Spring 2020
Business and Professional Communication - COMM 3320 – W01

This course is 100% online, and is not lecture-based. Students must manage time, deadlines and work independently to succeed.

Because communication will take place online, email (Bb Messages) professionalism is strictly enforced from students for all class and instructor communication, including authored Bb Messages and replies to the instructor (formal greetings on messages, proper message endings with a thank you including your full roster name, correct grammar, clear and concise messages - overall proper etiquette). Allow 3 business days, before following-up on an issue or a response to general communication from your instructor.

Contact Information
Instructor: Lucy E. Wilson-Garza
Office: Bay Hall, 374B (3rd Floor)
Phone: 361-825-2316 (please email me before calling, this is given for emergencies ONLY)
E-mail: Lucy.Wilson-Garza@tamucc.edu
Office hours: Monday and Wednesday, Noon - 12:50 p.m. (or by F2F appointment, via phone call or through video)
* If students need to reach out to the instructor, this must be done through Bb Messages. Please allow three business days for a response.*

Course Overview
The purpose of this course is to introduce the basic skills, principles, and contexts of communication in business and professional settings. The content of the course synthesizes public speaking with aspects of communication ethics, organizational, small group and interpersonal communication. You will learn practical skills via presentations, research, resumes, interviews and professional writing grounded in communication theory.

Student Learning Outcomes
At the end of the semester, students will be able to:
- Identify key terms and major communication theories relevant to the study of business and professional communication
- Create resumes (one print, one visume) to enhance individual career and/or educational marketability
- Employ effective interviewing skills and techniques used in both F2F and electronic mediums
- Produce an effective corporate profile

Required Course Materials
*See schedule for assigned readings.

Additional supplemental readings will be available through the Blackboard site.
**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. Degree plans are prepared in the CLA Academic Advising Center. The University uses an online Degree Audit system. Any amendment must be approved by the Department Chair and the Office of the Dean. All courses and requirements specified in the final degree plan audit must be completed before a degree will be granted. The CLA Academic Advising Office is located in Driftwood #203. For more information, please call 361-825-3466.

**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.

**Grade Appeals**

As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.03, *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 Procedure 13.02.99.C2.03, *Student Grade Appeals*. These documents are accessible online at: http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.C0.03_student_grade_appeals.pdf.

For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean’s office in the college in which the course is taught. For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal in CLA, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website: http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html.

**Academic Integrity/Plagiarism**

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.) In this class, academic misconduct or complicity in an act of academic misconduct on an assignment or test will result in zero points.
In an instructional setting, plagiarism occurs when a writer deliberately uses someone else’s language, ideas, or other original (not common-knowledge) material without acknowledging its source. Plagiarism is a violation of academic expectations, but it is sometimes difficult to understand what plagiarism actually is. Often, students commit unintentional plagiarism (not citing sources properly, for example), because they are unaware of the standards that apply. Plagiarism includes:

- Using the work of another as your own,
- Downloading or purchasing ready-made essays off the web and using them as your own,
- Using resource materials without correct documentation,
- Using the organization or language of a source without using quote marks and proper citation.
- Turning in a researched project without citing sources in an appropriate documentation style.

When you are confused about citation of quotes or ideas, please visit the Writing Center or me to get help. Information on MLA documentation rules and APA documentation rules is available at Purdue University’s OWL: [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/), and from our local Writing Center at CASA.

**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 your academic advisor, the Financial Aid Office, and me, before you decide to drop this course.** 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. Please check with the registration office regarding the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” this term.

**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. As the instructor, I pledge to do my best to present course materials in an interesting and engaging manner, to actively listen to and consider the ideas of every student in the classroom or online, and to be fair in grading all assignments.

**Statement of Civility (can be in place of classroom/professional behavior)**

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi has a diverse student population that represents the population of the state. Our goal is to provide you with a high quality educational experience that is free from repression. You are responsible for following the rules of the University, city, state and federal government. We expect that you will behave in a manner that is dignified, respectful and courteous to all people, regardless of sex, ethnic/racial origin, religious background, sexual orientation or disability. Behaviors that infringe on the rights of another individual will not be tolerated.
Statement of Academic Continuity*

In the event of an unforeseen adverse event, such as a major hurricane and classes could not be held on the campus of Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi; this course would continue through the use of Blackboard and/or email. In addition, the syllabus and class activities may be modified to allow continuation of the course. Ideally, University facilities (i.e., emails, web sites, and Blackboard) will be operational within two days of the closing of the physical campus. However, students need to make certain that the course instructor has a primary and a secondary means of contacting each student.

Late Work

All assignments are due by the designated due dates. Late work is not accepted.

Communication

This course will rely on Blackboard to communicate electronically. Students need to be sure to check-in each Monday (when each unit starts) and throughout the week. Students must communicate with their instructor through Blackboard messages only. Allow 3 business days for instructor responses to issues/general communication before reaching out again. Remember to always use professional communication etiquette when reaching out to your instructor - formal greeting, clear and concise message, a closing statement with a thank you, along with your full roster name (perception and credibility are very important in higher education and in the workplace, so we must get into the habit of doing this.

Exams

Two exams will be given in the course. Exam questions will come directly from the assigned readings. Material on the exam will not necessarily be covered in units, so it is imperative that all students have access to the course textbook.

Assignment Requirements

Assignments should be double spaced with one-inch margins and typed in Times New Roman 12-point font. It is also important that student use APA citations in submitted assignments. Please see the section on plagiarism for more information. Students are also responsible for keeping track of assignments and grades.

Blackboard

Because this is an online course, it is imperative that all students check Blackboard regularly. If a student has technical difficulties, you will need to contact the university’s Help Desk at 361-825-2825 or 866-353-2491. Please give yourself ample time to submit assignments, in case there is a technological issue that requires troubleshooting from the university.
Course Assignments

Discussion Forum Posts (100 points): In order to discuss the assigned readings, students must craft reflective responses to the weekly course content and synthesize previous work and educational experience (if applicable) with the readings. Each student must post a new thread with 5-7 full paragraphs of original thought under the discussion forum for the assigned week, and also reply to 3 other students (unless otherwise noted), each reply must be 1-2 paragraphs. Comments on previous week’s posts are due by the following Sunday (the next week). For example, the discussion post for Chapters 1-4 are due Sunday, 9/8, then your 3 replies are due by the following Sunday, 9/18 for that post. Students must keep up with weekly discussions. Each post will vary in points. *A full paragraph consists on 5 sentences minimum.

Elevator Speech (100 points): An elevator speech (or pitch) is a 60-90 second summary of your qualifications and strengths that can be recited easily during impromptu networking situations. In other words, if you step in to the elevator and see the CEO of the company you would love to work for, what would you say to him or her about yourself? The elevator speech must be recorded via webcam and posted to YouTube. The link must be posted to the discussion forum, and students must view and comment on the elevator speeches of 3 other students as well (the following week). Do not try to attach the video file to Blackboard. The student is responsible for researching, selecting and practicing before with a video software to use. Although you are not graded on video editing, lighting, setting, attire, camera focus/angle, etc. are taken into consideration with grading. Youtube videos can be “unlisted” for privacy.

**Job Posting, Resume & Cover Letter** (100 points): Early in the semester, you will choose an available job posting and will tailor your resume, cover letter, and mock interview video strategy to align appropriately with the posting objectives. Your resume and cover letter must clearly state your qualifications, background, and current career objectives. Your final resume and cover letter are due Sunday at 11:59 p.m. the week you are scheduled upload your interview video (found on Interview Dates discussion forum). Each student is required to comment constructively on the resumes and cover letters (along with videos) of ALL other students each week. See your unit and syllabus schedule for reply requirements. The resumes and cover letters will absolutely not be accepted late, as late submission is unprofessional behavior and not permitted in this class (the same expectations apply for all assignments). Reminder, this assignment works in correlation with your Mock Interview Video.

**Visume** (100 points): Employers are increasingly conducting interviews via telephone and Skype. An electronic account of your qualifications and objectives is also becoming increasingly desired so that employers may screen candidates’ communication skills, appearances and mannerisms. Your visume will be approximately 1.5 to 2 minutes, organized, structured, and thoroughly practiced and prepared. Remember, your visume is a general and is not tailored to a specific job, rather a specific industry you are interested in.

Visumes must be recorded on a webcam and posted to YouTube. Students must post the YouTube link of their visume to the designated discussion forum. Do not try to post the video file to Blackboard. Visumes are due on the visume discussion forum on the designated week. Students must view and post comments on at least three other students (the following week). Execute this assignment with professionalism, so you can use the final product to market yourself. Once again, the student is responsible for researching and selecting a video software to use.

**Video Interview** (300 points): Mock Interview Videos will be created by the student with their video software. Videos will be due on the students’ assigned week (this assignment will take place over four-week span). With the video, you will also turn in your cover letter and resume on the discussion forum. Video links will need to be uploaded (from Youtube), not the video file. Check Blackboard your first week to find your designated week for this assignment. Your week/date will be posted under the Interview Dates discussion forum. From there, you will need to find your date, and reply with your selected job posting (PDF or word document). Date requests will not be considered.

For the video, interviewees will be given questions to answer on video (questions can be found in their assigned week’s unit). Note: each assigned week has a different set of questions to answer (for example: if you are assigned to to upload your materials during the second week of this assignment, you may not receive the same questions to answer as the students from the first week). It is important that you possess the same professionalism verbally and nonverbally like you would in a real interview situation.

You may opt to read your questions on the video, then answer, or to have someone else read them for you off camera. Students who do not submit these materials on time will receive a zero on the assignment; no exceptions. It is very important that your resume, cover letter and mock interview are taken seriously, as this is 40% of your grade.

Note to students: The above **assignments are simulations of the actual interview process. Prepare your responses and communicate professionally for the interview and practice your answers thoroughly. Also, you will want to chose a location that is not distracting and dress professionally. The video quality, such as sound, lighting, location, etc. are also taken into consideration.

Exams (300 points): Students will be graded on 2 examinations during the semester. The exams will be objective (true/false and multiple choice).
**Grade Distribution**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>Discussion Forums (points vary per post)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>Elevator Speeches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>Resume &amp; Cover Letter (50 each)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300</td>
<td>Interview Video</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>Visume</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300</td>
<td>Exams (2) (150 each)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1000</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Evaluation**

Grades are based on demonstration of mastery of course material. Work that meets the minimum requirements of an assignment, is done on time, and displays average involvement with the course content is deserving of a 'C.' Higher grades are awarded to work that goes above and beyond the minimum standards to produce products that reflect superior intellectual effort, excellence in critical analysis, and overall creativity in the approach to any given assignment. Remember: perception, perception, perception! To average your grade up to any given point in the semester:

1. Add what you COULD have earned up to that point
2. Add what you have actually earned up to that point
3. Divide what you COULD have earned INTO what you actually earned you will have your current average in the course.

**Schedule**

Our weekly class rotation will start on Mondays and end each Sunday night at 11:59 p.m. All assignments, discussion forums, etc. will be due each Sunday evening at 11:59 p.m. Make sure to read the section regarding weekly discussion forums and responses (each week you will post on the discussion forum and respond to select classmates’ discussions from the previous week).

*It is imperative that you also visit the Units tab each week.

Please note: This syllabus is tentative and can change at any time. Although we try our best to plan ahead, there are sometimes unforeseen circumstances throughout the semester, or the need to change for improvements. It is important to check Blackboard regularly to be informed of changes and additions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>WEEKLY ACTIVITIES</th>
<th>ASSIGNMENTS DUE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Course introductions, syllabus, purchase textbook, student introductions</td>
<td>Post introduction on discussion forum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(go to Units tab on left-hand menu for more detail)</td>
<td>Due by Sunday, 1/26 @ 11:59 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week begins 1/21</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week begins 1/27</td>
<td>Discussion forum on chapters 1-4 Professional Excellence in the Workplace (go to Units tab on left-hand menu for more detail)</td>
<td>Discussion forum for chapter 1-4 due by Sunday, 2/2 @ 11:59 p.m. Responses from the prior week’s discussion are due by Sunday, 2/2 @ 11:59 p.m. as well.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week begins 2/3</td>
<td>Read chapters 8 &amp; 9 Draft Elevator Speech and post video link from YouTube to discussion form (not video file) (go to Units tab on left-hand menu for more detail)</td>
<td>Discussion forum for chapters 8 &amp; 9, post Elevator Speech link. Due by Sunday, 2/9 @ 11:59 p.m. Responses from the prior week’s discussion are due by Sunday, 2/9 @ 11:59 p.m. as well.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week begins 2/10</td>
<td>Take exams over Chapter 1-4 and 8-9 Begin preparing for mock interview (go to Units tab on left-hand menu for more detail)</td>
<td>Exams due by Sunday, 2/16 @ 11:59 p.m., Responses from the prior week’s discussion and responses to Elevator Speeches are due by Sunday, 2/16 @ 11:59 p.m. as well.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week begins 2/17</td>
<td><strong>Prepare Mock Interview PRACTICE Answers on Discussion Forum</strong> - the forum has the highest number of possible points compared to other forums. <em>This is not the questions you will answer on video.</em> (go to Units tab on left-hand menu for more detail) For the following weeks, your assignment is to upload your Mock Interview Video (with your resume and cover letter) and reply to your classmates’ materials. Remember, you were assigned a week at the beginning of the semester (Interview Dates discussion forum). The forum is still available for viewing. Your tailored cover letter and resume will also be due that assigned week and must be attached to your discussion post containing the video link. Weekly interview dates can not be changed, as in a real interview situation. Remember, this assignment is a large portion of your grade. Students are also expected to reply/critique ALL classmates.</td>
<td>Written answers to mock interview practice answers due by Sunday, 2/23 @ 11:59 p.m. No responses are due from the previous week (because of your exam).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week begins 2/24</td>
<td>Interview Week 1 (go to Units tab on left-hand menu for more detail)</td>
<td>Students assigned to upload their mock interview video this week (post link to Youtube, not video file) , must also submit their final cover letters and resumes on the discussion forum. Students must also comment on the practice mock interview questions from the previous week by Sunday, 3/1 @ 11:59 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week begins 3/2</td>
<td>Interview Week 2 (go to Units tab on left-hand menu for more detail)</td>
<td>Students assigned to upload their mock interview video this week (post link to Youtube, not video file) , must also submit their final cover letters and resumes on the discussion forum. Students must also comment on ALL resumes/cover letters/videos from last week by Sunday, 3/15 @ 11:59 p.m.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Week begins 3/16 | Interview Week 3  
(go to Units tab on left-hand menu for more detail) | Students assigned to upload their mock interview video this week (post link to Youtube, not video file), must also submit their final cover letters and resumes on the discussion forum. Students must also comment on ALL resumes/cover letters/videos from last week by Sunday, 3/22 @ 11:59 p.m. |
|---|---|---|
| Week begins 3/23 | Interview Week 4  
(go to Units tab on left-hand menu for more detail) | Students assigned to upload their mock interview video this week (post link to Youtube, not video file), must also submit their final cover letters and resumes on the discussion forum. Students must also comment on ALL resumes/cover letters/videos from last week by Sunday, 3/29 @ 11:59 p.m. |
| Week begins 3/30 | Work on Visume  
(go to Units tab on left-hand menu for more detail)  
(Students are fully responsible for researching/finding a video software to use and testing it before the due date) | Post visumes by Sunday, 11/3 @ 11:59 p.m. Post link to Youtube, not video file. Students must also comment on ALL resumes/cover letters/videos from the previous week by Sunday, 4/5 @ 11:59 p.m. |
| Week begins 4/6 | Read Chapters 5 & 6  
(go to Units tab on left-hand menu for more detail) | Post on discussion forum for Chapters 5 & 6 by Sunday, 4/13 @ 11:59 p.m. Responses to Visumes are due Sunday, 4/13 @ 11:59 p.m. as well. |
| Week begins 4/14 | Read Chapters 13 & 14  
(go to Units tab on left-hand menu for more detail) | Post on discussion forum by Sunday, 4/19 @ 11:59 p.m. Responses from the prior week’s discussion are due by Sunday, 4/19 @ 11:59 p.m. |
| Week begins 4/20 | Watch TedTalk about Interviews  
Because this is a holiday week, you may coordinate to submit materials earlier in the week.  
(go to Units tab on left-hand menu for more detail) | Post on discussion forum about the TedTalk by Sunday, 4/26 @ 11:59 p.m. Responses from the prior week’s discussion are due by Sunday, 4/26 @ 11:59 p.m. |
| Week begins 4/27 | Prepare for exam – (LinkedIn)  
(go to Units tab on left-hand menu for more detail) | Respond to last week’s forum by Sunday, 4/3 @ 11:59 p.m. |
| Week begins 4/4 | Prepare and take Final Exam  
(Chapters 5-6, 10, 13, 14)  
(go to Units tab on left-hand menu for more detail) | Due Friday, 4/8 @ 11:59 p.m. |