

Professional Communication
AMS 4385-501
Course Syllabus
Spring 2011

Day/Times: Tuesday 7pm – 9:45pm

Location: CB 1.102

Professor Contact Information

Dr. Lynn Winstead Mabe

School of Interdisciplinary Studies

Email: lynn.mabe@utdallas.edu

Office Phone: 972.883.2804

Other Phone: 214.727.4931

Office Location: HH 2.812

Office Hours:

Tuesdays 2:15pm – 7pm

Thursdays 10am – 11:30am

And by appointment

Course Description

This course introduces the principles of effective business communications to address both internal and external audiences. Practical writing applications will be examined including sales letters, memoranda, customer and vendor correspondence, letters of complaint "bad news" (or extremely sensitive) communications, reports, proposals, presentations and resumes. A review of audience, tone, style, scope and content/context in business writing will be conducted to enhance your communications effectiveness. This course is designed to teach about these interpersonal communication issues through lectures, assigned readings, film/video screenings and writing assignments. Achievement of these goals, though, is primarily up to you. Not only do you need to attend carefully to readings, class discussions, and video presentations, you need to THINK about these materials and ideas.

Student Learning Objectives/Outcomes

The primary objective of this course is for you to improve and/or begin to develop an effective professional communications style that is simple, natural, and direct. At the end of this course, students will be expected to have learned and be able to articulate the following:

1. Evaluate professional and technical audiences and communicate effectively to those audiences
2. Improve your professional writing, including letters, memos, reports and proposals
3. Present your ideas more comfortably before peers and in group meetings
4. Learn basic techniques to make an effective oral presentation, using appropriate, well-constructed visual aids
5. Review the principles of writing, such as sentence construction, topic selection and development, paragraph organization, grammar and mechanics.

Required Texts & Materials

Quintanilla, K.M. & Wahl, S.T. (2011). Business and Professional Communication: Keys for Workplace Excellence. Sage: Los Angeles, CA.

Business communication related current events and outside media regarding business communication issues.

Assignments and Academic Calendar

	DATE	TOPIC - CHAPTER - READINGS
Week 1	January 11th	Class Expectations, Syllabus, Policies, etc.
Week 2	January 18th	Chapter 1 and 2
Week 3	January 25th	Class Online Discussion Question 1
Week 4	February 1st	Chapters 3 & 4
Week 5	February 8th	Class Online Discussion Question 2
Week 6	February 15th	Test 1 BRING SCANTRON AND PENCIL
Week 7	February 22nd	
Week 8	March 1st	Chapters 5 & 6
Week 9	March 8th	Class Online Discussion Question 4
Week 10	March 15th	SPRING BREAK
Week 11	March 22nd	Chapters 7 & 8: Test Review
Week 12	March 29th	Test 2 BRING SCANTRON AND PENCIL
Week 13	April 5th	
Week 14	April 12th	Class Online Discussion Question 5
Week 15	April 19th	Chapters 11 & 12 FINAL CLASS MEETING Test Review
Week 16	April 26th	
Week 17	May 3rd	University Reading Days
Week 18	May 10th	University Scheduled Final Exams

Grading and Course Requirements

- 20% Attendance AND Participation AND Discussion Questions
- 20% Class Presentation and Summary Paper
- 60% Exams (3 – 20% each)

Attendance AND Participation: Students are required to attend class. You will be given an attendance/ participation grade for every class. You will basically start out with an attendance/participation grade of 100. If you miss one class, you will still have a 100 because there is one "free" absence. After that first absence, 10 pts will be deducted from the grade of 100, and for every absence after that, another 10pts will be deducted. The remaining total of points at the end of the semester will be your attendance grade, however not paying attention, texting, doing other things on a laptop, etc. will cause the attendance/participation grade to be lowered. Please note that absences and lack of participation will have a significant impact on your grade. This portion of the class makes up 20% of your grade. Participation is more than just showing up; it is getting engaged in the discussion and actively learning. Points will be taken off of your participation grade for talking/whispering to other students while I or another student is presenting material to the class. Sometimes it is necessary to miss class. Each of us must make a choice in this regard, so consider it your choice to miss class. The attendance and participation policy has been outlined so you should be aware of the related grading criteria. There is no need to contact me about missing class unless there is some specific circumstance that you would like for me to be aware of. Also, please do not call or email me to ask me what you missed. You should check elearning for any class assignments. You are responsible for all class information regardless of whether you were able to attend or not. In addition to checking elearning, I suggest that you exchange emails and phone numbers with at least two people so that you can contact a classmate for information. FORWARD YOUR UTD EMAIL TO YOUR REGULAR EMAIL ACCOUNT IF YOU DO NOT CHECK YOUR UTD ACCOUNT DAILY! **PLEASE NOTE:** leaving early, coming late and lack of participation will affect your grade. Attendance, being on time, staying through class and participating ALL factor into your attendance and participation grade.

Class Presentation: Every week, a few students will be assigned to present a portion of the chapter for the week. You will be required to bring in an outside resource to illustrate the concept, show as an example etc. (current event, a website, or something in the media related to the chapter) assigned for that date. This will be a major portion of the class grade (20%). The grading criteria for this presentation will be presented by the instructor and explained and please reference the grading rubric and the handout for how this assignment is graded. Points are given for the following areas: Presentation Organization, Outside Resource Presented, Communicated with other students regarding topic on discussion board in a timely manner, presentation was conducted on scheduled date/time, resources and discussion accurately reflect the assigned topic, and a handout was given to the teacher with sources, outline, explanation, summary, etc.

Late Work: 10 pts will be deducted for each class day that an assignment or test is late.

Exams: There will be three exams, including the final exam; Exams are multiple choice and short answer and essay. The length of your test will vary depending on how many chapters it covers. The bulk of the questions are taken from your reading but it is important to pay attention to videos and participate in class discussions, presentations and online discussion questions. I sometimes draw from these sources as well to design the test. You will need a pencil and a scantron on test days. I will let you know which type of scantron you will need prior to the test.

Class Expectations: Texting, Instant Messaging, Chatting and just generally using an electronic device to AVOID paying attention will result in points being taken off of your participation grade.

Classroom Citizenship: Disrespect of any student or of the professor will not be tolerated. This behavior will be reflected in the Class Participation Grade. We are here to listen, with an open mind, and learn; i.e.: to be good citizens.

Elearning: Elearning is a major source of communication and involvement in this class. You will use elearning to turn in your tests, access class emails, engage in class discussions on the discussion board and other various activities in this class. Please make yourself familiar with elearning if you are not already. It will be an essential part of this class.

Discussion Questions: Discussion Questions (There are 5 total throughout the class) are a learning tool for the entire class. This will be through elearning and will count towards ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION. For example, if you do not engage in the discussion at all, you will lose 10 points off of your Attendance/Participation Grade because you were not “present” for the class discussion for the relevant class period. If you post something but it is of minimal class value and do not respond or post anything else, there will be points deducted for lack of participation but you will be counted as “present” if you did respond. This will be up to you as to how much you become engaged during these 5 class discussions. I will be monitoring the class discussions, commenting, responding and taking note of who is engaged in the discussion and who is not.

Email: 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. PLEASE FORWARD YOUR UTD EMAIL TO YOUR REGULAR EMAIL ACCOUNT IF YOU DO NOT CHECK YOUR UTD ACCOUNT DAILY!

Cell Phones and Laptops: Phones on silent and put away!! I have a teenager; I know what “secret texting” looks like. I have a teenager; I know what surfing the internet vs. typing something academic looks like. I have a teenager; I know what scrolling through facebook looks like. I have a teenager; I know what youtube and just generally jacking around on a computer or phone looks like. Take note here! You will not know when I mark you down for texting, typing a paper for a different class during my class, playing online poker, messaging with your friends on facebook. I will just write down on the roll sheet for that day the specifics of the activity you were “otherwise engaged in” and will take points off of your attendance/participation grade. I would tread lightly if you come to see me about your attendance/participation grade. Because I promise you will be met with something like the following, “On 2/1 you were texting, on 2/8 you were on facebook, on 2/15 you were watching youtube videos.....”. I do pay attention to these activities and points will be deducted from your grade. I WANT you to pay attention; I WANT you to listen and learn. It MATTERS to me. ☺

Policy on Scholastic Dishonesty: I have a zero tolerance policy on cheating and plagiarism. 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.

Policies and Procedures for Students

The University of Texas at Dallas provides a number of policies and procedures designed to provide students with a safe and supportive learning environment. Brief summaries of the policies and procedures are provided for you at <http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies> and include information about technical support, field trip policies, off-campus activities, student conduct and discipline, academic integrity, copyright infringement, email use, withdrawal from class, student grievance procedures, incomplete grades, access to Disability Services, and religious holy days. You may also seek further information at these websites:

http://www.utdallas.edu/BusinessAffairs/Travel_Risk_Activities.htm
<http://www.utdallas.edu/judicialaffairs/UTDJudicialAffairs-HOPV.html>
<http://www.utsystem.edu/ogc/intellectualproperty/copypol2.htm>
<http://www.utdallas.edu/disability/documentation/index.html>

These descriptions and timelines are subject to change at the discretion of the Professor!!