

## **Syllabus**

Course Number: BCOM 3311  
Title: Honors Business Communications  
Term: Spring 2014

### **Contact Information**

Instructor: Kristen A. Lawson, Ph. D.  
Office Location: 4.432 SOM  
Office Hours: M 10:00-noon, Th 9:00-10:00 a.m., or by appointment  
Email: Kristen.Lawson@utdallas.edu  
Office Phone: 972.883.5827

### **Course Prerequisites, Co-requisites, and/or Other Restrictions**

Once you have been admitted to the Naveen Jindal School of Management and have credit for Rhetoric 1302, you are eligible to take BCOM 3311. Since 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) 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**

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. When the assignment is due you will turn in a folder containing 1) the first draft 2) your partner's Peer Evaluation worksheet and 3) the final draft of the document to be graded.

## Assignments

100 points – Book Review Presentation  
100 points – Email  
100 points – Claim or Sales Letter  
100 points – Bad News Letter  
100 points – Revised Elevator Pitch  
200 points – Chapter Quizzes (on aplia.com)  
50 points – Résumé  
150 points – Proposal  
100 points – Presentation

---

1000 possible points

Final grades will be assigned according to the UTD Undergraduate Catalog scale with “+” and “-”.

## Grading Scale:

970-1000 A+	870-899 B+	770-799 C+	670-699 D+	0-590 F
940-969 A	840-869 B	740-769 C	640-669 D	
900-939 A-	800-839 B-	700-739 C-	600-639 D	

## GET HELP!

You should expect to work hard in this course. Like each of your other JSOM courses, this is a rigorous class.

To help you meet these high standards, I strongly recommend that you review your assignments with me before they are due. Helping you with your work by answering questions and offering advice is a pleasure. You have already paid for this help. Even though you will be getting a lot of feedback from your classmates you should always feel free to involve me in your work.

**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** located in JSOM 1.218 and 1.213. 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.

## COURSE POLICIES:

### *Late Work*

All assignments will be due in both a paper format and submitted electronically through eLearning by the beginning of the class day it is due, unless otherwise specified. 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.

## Honors Business Communications Course Schedule Spring 2014

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 Tuesday, February 4<sup>th</sup>. 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, February 9<sup>th</sup>). 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.

<b>Tuesday, Jan. 14</b>	Introduction; Review Syllabus
<b>Thursday, Jan. 16</b>	SEE BA 3100 SYLLABUS Review Book Presentation Assignment
<b>Tuesday, Jan. 21</b>	SEE BA 3100 SYLLABUS
<b>Thursday, Jan. 23</b>	SEE BA 3100 SYLLABUS
<b>Tuesday, Jan. 28</b>	SEE BA 3100 SYLLABUS
<b>Thursday, Jan. 30</b>	SEE BA 3100 SYLLABUS
<b>Tuesday, Feb. 4</b>	Chapter 1 – “Communication Skills as Career Filters”
<b>Thursday, Feb. 6</b>	Chapter 2 – “Planning Business Messages” Review Email Assignment
<b>Tuesday, Feb. 11</b>	Chapter 3 – “Composing Business Messages” Review Proposal Assignment & meet teams
<b>Thursday, Feb. 13</b>	Chapter 5 – “Electronic Messages & Digital Media”
<b>Tuesday, Feb. 18</b>	Book Presentations
<b>Thursday, Feb. 20</b>	Book Presentations <b>DUE: EMAIL ASSIGNMENT</b>
<b>Tuesday, Feb. 25</b>	Book Presentations
<b>Thursday, Feb. 27</b>	Chapter 6 – “Positive Messages” Review Claim/Sales Letter Assignment
<b>Tuesday, Mar. 4</b>	Chapter 8 – “Persuasive Messages”
<b>Thursday, Mar. 6</b>	Read Ch 2, 3, 7, 12 of <a href="#">THIS</a> : Team meeting in class
<b>March 10-16</b>	<b>SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS</b>
<b>Tuesday, Mar. 18</b>	<b>DUE: CLAIM/SALES LETTER ASSIGNMENT</b> Chapter 7 – “Negative Messages”; Review Bad News Letter Assignment
<b>Thursday, Mar. 20</b>	Team health check and team meeting in class
<b>Tuesday, Mar. 25</b>	Mandatory team meeting in my office
<b>Thursday, Mar. 27</b>	Mandatory team meeting in my office
<b>Tuesday, Apr. 1</b>	Chapter 12 – “Business Presentations”
<b>Thursday, Apr. 3</b>	SEE BA 3100 SYLLABUS
<b>Tuesday, Apr. 8</b>	<b>DUE: RESUME ASSIGNMENT</b> Chapter 13 – “The Job Search, Resumes & Cover Letters”
<b>Thursday, Apr. 10</b>	<b>DUE: BAD NEWS LETTER ASSIGNMENT</b>
<b>Tuesday, Apr. 15</b>	<b>DUE: PROPOSAL</b> Chapter 14 – “Interviewing & Following Up”
<b>Thursday, Apr. 17</b>	Chapter 14 – “Interviewing & Following Up” continued
<b>Tuesday, Apr. 22</b>	<b>DUE: REVISED ELEVATOR PITCH</b> Work in teams and rehearse for presentations
<b>Thursday, Apr. 24</b>	<b>Proposal Presentations</b>
<b>Tuesday, Apr. 29</b>	<b>Proposal Presentations</b>
<b>Thursday, May 1</b>	<b>Proposal Presentations and wrap-up</b>