

MGT 303—BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS
Spring, 2024

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Course Description: A study of the fundamentals of writing both formal and informal reports, utilizing primary and secondary research. A team approach is used for problem solving and process improvement. Included is the study of life- long learning skills as related to interpersonal communication and intercultural business communication.

Prerequisites: Junior Standing

Course Student Learning Outcomes:

This course is designed to develop the following professional skills:

- Students will understand how business professionals communicate through formal and informal communication networks as well as in groups.
- Students will improve the ability to express themselves in writing, understanding how business writing differs from other types of writing, including positive, negative, neutral and persuasive messages.
- Students will begin to develop skills related to personal branding including social media, resume writing, interviewing, personal selling and persuasive writing/presentation.
- Students will understand the ethical goals of business communication and tools for communicating ethically in business.

College of Business Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Students will demonstrate proficiency in spoken communications by delivering clear and well-structured business presentations.
2. Students will demonstrate proficiency in written communications by creating clear and well-structured business documents.
3. Students will identify and evaluate ethical business issues.
4. Students will identify and evaluate global business challenges.
5. Students will be analytical problem solvers in business environments.

Course Text: No textbook required; we will use LinkedIn Learning courses to cover the topics of this course while you earn online certificates and micro-credentials that will strengthen your resume and LinkedIn profile.

Communication: The main means of communication for this course will be via email—I check my email several times per day. If you email me a question that I consider might benefit the rest of the class, I will email the question with a response to the entire class. I do not use all the functions available on D2L. You will be submitting your assignments in D2L.

Assignment Grading and Instructions:

- Assignment 1: Email (10%)
 - Select a business-related topic of your interest, write two different types of emails (the three types are inquiry, transactional, marketing/sales) and explain how each email follows the suggestions provided in the LinkedIn video.
- Assignment 2: Formal business writing (25%)
 - Write a short (3-6 pages) business report involving one of the following: 1) proposal for the launch of a new product/service for an existing company; 2) the expansion of a company branch into a new territory; or 3) a short business plan with the objective of obtaining investors.
- Assignment 3: Difficult conversation video (10%) OR Ethics/cultural sensitivity video (10%)
 - Create and record a short video skit demonstrating a situation where you would need to hold a difficult discussion OR talk about a culturally sensitive issue; using the skills taught in the LinkedIn course, produce a video skit (act the scenario out) and a video explaining what techniques you used for the presentation.
- Assignment 4: Negotiation video (15%)
 - Create and record a short video skit demonstrating a business situation where you need to negotiate using the skills taught in the LinkedIn course, produce a video skit (act the scenario out) and a video explaining what techniques you used for the presentation.
- Assignment 5: Formal presentation video (15%)
 - Create and record a short video skit of a formal presentation (for example of your formal business writing assignment) using the skills taught in the LinkedIn course, produce a video skit and explain what techniques you used for the presentation to be professional.
- Assignment 6: Resume (10%)
 - Develop your resume based on the guidelines offered on the videos covered during the class and/or on the suggestions made by our guest speaker.
- Assignment 7: LinkedIn page (15%)
 - Develop your LinkedIn profile page based on the guidelines offered on the videos covered during the class and/or on the suggestions made by our guest speaker.

For all assignments, grading will be based on your ability to follow the detailed guidelines provided in the LinkedIn videos, professionalism, grammar, spelling, formatting, aesthetics and providing any supporting documentation. If you have any questions, please ask BEFORE assignments are due; no late work is accepted. Please see specific grading considerations and criteria following the Course Schedule section.

January

Class 1 Wednesday 10: Live session @ 6PM: Course overview and expectations

Start watching

Communication Foundations:

<https://www.linkedin.com/learning/communication-foundations-2/foundations-of-communication?contextUrn=urn%3Ali%3AlyndaLearningPath%3A5e988c7c498e504cce3c1cf5&u=79322132>

Communication skills:

<https://www.linkedin.com/learning/search?keywords=communication%20skills&u=79322132>

Written Communication

Class 2 Wednesday 17: Work on email assignment

Start watching

Writing emails people want to read:

<https://www.linkedin.com/learning/writing-emails-people-want-to-read/three-types-of-emails?autoSkip=true&autoplay=true&resume=false&u=79322132>

Class 3 Monday 22: Live session @ 6PM: Formal written and spoken communication suggestions

Submit assignment 1: email

Start watching

Business writing principles:

<https://www.linkedin.com/learning/business-writing-principles/becoming-an-effective-business-writer?autoplay=true&u=79322132>

Writing a business report:

<https://www.linkedin.com/learning/writing-a-business-report/how-to-get-the-most-out-of-this-course?autoSkip=true&autoplay=true&resume=false&u=79322132>

Class 4 Monday 29: work on formal paper assignment

February

Class 5 Monday 5:

Submit assignment 2: formal paper

Start watching

The ten essentials of influence and persuasion:

<https://www.linkedin.com/learning/the-10-essentials-of-influence-and-persuasion/influence-others-at-work?autoplay=true&u=79322132>

Spoken Communication

Class 6 Monday 12: work on difficult conversation video assignment

Start watching

Having difficult discussions:

<https://www.linkedin.com/learning/having-difficult-conversations-2018/difficult-conversations?autoplay=true&u=79322132>

Communicating on culturally sensitive issues:

<https://www.linkedin.com/learning/communicating-about-culturally-sensitive-issues/navigate-difficult-conversations?autoplay=true&u=79322132>

Class 7 Monday 19:

Submit assignment 3: Difficult conversation OR communicating on culturally sensitive issues video

Class 8 Monday 26:

Start watching

Negotiation skills:

<https://www.linkedin.com/learning/negotiation-skills/everyone-needs-to-negotiate?autoplay=true&u=79322132>

March

Class 9 Monday 4: **Submit assignment 4:** Negotiation video

Start watching

Communicating with Confidence

<https://www.linkedin.com/learning/communicating-with-confidence/speaking-with-confidence?contextUrn=urn%3Ali%3AlyndaLearningPath%3A5e988c7c498e504cce3c1cf5&resume=false&u=79322132>

Class 10 Monday 11:

Start watching

PowerPoint Presentations

<https://www.linkedin.com/learning/powerpoint-from-outline-to-presentation>

Fomenting Work Relationships

Class 11 Monday 18: **Submit assignment 5:** Formal presentation video

Class 12 Monday 25:

Start watching

Building Trust

<https://www.linkedin.com/learning/building-trust-14841538/why-trust-matters-more-than->

ever?contextUrn=urn%3Ali%3AlyndaLearningPath%3A5e988c7c498e504cce3c1cf5&u=79322132

April

Class 13 Monday 1: Work on resume

Start watching

Igniting Emotional Engagement

<https://www.linkedin.com/learning/igniting-emotional-engagement>

Class 14 Monday 8: Live session @ 6PM: Resume writing

Start watching

Learning to be approachable

<https://www.linkedin.com/learning/learning-to-be-approachable>

Personal Branding

Class 15 Monday 15: Work LinkedIn profile

Start watching

Writing a Resume:

<https://www.linkedin.com/learning/writing-a-resume/writing-a-successful-resume?autoplay=true&u=79322132>

Class 16 Monday 22: Live session @ 6PM: wrapping-up the semester

Submit assignment 6: resume assignment

Class 17 Monday 29: **Submit assignment 7:** LinkedIn profile assignment

Grading Considerations and Criteria

Email:

- Title
- Format
- Grammar and punctuation
- Clarity
- Voice
- Compelling
- Creativity/originality
- Did you make clear that a response is needed and an easy way to respond
- How well did you tell the story: make it a story; story structure (beginning, middle and end)
- Did you use the You, Get, Because: identify the ‘you’; explain what they ‘get’; explain the ‘because’

- Did you avoid: being vague, too many topics, being too clever, jargon, apology, self-centered assumptions
- When (day/time) do you intend to send your email?
- Did you include something for your audience to 'click'; did you explain what happens if they click?
- Are there ways that you can repurpose your email? If so, how?

Formal Business Righting:

- Formal vs informal and active vs passive voice
- Type of report: informational, analytical, periodic, or special
- Cover/title page
- Table of contents
- Executive summary
- Introduction
- Body: consider paragraph length, grammar, punctuation and active/passive voice
- Ending
- Appendices
- SWOT
- Types of data: primary, secondary
- Graphics

Difficult conversation

- Identify power structures and established patterns
- Showing controlled emotions
- Did you seek to understand; countering confirmation bias
- Did you stay focused
- Did you manage your narrative
- Did you manage your emotions
- Is your primary and secondary purpose clear
- Was your tone polite and neutral
- Were you specific
- Did you: 1) state your purpose; 2) present your observations; 3) listen and give feedback; 4) state your request; and 5) create accountability
- Did you focus on what you want instead of what you don't want
- Did you avoid resistance (SAND): Stuck, Attached, Negative, Distracted
- Did you perform radical listening (through self-control and discipline): 1) take deep breath; 2) acknowledge their reality; 3) ask them to say more; and 4) look for signs they feel heard
- Resistance trap: Anger, Argument, Acquiescence, Avoidance
- Resisting resistance: 1) Imagine different scenarios; 2) create space for them to respond; 3) acknowledge their reality
- Testing for resistance: 'would you be willing'
- Options when met with resistance: Acceptance; Boundary; Change
- 1) address uncomfortable situations as soon as possible; 2) ask for what you want; 3) set boundaries

Persuasion/Negotiation

- Confidence
- Pace
- Organization of thoughts
- Facial and Body language
- Alternatives to lying: 1) use feelings; 2) I don't know; 3) I'm not allowed to say; 4) you don't think I'm going to tell you that, do you; and 5) it depends
- Show awareness of when you should negotiate
- Did you set a limit and stick with it
- Did you determine your limit and opening offer
- Did you identify your tradables
- Did you identify their weakness
- The preamble
- Did you do a flinch
- Did you use non-round numbers
- What tactic(s) did you use (vice, reluctant buyer, salami, time pressure, etc.)
- Did you use trading tactics (win-win tradables, small steps)
- What tactics did you use at closing (final offer, splitting the difference, nibble or quivering pen)

Ethics/cultural sensitivity video

- Do you make a sincere attempt to understand another persons point of view
- Are you aware of your biases
- Are you aware of microaggressions and how do you respond when made aware of a microaggression
- Did you set ground rules: open mind, avoid stereotypes, courage to be unconfomable, and acknowledge triggers
- Do you focus on the intent or on the impact of comments
- Do you debate or have a dialogue
- Do pay attention to what words you use (people-first language, remove gender from roles, avoid profanity and slurs)
- Use the platinum rule: treat others how they want to be treated
- Are you an ALLY: Acts, Learns, Listens and Yields
- Do you respond with empathy
- How to ask culturally sensitive topics, offer feedback and/or apologize (acknowledge responsibility, offer to repair the issue, express regret, explain what went wrong, repent for the problem, request forgiveness)

Resume

- Strong objective
- Summary of skills
- Showcase professional experience: company name, location, job title, dates of employment, duties and responsibilities
- Presentation of education
- Memberships and affiliations; volunteer and leadership experience; technical or computer skills

- Personal information format
- Achievements, awards and publications
- Format

LinkedIn page

- Photo that represents you
- Headline
- Profile video
- Profile summary
- Featured content
- Experience
- Use of rich media
- Recommendations
- Use of gender pronouns
- Use of creator mode: hashtags
- Include your skills
- Include endorsements and recommendations