

Syllabus

Course Number: BCOM 3311
Title: Business Communications
Term: Fall 2013

Contact Information

Instructor: Kristen A. Lawson, Ph. D.
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Course Prerequisites, Co-requisites, and/or Other Restrictions

Prerequisites: RHET 1302 and (ACCT 3100 or BA 3100 or FIN 3100 or IMS 3100 or MKT 3100 or MIS 3100 or OPRE 3100). Since ACCT/BCOM 3311 is a challenging, upper-level class, you should have at least college-level writing skills and both written and oral proficiency in English.

Course Description

(3 semester hours) Introduction to various types of professional communication, with an emphasis on business writing. You will gain experience writing and revising business email, letters, proposals, and job search documents. You will work both individually and in teams and will exit the course with a clear understanding of the centrality of communication in business. Not eligible for audit.

Communication is the root activity of business. Communication skills are rated as one of the most sought after qualities in today's job market. In nearly all aspects of professional life you will spend most of your day explaining, writing, directing, persuading, and listening to other people. Your ability to do so clearly and effectively will have a direct bearing on your success in the business world. This course is designed to give you not only a thorough introduction to business communication and its basic concepts and theories, but also a chance to work with these concepts and theories to build your own written and verbal communication skills. . You will gain knowledge and skills that will assist you not only in your chosen career, but will be useful in your academic and social lives as well.

Course Goals

This course is designed to help you:

- ◆ Develop basic communication skills you need to write, make oral presentations, communicate interpersonally, and work effectively in teams.
- ◆ Value the differences between yourself and others and to employ that understanding to improve the quality of your communication.
- ◆ Improve your communication in future courses and in your career.
- ◆ Develop stronger reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills and the ability to follow complete, complex written and oral instructions.

Student Learning Objectives/Outcomes

ACCT/BCOM 3311 is the second writing-intensive course in the Communications component of the Core Curriculum. The course addresses the following Component Learning Objectives:

1. You will be able to write effectively using appropriate organization, mechanics, and style.
2. You will be able to construct arguments that are effective and appropriate for business settings.
3. You will be able to incorporate and interpret source material in your writing and speaking.
4. You will be able to write in different ways for different audiences.

Required Textbooks and Materials

See Aplia instructions on eLearning for instructions for purchasing your ebook and Aplia access.

Peer Review and Revision

The following statement comes directly from the Core Curriculum section of the UTD Undergraduate Catalog:

All courses [that satisfy the core requirement for Communication] require that students write, receive detailed feedback about, and revise at least 15 double-spaced pages.

This means that every written exercise you do in this class will be done **TWO TIMES**. First, you produce a *draft* of the document and have the benefit of having it reviewed by one of your classmates before you submit it to me. Your partner will perform both formal and informal critiques of your draft. In turn, you will also provide formal and informal critiques of your partner's draft, allowing you to work on the valuable skills of conveying and accepting constructive criticism. You will then revise your draft using the feedback your partner has provided you, so that your final product can be the best and most polished version of your work possible.

Assignments

100 points – Email
100 points – Claim or Sales Letter
100 points – Bad News Letter
100 points – Resume
100 points – Elevator Pitch
200 points – Chapter Quizzes (on aplia.com)
150 points – Team Proposal
150 points – Team Presentation

1000 possible points

You must submit ALL writing assignments in order to pass this course.

Grading Policy

All work should also demonstrate the same professional and ethical standards expected of you in the workplace, including proofreading and editing carefully all work you submit in this class. Professionalism also means that you use appropriate source citation wherever and whenever necessary so that you avoid violations of copyright – even if those violations are inadvertent. By internalizing these skills now, you give yourself an advantage when heading into the workplace – not to mention in keeping yourself out of trouble in school!

Writing Lab

You are strongly encouraged to use the **JSOM Business Communication Center**. The JSOM Business Communication Center provides support for students of all writing levels and abilities, so do not hesitate to take advantage of what is offered there. The BCC is located on the first floor of the JSOM building.

Visit <http://bcc.utdallas.edu/> to make an appointment, find resources for business writing, and learn how to use APA to cite materials in your writing. Keep in mind that there can be a wait around the time that papers are due, so planning ahead and making an appointment can help you make effective use of your time.

Attendance

Things happen to all of us. You get 2 free absences in this class.

Each absence after that = 10 points off your final grade.

Therefore, make sure you are counted present in each class that you do attend.

Aplia Quizzes

Chapter quizzes must be completed by 11:45 p.m. on the Sunday after we work with the chapter in class.

You get 1 free deadline extension as long as you notify me within 48 hours of missing the deadline.

Emphasis on Social and Environmental Sustainability

Responsible business leaders of the 21st century will not only need to ensure the profitability of their company but will also need to be able to identify and manage the many ways in which their organization impacts its natural environment and social community. Leaders must also be able to communicate these commitments to the public in an effective and accurate way.

In this class, you will complete a major writing project that will help you imagine the ways in which North Texas businesses can 'give back' to their community through a significant community action program. This project will not only help you improve your team work and communication skills, but will also bring you into a closer relation to your community and its needs.

COURSE POLICIES:

Late Work

Deadlines in the professional world are a serious matter. Missed deadlines mean lost contracts, delayed product releases, skyrocketing expenses, and, in some cases, the loss, quite literally, of millions of dollars in revenue. Missed deadlines also compromise professional reputations and careers. Work that does not meet the assignment's constraints is unprofessional and creates administrative headaches. "Technological problems" is not a valid excuse for late work, so plan accordingly.

For these reasons, late or incomplete work is not acceptable in this course EXCEPT in the most extreme and unlikely of circumstances.

Individual Extra Credit

Other than extra credit opportunities offered to the entire class, I do not curve individual items, nor do I offer "extra credit" work or "special consideration" to allow individual students a chance to raise their grade. If a personal situation arises during the semester that may affect your classroom performance, please talk to me sooner rather than later. If you wait until the end of the semester, I won't be able to help you. I can work with you more easily if you speak to me when the situation arises.

Classroom Citizenship

In keeping with this course's professional communication mandate, you are expected to use every opportunity in the course to practice communicating in a civil and professional manner. Each class is an opportunity to hone your skills in the effective and efficient use of language, the center of business communications.

Technology Requirements

The course is taught using eLearning, and **you should develop the habit of checking both eLearning and your UTD email often for assignments and announcements. Reliable and frequent internet**

connectivity is indispensable – not having internet access will make your group projects more difficult and will not serve as a valid excuse for shortcomings. You also have the responsibility to ensure that you have access to the course for the duration of the semester and must submit all assignments, except for the proposal, through the internet. Failure to check UTD or eLearning email, errors in forwarding email, and email bounced from over-quota mailboxes are not acceptable excuses for missing course or project-related email, just like they would not be acceptable excuses in the workplace. Your classmates and I will be counting on you to stay in contact with us, and you should be able to count on us as well.

Classroom and Equipment Use Policies

No laptops, cell phones, pagers, or other electronic messaging services may be used in the classroom unless you have cleared it with me first. You and your classmates have invested a lot of time and money into taking this class, and you owe it to each other not to disrupt the classroom.

University Policies and Procedures

Please see the following for Student Conduct and Discipline, Religious Holidays, Academic Integrity, Email Use, Withdrawal from Class, Student Grievance Procedures, and other university policies and procedures:
<http://coursebook.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies/>

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

Business Communications 3311 Fall 2013 Course Schedule

Chapter readings are due on the date on which they are listed; so, for example, I expect you to have read Chapter 1 before you come to class on Thursday, August 29th. Quizzes for each chapter on Aplia are due by 11:45 p.m. on the Sunday after we have discussed that chapter in class (so the quiz for Chapter 1 will be due by 11:45 p.m. on Sunday, September 1st). Note: While the syllabus is intended as a general guideline of our activities and due dates, I reserve the right to change the syllabus should the need arise.

Tuesday, Aug . 27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction; Review Syllabus
Thursday, Aug. 29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 1 – “ Communication Skills as Career Filters ”
Tuesday, Sep. 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 2 – “Planning Business Messages” • Review Video Assignment
Thursday, Sep. 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 3 – “Composing Business Messages” • Review Email Assignment
Tuesday, Sep. 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 5 – “Electronic Messages & Digital Media”
Thursday, Sep. 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss Team Work (Ch. 11, available online to skim) • APA Overview – guest speaker • Review Proposal Assignment & Meet Teams
Tuesday, Sep. 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 4 “Revising Business Messages” • Workshop Email Assignment in class • Review Resume assignment
Thursday, Sep. 19	DUE: Email Assignment – turn in via eLearning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss Proposal Format (Ch. 9 & 10, available online to skim) • Library presentation to Proposal Teams / Team meeting in class
Tuesday, Sep. 24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 6 – “Positive Messages” • Review Claim Letter Assignment
Thursday, Sep. 26	DUE: Resume Assignment Part 1 – turn in via eLearning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team Meeting in class
Tuesday, Oct. 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 8 – “Persuasive Messages”
Thursday, Oct. 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop Claim Letter Assignment in class
Tuesday, Oct. 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team Meeting in class
Thursday, Oct. 10	DUE: First Part of Elevator Pitch
Tuesday, Oct. 15	DUE: Claim Letter - turn in via eLearning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 7 – “Negative Messages” • Review Bad News Letter Assignment
Thursday, Oct. 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 11 – “Professionalism at Work: Business Etiquette, Ethics, Teamwork, & Meetings”
Tuesday, Oct. 22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teams meet with me in my office
Thursday, Oct. 24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop Bad News Letter Assignment in class
Tuesday, Oct. 29	DUE: Second Part of Elevator Pitch – turn in via eLearning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team Meeting in class
Thursday, Oct. 31	DUE: Bad News Letter - turn in via eLearning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 12 – “Business Presentations”
Tuesday, Nov. 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 12 – “Business Presentations” continued • Review Proposal Presentations
Thursday, Nov. 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop your team’s draft of your Proposal Assignment in class • Chapter 13 – “The Job Search, Resumes & Cover Letters”
Tuesday, Nov. 12	DUE: Proposal Assignment - Hand in to me by beginning of class Mandatory Attendance: Career Center Presentation Chapter 13 – “The Job Search, Resumes & Cover Letters” continued
Thursday, Nov. 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 14 – “Interviewing & Following Up”
Tuesday, Nov. 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 14 – “Interviewing & Following Up” continued
Thursday, Nov. 21	DUE: Resume Assignment Part 2 - turn in via eLearning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • work in teams and prepare for presentations
Fall Break: 11/25 - 30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NO CLASS
Tuesday, Dec. 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandatory Attendance: Proposal Presentations
Thursday, Dec. 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandatory Attendance: Proposal Presentations
Tuesday, Dec. 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandatory Attendance: Proposal Presentations