

Master Syllabus

Applies to All BA 324 Sections

Prerequisites

Required classes: English 603A, Rhetoric and Writing 306, 306Q, 309K, or Tutorial Course 603A, and credit or registration for BA 101H (or 102H), 101S, or 101T

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

Primary Textbook

The primary required textbook for all BA 324 sections is *Business Communication: Process & Product*, 7th edition, by Mary Ellen Guffey and Dana Loewy. Individual lecturers may require additional texts and/or reading packets. 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 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 feedback, accept feedback, 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 is a minimum number of specific assignments required for all sections of the course. Students should review the required assignments for their particular BA 324 section.

Three key content areas for BA 324:

Written Communication (55%)

Including a minimum of

- Eight 1- to 3-page assignments or exercises (e.g., memos, emails, letters, blogs, summaries, etc.).
- One business research report or proposal
- Agendas, work plans, PowerPoint slides, outlines, etc.

Oral Communication (30%)

Including a minimum of

- One group research presentation
- One interpersonal assignment

Professional Development (15%)

Including

- Exams (essay or multiple choice), quizzes, and worksheets
- Class participation
- Professional conduct
- Other assignments (written or oral) requiring analysis and integration of course concepts

BA 324: Writing Flag Designation (Substantial Writing Component Course)

Courses that carry a writing flag are intended to offer students significant opportunities to hone their writing skills as they progress through their core curricula and major coursework.

A writing flag course fulfills the following criteria:

- *Requires students to write regularly—several times during the semester—and to complete writing projects that are substantial. It is only through the practice of writing that students learn to improve their writing.*
- *Is structured around the principle that good writing requires rewriting. Students must receive meaningful feedback from the instructor (or teaching assistant) so they can improve successive drafts.*
- *Includes writing assignments that constitute at least one-third of the final grade in the course. These assignments must be graded on writing quality as well as content.*
- *Provides an opportunity for students to read each other's work and offer constructive criticism. Careful reading and analysis of the writing of others is a valuable part of the learning process.*

Written assignments comprise 55% of the grade for this course. Of that 55%, 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.

Revision/Rewrite Policy

One writing project, chosen at the instructor's discretion, will 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.

Instructor Communications

Instructors use mass email functions (e.g., Blackboard) to communicate with students. Students are responsible for checking their university email accounts regularly. Emails from instructors contain important information about the course.

Attendance /Punctuality 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 three days for a MWF course or two days for a TTh course, your final grade is impacted by a minimum of a 1% deduction of your final grade per absence. Instructors reserve the right to fail students whose absences exceed eight MWF classes or five TTh classes.

Please review carefully the additional attendance requirements specified by your instructor.

Grading Policy for All BA 324 and BA 324H Sections

The following plus/minus scale will be used to determine final course grades in all BA 324 and BA 324H 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**

University Policies Relevant to BA 324 Students

Academic Integrity (Please read very carefully)

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

Password-protected class sites are available for all accredited courses taught at the university. Syllabi, handouts, assignments, and other resources are types of information that may be available within these

sites. Site activities may include exchanging emails, engaging in class discussions and chats, and exchanging files. In addition, class email rosters may be a component of the sites. 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 go to

<http://www.utexas.edu/student/registrar/catalogs/gi02-03/app/appc09.html>

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>

Writing Rubric BA 324 Business Communication

Criteria	Poor	Satisfactory	Strong
Organization	Writing is not concise and tends to ramble; lack of direction interferes with audience understanding; lacks clear topic sentences	Focus and direction of writing are acceptable and do not interfere with audience understanding; minor errors in cohesion	Writing is concise and clear; information is easy to understand; focus and direction of writing are obvious to audience
Introduction and Conclusion	Main idea or purpose is not established in the appropriate paragraph; conclusion does not include contact information, end date, goodwill, or future relationship	Main idea or purpose is established in the appropriate paragraph; conclusion is satisfactory but lacks at least one important statement	Introduction not only establishes main idea or purpose as appropriate, but also has an interesting hook; conclusion includes every necessary action or statement
Punctuation and Spelling	Writing contains numerous and/or significant errors which distract from the message	Writing contains occasional errors, which do not distract from the message	Writing is nearly error free with no item that distracts from the message
Sentence Structure and Transitions	Sentence structure lacks readability and/or is awkward; connections between topics, ideas, or arguments lack clear transition	Most sentences build within paragraphs for readability; a few sentences lack transition	Sentences are clear, well developed, and express concise ideas; transitions create strong readability
Background and Critical Thinking	Ideas lack support or are expressed with personal views; no original thoughts that show critical thinking	Ideas are supported with occasional citations or class lessons; some individual, original ideas are expressed	Arguments are supported with cited references or relevant facts; strong use of originality is shown throughout the message
Professional Format and Tone	Document is not professionally formatted; tone and language are inappropriate	Document follows most of the traditional format guidelines but has at least one distracting error; tone and language use are fair	Professional format style is obvious; all aspects of the tone and language lend to audience's verbal and non-verbal understanding

Adapted from the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) Assessment Writing Rubric

Oral Presentation Criteria

Criteria for Grading Speeches*

To receive a **C** on your speeches, you must meet the following standards:

1. The speech must be original.
2. The type of speech presented must be appropriate to the assignment.
3. The topic must be appropriate for the audience and sufficiently focused.
4. The speech must fit the time requirements of the assignment.
5. The speech must be presented on the day assigned.
6. Main ideas must be supported with facts and figures, appropriate testimony, examples, or narratives.
7. The speech must have a clear sense of purpose.
8. The speech must have a clearly identifiable and appropriate design, complete with an introduction and a conclusion.
9. The speech must be presented extemporaneously.
10. The speech must satisfy any specific requirements of the assignment, such as number of references, formal outline, or use of visual aids.
11. The speaker must use language correctly.

To receive a **B** on your speech, you must meet the following standards:

1. Satisfy all requirements for a C speech.
2. Select a challenging topic and adapt it appropriately to your audience.
3. Reflect a greater depth of research
4. Clearly identify sources of information and ideas.
5. Create and sustain attention throughout the speech.
6. Make effective use of transitions, previews, and summaries.
7. Use good oral style.
8. Present the speech with poise.

To receive an **A** on your speech, you must meet the following standards:

1. Satisfy all requirements for a B speech.
2. Demonstrate imagination and creativity in topic selection and development.
3. Develop and sustain strong bonds of identification among the speaker, audience, and topic.
4. Consistently adapt information and supporting material to the experiential world of your audience.
5. Reflect an even greater depth of research (Refer to your assignment sheet for each presentation)
6. Demonstrate artful use of language and stylistic techniques.
7. Make a polished presentation that artfully integrates verbal and nonverbal communication skills.

A **D** speech does not meet one or more of the standards for a C speech or:

1. Is obviously unrehearsed.
2. Is based entirely on biased information or unsupported opinions.

An **F** speech does not meet three or more of the standards for a C speech, reflects either of the problems associated with a D speech, or:

1. Uses fabricated supporting material.
2. Deliberately distorts evidence.
3. Is plagiarized.

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These criteria apply to all oral presentations in this course.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR DR. DUNN'S CLASS

Professor	Mary B. Dunn, Ph.D.
Office	GSB 4.126D
Office Hours	Wednesdays , 2-3pm, and by appointment (email me to schedule)
Phone	512-471-1653
E-Mail	mary.dunn@mcombs.utexas.edu * email* is the most reliable way to reach me
Course Web Page	via Blackboard
Grader	TBA

Leaders consistently rank communication skills among the most desirable qualities they look for in new employees. The McCombs School of Business designed this course in response to industry feedback about the communication skills needed for business graduates to enter successfully into today's competitive marketplace. Establishing good communication skills can contribute significantly to your success in your career. This course is very practical. Yet, it this course is grounded in concepts and theories of communication.

COURSE GOALS:

This course is designed to help you:

- ◆ Understand the symbolic and strategic importance of communication
- ◆ Develop basic communication skills you need to write, make oral presentations, communicate interpersonally, and work effectively in teams.
- ◆ Improve your communication in future courses and in your career.
- ◆ Value the differences between yourself and others and employ that understanding to improve the quality of your communication.
- ◆ Use methods of problem solving in business communication as an individual or as a team.
- ◆ Reflect and learn from your experiences to enhance the effectiveness of your communication

Required Readings:

- 1) Mary Ellen Guffey's *Business Communication: Process & Product*, 7th Edition (“Guffey”).
- 2) Additional articles on BlackBoard (“BB”).

Attendance: Attendance is an essential component of this course. I will circulate a sign-in sheet at the start of class each day so please come to class on time every day. Class sessions include exercises and activities that help you develop your written and oral communication skills. We also spend a lot of class time working in groups to improve your interpersonal skills and your ability to give and receive constructive feedback. Besides all of these learning incentives to come to class, there is another reason NOT to miss class. Pursuant to BA324 attendance policy, if you have three or more absences, you will face the consequence of **1%** per absence deducted from your overall grade in this course.

All assignments are due *at the start of class* unless otherwise noted. I CANNOT ACCEPT late or missed assignments. I will not grant extensions for written assignments unless you have a verifiable medical emergency. Given our schedule, there are no opportunities to make up oral presentations or group work for this class, so please be prepared on the day assigned. Students with a medical emergency can appeal in writing within 24 hours for reconsideration for a missed individual written or oral presentation. This policy is strictly enforced.

Re-grade Requests

If you believe that your graded work received too little credit, you may submit it for a re-grade under the following restrictions:

1. All re-grade requests must be submitted with a clear, respectful, and persuasive statement that explains why you believe the original grade was incorrect.
2. All re-grade requests must be submitted within 1 calendar week of when the graded work is returned.
3. Re-grades may result in your grade going up or down. I will re-grade the entire work, and if I was overly generous I will deduct points. Thus, your grade can go up or down on a re-grade.

Your grade for the course will be calculated using the weightings for each assignment above and the scale below. Please note: I do not round up.

A = 93.0% - 100%	C = 73.0% - 76.9%
A- = 90.0% - 92.9%	C- = 70.0% - 72.9%
B+ = 87.0% - 89.9%	D+ = 67.0% - 69.9%
B = 83.0% - 86.9%	D = 63.0% - 66.9%
B- = 80.0% - 82.9%	D- = 60.0% - 62.9%
C+ = 77.0% - 79.9%	F = 59.9% and below

A Note about Final Grades: McCombs grading policies reserve “A” grades for students with truly exceptional performance. This means that instructors are to award “A” grades only when students demonstrate insight and creativity that go over and above the stated requirements. You should expect to work hard in this course. Like all of your other business school courses, this is a rigorous class.

McCombs Classroom Professionalism Policy

The highest professional standards are expected of all members of the McCombs community. The collective class reputation and the value of the Texas BBA experience hinges on this.

Faculty are expected to be professional and prepared to deliver value for each and every class session. Students are expected to be professional in all respects.

The Texas BBA classroom experience is enhanced when:

- **Students arrive on time.** On time arrival ensures that classes are able to start and finish at the scheduled time. On time arrival shows respect for both fellow students and faculty and it enhances learning by reducing avoidable distractions.
- **Students are fully prepared for each class.** Much of the learning in the Texas BBA program takes place during classroom discussions. When students are not prepared they cannot contribute to the overall learning process. This affects not only the individual, but the class as a whole.
- **Students respect the views and opinions of their colleagues.** Disagreement and debate are encouraged. Intolerance for the views of others is unacceptable.
- **Laptops are closed and put away.** When students are surfing the web, responding to e-mail, instant messaging each other, and otherwise not devoting their full attention to the topic at hand they are doing themselves and their peers a major disservice. Those around them face additional distraction. Fellow students cannot benefit from the insights of the students who are not engaged. Please keep the laptops closed.
- **Phones and wireless devices are turned off and put away.** We've all heard the annoying ringing in the middle of a meeting or class. Not only is it disruptive in this setting, but it also cuts off the flow of discussion when the search for the offender begins. When a true need to communicate with someone outside of class exists (e.g., for some medical need or other emergency) please inform me prior to class. Texting is also very distracting. Please keep your phones turned off and put away.

TENTATIVE* SCHEDULE

(please note this schedule is subject to change at any time!)

Week	Tentative Topic and Assignments Due
Week 1	Introduction to Course Effective & Ethical Communication
Week 2	The 3x3 Writing Process Due 8/31 Grammar Diagnostic Due 9/2 Introduction email
Week 3	Library Research and the Revising Process Due 9/9 Memo Revision
Week 4	Communicating effectively in teams Due 9/14 Executive Summary
Week 5	Making Outstanding Presentations Due 9/23 Team contract (memo format), meeting agenda and minutes
Week 6	Communicating Across Cultures Due 9/26-9/30 Intercultural Presentations -Intercultural memo and hard copies of slides are due the morning of your presentation. -Memo reflecting on your presentation's strengths and areas to improve (after watching the video) is due within 1 week of your presentation
Week 7	Giving and Receiving Feedback 10/3 **In-class writing assessment (graded) Due 10/7 Persuasive letter (bring 3 hard copies)
Week 8	Researching, Organizing and Writing Formal Reports Due 10/12 revised persuasive letter Due 10/14 Proposal for team report
Weeks 9 & 10	Making Persuasive Presentations and Giving Constructive Feedback Due Persuasive Presentations 10/17-11/2 -Persuasive memo and hard copies of slides are due the morning of your presentation. -Memo reflecting on your presentation's strengths and areas to improve (after watching the video) is due within 1 week of your presentation Due 10/21 Mid-semester survey on Blackboard
Week 11	Debriefing presentations, Analyzing survey results and Delivering bad news
Week 12	Putting it all together and demonstrating our learning 11/7 **In-class writing assessment (graded) Due 11/11 Blog Critique
Weeks 13 & 14	Finalizing Team Reports Due 11/14 Rough Draft of Final Reports Due Final Team Presentations 11/18-12/1
Week 15	Adjourning: The Final Week Due 12/1 Final Team Paper is due at the start of class Due 12/1 Team Evaluations are due by 5pm Due 12/3 Lessons learned Memo is due at the start of class

Guide to Effective Class Participation

Excellent participation (A-level):

- Contribute actively in all class discussions, exercises and activities.
- Share insights of relevant information from reading and from personal experience
- Make succinct comments to move discussion forward rather than repeat what others have said
- Clarify points that others may not understand
- Demonstrate excellent ability to apply, analyze, and synthesize course material
- Demonstrate willingness to take risks by answering challenging questions or offering important insights from personal experience
- Engage in active listening
- Never miss class (except for an unavoidable emergency)

Good Participation (B-level):

- Participate enthusiastically in all class exercises and activities.
- Participate regularly and voluntarily in class discussions
- Contribute relevant and important points to topics of discussion
- Analyze, apply, and synthesize course material
- Almost never miss class

Fair Participation (C-level):

- Participate in class discussion only when called upon
- Contribute relevant and important points to topics of discussion
- Attend class regularly, but miss more classes than others in the course

Poor Participation: any of the following (D-level):

- Reluctantly participate in discussion, exercises and activities
- Make comments that are irrelevant, inaccurate or not helpful
- Miss class often

Unacceptable Participation: any of the following will result in failing participation grade

- Fail to contribute in class, even when called upon
- Fail to participate in class exercises and activities
- Make comments that are inappropriate or offensive to others
- Behave in a manner that is distracting or disruptive to the class (e.g. talking with friends, sleeping, texting, studying for other classes, etc.)
- Not showing respect to your classmates or to the class
- Miss class regularly

* As graduate students at McCombs, I expect you all to participate at the A and B levels. Please use this sheet as a guide. Keep in mind that active listening is a key part of participation. If you think your participation is not up to A or B standards, it is your responsibility to come to me to discuss ways to enhance your participation. I keep track of participation each day of the semester. Your peers also keep track and know who makes valuable contributions. At the end of the semester, each student will rate each classmate on the quality of his/her participation. To compute final participation scores, I may use your peers' feedback about your performance when assigning your final participation grade (no more than 25%).