

Course Syllabus

Business Communications with Stakeholders (MAS 6v09)

Course Information:

Summer Semester 2010
Time: 6-10 pm Mondays
Classroom: 2.802

Professor Contact Information:

Instructor: Dennis McCuiston
President, McCuiston & Associates, Inc.
President, Foundation for Responsible Television

Office Phone: 903-464-9555
Fax: 903-464-9225
Email Address: mccuiston@mccuiston.com
Office Location: 2.405
Office Hours: By appointment
Web site: www.mccuiston.tv

Course Pre-requisites, Co-requisites, and/or Other Restrictions:

None

Course Description:

A case can be made that virtually every major problem in a business is either caused or exacerbated by poor, ineffective or no communication. This course is designed to prepare the student to understand his/her own communication style and then teach him/her to address communication in a way that the receiver will best receive it. Emphasis will be placed on listening skills since often the problem is failing to hear or understand.

Businesses have stakeholders which include shareholders, customers, suppliers, employees, regulators, communities and competitors. Communicating with each requires different skills and methods. Presentation skills with or without visual aids will be emphasized and extensive practice, role-playing and videotaping will be used.

Student Principal Learning Objective/Outcome:

The principal learning objective is for the student to gain a robust understanding of the challenges and solutions in communicating with corporate stakeholders including shareholders, customers, employees, regulators, suppliers and communities. The communication process includes listening, feedback, presentation and writing skills along with an understanding of different communication styles. A secondary objective is for the student to improve communication with significant others.

Extended Business/Communication Issues Addressed by Guest Lecturers/Instructor:

The students will be exposed to guest lecturers on the following topics:

- An overview of communication styles
- What listening is and how important it is to the communication process

- An overview of PowerPoint presentations
- What investors expect from corporate presentations
- Communicating in a time of crisis
- Looking good on camera
- Responding to hostile questions

Required Textbooks and Materials:

Mastering Communication at Work: How to Lead, Manage, and Influence

By Ethan F. Becker and Jon Wortmann

Listening Leaders: The 10 Golden Rules to Listen, Lead and Succeed

By Dr. Lyman Steil and Dr. Richard K. Bommelje

(order at www.listeningleaders.com)

Grading Policy:

Each student must accept the responsibility for course preparation. Thus, for each session, every student must study the assigned readings. In addition, each student is expected to participate actively in classroom discussions.

Grading Criteria:

Presentations and writing assignments	50%
Mid-term exam	25%
Class participation	25%
There will be no final exam	
Total possible points	100%

Translation of the total point score into a letter grade will be based on the instructor's judgment guided initially by >93% of 250 = A, 90-93% = A-, etc.

Assignments & Academic Calendar

DATE	TOPIC	LECTURER(S)*	Reading
Week 1 May 24	Introduction to the course; administrative matters, assignment of reading and discussion on “Who are the stakeholders we communicate with?” Administer assessment instrument. Review of the reading assignments	Dennis McCuiston	Steil Ch 1-3 Becker Ch 1-3
Week 2 June 7	The most important aspect of communication: listening. Understanding communication styles, who we are, who others are. Focus on stakeholder expectations. Review of the reading assignments	Dennis McCuiston Niki McCuiston	Steil Ch 1-3 Becker Ch 1-3
Week 3 June 14	The art of oral communication. Establishing the baseline in oral presentations – videotape. Review of the reading assignments	Dennis McCuiston Eliza Solender	Steil Ch 4 Becker Ch 4
Week 4 June 21	Incorporating Power Point and visual aids into presentations Review of the reading assignments	Dennis McCuiston	Steil Ch 5 Becker Ch 5
Week 5 June 28	Practice oral presentations. Review for mid-term. Review of the reading assignments	Dennis McCuiston	Steil Ch 6 Becker Ch 6
Week 6 July 5	Mid-term examination will cover Ch 1-6 and 12 of Becker and Ch 1-6 of Steil Review of the reading assignments The basics of written communications.	Dennis McCuiston	Review of prior chapters
Week 7 July 12	How to use email, letters and memos. Practice communicating in a crisis. Regulators, investors, employees, boss using case studies. Review of the reading assignments	Dennis McCuiston Merrie Spaeth	Stein Ch 7 Becker 8
Week 8 July 19	Communicating with your boss, your peers and your subordinates. Situational role plays. Review of the reading assignments	Dennis McCuiston Dianna Booher	S – Ch 8 B – 7, 9, 10, 11
Week 9 July 26	Overview of what the board and investors expect from corporate communications. Customer and supplier communications. Review of the reading assignments	Dennis McCuiston Shad Rowe and Mark Pape	Stein Ch 9
Week 10 Aug 2	Practice with feedback. Review of the reading assignments	Dennis McCuiston Karen Reisman	S – 10 B – 13
Week 11 Aug 9	Final presentations.	Dennis McCuiston	

NOTE: Guest Lecturers will be attending depending on travel schedules, etc. (These presentations will not always “line up” with the topic for the evening because of scheduling difficulties related to our Guest Lecturers’ commitments.)

DETAILED REQUIREMENTS FOR CASE STUDIES AND INDIVIDUAL PRESENTATIONS

Case Studies: Students will be given case studies or situations in corporate life and be expected to develop appropriate communication responses, using email, letter, memo and verbal responses.

Individual Presentations: Students will be videotaped giving presentations of all types, and then critiqued by classmates and experts.

Important, Time-Sensitive Requirement

Note: To facilitate the process so that I can know something about you, please e-mail mccuiston@mccuiston.com, with the subject "student background," containing the information below.

1. Last Name; First Name; UTD Degree Program and Expected Graduation Semester/Year
2. Day-Time Telephone Number and FAX Number; Day and Evening e-Mail Addresses
3. Collegiate Degree(s) Earned; Year(s) Earned; Name(s) of the Granting Institution(s)
4. Number of Earned Collegiate Semester Hours of Accounting; Where Earned (Institution)
5. Name of Current Employer; Your Position or Title; Months with Employer
6. Short Summary of Prior Business Experience with Most Recent Experience First
7. A Short Statement of Your Career Objectives and How You Expect This Course to Help

Student Conduct & Discipline

The University of Texas System and The University of Texas at Dallas have rules and regulations for the orderly and efficient conduct of their business. It is the responsibility of each student and each student organization to be knowledgeable about the rules and regulations which govern student conduct and activities. General information on student conduct and discipline is contained in the UTD publication, *A to Z Guide*, which is provided to all registered students each academic year.

The University of Texas at Dallas administers student discipline within the procedures of recognized and established due process. Procedures are defined and described in the *Rules and Regulations, Board of Regents, The University of Texas System, Part I, Chapter VI, Section 3*, and in Title V, Rules on Student Services and Activities of the university's *Handbook of Operating Procedures*. Copies of these rules and regulations are available to students in the Office of the Dean of Students, where staff members are available to assist students in interpreting the rules and regulations (SU 1.602, 972/883-6391).

A student at the university neither loses the rights nor escapes the responsibilities of citizenship. He or she is expected to obey federal, state, and local laws as well as the Regents' Rules, university regulations, and administrative rules. Students are subject to discipline for violating the standards of conduct whether such conduct takes place on or off campus, or whether civil or criminal penalties are also imposed for such conduct.

Academic Integrity

The faculty expects from its students a high level of responsibility and academic honesty. Because the value of an academic degree depends upon the absolute integrity of the work done by the student for that degree, it is imperative that a student demonstrate a high standard of individual honor in his or her scholastic work.

Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, statements, acts or omissions related to applications for enrollment or the award of a degree, and/or the submission as one's own work or material that is not one's own. As a general rule, scholastic dishonesty involves one of the following acts: cheating, plagiarism, collusion and/or falsifying academic records. Students suspected of academic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary proceedings.

Plagiarism, especially from the web, from portions of papers for other classes, and from any other source is unacceptable and will be dealt with under the university's policy on plagiarism (see general catalog for details). This course will use the resources of turnitin.com, which searches the web for possible plagiarism and is over 90% effective.

Email Use

The University of Texas at Dallas recognizes the value and efficiency of communication between faculty/staff and students through electronic mail. At the same time, email raises some issues concerning security and the identity of each individual in an email exchange. The university encourages all official student email correspondence be sent only to a student's U.T. Dallas email address and that faculty

and staff consider email from students official only if it originates from a UTD student account. This allows the university to maintain a high degree of confidence in the identity of all individual corresponding and the security of the transmitted information. UTD furnishes each student with a free email account that is to be used in all communication with university personnel. The Department of Information Resources at U.T. Dallas provides a method for students to have their U.T. Dallas mail forwarded to other accounts.

Withdrawal from Class

The administration of this institution has set deadlines for withdrawal of any college-level courses. These dates and times are published in that semester's course catalog. Administration procedures must be followed. It is the student's responsibility to handle withdrawal requirements from any class. In other words, I cannot drop or withdraw any student. You must do the proper paperwork to ensure that you will not receive a final grade of "F" in a course if you choose not to attend the class once you are enrolled.

Student Grievance Procedures

Procedures for student grievances are found in Title V, Rules on Student Services and Activities, of the university's *Handbook of Operating Procedures*.

In attempting to resolve any student grievance regarding grades, evaluations, or other fulfillments of academic responsibility, it is the obligation of the student first to make a serious effort to resolve the matter with the instructor, supervisor, administrator, or committee with whom the grievance originates (hereafter called "the respondent"). Individual faculty members retain primary responsibility for assigning grades and evaluations. If the matter cannot be resolved at that level, the grievance must be submitted in writing to the respondent with a copy of the respondent's School Dean. If the matter is not resolved by the written response provided by the respondent, the student may submit a written appeal to the School Dean. If the grievance is not resolved by the School Dean's decision, the student may make a written appeal to the Dean of Graduate or Undergraduate Education, and the dean will appoint and convene an Academic Appeals Panel. The decision of the Academic Appeals Panel is final. The results of the academic appeals process will be distributed to all involved parties.

Copies of these rules and regulations are available to students in the Office of the Dean of Students, where staff members are available to assist students in interpreting the rules and regulations.

Incomplete Grade Policy

As per university policy, incomplete grades will be granted only for work unavoidably missed at the semester's end and only if 70% of the course work has been completed. An incomplete grade must be resolved within eight (8) weeks from the first day of the subsequent long semester. If the required work to complete the course and to remove the incomplete grade is not submitted by the specified deadline, the incomplete grade is changed automatically to a grade of **F**.

Disability Services

The goal of Disability Services is to provide students with disabilities educational opportunities equal to those of their non-disabled peers. Disability Services is located in room 1.610 in the Student Union. Office hours are Monday and Thursday, 8:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.; Tuesday and Wednesday, 8:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.; and Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

The contact information for the Office of Disability Services is:

The University of Texas at Dallas, SU 22
PO Box 830688
Richardson, Texas 75083-0688
(972) 883-2098 (voice or TTY)

Essentially, the law requires that colleges and universities make those reasonable adjustments necessary to eliminate discrimination on the basis of disability. For example, it may be necessary to remove classroom prohibitions against tape recorders or animals (in the case of dog guides) for students who are blind. Occasionally an assignment requirement may be substituted (for example, a research paper versus an oral presentation for a student who is hearing impaired). Classes enrolled students with mobility impairments may have to be rescheduled in accessible facilities. The college or university may need to provide special services such as registration, note-taking, or mobility assistance.

It is the student's responsibility to notify his or her professors of the need for such an accommodation. Disability Services provides students with letters to present to faculty members to verify that the student has a disability and needs accommodations. Individuals requiring special accommodation should contact the professor after class or during office hours.

Religious Holy Days

The University of Texas at Dallas will excuse a student from class or other required activities for the travel to and observance of a religious holy day for a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property tax under Section 11.20, Tax Code, Texas Code Annotated.

The student is encouraged to notify the instructor or activity sponsor as soon as possible regarding the absence, preferably in advance of the assignment. The student, so excused, will be allowed to take the exam or complete the assignment within a reasonable time after the absence: a period equal to the length of the absence, up to a maximum of one week. A student who notifies the instructor and completes any missed exam or assignment may not be penalized for the absence. A student who fails to complete the exam or assignment within the prescribed period may receive a failing grade for that exam or assignment. If a student or an instructor disagrees about the nature of the absence [i.e., for the purpose of observing a religious holy day] or if there is similar disagreement about whether the student has been given a reasonable time to complete any missed assignments or examinations, either the student or the instructor may request a ruling from the chief

executive officer of the institution, or his or her designee. The chief executive officer or designee must take into account the legislative intent of TEC 51.911(b), and the student and instructor will abide by the decision of the chief executive officer or designee.

Off-Campus Instruction and Course Activities

Off-campus, out-of-state, and foreign instruction and activities are subject to state law and University policies and procedures regarding travel and risk-related activities. Information regarding these rules and regulations may be found at the website address given below. Additional information is available from the office of the school dean. (http://www.utdallas.edu/Business Affairs/Travel_Risk_Activities.htm)