Communicating in Business

Course Description

A study of the fundamentals of effective communication in business and administration. Emphasis is placed on the application of modern techniques to business writing including memos, letters and reports, and oral reporting. Prerequisites: BUSI 0011 and Junior standing or above.

Learning Objectives

- Review/learn English grammar and punctuation.
- Review/learn effective writing style principles (paragraph unity, paragraph length, active voice, etc.).
- Learn correct format and content for business letters, memos, e-mail, and short and long reports.
- Learn correct format of APA style.
- Review/learn effective speaking skills (content, delivery, PowerPoint design, etc.).
- Learn correct format and content for documents relating to employment (i.e., resume, application letter, follow-up letters).
- Consider ethical implications of various communication documents (i.e., exaggeration in sales letters and resumes, etc.) and situations (plagiarism).
- Seeks to assist students in their preparation for the Major Field Test.

Required or Recommended Readings

Course Materials:

MindTap -- Registration/purchase instructions provided at the “MindTap Content” course menu on the course Blackboard page. (Required E-textbook and APLIA online homework assignments are embedded within MindTap). Payment made be made later, following a short grace period.


Blackboard Login: https://iol.tamucc.edu/
List of Supplies

USB Flash Drive
(Bring every class session. Do not bring one that contains irreplaceable or sensitive data.)

Major Course Requirements

Testing
Exam 1 (January 31)  55
Exam 2 (March 21)  55
Final (May 7)  75
Final exams taken at other times will result in score reduction of 20 points unless approved by university policy

Written Report
Assignment 1 (February 1, 11:59 p.m.)  0
Assignment 2 (February 19, 11:59 p.m.)  0
Assignment 3 (February 26, 11:59 p.m.)  0
Assignment 4 (February 28, 11:59 p.m.)  0
Assignment 5 (March 22, 11:59 p.m.)  50

Oral Presentation
Oral Presentation #1 (February 5, 7, 12, 14)  50
Oral Presentation #2 (April 11, 16, 18)  50

MindTap (Aplia) Online Homework Assignments
13 Aplia assignments

Aplia Online Homework Assignments: There are 13 required Aplia assignments over the semester, as indicated in the “Required?” column of the Aplia schedule (inside “Aplia Assignment” section of the Blackboard course menu). Each assignment has a due date after which the assignment is locked. Only the top 10 (of 13) assignments will count toward a student’s grade. That means that students have three free passes. Please note that once a due date has passed, the assignment is no longer available. If students miss an assignment for any reason, legitimate or otherwise, that will count as one of their three free passes.

Students who only complete assignments as trial purchase recipients (never purchasing the product) will receive no Aplia points for any assignment.
Professionalism (Class Attendance, Behavior, & Participation)

Students are expected to attend and participate actively in each of the scheduled in-class sessions. In order to receive the full allotment of daily participation points, students must satisfy all three of these tasks: (a) attend class on time and stay until dismissed; (b) listen attentively and avoid distracting behaviors, such as phone usage, noncourse computer application, homework for other courses, and so on; and (c) comply with any impromptu speaking requests.

Occasional In-Class Assignments (? @ 5, 10, or 15 points each)

On occasion, the instructor may assign a short graded activity to be completed during a scheduled class session. Only students present at that class session would be eligible to submit such assignments. Students absent because of an excusable reason may complete an “Excused Absence Form” and submit it to Turnitin within 2 weeks of the in-class assignment date to remove the zero score assigned.

Extra Credit Opportunities (optional—complete any or all by April 15)

Junior Achievement (up to 15 pts.)
Mock Interview with Career Counselor; 825-2628 (5 pts.)
Write Experience (inside MindTap; 50% score = 5 pts; 60% = 6 pts; 70% = 7 pts; 80% = 8 pts; 90% = 9 pts; 100% = 10 pts)

Course Grade Percentages: A letter grade will be determined based on the percentage earned of total points possible, as follows: A, 90-100%; B, 80-89%; C, 70-79%; D, 60-69%; F, 0-59%.

Monitoring Assignment Scores: Students are encouraged to monitor their assignment and test scores throughout the semester. All assignment scores are available in the “My Grades” section of Turnitin; no scores are kept in Blackboard, MindTap, or any other location. Students with a question or concern with an assignment grade need to express that concern with the course instructor within 2 weeks of the assignment score’s posting in Turnitin. After 2 weeks, students may not challenge an assignment score. Also, students who mistakenly thought they had successfully posted an assignment on Turnitin by the deadline may not attempt to resubmit that assignment 2 weeks past the original due date. Those students need to recognize that they were unsuccessful in posting that assignment and notify the instructor within 2 weeks of the original due date.

Borderline Grades: Students slightly below grade thresholds will have their course grades raised if they meet certain conditions:

Students 1 percentage point from a threshold (89, 79, 69, 59) must meet one of these conditions: (a) submitted all graded assignments (no zero scores appear on the Turnitin.com “My Grades” page), (b) attended all class sessions (including first day; excused absence considered an absence), (c) earned the higher grade on the final exam [student with 89% course average after the final would need to earn an “A” grade on the final to receive an “A” course grade], (d) completed and submitted all 5 Written Report
assignments to Turnitin.com by the deadlines, (e) delivered the Introduction and Conclusion for the team’s Oral Presentation #2, or (f) completed one extra credit activity.

Students more than 1 percentage point from a threshold (88, 78, 68, 58) will not have their course grades raised.

Course Policies

Exam & Assignment Policies

**Missed Exams.** Exams missed for any reason (other than required university-sponsored events) may not be made up. Students who miss an exam because of an excused absence will have their Final Exam worth a higher point total (# of points of the missed exam). Students participating in required university-sponsored events (athletic events, approved field trips, etc.) must complete make-up exams within one week; make-up exams not completed within one week will result in students completing the Final Exam worth a higher point total.

**Missed In-Class Assignments.** Students absent on the date of an in-class assignment may not complete and submit the assignment, even if they submit the assignment to Turnitin.com before the deadline. However, students who missed class because of a legitimate, excusable absence will receive “no score” (rather than zero) on any graded in-class assignments that occurred on that date—if they successfully complete and submit the “Excused Absence Form” to the designated link on Turnitin.com within 1 week of the excused absence. Students may submit the “Excused Absence Form” for two absences.

Legitimate absences include family emergencies; sickness, one-time transportation problems (car won’t start, accident, etc.); and other legitimate, unpreventable circumstances. Inexcusable absences include work conflicts, other course conflicts, nonemergency doctor appointments, and other issues that could have been completed at another time. Athletes or other students involved in university-sponsored events missing an in-class assignment may either submit an “Excused Absence Form” (if any excused absence opportunities remain) or complete a make-up assignment provided by the instructor. The Excused Absence Form or the make-up assignment must be submitted within one week to avoid earning a zero score on the assignment.

**Late Written Assignments.** Students are expected to complete assignments early in the assignment’s timeframe period. Students who wait until the end of the timeframe period to complete assignments, do so at their own risk. An assignment is considered late if it arrives after the designated deadline (The clocks on BlackBoard and Turnitin.com will be considered the official time; no other clock time will be considered). Due to the possibility of unforeseen circumstances such as technical difficulties or personal situations, you are encouraged to complete your assignments and quizzes in time to rectify any problems before the deadlines.

No assignment may be submitted after the Final Exam.
Inattentiveness Policy

Students are expected to be attentive at all times. Students may not use computers during class time to view websites, e-mail, computer games, files, or programs unless told to do so by the instructor. In addition, students may not study for other courses, complete personal tasks (including cell phone usage of any kind), or any other activity not related to the class material being discussed at that time.

Writing Deficiency Policy

This is a fast-paced, intensive course that will require a lot of outside work and preparation. It will be assumed that students have obtained acceptable composition skills as well as a good understanding of basic English grammar and punctuation rules. These will not be covered extensively in class. Students lacking in these basic skills are strongly advised to take a remedial writing course first.

The instructor will evaluate student writing competence continually throughout the course. Students with writing deficiencies will be advised to complete appropriate remedial action, ranging from individualized instruction at the Writing Center or with a tutor to enrollment in a remedial English course.

Written assignments with proofreading errors will automatically receive significantly reduced scores regardless of other commendable qualities.

Attendance Policy

Attendance is required. Each student, whether present or absent, is personally responsible for announcements made, assignments, lecture notes, class discussions, handouts, and videos. A student should consult with other students for missed announcements, lecture notes, and assignments.

Academic Integrity/Plagiarism Policy

University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, falsification, forgery, complicity or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one’s own work.) Students may not collaborate on assignments or tests—either inside or outside the classroom. If one student’s assignment is too similar to that of a classmate’s, both students will receive zeroes regardless of which student did the copying.

This course, and all other courses offered by the College of Business (COB), requires all of its students to abide by the COB Student Code of Ethics (available online at www.cob.tamucc.edu). Provisions and stipulations in the code are applicable to all students taking College of Business courses regardless of whether or not they are pursuing a degree awarded by the COB.
**Dropping a Class**

I hope that you never find it necessary to drop this or any other class. However, events can sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. Please consult with me before you decide to drop to be sure it is the best thing to do. Should dropping the course be the best course of action, you must initiate the process to drop the course by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class. **April 5** is the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” this term.

**Preferred Methods of Scholarly Citations**

APA style

**Classroom/Professional Behavior**

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, as an academic community, requires that each individual respect the needs of others to study and learn in a peaceful atmosphere. Under Article III of the Student Code of Conduct, classroom behavior that interferes with either (a) the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or (b) the ability of other students to profit from the instructional program may be considered a breach of the peace and is subject to disciplinary sanction outlined in article VII of the Student Code of Conduct. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior may be instructed to leave the classroom. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including classrooms, electronic classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.

**Grade Appeals**

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](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.

**Disabilities Accommodations**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning
environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall 116.

If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.

**Perspectives**

*Global Perspectives*

Foreign and domestic cultural norms and values will be discussed as they relate to oral and written communication.

*Demographic Diversity Perspectives*

Diversity will be discussed as it relates to oral and written communication.

*Ethical Perspectives*

Ethical topics occur throughout the course. The textbook features some of these topics with its “Ethical Insights.” In addition, “Ethical Issue” critical thinking questions may be assigned.

**Major Field Test**

The Major Field Test (MFT) is required for all students pursuing the Bachelor of Business Administration degree and will be administered in the MGMT 4388 course, “Administrative Policy and Strategy.” To prepare for this test, business majors are advised to retain their class notes, textbooks, and other relevant materials from this class and the other business core courses.
January 15  Course Syllabus
MindTap Registration & Demonstration
Written Report Assignment (Assignment 1: Company Selection, Research, & Organization)
H.A.T.S. Document Design Exercise
Turnitin Registration
Pretest assignment (available on Blackboard “Assessments”)

January 15  Homework  (see Ch. 4 “Homework Assignments” listing off the course menu)
H.A.T.S. Document Design Exercise
Written Report Assignment (Assignment 1: Company Selection, Research, & Organization)
Discuss Oral Presentation #1
Chapter 4: “Planning Business Messages” (read before class)

January 22  Homework  (see Ch. 5 “Homework Assignments” listing off the course menu)
Chapter 5: “Organizing and Drafting Business Messages”
Discuss Exam #1

January 24  Homework  (see Ch. 6 “Homework Assignments” listing off the course menu)
Chapter 6: “Revising Business Messages” (read before class)

January 29  Homework  (see Ch. 11-Day 1 “Homework Assignments” listing off the course menu)
Discuss Chapter 11 (pp. 389-417): “Reporting in the . . . Workplace” (read before class)
Discuss Written Report Assignment 2

January 31  Exam #1 (closed book, closed notes)
H.A.T.S. Problem 1 @ 25 pts
Multiple Choice Questions (Chapters 4-6) 25 @ 1 pt.
Checkpoint Sentences 1-25 (Appendix D, Guides 1-16) 5 @ 1 pt.
February 5  ORAL PRESENTATION #1
February 7  Assigned students attend all these sessions
            Nonassigned students complete Written Report Assignment 2

February 12 ORAL PRESENTATION #1
February 14 Assigned students attend all these sessions
            Nonassigned students complete Written Report Assignment 2

February 19 Homework (see Ch. 11-Day 2 “Homework Assignments” listing off the course menu)
            Review Written Report Assignment 2
            Discuss Written Report Assignment 3
            Discuss Oral Presentation #2
            Discuss Chapter 11 (pp. 412-416): “Documenting Information” (read before class)

February 21 Homework (see Ch. 11-Day 3 “Homework Assignments” listing off the course menu)
            Discuss Exam #2
            Discuss Chapter 11 (pp. 417-424): “Creating Effective Graphics” (read before class)
            Discuss Written Report Assignment 4

February 26 Homework (see Ch. 12-Day 1 “Homework Assignments” listing off the course menu)
            Discuss Chapter 12 (pp. 437-451): “Informal Business Reports” (Conclusions & Recommendations)
            Discuss Written Report Assignment 5

February 28 Homework (see Ch. 12-Day 2 “Homework Assignments” listing off the course menu)
            Discuss Chapter 12 (pp. 446-468): “Informal Business Reports” (Short Reports)

March 5    Discuss Chapter 12 (pp. 446-468): “Informal Business Reports” (Short Reports)
March 7  Homework  (see Ch. 13-Day 1 “Homework Assignments” listing off the course menu)
Present APA Style Report Format
Discuss Chapter 13 (pp. 493-508): “Writing Formal Business Reports” (read before class)
Discuss p. B-1 to B-3 “Documentation Formats” (read before class)

March 19  Review APA Style Report Format
Discuss Chapter 13 (pp. 493-508): “Writing Formal Business Reports” (read before class)
Discuss p. B-1 to B-3 “Documentation Formats” (read before class)

March 21  Exam #2 (closed book, closed notes)
Multiple Choice Questions (Chapters 4-6, 11-13) 35 @ 1 pt.
Application Problem (Chapters 11-13) 1 @ 10 pts.
Checkpoint Sentences 1-50 (Appendix D, Guides 1-30) 10 @ 1 pt.

March 26  Homework  (see Ch. 7 “Homework Assignments” listing off the course menu)
Discuss Chapter 7: “Short Workplace Messages and Digital Media” (read before class)
Video 3 (“Smart E-Mails and Memos Advance Your Career” [6:36])
Discuss Appendix A: “Document Format Guide” (pp. A-1 to A-2 [read before class])

March 28  Homework  (see Ch. 8-Day 1 “Homework Assignments” listing off the course menu)
Discuss Chapter 8: “Positive Messages” (read before class)
Discuss Appendix B: “Document Format Guide” (pp. A-2 to A-8 [read before class])

April 2  Homework  (see Ch. 9 “Homework Assignments” listing off the course menu)
Discuss Chapter 9: “Negative Messages”
Discuss Final Exam

April 4  Homework  (see Ch. 10 “Homework Assignments” listing off the course menu)
Discuss Chapter 10: “Persuasive and Sales Messages”

April 5  LAST DAY TO DROP A COURSE
April 9  Oral Presentation #2 team meetings

April 11  ORAL PRESENTATION #2—See assigned list of teams chosen to speak today
          Absent students may either (a) submit an “Excused Absence Form” (if they haven’t
          already used their two excused absences earlier in the course or (b) complete a make-up
          assignment (see Oral Presentation #2 assignment sheet)

April 16  ORAL PRESENTATION #2— See assigned list of teams chosen to speak today
          Absent students may either (a) submit an “Excused Absence Form” (if they haven’t
          already used their two excused absences earlier in the course or (b) complete a make-up
          assignment (see Oral Presentation #2 assignment sheet)

April 18  ORAL PRESENTATION #2— See assigned list of teams chosen to speak today
          Absent students may either (a) submit an “Excused Absence Form” (if they haven’t
          already used their two excused absences earlier in the course or (b) complete a make-up
          assignment (see Oral Presentation #2 assignment sheet)

April 23  Employment Communication
          Chapter 15/16

April 25  Employment Communication
          Chapter 15/16

April 30  Employment Communication
          Chapter 15/16
FINAL EXAM: Tuesday, May 7, 8:00 am -10:30 am

Chapters 4-13 & Checkpoint Sentences 1-75 (Appendix D, Guides 1-50)

Multiple Choice
Chapters 4-6; 11-13--approximately 25 questions  45 @ 1 pt.
Chapters 7-10--approximately 20 questions
Checkpoint Sentences 1-75 (Appendix D, Guides 1-50)  15 @ 1 pt.
Application Problem  1 @ 15 pts.