

The University of Texas at Austin – McCombs School of Business
BA 324 - Business Communication, summer 2012
M-TH, 12 p.m. – 2 p.m., 70865, CBA 4.322
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Prerequisites: Required classes: RHE or E 306; MIS 301 or 310; and credit or registration for BA 101S, 101T, or 101H

Expected skills: Basic writing skills, including grammar and mechanics; Computer skills, including the ability to create PowerPoint presentations, communicate via email, and use the Internet/Web

Primary textbook: The primary required textbook for all BA 324 sections is Mary Ellen Guffey's *Business Communication: Process & Product*, 7/e. The textbook is available in two versions: bound and loose leaf.

Mission statement: The mission of BA 324 is to provide McCombs School of Business undergraduates with a conceptual framework and specific tools for communicating in complex environments and accomplishing strategic academic and professional business goals. This core course provides writing, oral, and collaborative skills necessary for future business courses, internships, and professional positions.

Course goal: To create winsome, tenacious, and competent business leaders for the market and community.

Course objectives: Preparing students for business environments

BA 324 focuses on writing, speaking, and interpersonal communication. Although differences in instructors' presentation styles are a natural and valuable part of a multi-section course, all sections of BA 324 have the same objectives. These objectives specify that business students, at the conclusion of the course, should be able to:

- Analyze communication situations and audiences to make choices about the most effective and efficient way to communicate and deliver messages
- 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
- Deliver effective business presentations in contexts that may require either extemporaneous or impromptu oral presentations
- Provide, accept, and use feedback to improve communication skills
- Write business documents that are grammatically correct and use appropriate business style

- Develop effective interpersonal communication skills
- Use communication technology appropriately and effectively

Core communication skills and required assignments

BA 324 focuses on a core set of communication skills and requires assignments that support students in their learning of these skills. Students can expect to work on this core set of skills in all sections of BA 324, although individual sections may add or substitute specific assignments that teach the same skills and fulfill the same course objectives. These communication skills and the types of assignments that teach those skills are described below.

Written communication: Students write letters, memos, proposals, formal and informal reports, work plans, and progress reports.

Oral communication: Oral presentations from 2-30 minutes long address informative, persuasive, and extemporaneous methods of delivery. Some oral presentations require the use of visual aids such as handouts, overhead transparencies, and presentation software such as PowerPoint.

Time management: Assignments are varied, integrated, and overlapping, and students must focus on multiple issues, projects, and demands. Students must, therefore, take responsibility for planning and pacing their own work as well as developing time management skills.

Project development: Groups of approximately four to six students develop projects, complete research, schedule meetings, write team papers and reports, and deliver a 20-30 minute oral presentation using visual aids. These projects build on and use the skills developed in other class assignments.

Evaluation/feedback: Assignments that require students to learn and develop evaluation and feedback skills are included throughout the course. These assignments may involve editing one's own writing and doing self-critiques, self-evaluations, or analyses of one's own presentations, interpersonal communication, and other class activities. These assignments may also involve peer-editing as well as providing evaluations and critiques of the work of other class members.

Group management: Students work on group projects to practice interpersonal skills by communicating with group members, other groups, and peers outside the group.

Meeting management: As part of the projects, groups meet on a regular basis, develop meeting goals, make agendas, facilitate meetings, provide feedback, and submit meeting summaries.

Grading, key content areas, and required assignments: Grades in BA 324 are based on a student's work in three key content areas. These content areas reflect the mission of the course, the course objectives, and the core communication skills that students are expected to learn. Each of these content areas represents a fixed percentage of the

course's content. In two of these areas, there are a minimum number of specific assignments required for all sections of the course.

Three key content areas for BA 324:

Written Communication (50%)

Oral Communication (35%)

Professional Development (15%)

BA 324 is a substantial writing component course

The University's official policy statement: "Each course certified as having a substantial writing component must include at least three writing activities per semester, exclusive of in-class quizzes and examinations. These three or more writing activities must total approximately 16 type-written double-spaced pages (4,000 words). A major rewriting of a paper (requiring additional original writing, not merely editing) can be considered a separate writing activity. The quality of the student's written expression must be an important component in determining the student's course grade."

Written assignments in BA 324 that fit the substantial writing component criteria comprise 50% of the grade for this course. Of that 50%, half of the grade is based on the quality of your writing, and the other half is based on evidence of your understanding of the material and fulfillment of other criteria.

Writing assignments may involve revision. "Rewriting" goes beyond the correction of grammar, mechanics, and usage. It typically involves the re-thinking of major arguments, organizational elements, perspectives, or stylistic choices in the project.

Attendance policy

Since BA 324 teaches both conceptual knowledge and skills, daily attendance and active participation in the class are required. Students should view class attendance as they would work attendance and communicate to their peers and instructor in an appropriate manner. If your absences exceed two days your final grade is impacted by a minimum of a 1% deduction of your final grade per absence. A student that arrives more than 15 minutes late will be counted absent.

University policies relevant to BA 324 students:

Academic integrity. The responsibilities of both students and faculty with regard to scholastic dishonesty are described in detail in the Policy Statement on Scholastic Dishonesty for the McCombs School of Business, available online at http://www.mcombs.utexas.edu/udean/Scholastic_Responsibility.asp

One of the provisions of this statement reads as follows:

"The McCombs School of Business has no tolerance for acts of scholastic dishonesty. The responsibilities of both students and faculty with regard to scholastic dishonesty are described in detail in the Policy Statement on Scholastic Dishonesty for the McCombs

School of Business. By teaching this course, I have agreed to observe all of the faculty responsibilities described in that document. By enrolling in this class, you have agreed to observe all of the student responsibilities described in that document. If the application of that Policy Statement to this class and its assignments is unclear in any way, it is your responsibility to ask me for clarification. Policy on Scholastic Dishonesty: Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Since dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. You should refer to the Student Judicial Services website (<http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/>) or the *General Information Catalog* to access the official University policies and procedures on scholastic dishonesty as well as further elaboration on what constitutes scholastic dishonesty.”

BA 324 instructors will follow and enforce the provisions of the Policy Statement on Scholastic Dishonesty for the McCombs School of Business. You are responsible for reading, understanding and following the Policy Statement on Scholastic Dishonesty for the McCombs School of Business and the policies and procedures on scholastic dishonesty on the Student Judicial Services website. Included in these responsibilities is the responsibility for understanding what actions constitute scholastic dishonesty.

You may not use any resources, including, but not limited to books, computers, databases, etc. for out-of-class assignments if using such resources constitutes one or more acts of scholastic dishonesty, as defined in the *General Information Catalog* or as described in the Policy Statement on Scholastic Dishonesty for the McCombs School of Business. By way of example and not by limitation, you may not consult or submit work (in whole or in part) that has been completed by other students in this or previous years for the same or substantially the same assignment.

Students should be aware that all required writing assignments may be submitted through a software program called SafeAssign on Blackboard. The software is designed to help faculty and students organize and improve the writing process by encouraging original submissions and proper citation practices.

Class websites and student privacy: Students who do not want their names included in these electronic class rosters must restrict their directory information in the Office of the Registrar, Main Building, Room 1. For more information visit the Registrar’s website at <http://www.utexas.edu/student/registrar/faq.html#directory>

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>

Class policies:

- No electronic devices (notebooks/laptops, cell phones, iPods, etc.).
- Turn in neat, polished work. All assignments completed outside of class must be typewritten.
- Please proofread your work. Word-processing functions (spell check and grammar check) will often let you down. Proofreading a printout is the most effective way to catch mistakes.
- Meet deadlines. Hard copies of assignments are due the minute the class starts on the scheduled completion date. Equipment failure is not an acceptable excuse for late work. No late work will be accepted.
- Teamwork is a core component of this class. Fulfilling your responsibilities to your team is critical to your final course grade. Serious negligence in this area can result in a significant reduction in your final grade.
- *Academic integrity is required.* You must observe all the responsibilities described in the UT Policies for Academic Integrity. Avoiding plagiarism is a key tenet of academic integrity.
- If you have questions about your grade on an assignment, please see me within 5 business days of receiving the grade (day 1 is the day the assignment is returned). After 5 days, a graded assignment is not eligible for review. Graded assignments submitted for review may be re-graded in their entirety.
- If you have questions about a grade or any other aspect of the course, please see me after class or during office hours. If your schedule conflicts with my office hours, I will be glad to schedule additional office time to meet with you.
- Participation includes your attendance, punctuality, participation in class discussions and think-pair-share activities, asking questions of your peers during their presentations, and offering constructive criticism to your peer after they speak

Grading, key content areas, and required assignments: Grades in BA 324 are based on a student's work in three key content areas. These content areas reflect the mission of the course, the course objectives, and the core communication skills that students are expected to learn.

Three key content areas and corresponding assignments:Written communication

- Introduction email– 50 points
- Elevator pitch self assessment– 50 points
- Dear boss– 50 points
- Executive summary assignment – 50 points
- Sales pitch self assessment – 50 points
- Case defense (group grade) – 75 points
- Flip the class written materials – 75 points
- Group reflection essay– 100 points

Oral communication

- Elevator pitch – 100 points
- Sales pitch – 100 points
- Flip the class oral presentation – 75 points
- Case challenge oral defense (group grade) – 75 points

Professional development

- Written exams – 3 exams worth 45 points each for a total of 135 points
- Participation – 15 points (Participation includes your attendance, punctuality, participation in class discussions and think-pair-share activities, asking questions of your peers during their presentations, and offering constructive criticism to your peers after they speak)

Point breakdown:

A	93% and above – 930 – 1000
A-	90-92.9% - 900 – 929
B+	87-89.9% – 870 - 899
B	83-86.9% – 830 - 869
B-	80-82.9% - 800 - 829
C+	77-79.9% – 770 - 799
C	73-76.9% - 730 - 769
C-	70-72.9% - 700 - 729
D+	67-69.9% - 670 - 699
D	63-66.9% - 630 - 669
D-	60-62.9% - 600 - 629
F	59.9% and below – 599 - 0

Grading policy for all BA 324 sections: The following plus/minus scale will be used to determine final course grades in all BA 324 sections:

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

Tentative daily schedule

Thursday, May 31

Course introduction
Chapter 1: Effective and ethical communication
Chapter 7: Electronic messages and digital media
The writing process: Chapters 4-6
Reports and proposals: Chapters 11-13
Introduce email assignment

Monday, June 4

Email assignment due
The writing process: Chapter 4-6
Reports and proposals: Chapters 11-13
Verbal and nonverbal delivery
Introduce elevator pitches

Tuesday, June 5

Deliver elevator pitches
The writing process: Chapter 4-6
Reports and proposals: Chapters 11-13

Wednesday, June 6

Chapter 2: Listening skills; nonverbal communication and etiquette skills
Two Flip the class group presentations

Thursday, June 7

Elevator pitch self assessment due
Chapter 3: Intercultural communication
Flip the class group presentation
Exam #1

Monday, June 11

Chapter 9: Negative messages
Flip the class group presentation
Gender communication
Introduce dear boss assignment

Tuesday, June 12

Chapter 10: Persuasion and sales messages
Flip the class group presentation
Introduction to academic research
Introduce executive summary

Wednesday, June 13

Dear boss assignment due
Chapter 10: Persuasion and sales messages
Introduce sales pitches and sales pitch evaluations

Thursday, June 14

Chapter 2: Group communication
Flip the class group presentation
Exam #2

Monday, June 18

Executive summary due
Deliver sales pitches

Tuesday, June 19

Chapter 14: Business presentations
Flip the class group presentation
Introduce case challenges

Wednesday, June 20

Chapter 14: Business presentations
Sales pitch self assessment due

Thursday, June 21

Case challenges

Monday, June 25

Chapter 15: The job search, resumes, and cover letters
Chapter 16: Interviewing and following up
Flip the class group presentation

Tuesday, June 26

Chapter 16: Interviewing and following up
Group reflection essay due
Exam #3