

# Rhetorics of Risk and Disaster

## Course

ENGL 893 Seminar in Rhetoric  
Summer Doctoral Institute 2023  
Department of English  
Old Dominion University

## Instructor

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This course explores risk as inherent in technical communication practice, teaching, and research throughout history. Risk, as a concept, has always been embedded within technical communication, though the academic fields of technical communication and rhetoric have almost always approached risk as a topic to engage or a method to use. Specifically, technical communication has considered risk as one of many areas that can be considered by technical communicators as they perform their jobs and advocate for others. Risk has become more central to the kinds of work that technical and professional communicators perform.

Yet, despite this attention by rhetoricians and technical communicators, risk is riddled with assumptions about who is made to bear the burden of risk while engaging in complex, technical processes. Through analyzing past and current case studies on various ecological, technological, and human disasters, situated within the larger theoretical framework of risk, students will explore the rhetorical nature of risk and risk communication practices.

## Course Details

Course Dates: June 26th – August 5th  
Meeting Times: July 10th – 14th, 9:00am-11:00am  
July 17th – 21st, 9:00am-11:00am  
Classroom: Batten Arts and Letters (BAL) 5009

## Objectives

- i. Understand the sociopolitical and scientific contexts out of which risk as a concept emerged.
- ii. Identify the key ideas and attitudes underlying the development of risk analysis and risk communication.
- iii. Locate the role rhetoric as a field plays in the development of risk communication theory and practice.
- iv. Create an array of communicative artifacts that situate, explore, and enact risk-based theories and principles.

## Assignments

Students will complete a variety of assignment ranging in length and depth. Each assignment is due by 9:00am Eastern Time on the dates listed below.

<i>Title</i>	<i>Length</i>	<i>Weight</i>	<i>Due Date</i>	<i>Delivery</i>
Discourse	300 words each, 15 total	30%	M-F, Wks. 1-4	Canvas
Disaster Narrative	2000 words	15%	July 10	Print
Leading Discussion	45-60 minutes	10%	See sign-up sheet	Print
Project	6000 words	45%	August 5	Email

### Discourse

Students will initiate and participate in online discussions using Canvas's "Discussions" feature. Students will be expected to: pose questions, locate gaps, articulate applications, identify relevancies, and/or share experiences. There will be 17 opportunities to participate (Discussion Boards 1 through 20). Students need only compose 15 responses total, and can therefore plan to take two days "off." Each response should be at minimum 300 words in length and can either start a thread or respond to an existing reply.

I'll be looking at quality of response and engagement with course texts. Go on the day's board and just start some conversations. Have a back and forth. Pose a question—to the instructor or to peers. Make meaningful and risky connections. Have a take. Share an experience. Be a meaningful contributor to our continued discourse.

### Disaster Narrative

This project is based upon your own connections—profound or mundane—to a risk or disaster. The philosophical presumption of this assignment is that material experiences and relationships shape the development of our ideas and principles. I am therefore asking each of you to compose your own "disaster narrative," articulating a connection you have to a past, current, or future risk or disaster. Tell us a story about your own embeddedness in our inherently unstable and risky ecological or technological worlds.

On the first face-to-face class (July 10), you will share, informally, a two- to three-minute glimpse into these experiences for the class. These glimpses will set the tone for the rest of the summer. The papers will be submitted hard copy, in MLA format. If you need help with printing, you can send me the document by Sunday evening (July 9) and I can print it.

### Leading Discussion

Each student will lead discussion for a single half day of class (about 45-60 minutes). Students will be expected to craft four discussion questions that (a) explore the ideas in that day's assigned readings and (b) connect the day's texts to previously read texts. A one-page handout that includes the four questions, a bibliographic list of readings, and a brief summary of the assigned readings will be distributed to the class by the student.

## Project

This major project is the culminating work of the course. A thoughtful, well-researched, and substantial project must be submitted by August 5. The length of this project will vary but it might be useful to think of it in terms of a 18- to 20-page paper in terms of the expected research and writing workload. I am allowing the final two weeks to serve as the time spent on this project. There are no assigned readings during weeks five and six. If you are looking for ideas, you might find it useful to peruse *The Risks Digest* (<https://catless.ncl.ac.uk/risks/>).

Whatever the project you choose to craft, it must be constituted by and synthesized with literature and ideas covered during our time together supplemented with literature and ideas found through your own personal, tailored research. (The expectation that you'll be conducting your own research is why no readings have been assigned for the final two weeks.)

In terms of genre, the major project can be any number of things. The major project can be a traditional academic essay, a research proposal, a book review, a new course syllabus with annotations, or anything else useful—so long as students seek approval beforehand. Below are outlines of sample projects for more common genres (only one needs to be selected).

*Academic Essay.* Students will submit a traditional academic essay in the area of 6000 words. Essays should reflect the genre of journal articles in the fields of rhetoric, literature, media studies, or cultural studies and therefore posit a clear analytic argument about a gap, oversight, introduction, extension, challenge, or complication of or in existing scholarship. Essays will be in MLA format.

*Research Proposal.* Students will submit a qualitative research proposal that outlines a prospective project at the intersections of rhetoric and risk or disaster that is feasible in scope, relevant to the subject areas covered in class, and befitting of the student's abilities and academic trajectories. Students might wish to craft a proposal that works as first step towards developing a dissertation prospectus or journal article. All research proposals must have the following elements: Abstract (condensed description of the proposed research); Introduction (contextual statement of proposed research); Literature Review (in-depth exploration of relevant theories and extant work); Artifacts (statement or list of the things to be studied); Methodologies/Methods (specified articulation of how you will study those things); and a Statement of Importance (prescient argument for what research might contribute).

*Book Review.* Students will write a review of a book in the area of risk and disaster. The review will be submitted for publication by the end of the semester at a relevant and appropriate journal. Reviews are the best way to get your publishing feet wet and are important genres for building credibility in the field.

*Annotated Syllabus.* Students will create their own unique syllabus for a course in rhetoric and risk. Each syllabus will be informed by institutional and field-based research and will have the following components: Course Description; Course Objectives; Learning Outcomes; Major Project Descriptions; Readings; Assignments; Assessment and Grading; Policies; Calendar (i.e., What will be covered and when? The calendar should reflect a 15-week semester, accounting for 3 hours of class time per week. Students will follow the twice-a-week model. Each class period in your calendar should include agenda, readings, and due dates). Syllabi should be informed by the scholarship we are reading this semester and should include detailed annotations.<sup>1</sup>

### *Workplace Artifact*

The workplace artifact option is designed for students who are coming into class with minimal academic experience in English or little interest in pursuing academic goals in English beyond their current endeavors. This option can be tailored to the students' own professional background, experiences, and future career in mind. The core feature of the artifact is that it brings value to a professional workplace of any kind. The artifact has to be a complete original and cannot be derivative of a previous project. Some examples of a workplace artifact might be:

- White paper on a given topic that would bring about the requisite knowledge for an organization or industry to make informed decisions.
- Instructional documentation leading users through a task of significance.
- Website on a technical or environmental topic that is designed to facilitate understanding for a public audience.
- Promotional campaign of sort sort for a cause, candidate, or product.

Given the flexibility of this option, students must receive instructor approval.

## **Grading Approach**

Letter grades will be assigned for each component of the course, including individual discussion board posts. Grades will be posted in Canvas. Only work submitted in proper format and on time will receive qualitative feedback. Late assignments will receive a third of a letter grade penalty per day late, including weekends. Extensions will be negotiated on a situational basis, but permission must be sought in advance. The grade breakdown is:

90–100%: A, A- (*Excellent*). You have met expectations and exceeded all or most.

80–89%: B+, B, B- (*Good*). You have met expectations but exceeded none.

70–79%: C+, C, C- (*Average*). You have met few expectations for doctoral work.

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<sup>1</sup> Annotations will take the form of footnotes, like this one, and will provide the reader insight into your decisions. Each footnote must have a reference to a course reading. There should be 2-3 footnotes per page.

## Schedule

Reading schedule and due dates are subject to change. Materials are due by 9:00am Eastern Time on the dates specified below. Asterisks (\*) denote in-class meeting; .

	<b>Readings</b>	<b>Due</b>
<i>Week 1</i>	<i>Conceptual Underpinnings</i>	
June 26	Perrow (Intro + one chapter of your choice)	Discussion Board (DB) 1
June 27	Beck (Chs. 1, 2, 8); Danisch	DB2
June 28	Dekker	DB3
June 29	Gross (pp. ix–48 + one chapter of your choice)	DB4
June 30	Finn; Kreps; Lakoff	DB5
<i>Week 2</i>	<i>Excavating Deeper</i>	
July 3	Bennett	DB6
July 4	No reading (holiday)	–
July 5	Nixon	DB7
July 6	Yusoff or Bernard-Donals; Lifton & Olson	DB8
July 7	Sauer (pp. 1–126, 256–284)	DB9
<i>Week 3</i>	<i>Risk Communication</i>	
July 10*	Plough & Krinsky; Russell & Babrow; Leiss	DB10; Disaster Narrative
July 11*	Schwartzman et al.; Powell & Leiss (pp. 3–40)	DB11
July 12*	Dombrowski; Gross & Walzer; Winsor (optional)	DB12
July 13*	Katz & Miller; Grabill & Simmons; Richards (optional)	DB13
July 14	No class; optional open workshop	–
<i>Week 4</i>	<i>Gesturing Toward Practicality</i>	
July 17*	NRC; Mirel; Sauer (1995); Iverson (optional)	DB14
July 18*	Rude (1997); Bradbury; Walaski	DB15
July 19*	Ding; Slovic (pp. xix–xxvii, 21–36, 79–84)	DB16
July 20*	Tinker & Galloway; Philippa & Barriault	DB17
July 21	No class; optional open workshop	Outline of Project (1 pg.)
<i>Weeks 5-6</i>	<i>Project Development</i>	
Jul 24-Aug 4	No readings; individual research	Project due August 5

*Note: The above readings represent only a sliver of work on risk, disaster, rhetoric, and risk communication. My selection criteria were skewed towards foundational texts, theoretical models, and field-based arguments locating the precise intersections of rhetoric, risk, and disaster. Below you'll find a full bibliography of assigned texts as well as further readings to help kickstart your projects. This supplemental list, also, is but a sliver of current scholarship.*

## Course Texts: Books

- Bennett, Jane. *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*. Duke UP, 2010.
- Dekker, Sidney. *The Field Guide to Human Error Investigations*. Ashgate, 2002.
- Ding, Huiling. *Rhetoric of a Global Epidemic: Transcultural Communication about SARS*. Southern Illinois UP, 2014.
- Finn, Megan. *Documenting Aftermath: Information Infrastructures in the Wake of Disasters*. MIT Press, 2018.
- Gross, Alan G. *Starring the Text: The Place of Rhetoric in Science Studies*. Southern Illinois UP, 2006.
- Nixon, Rob. *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*. Harvard UP, 2013.
- Perrow, Charles. *Normal Accidents: Living with High-Risk Technologies*. Basic Books, 1984.
- Sauer, Beverly. *The Rhetoric of Risk: Technical Documentation in Hazardous Environments*. Routledge, 2002.
- Yusoff, Kathryn. *A Billion Black Anthropocenes or None*. U of Minnesota Press, 2018.

## Course Texts: Articles and Chapters

- Beck, Ulrich. *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*. Sage, 1992, pp. 19-90, 183-236.
- Bernard-Donals, Michael. "The Rhetoric of Disaster and the Imperative of Writing." *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*, vol. 31, no. 1, 2001, pp. 73-94.
- Bradbury, Judith A. "The Policy Implications of Differing Concepts of Risk." *Science, Technology, and Human Values*, vol. 14, no. 4, 1989, pp. 380-399.
- Danisch, Robert. "Political Rhetoric in a World Risk Society." *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*, vol. 40, no. 2, 2010, pp. 172-192.
- Dombrowski, Paul. "The Two Shuttle Accident Reports: Context and Culture in Technical Communication." *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication*, vol. 36, no. 3, 2006, pp. 231-252.
- Grabill, Jeffrey T., and W. Michele Simmons. "Toward a Critical Rhetoric of Risk Communication: Producing Citizens and the Role of Technical Communicators." *Technical Communication Quarterly*, vol. 7, no. 4, 1998, pp. 415-442.
- Gross, Alan G., and Arthur Walzer. "The Challenger Disaster and the Revival of Rhetoric in Organizational Life." *Argumentation*, vol. 11, 1997, pp. 85-93.
- Katz, Steven B. and Carolyn R. Miller. "The Low-Level Radioactive Waste Siting Controversy in North Carolina: Toward a Rhetorical Model of Risk Communication." *Green Culture: Environmental Rhetoric in Contemporary America*. Eds. Carl G. Herndl and Stuart C. Brown. University of Wisconsin Press, 1996, pp. 111-40.
- Kreps, G. "Disaster and the Social Order." *Sociological Theory*, vol. 3, no. 1, 1985, pp. 49-64.
- Leiss, William. "Three Phases in the Evolution of Risk Communication Practice." *The Annals*

- of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, vol. 545, 1996, pp. 85-94.
- Lifton, Robert J., and Eric Olson. "The Human Meaning of Total Disaster. The Buffalo Creek Experience." *Psychiatry* vol. 39, no. 1, 1976, pp. 1-18.
- Mirel, Barbara. "Debating Nuclear Energy: Theories of Risk and Purposes of Communication." *Technical Communication Quarterly*, vol. 3, no. 1, 1994, pp. 41-66.
- NRC (U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission). *Fault Tree Handbook*. NUREG-0492, 1981.
- Plough, Alonzo, and Sheldon Krinsky. "The Emergence of Risk Communication Studies." *Science, Technology, and Human Values*, vol. 12, no. 3-4, 1987, pp. 4-10.<sup>2</sup>
- Powell, Douglas, and William Leiss. *Mad Cows and Mother's Milk: The Perils of Poor Risk Communication*. McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997, pp. 3-40.
- Richards, Daniel P. "Reconstituting Causality: Accident Reports as Posthuman Documentation." *Topic-Driven Environmental Rhetoric*, edited by Derek G. Ross, Routledge, pp. 149-167.
- Rude, Carolyn D. "Environmental Policy Making and the Report Genre." *Technical Communication Quarterly*, vol. 6, no. 1, 1997, pp. 77-90.
- Russell, Laura D., and Austin S. Babrow. "Risk in the Making: Narrative, Problematic Integration, and the Social Construction of Risk." *Communication Theory*, vol. 21, no. 3, 2011, pp. 239-260.
- Sauer, Beverly. "Fatal Grammar: The Rhetoric of Disasters." *Technical Communication*, vol. 41, no. 1, 1994, pp. 154-60.
- Schwartzman, Roy, Derek G. Ross, and David M. Berube. "Rhetoric and Risk." *POROI*, vol. 7, no. 1, 2011, pp. 1-9.
- Slovic, Paul. *Risk as Feeling: New Perspectives on Risk Perception*. Earthscan (Routledge), 2010, pp. 21-36, 79-84.
- Philippa, Spoel, and Chantal Barriault. "Risk Knowledge and Risk Communication: The Rhetorical Challenge of Public Dialogue." In Doreen Starke-Meyerring (Ed.), *Writing in Knowledge Societies*, 2011, WAC, pp. 87-112.
- Tinker, Timothy, and Gerald E. Galloway. "How Do You Effectively Communicate Flood Risks?: Looking to the Future." *Booz Allen Hamilton*. White paper, 2008.
- Walaski, Pamela. *Risk and Crisis Communications*. Wiley, 2011.

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<sup>2</sup> Vol. 12, No. 3/4, Summer - Autumn, 1987, Special Issue on the Technical and Ethical Aspects of Risk Communication. *Science, Technology, & Human Values*. I have selected some readings from this special issue, but it worth perusing in full.

## Course Texts: Further Reading

- Aday, D. and S. Ito. "Social Structure and Disaster: A Prolegomenon." *Social Structure and Disaster*. Ed. G. Kreps. U of Delaware Press, 1989, pp. 19-26.
- Alcabes, Philip. *Dread: How Fear and Fantasy Have Fueled Epidemics from the Black Death to the Avian Flu*. PublicAffairs, 2009.
- Arendt, Hannah. "On the Nature of Totalitarianism: An Essay in Understanding." Hannah Arendt Papers at the Library of Congress, 1953.
- Baker, Frank. "Risk Communication about Environmental Hazards." *Journal of Public Health Policy*, vol. 11, no. 3, 1990, pp. 341-59.
- Baker, George W., and Dwight W. Chapman, eds. *Man and Society in Disaster*. Basic Books, 1962.
- Barton, Allen H. *Communities in Disaster: A Sociological Analysis of Collective Stress Situations*. Doubleday & Co., 1969.
- Beale, Walter H. "Rhetorical Performative Discourse: A New Theory of Epideictic." *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, vol. 11, no. 4, 1978, pp. 221-46.
- Beck, Ulrich. *World Risk Society*. Blackwell Publishers Inc., 1999.
- Boiarsky, Carolyn. "Effects of Communicating with Emails and Texts in Risk Communication: Information Poor, Writer-Based, A-Synchronous." *Technical Communication*, vol. 64, no. 3, 2017, pp. 194-209.
- Brockmann, R. John. *Exploding Steamboats, Senate Debates, and Technical Reports: The Convergence of Technology, Politics, and Rhetoric in the Steamboat Bill of 1838*. Routledge, 2002.
- Cantrill, James G, and Christine L. Oravec. *The Symbolic Earth: Discourse and Our Creation of the Environment*. University of Kentucky Press, 1996.
- Connors, Robert J. "The Rise of Technical Writing Instruction in America." *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication*, vol. 12, no. 4, 1982, pp. 329-352.
- Coogan, David. "Public Rhetoric and Public Safety at the Chicago Transit Authority: Three Approaches to Accident Analysis." *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, vol. 16, no. 3, 2002, pp. 277-305.
- Coppola, Nancy, and Bill Karis. "Introduction." *Technical Communication, Deliberative Rhetoric, and Environmental Discourse*. Eds. Nancy Coppola and Bill Karis. Stamford. Ablex, 2000, pp. xi-xxvii.
- Coppola, Nancy Walters. "Rhetorical Analysis of Stakeholders in Environmental Communication: A Model." *Technical Communication Quarterly* 6.1 (1997): 9-24. Print.
- Couch, Stephen Robert, and J. Stephen Kroll-Smith (Eds.). *Communities at Risk: Collective Responses to Technological Hazards*. Peter Lang, 1991.
- Cox, Robert. *Environmental Communication and Public Sphere*. Sage, 2010.



- David, Leonard. "The Untold Story: Columbia Shuttle Disaster and Mysterious 'Day 2 Object'." *SPACE.com*. 26 May 2013.
- Dombrowski, Paul. "The Lessons of the Challenger Investigations." *IEEE: Transactions on Professional Communication*, vol. 34, no. 4, 1991, pp. 211-216.
- Dragga, Sam and Gwendolyn Gong. "Dangerous Neighbors: Erasive Rhetoric and Communities at Risk." *Technical Communication*, vol. 61, no. 2, 2014, pp. 76-94.
- Edbauer, Jenny. "Unframing Models of Public Distribution: From Rhetorical Situation to Rhetorical Ecologies." *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 35.4 (2005): 5-24.
- Farrell, Thomas, and G. Thomas Goodnight. "Accidental Rhetoric: The Root Metaphors of Three Mile Island." *Communication Monographs*, vol. 48, 1981, pp. 271-300.
- Fischhoff, Baruch. "Treating the Public with Risk Communications: A Public Health Perspective." *Science, Technology, & Human Values*, vol. 12, no. 3/4, 1987, pp. 13-19.
- Foss, Jeffrey E. *Beyond Environmentalism: A Philosophy of Nature*. Wiley, 2009.
- Foucault, Michel. *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*. 1969. Trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith. Routledge, 2002.
- Fritz, C. E. "Disasters." *Contemporary Social Problems*. Eds. R. K. Merton and R. A. Nisbet. Harcourt, Brace and World, 1961.
- Goodnight, G. Thomas. "The Personal, Technical, and Public Spheres of Argument." *Argumentation and Advocacy*, vol. 18, 1982, pp. 214-227.
- Habermas, Jürgen. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*. Trans. Thomas Burger. MIT Press, 1991.
- Harding, Sandra. *Whose Science? Whose Knowledge? Thinking from Women's Lives*. Cornell UP, 1991.
- Hay, Peter. *Main Currents in Western Environmental Thought*. Indiana UP, 2002.
- Hayenhjelm, Madeleine. "Asymmetries in Risk Communication." *Risk Management*, vol. 8, no. 1, 2006, pp. 1-15.
- Herndl, Carl G., Barbara A. Fennell, and Carolyn R. Miller. "Understanding Failures in Organizational Discourse: The Accident at Three Mile Island and the Shuttle Challenger Disaster." *Textual Dynamics of the Profession*. Eds. C. Bazerman and J. Paradis. University of Wisconsin Press, 1991, pp. 279-305.
- Herzog, Lisa. *Reclaiming the System: Moral Responsibility, Divided Labour, and the Role of Organizations in Society*. Oxford UP, 2019.
- Hewett, K., ed. *Interpretations of Calamity*. Allen & Unwin, Inc., 1983.
- Hopkins, Andrew. *Disastrous Decisions: The Human and Organisational Causes of the Gulf of Mexico Blowout*. CCH Australia. 2012.
- Jasanoff, Sheila. "EPA's Regulation of Daminozide: Unscrambling the Messages of Risk." *Science, Technology, & Human Values*, vol. 12, no. 3/4, 1987, pp. 116-124.
- Juanillo, Napoleon K, and Clifford W. Scherer. "Attaining a State of Informed Judgments:

- Toward a Dialectical Discourse on Risk.” *Communication Yearbook*. Ed. Brant Burlseon. International Communication Association, 1994, pp. 279-99.
- Killingsworth, M. Jimmie and Jacqueline S. Palmer. *Ecospeak: Rhetoric and Environmental Politics in America*. Southern Illinois UP, 1992.
- Killingsworth, M. Jimmie, and Martin Jacobsen. “The Rhetorical Construction of Environmental Risk Narratives in Government and Activist Websites: A Critique.” In Jane M. Perkins and Nancy Blyler (Eds.), *Narrative and Professional Communication*, Ablex Publishing, 1999, pp. 167-177.
- Krimsky, Sheldon, and Alonzo Plough. *Environmental Hazards: Communicating Risks as a Social Process*. Auburn House, 1988.
- Lafollette, Marcel C. “Editorial Introduction.” *Science, Technology, & Human Values*, vol. 12, no. 3/4, 1987, pp. 3-3.
- Lancaster, Amber. “Identifying Risk Communication Deficiencies: Merging Distributed Usability, Integrated Scope, and Ethics of Care.” *Technical Communication*, vol. 65, no. 3, 2018, pp. 247-264
- Lessl, Thomas M. “Heresy, Orthodoxy, and the Politics of Science.” *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, vol. 74, no. 1, 1988, pp. 18-34.
- Lindeman, Neil. “Subjectivized Knowledge and Grassroots Advocacy: An Analysis of an Environmental Controversy in Northern California.” *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, vol. 27, no. 1, 2013, pp. 62-90.
- Mazur, Allan. “Putting Radon on the Public’s Risk Agenda.” *Science, Technology, & Human Values*, vol. 12, no. 3/4, 1987, pp. 86-93.
- McKay, Susan. “The Discursive Construction of Health Risk in Magazines: Messages, Registers and Readers.” In Maurizio Gotti and Francoise Salager-Meyer (Eds.), *Advances in medical discourse analysis: Oral and written contexts*, Peter Lang, 2006, pp. 311-330.
- Mebust, Michelle R., and Steven B. Katz. “Rhetorical Assumptions, Rhetorical Risks: Communication Models in Genetic Counseling.” In Barbara Heiffler and Stuart C. Brown (Eds.), *Rhetoric of Healthcare: Essays Toward a New Disciplinary Inquiry*, Hampton Press, 2008, pp. 91-114.
- Miller, Carolyn R. “Genre as Social Action.” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 70 (1984): 151-67.
- Moser, Susanne C., and Lisa Dilling (Eds.). *Creating a Climate for Change: Communicating Climate Change and Facilitating Social Change*. Cambridge UP, 2007.
- Nagelhout, Ed. “Risk Communication, Space, and Findability in the Public Sphere: A Case Study of a Physical and Online Information Center.” *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication*, vol. 39, no. 3, 2009, pp. 227-243
- Needleman, Carolyn. “Ritualism in Communicating Risk Information.” *Science, Technology, and Human Values*, vol. 12, no. 3-4, 1987, pp. 20-25.
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- Oravec, Christine. "'Observation' in Aristotle's Theory of Epideictic." *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, vol. 9, no. 3, 1976, pp. 162-74.
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- Preda, Alex. *AIDS, rhetoric, and medical knowledge*. Cambridge UP, 2005.
- Price, David Channing. *Organizational Rhetoric of News Media Disaster Experience*. Dissertation. University of Utah, 1998. UMI, 1998.
- Quarantelli, E. L. "What is a Disaster? An Agent Specific or an All Disaster Spectrum Approach to Socio-Behavioral Aspects of Earthquakes?" *Social and Economic Aspects of Earthquake*. Eds. B. Jones and M. Tomazevic. Cornell University, 1982, pp. 453-478.
- Quinn, Sandra Crouse, Tammy Thomas, and Carol McAllister. "Lessons From the 2001 Anthrax Attack: A Conceptual Model for Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication." In Seeger, Matthew W.; Timothy L. Sellnow; Robert R. Ulmer (Eds.), *Crisis Communication and the Public Health*, Hampton Press, 2008.
- Rhodes, Lynne. "A Friend in Your Neighborhood: Local Risk Communication in a Technical Writing Classroom." *College Composition and Communication*, vol. 61, no. 2, 2009, pp. 370, W63-W75.
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- Rosener, Judy B., and Sallie C. Russell. "Cows, Sirens, Iodine, and Public Education about the Risks of Nuclear Power Plants." *Science, Technology, & Human Values*, vol. 12, no. 3/4, 1987, pp. 111-115.
- Rude, Carolyn D. "The Report for Decision Making: Genre and Inquiry." *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, vol. 9, no. 2, 1995, pp. 170-205.
- Rycroft, Robert W., et al. "Acquiring and Utilizing Scientific and Technical Information to Identify Environmental Risks." *Science, Technology, & Human Values*, vol. 12, no. 3/4, 1987, pp. 125-130.
- Sauer, Beverly. "The Dynamics of Disaster: A Three-Dimensional View of Documentation in a Tightly Regulated Industry." *Technical Communication Quarterly*, vol. 3, no. 2, 1994, pp. 393-419.
- Scott, J. Blake. *Risky rhetoric: AIDS and the cultural practices of HIV testing*. Southern Illinois UP, 2003.

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- Stratman, James F., et al. "Risk Communication, Metacommunication and Rhetorical Stases in the Aspen-EPA Superfund Controversy." *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, vol. 9, no. 1, 1995, pp. 5-41.
- Sullivan, Dale. "The Epideictic Rhetoric of Science." *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, vol. 5, no. 3, 1991, pp. 229-245.
- Towner, Emil B. "Expository Warnings in Public Recreation and Tourism Spaces." *Technical Communication*, vol. 66, no. 4, 2019, pp. 347-362.
- Walzer, Arthur E., and Alan Gross. "Positivists, Postmodernists, Aristotelians, and the Challenger Disaster." *College English*, vol. 56, no. 4, 1994, pp. 420-33.
- Warner, Michael. "Publics and Counterpublics." *Public Culture*, vol. 14, no. 1, 2002, pp. 49-71.
- Welhausen, Candice A. "Visualizing a Non-Pandemic: Considerations for Communicating Public Health Risks in Intercultural Contexts." *Technical Communication*, vol. 62, no. 3, 2015, pp. 244-257.
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## Course Policies

Here are the policies governing the course.

**Academic Integrity.** Old Dominion University is committed to students' personal and academic success. In order to achieve this vision, students, faculty, and staff work together to create an environment that provides the best opportunity for academic inquiry and learning. All students must be honest in their academic studies. The following behaviors violate this policy:

*Cheating.* Using unauthorized assistance, study aids, or other information.

*Plagiarism.* Using someone else's language, ideas, or other original material without acknowledging its source in any academic exercise. Plagiarism will result in the failure of the assignment and possibly the failure of the course. Students cannot use work completed for credit in previous courses to count towards this course.

*Fabrication.* Inventing, altering, or falsifying any data, citation, or information.

*Facilitation.* Helping another student commit, or attempt to commit, any Academic Integrity violation, or failure to report suspected Academic Integrity violations to a faculty member.

Academic dishonesty will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct & Academic Integrity.

**Technology Requirements.** This class requires an ODU email account; knowledge of a word processing program; printer; and working knowledge of a design platform.

**Accommodations.** Old Dominion University is committed to ensuring equal access to all qualified students with disabilities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The Office of Educational Accessibility (OEA) is the campus office that works with students who have disabilities to provide and/or arrange reasonable accommodations. If you experience a disability that will impact your ability to access any aspect of the class, please present the instructor with an accommodation letter from OEA so that you can work together to ensure that appropriate accommodations are available to you ([odu.edu/educationalaccessibility](http://odu.edu/educationalaccessibility)).

**Religious Observances.** If you anticipate being absent from class due to religious observances, please inform the instructor by the second class meeting.

**Student Conduct.** Old Dominion University is committed to fostering an environment that is: safe and secure; inclusive; and conducive to academic inquiry, student engagement and student success. A community exists on the basis of shared values and principles. At Old Dominion University, student members of the community are expected to uphold and abide by standards of conduct that form the basis of the Code of Student Conduct ([odu.edu/oscai](http://odu.edu/oscai)).

## **The Writing Center**

The Old Dominion University Writing Center (WC) offers free appointments to all ODU students to help them develop and improve as writers. They offer writing consulting sessions that assist students throughout the writing process from early brainstorming changes and getting projects started, to developing the argument, to the organization of a paper. Consultants can also help students learn to proofread and edit their own work and format papers according to citation guidelines. Appointments are approximately 45 minutes; WC graduate student consultants work with individual students or groups. The WC will offer in-person, real time online appointments, and asynchronous video feedback appointments. Appointments should be made online ([odu.edu/al/centers/writing-center](http://odu.edu/al/centers/writing-center)). If any questions arise, please email them at [writingcenter@odu.edu](mailto:writingcenter@odu.edu).

## **Withdrawal**

A syllabus constitutes a contract between the student and the course instructor. Participation in this course indicates your acceptance of its content, requirements, and policies. If you believe that the nature of this course does not meet your interests, needs, or expectations (amount of work involved, class meetings, assignment deadlines, course policies, etc.), you should drop the class by the drop/add deadline, which is indicated in the ODU Schedule of Classes.