cross-Cultural Communication: Theory and Research
- COMM 5393 Risk Assessment and Communication

Major Areas of Teaching and Research Interest

My research program is within the areas of social influence and intercultural research. Within social influence, I am interested in the effects of discrepancy, emotion and resistance on risk perception and message-processing. In the realm of intercultural communication, I am interested in cross-cultural differences in information integration regarding risk. I also study credibility assessment, in particular, how culture informs the differences in verbal and nonverbal cues that might be associated with deception.

Representative Publications

- **Bessarabova, E., & Massey, Z. B. (2019).** Testing terror management health model and integrating its predictions with the theory of psychological reactance, *Communication Monographs*, 87, 25-46, doi:10.1080/03637751.2019.1626992
- **Bessarabova, E., Miller, C. H., & Russell, J. (2017).** A further exploration of the effects of restoration postscripts on reactance. *Western Journal of Communication*, 81, 362-384. doi:10.1080/10570314.2016.1254815
- **Bessarabova, E., Piercy, C., King, S., Vincent, C., Dunbar, N. E., Burgoon, J. K., Miller, C. H., Jensen, M., Elkins, A., Wilson, D., Wilson, S. N., & Lee, Y.-H. (2016).** Mitigating bias blind spot via a serious video game. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 62, 452-466. doi:10.1016/j.chb.2016.03.089
- **Bessarabova, E., Turner, M. M., Fink, E. L., & Blustein, N. B. (2015).** Extending the theory of reactance to guilt appeals: “You ain’t guiltin’ me into nothin’.” *Zeitschrift für Psychologie*, 223, 215-224. doi:10.1027/2151-2604/a000223
- **Bessarabova, E. (2014).** In-group favoritism and deception: A comparison of Russian and American cultures. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 39, 9-21. doi:10.1016/j.ijintrel.2013.09.001
- **Bessarabova, E., Fink, E. L., & Turner, M. (2013).** Reactance, restoration, and cognitive structures: Comparative statics. *Human Communication Research*, 39, 339-364. doi: 10.1111/hcre.12007

Representative Honors and Awards Received

Nov 2019 Distinguished Article Award from Communication and Social Cognition Division, National Communication Association: Bessarabova, E., & Massey, Z. B. (2019). Testing terror management health model and integrating its predictions with the theory of psychological reactance, *Communication Monographs*. doi:10.1080/03637751.2019.1626992

- Nov 2019 Top Paper in Health Communication Division, National Communication Association: Richards, A., Bessarabova, E., Banas, J., & Bernard, D. R. (2019, November). *Reducing Psychological Reactance in Health Promotion Messages: Comparing Preemptive and Postscript Mitigation Strategies*.
- Dec 2013 Two Awards for Serious Game MACBETH (Mitigating Analyst Cognitive Bias by Eliminating Task Heuristics) at the 2013 Serious Games Showcase & Challenge (SGS&C) at the Interservice/Industry Training Simulation and Education Conference (I/ITSEC): Best Game Overall (Business Category) and the Adaptive Force Award (selected by the Office of the Secretary of Defense).

Major Professional Affiliations

- International Communication Association
- National Communication Association