

BA 324: Business Communications
The University of Texas at Austin
Sections: 01840 & 01850
Spring 2012

Professor:	Laura J. Cortez, Ph.D.	Location: CBA 4.322
Office:	GSB 4.126E	Time: 3:00-4:00pm; 4:00-5:00pm
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**Please note there are two syllabi for this course. Be sure to review all information in the "Master Syllabus".*

Course Description

This course provides students with a conceptual framework and specific tools for communicating in complex environments and accomplishing strategic academic and professional business goals. This course provides writing, oral, and collaborative skills necessary for future business courses, internships, and professional positions.

Course Objectives

Students engaged in this course will:

1. Analyze communication situations and audiences to make choices about the most effective and efficient way to communicate and deliver messages.
2. Conduct research that includes the use of electronic library resources and the Internet; use the results of that research to complete written and oral reports.
3. Deliver effective business presentations in contexts that may require either extemporaneous or impromptu oral presentations.
4. Provide feedback, accept feedback, and use feedback to improve communication skills.
5. Write business documents that are grammatically correct and use appropriate business style.
6. Develop effective interpersonal communication skills.
7. Use communication technology appropriately and effectively.

Required Texts

Guffey, M.E. & Loewy, D. (2011). *Business Communication Process & Product* (7th Edition). Ohio: Cengage Learning.

Morrison, E.B. (2011). *The Bare Essentials*. Self-published grammar guide. (Provided in class)

Additional Materials

- Pocket dictionary for reference
- Three-ring binder for organizing handouts

Course Evaluation

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--|------------|
| 1. Written Communication | | 50% |
| 2. Oral Communication | | 35% |
| 3. Professional Develop | | <u>15%</u> |
| | | 100% |

Grading

The following plus/minus scale will be used to determine final grades. Please review the Master Syllabus for details on writing rubric and oral presentation criteria.

A 93 and above	B 83-86.9	C 73-76.9	D 63-66.9
A- 90- 92.9	B- 80-82.9	C- 70-72.9	D- 60-62.9
B+ 87-89.9	C+ 77-79.9	D+ 67-69.9	F 59.9 and below

Overview of Assignments

Writing – (50%) Total Points: 500 points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (5) In-class exercises (grammar/writing) 100 pts • (5) Homework assignments 300 pts • Section draft of team proposal 50 pts • Final written team proposal <u>50 pts = 500</u>
Speaking – (35%) Total Points: 350 points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (2) Impromptu presentations 50 pts • (1) Interpersonal assignment 75 pts • (1) Three-person presentation 125 pts • (1) Team presentation <u>200 pts = 350</u>
Professional Development – (15%) Total Points: 150 points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team work plan & agreement 10 pts • Team contact report 10 pts • Exam 100 pts • Class Participation <u>30 pts = 150</u>
TOTAL POINTS	1000

Policies

Syllabus: Please note that this syllabus provides a tentative list of readings and due dates. I reserve the right to alter the readings, assignments, and due dates throughout the course if necessary. I will keep you updated with changes.

Classroom: Attend each class meeting and arrive on time. Turn all cell phones to “off” mode. Do not answer cell phones or send/respond to text messages during class. No other electronic devices (iPads, iPods, notebooks/laptops, etc.) are allowed. I will announce the dates when you are allowed to bring a laptop to class.

Communication: Check your university email frequently. I will answer all emails. A lack of response from me indicates that I did not receive your email. My response may be short but you will receive a response.

Preparation: Come to class prepared. Bring your textbook, grammar guide, syllabus, binder, and pocket dictionary. You may use the grammar guide (*The Bare Essentials*) for tests and in-class assignments. If you forget to bring your copy of *The Bare Essentials* during an exam you may not borrow or share another student’s copy.

Assignment Format: Please submit neat and polished work. It is important that you take time to proofread your work. Be advised that spell-check does not correct grammar errors. One effective way to proofread your work is to printout assignments and check for mistakes.

Assignment Deadlines: Hard copies of assignments are due *at the beginning of class* on the scheduled due date. You will also need to post an electronic copy of all your assignments to blackboard before midnight on the day the assignment is due. *If you will not be in class on a specific date that an assignment is due, the assignment must be submitted (in hard copy) prior to the scheduled due date.* Equipment failure is not an acceptable excuse for late work.

Rewrite/Revision: At my discretion, one writing project will involve revision. “Rewriting” goes beyond the correction of grammar, mechanics, and usage. This exercise involves re-thinking of major arguments, organizational elements, perspectives, or stylistic choices in the project.

Late/Missed Assignments: Late assignments will not be accepted for this course.

In-Class Assignments: In-class exercises are brief but they will be unannounced and *cannot* be made up.

Policies (cont.)

Attendance Policy: Daily attendance and active participation in the class is required. *If your absences exceed three days, your final grade is impacted by a minimum of 1% deduction of your final grade per absence.* A point can make a difference between an A and an A-. Excessive absences (8 or more) can result in a failing grade for the course.

***A student who arrives 20 or more minutes after the beginning of class will be considered absent.

Punctuality Policy: I expect you to arrive to class on time. In the business world and in your future employment, punctuality is important. Therefore, I ask that you take punctuality seriously. I will take attendance at the beginning of class. If you are not present when I take attendance you will be counted as late. Three late arrivals will equal an absence. Excessive tardiness will impact your final grade. Also, I do understand that unforeseen circumstances occur and if for some reason you are late for reasons outside of your control please be sure to notify me after class.

Academic Integrity: You must observe all responsibilities described in the UT Policies for Academic Integrity. Avoiding plagiarism is a key tenet of academic integrity. (See the Master Syllabus for more details.)

Teamwork: Teamwork is a core component of this class and is critical to your final grade. You must fulfill your responsibility to your team. If you are negligent in this area, it can result in a substantial reduction to your final grade.

Grading: I will grade all assignments (written and oral). If you have questions about your grade on an assignment, please visit me within 5 business days of receiving the grade. (Please note that Day 1 is the day the graded assignment is returned.) After 5 days, a graded assignment is ineligible for review. Please note that graded assignments submitted for review may be graded in their entirety.

If you have questions about your grade, please feel free to see me after class or during my office hours. If your schedule does not permit you an opportunity to visit with me during my office hours, I will be happy to schedule additional time to meet with you.

Services for Students with Disabilities: The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact the Office of the Dean of Students at 471-6259, 471-6441 TTY.

Religious Holidays: A student who is absent from a class or examination for the observance of a religious holy day may complete the work missed within a reasonable time after the absence, if proper notice has been given. Review this policy at <http://www.utexas.edu/student/registrar/catalogs/gi03-04/ch4/ch4g.html#religion>

Undergraduate Writing Center: The Undergraduate Writing Center offers free, individualized, expert help with writing for any UT undergraduate, by appointment or on a drop-in basis. Any undergraduate enrolled in a course at UT can visit the UWC for assistance with any writing project. Their services are not just for writing that has "problems." Getting feedback from an informed audience is a normal part of a successful writing project. Consultants help students develop strategies to improve their writing. For more information, contact The Undergraduate Writing Center at 471-6222, website <http://www.uwc.utexas.edu/>, FAC 211.

Course Schedule

This schedule is subject to changes, dependent on the needs of the course and at my discretion. Please bring your schedule to class so that you can record any necessary changes. Also, check your email for any assignment updates and messages.

Week 1
Getting Started

January 18**In Class**

- Introduction to course and classmates

Assignment for January 20

- Bring signed plagiarism agreement to class (in first-day folder)
- Read Guffey Chapter 1
- Complete the Interactive Plagiarism Tutorial for 1 credit (see handout)
- Review one business related article through a media outlet (online or paper) for “*best practices*” in business

January 20**In Class**

- “Show and Tell”
- Discuss Formal Communication Channels
- Discussion on Understanding the Importance of Communication
- Grammar skills assessment

Assignment for January 23

- Review one business related article through a media outlet (online or paper) for “*what not to do*” in business setting
- Read Guffey Chapters 4 through 6 (heart of the text)

Week 2
Learning and Living the 3 X 3 Rule

January 23**In Class**

- “Show and Tell”
- Discussion of Guffey 3x3 writing process
- Discussion of direct & indirect writing styles
- Discussion of memos and emails

Assignment for January 25

- Read Guffey Chapter 8
- Memo exercise (see handout)
- Email exercise (see handout)
- Review one business related article through a media outlet (online or paper) for “*grammatical errors*”

January 25

In Class

- “Show and Tell”
- Critique (self and peer) of first drafts of memos and emails
- Discussion of listening skills and public speaking
- Discussion of 2- and 3-person speaking assignment
- Draw for speaking dates

Assignment for January 27

- Review one business related article through a media outlet (online or paper) for “*emails, social media, blogs*” business advice
- Read Guffey Chapters 2 & 14
- Begin working on 2- and 3-person speaking assignment

January 27

In Class

- “Show and Tell”
- Grammar diagnostic (for credit)
- Q&A about 2- and 3-person speaking assignment
- Discussion of impromptu speaking

Assignment for January 30

- Watch a short clip on a debate, speech, or presentation to observe for effective speaking strategies (handout)
- Final drafts of memos and emails due

Week 3

Keep It Interesting—Keep Us Entertained

January 30

In Class

- “Show and Tell”
- Plagiarism workshop

Assignment for February 1

- Teams presenting February 1 be ready

February 1

In Class 2- and 3-person presentations

- 2- and 3-Person presentations (5)
- Critiques of presentations

Assignment for February 3

- Teams presenting February 3 be ready

February 3

In Class 2- and 3-person presentations

- 2- and 3-Person presentations (5)
- Critiques of presentations
- Punctuation diagnostic (for credit)

Assignment for February 6

- Teams presenting February 6 be ready
- Read Chapter 13

Week 4

Beginning to Plan the Team Proposal

February 6

In Class

- 2- and 3-person presentations (1)
- Written critiques of presentations
- Discussion of intercultural communication
- Obtain volunteers for intercultural panel

Assignment for February 8

- Read Chapter 3 (prepare for cross-cultural discussion)
- Begin working on intercultural memo (due February 13)

February 8

In Class

- Discussion of team proposal (what makes a good topic)
- Intercultural panel
- Peer evaluation of team speaking experience

No Assignment for February 10

February 10

Meet in ModLab East (CBA 5.325)

Library Research Session (April Kessler, business librarian)

Assignment for February 13

- Library research assignment (see handout)
- Complete intercultural memo (see handout)
- Read Guffey Chapter 2

Week 5

Team Work

February 13

In Class

- Assignment of proposal teams
- Proposal teams meet to decide on tentative proposal topic
- Submit intercultural memo

Assignment for February 15

- Research topics for team workshop (see handout)

February 15

In Class

- Discussion of MLA style and annotated bibliography
- Review of intercultural memos
- Discussion of survey writing

Assignment for February 17

- Complete on-line Business Research tutorial (for credit—see handout)
- Draft proposal team survey (for credit—to be reviewed in class on February 20). (This assignment will require an outside team meeting.)

February 17

In Class

- Impromptu presentations

No Assignment for February 20

Week 6
Setting Team Expectations

February 20

In Class

- Discussion of Team Agreement and Work Plan
- Discussion of formal team meetings
- Peer critique of team survey

Assignment for February 22

- Complete Team Agreement and Work Plan
- Review one business related article through a media outlet (online or paper) for “*business etiquette*” in the workplace

February 22

In Class

- “Show and Tell”
- Discussion of LinkedIn/Blog assignment
- Team personalities workshop

Assignment for February 24

- Begin working on LinkedIn/Blog assignment (see handout)
- Review any tips on how to best set up a LinkedIn account or Blog

February 24

In Class

- Discussion of team presentation PowerPoint assignment
- Draw for presentation dates
- In-class exercise

Assignment for February 27

- Complete LinkedIn account or Blog

Week 7
Preparing for the Test

February 27

In Class

- Sample presentation by former BA 324 students
- In-class exercise
- Impromptus

No Assignment for February 29

February 29

In Class

- Review for test (content to be announced)
- Review of executive summary
- Impromptus

Assignment for March 2

- Study for exam

March 2

In Class

- Exam

No Assignment for March 5

Week 8

Learning from the Professionals

March 5 **In Class**
Guest Speaker

March 7 **In Class**
Group Activity

March 9 **NO CLASS**

Week 9

NO CLASSES- SPRING BREAK

Week 10

Learning to Deliver Bad News

March 19 **MEET IN MODLAB East (CBA 5.325)**

- In-class writing assignment

Assignment for March 21

- Read Chapter 9

March 21 **In Class**

- Discussion of indirect writing style and “Bad News” letter
- Workshop for Proposal Team presentations

Assignment for March 23

- “Bad News” letter (handout)
- Work on Proposal Team presentations. Bring your laptops, draft of PowerPoint slides, and draft of outline to class for workshop

March 23 **In Class**

- Peer review of “Bad News” letter
- Discussion of “Expanding Your Horizons” presentation
- Draw for “Expanding Your Horizons” presentation dates
- In-class exercise

Assignment for March 26

- Team Proposal presentations begin
- Refresh your audience skills

Important: Schedule at least two, preferably three, team practice sessions before the date of your formal team presentation. Practice makes a difference!

*Formal Team Presentations Nov. 1, 3, 8
Attendance is critical during this period. Absences count double.*

Week 11
Selling Your Proposal

March 26

In Class

- Proposal Team presentations with peer critiques

Assignment for March 28

- Continue working on Proposal Team presentation and “Expanding Your Horizons” presentation

March 28

In Class

- Proposal Team presentations with peer critiques
- Distribute handout on team written proposal requirements

Assignment for March 30

- Review handout on team written proposal requirements
- Continue working on Proposal Team presentation and “Expanding Your Horizons” presentation

March 30

In Class

- Proposal Team presentations with peer critiques
- Distribute handout on *requirements of and deadlines for* formal written Team Proposal

Assignment for April 2

- Work on “Expanding Your Horizons” presentation
- Begin section drafts of Team Proposal

Week 12
Multi-tasking

April 2

In Class

- “Expanding Your Horizons” presentations
- Review requirements for team proposal
- Impromptus

Assignment for April 4

- Work on “Expanding Your Horizons” presentations
- Work on section drafts of Team Proposal

April 4

In Class

- “Expanding Your Horizons” presentations
- In-class exercise
- Discussion of in-class writing assignment

Assignment for April 6

- Work on Team Proposal

April 6 **NO CLASS**

Week 13
Continuing your work

April 9 **In Class**

- “Expanding Your Horizons” presentations
- In-class exercise
- Impromptus

Assignment for April 11

- Work on Team Proposal

April 11 **In Class**
MEET IN MODLAB EAST (CBA 5.325)

- In-class writing assignment

Assignment for April 13

- Keep working on Team Proposal

April 13 **In Class**

- Group Activity

Assignment Due
FINAL SECTION DRAFTS OF TEAM PROPOSAL DUE
Note: Must be in final form—ready for incorporation into the final proposal.

Week 14-Week 15
Beginning to See Daylight

April 16-April 27 **TBA**

Week 16
Wrapping Up

April 30 **In Class**

- Expanding Your Horizons
- Impromptus

No Assignment for May 2

May 2 **In Class**

- Group Activity

Assignment for May 4

- **TEAM PROPOSAL DUE**

May 4 **Last Day of Class**
In Class

- **TURN IN TEAM PROPOSAL**
- **Complete team peer evaluation**