



MPA 710 (CA): Communication and Design Thinking in the Identification of Organizational Disaster Needs

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Office hours

By appointment - on the phone or via Google Hangout

Communication

Students are expected to have access to email, either university (preferred) or personal, and check it frequently. I will use email to send updates about this class, as needed. I strongly encourage email as the first means of communication, followed up by a phone call, if needed. The syllabus, lecture slides, videos, readings, and other necessary information are available on Moodle. Please notify me immediately if you have any technical or personal issues that prevent you from completing an assignment.

Course Description

This course is designed to provide you with the understanding of how to use communication and [design thinking](#) to identify and address needs as they relate to disasters within communities.

Upon learning about these subjects, you will apply your knowledge within your own community to help an entity prepare for—and possibly respond to—a disaster.

This course is the first of three constructive action (CA) courses. The other two you will take consecutively during the next two semesters. Upon completion of all three, you will present a substantial piece of work (comprised of the work you completed in the three courses) that shows your mastery in emergency management.

You are expected to have a basic understanding of your community. This means who lives in it, its weaknesses, its strengths, the structure of its government and first responders, and the services available.

Yes, this means you must pick up the phone, call, and talk with people in your community. This also means you must visit some of these people and discuss issues face-to-face. When it comes to an emergency, communication is vital, and who to communicate with is even more important.

Remember: The right information at the right time to the right people saves lives.

Book

For this course, you are expected to read *The Laws of Simplicity* by John Maeda. It is a 100-page book. You can purchase it on Amazon for \$16 or less. If you suffer from a hardship and are not able to buy the book, please email me. You must finish it by the midterm. Purchase link: <https://www.amazon.com/Laws-Simplicity-Design-Technology-Business/dp/0262134721/>

Getting Started and Class Details

Attendance

Success in this course is dependent on your active participation and engagement throughout the course. As such, students are required to complete all assignments by the due date and to actively participate in class discussions.

Class Labels

Within Moodle, you will see labels: LESSON, READ, WATCH, LISTEN, DISCUSSION, REVIEW, and ASSIGNMENT.

- LESSON is a PDF and/or an interactive slide presentation of the week's lesson with notes.
- READ is attached to the articles and whitepapers you must read.
- WATCH is attached to videos you must view.
- LISTEN is attached to audio files you must hear.
- DISCUSSION is an interactive feature between your peers, and you and me. It is done either in a Moodle forum, via [Google Hangout](#), or on the phone.
- REVIEW is attached to information that you can review at any time.
- For ASSIGNMENT, most weeks have an assignment forum with a deadline. Other weeks may have written assessments. You are expected to complete each assignment on time. Failure to do so will result in a reduction of 2 percentage points each day the assignment is late. I expect these forums to be active and to help each of you by learning from your peers. Further information about assignment forums and assessments is provided in the assignment forums and assessments section.

Discussions

Making sure you understand the material presented is incredibly important. As a result, I will conduct discussions with the class, or individually, throughout the term. Think of this as office hours or “coffee with the professor.” We will discuss via email the best time for a chat. In addition, each week will have discussion questions that you must answer in a Moodle forum by the end of each week.

Assignment Forums and Assessments

Some weeks have assignment forums. These forums are where you will respond to questions and provide help to other students. They are a peer-to-peer learning experience. For example, you will post your answer to the question(s) provided. You will then read peers’ answers and respond with robust insight. There is no word limit to the answers or responses, but they must provide knowledge of the subject discussed. A response of “I agree/don’t agree” does not count.

To use these forums, log into Moodle and look for ASSIGNMENT within a lesson. If it’s a forum, select it, read the instructions, and respond. Once you submit your answer, you will have 30 minutes to edit it. You may then look at other people’s responses and reply, as necessary. These assignments are due by noon on the last day of the week, unless otherwise specified.

For assessments, these are written papers that do not require a response by peers. You will submit these via Moodle, as instructed.

Review

Following each assignment, I will review your response(s) and reply within 48 hours. For the assignment forums, as long as you show you are on task and submit your response(s) on time, you will not lose points. Assessments will be formally graded and returned with feedback. You have 48 hours upon receiving feedback to challenge the grade. To do so, provide a detailed email to me for review.

Journal

As part of your final assignment, you will keep a journal about your work and interactions within the community from the start of the semester to the end of it. You can use the online journal [Penzu](#), Microsoft Word, or Google Docs. Whatever program you use, you must date each entry. You will turn over your entries as a single PDF document at the middle and end of the semester. The journal will help you write the final assignment, and it will be used as you continue through the constructive action. Put as much detail as you can in the journal: the people you meet, the vulnerabilities you see, the contacts you make. Some weeks have specific journal entries, but you are expected to keep this journal as up-to-date as possible. Doing so will make the final assignment easier. The journal will not be graded separately. It will be rolled into your midterm and final.

Penzu has granted a 50 percent discount for students enrolled in this course. I will provide more information about this discount in the Introduction section and Announcements forum.

Final

The final assignment in this class carries on to the next semester's constructive action class. You will build upon this assignment as you move through creating a substantial piece of work that you will present to faculty prior to graduation. Consider this the first of three building blocks, and the foundation for the other two.

The final assignment will be to identify an entity within your community that is vulnerable to a particular threat, interact with that entity, and begin discussions to mitigate the threat.

You will show this in the form of a detailed paper that walks through your actions within the community during the 14 weeks. I will provide you with more information later in the semester.

Grading

Assignment Forums (including responses): 10 percent

Presentations/Quizzes: 15 percent

Midterm: 25 percent

Final (including journal): 50 percent

A	Outstanding	95	4.0
A-	Excellent	91	3.6
B+	Very Good	88	3.3
B	Good	85	3.0
B-	Competent	81	2.6
C+	Fair	78	2.3
C	Satisfactory	75	2.0
EI	Extended Incomplete	0	0.0
F	Failure	0	0.0
FNS	Failure No Show	0	0.0
FWD	Failure Withdraw	0	0.0
I	Incomplete	0	0.0
P	Pass	0	0.0

Lesson Availability

I will make each weekly lesson available by noon on the first day of the week.

Expectations

This is a master's degree course offered via distance learning. As such, I expect you to conduct yourself in a professional manner online and in the field. This class requires work within your community. When you do this work, you represent the university. Act accordingly. Any actions deemed unprofessional and discovered or reported will be reviewed by me and the head of the department. If necessary, a report may also be sent to the student disciplinary committee for review and appropriate action.

Standards, Academic Conduct, and Policies (as stated by MCNY)

Overview

The College expects academic honesty from students and instructors. Students have the obligation both to themselves and to the College to make the appropriate College representative aware of instances of academic deceit or dishonesty. Generally, this entails making the situation known to the instructor, and if needed, to the Dean of the student's school. Likewise, faculty members are responsible for enforcing the stated academic standards of the College. Instances of violating academic standards might include, but are not necessarily limited to, the situations outlined in the following subchapters.

Cheating

Receiving or providing unapproved help in any academic task, test, or treatise is considered cheating. Cheating includes the attempt to use or the actual use of any unauthorized information, educational material, or learning aid in a test or assignment. Cheating includes multiple submission of any academic exercise more than once for credit without prior authorization and approval of the instructor.

Plagiarism

Presenting someone else's work as though it is your own. In an academic community the use of words, ideas, or discoveries of another person without explicit, formal acknowledgement constitutes an act of theft or plagiarism. In order to avoid the charge of plagiarism, students must engage in standard academic practices such as putting quotation marks around words that are not their own, employing the appropriate documentation or citation, and including a formal acknowledgement of the source in the proper format. Each school of MCNY follows a style manual prescribed in your Purpose Handbook. Students are responsible for following that style.

Students with Disabilities

MCNY is committed to complying by making reasonable accommodations in its academic programs, thus ensuring maximum participation by all students with disabilities. Reasonable accommodations and academic assistance are provided to MCNY students with disabilities

registered with the Office of Student Services. Students with disabilities must complete a Request for Academic Adjustment Application Form available from the Student Services Office.

Online Course Policies, Procedures, and Technical Requirements

You will need access to a laptop/desktop computer with reliable internet connection to complete the work assigned in this course. You will be limited if you expect to complete all your work on a smartphone or tablet. It will not be possible to submit files required for certain assignments.

You will need access to productivity software, such as Microsoft Office (Word, PowerPoint, Excel) or Open Office. You may instead use free Google products, such as Google Docs, Slides, Sheets, Forms, etc. Google products can then be shared with the instructor or exported as a PDF or Word document to upload on Moodle.