HONORS 4390.001
Topics in Communication:
Business and Professional Communication
Spring 2012

Professor: Dr. Kelly Quintanilla,
Dean of the College of Liberal Arts
Professor of Communication
Office: Faculty Center 203
Phone: 825-2659
Email: kelly.quintanilla@tamucc.edu
Office Hours: Everyday by Appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Introduces students to basic skills, principles, and contexts of communication in business and professional settings by combining public speaking with aspects of communication ethics and organizational, small group, and interpersonal communication. Students will learn practical skills via presentations, research, resumes, interviews, meetings, and professional writing grounded in communication theory.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of the course, you will be able to:

- Identify the key terms and major communication theories relevant to the study of business and professional communication;
- Create a resume to enhance individual career and/or educational marketability;
- Use effective interviewing skills and techniques;
- Apply theory in order to effectively communicate as both a team member and as a leader;
- Assess the performance of team members based on clearly defined objectives and present that assessment in an honest, yet constructive manner;
- Successfully integrate communication and research skills to create a professional presentation; and
- Produce an effective corporate profile.

COURSE TEXT

COURSE POLICIES:

Attendance: You are expected to attend all scheduled meetings of this course. Every class meeting will involve discussion, case studies, and group activities which are important to your understanding of the course material. Attendance will be taken at every scheduled class meeting. More than two absences regardless of the reason will result in an individual consultation with the instructor. Beginning with the third absence deductions of 5% points per absence will be taken from your total points at the end of the semester and excessive absences will result in course failure. Attendance is also required in group meetings and projects that may take place outside the normal course meeting time. Each group will develop its own attendance policy for handling tardiness and absenteeism.

Late Work: Late work will only be accepted with prior approval. Failure to turn in work on the assigned date will result in a 50% reduction in the possible grade for the assignment.

Scholastic Dishonesty Statement: Plagiarism is considered serious academic misconduct. All assignments presented should be the work of the student enrolled in the course. Proper documentation should be made of materials cited from all sources. Instructors determining that a student has plagiarized will assign a failing grade for that assignment and may elect to pursue disciplinary proceedings against the student.

Notice to Students with Disabilities: Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act in making reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. If you suspect that you may have a disability (physical impairment, learning disability, psychiatric disability, etc.), please contact the Services for Students with Disabilities Office, located in Driftwood 101, at 825-5816. If you need disability accommodations in this class, please see me as soon as possible.

Academic Advising: The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. The Academic Advisor will set up a degree plan, which must be signed by the student, a faculty mentor, and the department chair. The College's Academic Advising Center is located in Driftwood 203E, and can be reached at 825-3466.

Grade Appeal Process: As stated in University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, and University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures. These documents are accessible through the University Rules Web site at http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Office of Student Affairs.
Honors Standards:

- Students read assignments on time, completely, to the last page. They know that reading is only the first step; and they working toward taking commend of the material, and come to class with serious responses and a willingness to learn.
- Students do not assume that an assignment is legitimate only if it will be “tested.” The work is done for its own sake. Students also make connections between the material at hand and what has been explored in previous classes.
- Students expect that they will attend 100% of the time, and make home arrangements that this will happen. They don’t assume that there are a certain number of allowable “skips.” Barring natural catastrophes, faithful attendance and preparation are expected.
- Students assume that open and equitable discussion and critique is the soul of an honors course. Everybody listens attentively to the instructor and to each other. Everybody participates. Students don’t put the burden on the teacher or on other students to originate or maintain discussion. They themselves take on the responsibility to keep some class members from dominating others, and they do it by offering their share of talk and thinking of questions that will help the class explore course content more deeply.
- Students think “outside the box” and are not afraid to take risks and try out new things.
COURSE DESIGN

We will cover a variety of theories, concepts and communication practices related to business and professional communication. Then you will have an opportunity to apply what you have learned and develop your skills as a leader, a team member, and a professional. Since this course simulates a live professional environment, I will allow you to manage your teams as a business. For example, team members can terminate fellow members for not participating or meeting project demands. If someone is not coming to class and/or meeting team goals, members may choose to “fire” that group member. Any student who is fired from their team must drop the course.

ASSIGNMENTS:

Exams (45%; 15% for each exam)
Three examinations will be given during the semester. These exams are designed to test your knowledge of the course readings and lectures. Each exam will incorporate multiple choice and true/false questions.

Cover Letter, Resume and Mock Interview (5%)
For this assignment you will be required to take part in a mock interview* with the Office of Career Planning and Placement. As part of the mock interview process you must find a job posting for a position you would be interested in applying for after graduation. You must customize your cover letter and resume for this position and use it as part of the mock interview process. The interview will be recorded. Following the interview you will be required to watch the recording and take part in a critique of your performance. Your grade on this assignment will be credit/no credit for completing all assignment requirements.

* You must schedule your interview at the beginning of the semester. Failure to do so may result in your inability to complete this assignment.

Corporate Case Study (10%)
You will be assigned a topic area such as listening, leadership, or work-life balance. You will then research an organization, preferable a well known company that has shown excellence in this area. For the profile, you will provide background information on the organization and evidence to support your claim that this organization has shown excellence. (1 page, 12 font, double spaced)

Ethical Considerations (15%)
Ethics permeate all aspects of professional life. For this assignment you will be assigned three topic area such as listening, leadership, or work-life balance. You must find a news story that deals with ethical considerations that challenge you to think about how you would handle a situation in this topic area. You will provide a brief overview of the situation, as well as your conclusions on the best way to handle the situation ethically. Your conclusions must be supported by information covered in the course. You must turn in the news stories with your assignment. (3 pages, 12 font, double spaced)
**Team Presentation (15%)**
You will be randomly assigned to a team consisting of 4-6 members. As a team you will develop a procedure for recording policies, including division of labor and attendance. Your team will present on a topic related to communication excellence in the business and professional context. During the planning phase your team will assess the problem/situation, select a topic, develop a plan of action, and take any needed steps in preparation for the implementation phase. The implementation phase will include giving an oral presentation (30 minutes) based on your research. Power point presentations and bibliographies must be turned in immediately prior to the presentation.

**Memos (5%)**
You will write a performance appraisal of your fellow teammates. Specifically, you will write a memo in which you appraise your teammates' performance as both leaders and team members. All discussions must be tied to the theories and concepts covered in this course. Specific examples must be cited; therefore, you should keep a log of group meetings and progress.

Each memo should include the following.

A. Describe and evaluate contributions. Be specific. Make certain to focus the evaluation on communication excellence.

B. Identify an area(s) for performance improvement. Then make suggestions for improvement based on what you have learned about communication this semester.

C. Your financial officer has informed you that each person can receive up to $100 in bonus salary. In the concluding paragraph assign the bonus amount. The amount must be justified by the content of the performance appraisal.

**Peer Evaluation Average (5%)**
The bonus score you receive from your teammates will be averaged together and that score will become 5% of his or her final grade in this course.
### GRADING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exam One</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam Two</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam Three</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cover Letter, Resume, Interview</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate Case Study</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethical Considerations</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Presentation</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memos</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Evaluation Average</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are 1000 points broken down as follows:

- **A** = 900-1000
- **B** = 800-899
- **C** = 700-799
- **D** = 600-699
- **F** = 599 or below
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 12</td>
<td>Topic: Introduction to the Course</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 17</td>
<td>Topic: Business and Professional Excellence in the Workplace</td>
<td>Assignments: Readings: Chapter 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 19</td>
<td>Topic: Landing the Job</td>
<td>Assignments: Readings: Chapter 2, Find Job Posting, Begin Preparing Resume &amp; Cover Letter, Schedule Mock Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 24</td>
<td>Learning Activities: Developing Resume and Cover letter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 26</td>
<td>Topic: Getting to Know You Diverse Workplace</td>
<td>Assignments: Readings: Chapter 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 31</td>
<td>Learning Activities: Learning Your Workplace Culture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2</td>
<td>Topic: Building Relationships Through Interpersonal Communication</td>
<td>Assignments: Reading: Chapter 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 7</td>
<td>Learning Activities: Gossip versus the Grapevine</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 9</td>
<td>EXAM (Chapter 1-4)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 14</td>
<td>Topic: Strengthening Connections through Team Communication</td>
<td>Assignments: Readings: Chapter 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 16</td>
<td>Learning Activities: Problem Solving</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 21</td>
<td>Topic: Communicating Excellence with Technology</td>
<td>Assignments: Readings: Chapter 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 23</td>
<td>Learning Activities: Communicating Your Identity Through Technology</td>
<td>Assignments: MOCK INTERVIEW due, RESUME due, COVER LETTER due</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
February 28  Topic:  Writing with Professional Excellence  
Assignments:  Readings:  Chapter 7

March 1  Leading with Professional Excellence  
Assignments:  Readings:  Chapter 8

March 6  Learning Activity:  Dealing with Difficult People

March 8  Learning Activities:  Saying Thank You

**SPRING BREAK**

March 20  Topic:  Developing Your Teams.  You will be randomly placed in a team for your presentation; each team will develop policies for performance

March 22  EXAM (Chapter 5-8)

March 27  Topic:  Presenting in the Workplace  
Readings:  Chapter 9 and 10

March 29  Topic:  Delivering a Speech With Professional Excellence  
Assignments:  Readings:  Chapter 11

April 3  Learning Activities:  Learning to Cope with the Adrenaline Rush  
Learning Activities:  Analyzing the Audience

April 5  Topic:  Balancing Work and Life Through Communication  
Assignments:  Readings:  Chapter 12

April 10  Learning Activities:  Work Life Balance

April 12  Preparing for Team Presentations

April 17  TEAM PRESENTATIONS

April 19  TEAM PRESENTATIONS

April 24  TEAM PRESENTATIONS

April 26  TEAM PRESENTATIONS

May 1  Last Day of Class  
MEMOS due  
CORPORATE CASE STUDY due  
ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS due

May 8  FINAL EXAM (Chapters 9-12)  
1:45-4:15