

# BA 324: Business Communication

University of Texas at Austin

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## MASTER SYLLABUS

Please refer to the BA 324 Master Syllabus for additional information about this course, including the BA 324 mission statement, course objectives, required assignments, and the plus/minus grading scale. The Master Syllabus can be found on our course's Blackboard site under "Syllabus."

The syllabus for this course, as well as the BA 324 Master Syllabus, are always subject to change.

## COURSE POLICIES

**Preparedness.** You should always come to class prepared to take notes, complete in-class activities, and be a meaningful contributor to class discussion. This involves completing your readings before class, and bringing your textbook as well as other necessary materials into the classroom. Preparedness also means that you will find out what happened during class time from a colleague if you happen to miss a day.

**Class Attendance.** BA 324 policy states that more than 3 absences results in a minimum 1% deduction in your final grade. Absences can be accrued for showing up late, violating course decorum (e.g., if your cell phone rings during class), or not completing in-class assignments, among other reasons.

**Communication.** Please communicate with me early and often throughout the semester. I am always available to talk by email or in office hours, and we can always set up an appointment to meet or talk on the phone. I will respond to every email you send me. If I do not respond within 48 hours (not including weekends), assume that I have not received the email and please send me a reminder.

**Respect and Understanding** are the central values for creating and maintaining a positive classroom environment where everyone feels comfortable sharing ideas and opinions. This does not mean that everyone in the classroom has to agree with the ideas and opinions discussed. Rather, this suggests a responsibility for everyone in the classroom to (1) assume that, at least, some people may disagree with comments you make and be open to that disagreement, (2) be tolerant and respectful and disagree with the "thought" not the person, and

(3) be prepared to explain your statements, so that everyone has an opportunity to understand what you're saying. If these three guidelines are followed, you will NEVER be penalized for disagreeing with anyone in this class, including me.

If you feel uncomfortable sharing your ideas and opinions in this class because any of your classmates are not following these rules, contact me during my office hours so I can help you make this class a positive learning experience.

**Assignment Requirements.** It should go without saying that each and every assignment you turn in will be neat and polished, and will also meet all the technical requirements mentioned in class and listed in your assignment handouts. If you turn in work that does not meet the technical requirements, such as document format, length, and required components, I will consider it to be below average (see "Late Work").

**Late Work.** Work that is turned in late will be considered below average, meaning that the highest grade possible on any late assignment is 79.9%. After the first 24 hours, late work will be deducted 10% for every day it is late. Some of your assignments will not be accepted past the due date (exams, in-class exercises, and the case report/presentation).

**Negotiating Grades.** There is a 24-7 rule in this class: you must wait at least 24 hours after receiving a grade to discuss it, and no later than 7 days. Any discussion of grades must occur outside of class time. I will gladly talk about assignments (non-grade issues) past the 7-day period.

**Electronics.** Please turn off your cell phone before coming to class. The use of laptops and tablets is accepted in the classroom for the purposes of taking notes and completing in-class exercises. Laptops and tablets may not be used for any other purpose, including other BA 324 assignments, other coursework, surfing the internet, email, and instant messaging. I reserve the right to revoke electronic use on a per-student or class-wide basis at any time during the semester.

**Academic Integrity.** Inappropriate scholastic endeavors, as defined by UT-Austin policy, include cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, falsifying academic records, any attempted act designed to give an unfair academic advantage to the student, submission of essentially the same written assignments for two courses without prior permission from the instructors, and providing false or misleading information to receive postponements or extensions. Evidence of academic dishonesty will be dealt with in accordance with UT policy.

**UT Honor Code.** The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

## ACCOMODATIONS

**Athletics/Organizations.** Students participating in athletics or other organizations that involve traveling to events during scheduled classes must provide the instructor with their official travel schedules by the third day of classes. To avoid late penalties, assignments that are due on days that you must miss class *must* be completed *before due dates* or they will be subject to late penalties.

**Student Disabilities.** My goal is to facilitate your learning in the ways that are best suited for you. At the beginning of the semester, students with disabilities who need special accommodations should notify me by presenting a letter prepared by the Service for Students with Disabilities (SSD) Office. To ensure that the most appropriate accommodations can be provided, students should contact the SSD Office at 471-6259 or 471-4641 (TTY).

**Religious Holidays.** A student who misses classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day should inform the instructor at least two weeks in advance.

**Military Service.** In accordance with section 51.9111 of the Texas Education Code, a student is excused from attending classes or engaging in other required activities, including exams, if he or she is called to active military service of a reasonably brief duration. The student will be allowed a reasonable time after the absence to complete assignments and take exams.

## ASSIGNMENTS

<b>Writing (55%)</b>	<b>Points Possible</b>	<b>My Points</b>
In-class Exercises (5)	100	
Homework Assignments (5)	100	
Case Report	75	
<b>Speaking (30%)</b>	<b>Points Possible</b>	<b>My Points</b>
Presentation	50	
Class Meeting	50	
Case Presentation	50	
<b>Professional (15%)</b>	<b>Points Possible</b>	<b>My Points</b>
Exam #1	25	
Exam #2	25	
Participation	25	
<b>Total</b>	<b>500</b>	

Your grade in this course is based on a 500-point plus/minus scale (please see the BA 324 Master Syllabus for details of the plus/minus scale). It is up to you to earn enough points throughout the course to obtain the grade you want. I do not bump up grades at the end of the semester.

**In-class Exercises.** Among many other practice exercises, there will be 6 in-class writing exercises for credit, and your top 5 scores will be counted towards your grade. In-class exercises are not always announced beforehand, so missing more than one class may be detrimental to your point total. In-class exercises may not be made up at a later date.

**Homework Assignments** are to be completed by the student only. It is my preference that any and all organizing and proofreading of homework assignments be done by yourself as a way to strengthen those skills.

**Case Report/Case Presentation.** Your main semester project will be a consulting/case project for an organization to be announced at a later date during the semester. You will work on this

project in teams, and the output will be graded in two parts: 1) a professional, written report and 2) a formal presentation delivered during the last week of class.

**Individual Presentations/Class Meeting.** You will also complete two individual presentations during the semester, and you will also run a class-wide meeting in pairs on a topic from your readings. More details will be provided at a later date.

**Exams** will be comprised of multiple choice and short answer questions. Exams will cover material from class, readings, and lecture notes.

**Participation** is earned, not assumed. It is based on a combination of attendance, meaningful class participation, effort, and behavior, especially during teamwork.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

Listed readings are to be completed before class. Days that do not have scheduled readings or topics are still class meetings days; the content of those days is to be determined by class pace and interest. All dates, times, readings and assignments are subject to change.

HW – Homework

P – Project

\* - Class Meeting Days

Date	Topic	Readings	Assignment Due
8/24	Course Introduction		
8/26	Business Messages	Chapter 4	
8/29	Organizing and Writing	Chapter 5	
8/31	Revising	Chapter 6	
9/2	Electronic Messages	Chapter 7	Chapter Outline (HW)
9/5	<b>LABOR DAY – NO CLASS</b>		
9/7	Résumés/Cover Letters	Chapter 15	Class Meeting Topics Assigned
9/9	Persuasive Messages	Chapter 10	Résumé and Cover Letter (HW)
9/12			
9/14	Positive/Negative Messages	Chapters 8 and 9	
9/16	Interviewing	Chapter 16	Persuasive Letter (HW)
9/19			
9/21	Exam Review		
9/23	Exam #1	Covering Chs. 4-10 and 15-16	
9/26	Ethical Communication	Chapter 1 – Ethics section	
9/28			
9/30	Professionalism	Chapter 2	Ethics Case Study (HW)
10/3	Intercultural Communication	Chapter 3	

10/5	Workshop		
10/7			Teams Assigned for Project
10/10	Business Presentations	Chapter 14	
10/12	Reports and Research	Chapter 11	
10/14			Cross-cultural Memo (HW)
10/17	Informal Reports	Chapter 12	
10/19	Business Plans	Chapter 13	
10/21	Workshop		Team Agreement (P)
10/24	Presentations		
10/26	Presentations		
10/28	Presentations		Skeleton Plan (P)
10/31			
11/2	Exam Review		
11/4	Exam #2	Covering Chs. 1-3 and 11-14	
11/7			
11/9	Business Plan Workshop		
11/11	1-on-1 Group Meetings		
11/14	Practice Presentations/ Peer Critiques		
11/16	Team Meetings		
11/18	TBA		Section drafts of Case Report (P)
11/21	Practice Presentations		
11/23			
11/25	<b>THANKSGIVING BREAK – NO CLASS</b>		
11/28	Presentation Workshop		
11/30	Case Presentations		Case Report (P)
12/2	Case Presentations		
Finals Week			