Professional Communications

BUS/CIS/CNT/CS 43

CRN 32021/30514/30513/30512

Spring 2017
Distance Education

This syllabus subject to change. Any changes to the syllabus will be noted in the Announcements section of Canvas.

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Office Hour: Wednesday 5:30-6:30 pm in 803

Canvas Website: https://clpccd.instructure.com/login/canvas

Course Description: This course is designed to help students develop and refine the written and oral communication skills necessary to communicate effectively in a business environment. This will be accomplished through the planning, composing, and evaluating of written communication; report writing; and oral presentations. Additional focus will be placed on developing interpersonal skills, mastering the mechanics of writing, developing team participation skills, and demonstrating professionalism.

Required In Person Meetings:

Three required on-campus meetings:

1. Saturday, January 20: orientation, 10 AM - 1 PM, Room 2460
2. Saturday, March 11: oral presentations, 10 AM - 1 PM, Room 2460
3. and your choice of one of the two following dates:
    1. Saturday, May 6: final project presentations, 10 AM - 1 PM, Room 2460

    2. Saturday, May 13: final project presentations, 10 AM - 1 PM, Room 2460

Please note: for the required on campus meetings, please keep in mind that *you cannot pass the class* without attending these meetings and there are no makeup dates. Please do not register for the class if you cannot attend these meetings.

Expected Outcomes for Students:

- Analyze a business situation and select an appropriate approach to respond to it; use principles of routine and informative writing to create an appropriate response
- Apply standard business English including grammar, punctuation, and mechanics
- Demonstrate clear, compelling, analytical, and concise writing

Upon completion of this course, student should know how to

- Explain the elements of the communication process
- Analyze how word selection and usage affects communications
- Solve business communications problems through planning, problem solving, organizing, writing, listening, and presenting techniques
- Illustrate sensitivity to audience needs and desire, including cross-cultural situations
- Plan, organize, write and revise letters, memos, emails, and reports suitable for a variety of business situations, including quantitative (e.g., accounting and finance) and business legal contexts
- Plan and deliver individual or team oral presentations for business meetings
- Construct communications in an internationalization and globalization context
- Identify basic logical fallacy in an oral or written context
- Select a proper delivery format, face-to-face, electronic (e.g., email, virtual meeting) and identify strengths of each modality
- Examine uses of social media and related Internet writing contexts
- Adjust composition, prose, and rhetorical language use for optimal conciseness and clarity
- Practice social etiquette and "net-etiquette" applicable in a business environment
- Be able to discern and appreciate the difference between primary and secondary sources

- Describe the importance of original work, the role of proper citations and references, and the ability to avoid plagiarism of either a deliberate or inadvertent nature.

Required Text/Materials:

Excellence in Business Communication 12th edition by John V. Thill and Courtland Bovee. You will need to purchase the book but you don't need access to the publisher's web site, mybcommlab.

We will also be using some **business communication games from Toolwire**, for which you will need an access code. I believe you can only purchase this through the bookstore.

The materials can be purchased at the bookstore. Please be sure you get the **12th edition** of the textbook- we will be using some assignments from the book and the older editions won't necessarily contain what you need, plus there is new content especially in the area of social media.

The publisher sells the book in several formats. I encourage you to do some research to find the best price, including the publisher's web site and outside sellers such as Amazon that offer low price guarantees, in addition to checking our bookstore.

- Soft cover textbook (resellable) : ISBN-13: 978-0-13-431905-6

- Loose leaf book (not resellable but less expensive to purchase): ISBN-13: 978-0-13-438817-5

- E-text (digital version): ISBN-13: 978-0-13-432868-3

Course Format

For a typical 17 week semester, this class will meet for the equivalent of four lecture hours per week. Students are expected to log into the class at least three or four times per week. This class includes weekly quizzes, weekly assignments, class discussions, oral presentations, and a final project. For every hour of class time, students should expect 2 hours of preparation. There will be assignments almost every week with a penalty for late work, weekly quizzes, and no makeups for missed quizzes.

Ask anyone who has already taken this class - it's a lot of work and will require a regular, significant time commitment.

Attendance Policy

Active participation is the key to your success in an online class. Students are expected to participate in weekly discussions, to keep up with deadlines for assignments, and to check email regularly. Students must log into the class at least once a week, though

more often is preferable, and students who do not log in regularly may be dropped from the class. The instructor can use course management tools to establish whether a student has met the attendance requirement.

Drop Policy

The instructor may drop students who miss the first meeting of a course. The first meeting of online or hybrid Distance Education courses is the first day of the class as specified in the class schedule listing. For these courses, instructors may drop students who do not log into their Canvas course and/or complete indicated activities by the third day of classes. I will drop students who don't start the work right away. You can start working on the class even before you have your textbook; look in Canvas and you will see work that can be completed without your textbook.

Additionally, [college policy](#) allows instructors to drop students who do not complete any work for two consecutive weeks of class.

Assignments:

The best way to improve your communication skills is to practice. In this class, there are writing assignments due regularly. Some will be awarded a numeric grade and some will be on a *credit/no credit* basis; you will get full credit for following the directions and turning in the *credit/no credit* assignments.

Some of the assignments will be:

- Writing a persuasive letter

- Completing a negotiation with another student and answering questions about the results

- Preparing a short oral presentation on a section of the textbook for presentation at the second class meeting in October

- Preparing a resume and writing a response to a job advertisement in your chosen field

- Preparing a research project on a subject of your choosing, including a written report and presentation of the work in front of the class. More information on this project will be posted the second week of class. Drafts of portions of this work will be turned in several times.

Evaluation/Grading:

There are weekly quizzes during the term. Missed quizzes cannot be made up under any circumstances. Two quizzes (lowest scores) will be dropped at the end of the semester.

Some of the work for this class is graded on a *credit/no credit* basis. This includes Discussion Board postings and some writing assignments.

If the work is completed, you get 100% credit for it. If the work is not completed, you get a 0 for it. This means it's really important for you to complete this work - it's 15% of your grade. Full credit scores (100) help your total grade in the class and similarly, zeros really hurt your grade. Items not listed here as *credit/no credit* are given numeric scores. Written assignments are always graded on the basis of rubrics that you can review before you turn in your work.

All presentations, the midterm in March, and the final presentation in May, are mandatory. *Do not sign up for the class unless you can attend on the presentation dates and present your work.* You cannot pass the class without presenting on these dates, and there are no makeup dates.

Extra credit may be offered later in the semester, but the expectation is that you will use your regular coursework as the basis for your grade. In any event, extra credit is not enough to raise your grade from one letter grade to another, such as a B to an A. If extra credit is offered, you will see it posted in Canvas.

A word about incomplete work: the *incomplete* grade was never intended for students who simply get behind in their work; it is intended to accommodate a student with an unforeseen disastrous event that makes it impossible to finish classwork on time. Do not request an incomplete unless you are (1) doing passing work at the time of the request and (2) able to document the reason for the request.

Grade Components

- Writing assignments 15%
- Chapter Tests 15%
- Participation in discussions 15%
- Business Communication games 15%
- Midterm oral text presentation 10%
- Final Research Project 20%
- Employment/Resume assignment 10%

Grading Scale

- A = 90% or higher
- B = 80-89%
- C = 70-79%
- D = 60-69%
- F = less than 59%

Dropping the class:

If you choose to drop the class, please go to Admissions and Records and drop the class yourself. Do not assume you will be dropped if you stop participating in the class.

Cheating and plagiarism:

If you are caught cheating, a report will be submitted to the Dean of Students Services for investigation and disciplinary action. Examples of cheating:

- copying test answers

- copying work off the Internet

- turning in work that is copied from another student

- copying material in written assignments without giving credit to the author

Please understand that I take this issue very seriously. If you have questions about what that means, please refer to the college's academic honesty statement at http://www.laspositascollege.edu/facultystaff/honesty.php

You must use your own words and your own sentence structure to avoid plagiarism, and you must credit any sources you use for ideas. We will do a unit on plagiarism later in the semester to make sure you understand the concept. I do use automated tools to detect plagiarism in student work.

Please note that I will fail your research project or any other assignment if it is not your own work; don't test me on this because I am absolutely serious and have caught and failed students for this in the past.

Weekly Assignments:

Assignments are due on Tuesday unless otherwise stated. Assignments will be submitted via email to cnt43class@gmail.com. Please put your name and the number of the assignment (such as HW1) into the subject line; I will not attempt to guess whose work it is based on the email address from which it was sent.

Late written assignments will only be accepted within one week of the due date. For the first week after the due date, 50% of the maximum possible score will be subtracted for all late assignments. Written assignments submitted more than one week late will not be graded. Class syllabus and assignment dates are approximate and subject to change.

Work in the Business Communication games is all available from the first day of the semester. You can complete it at any time. For this reason, the due dates listed below and in Canvas are the final dates this work can be completed.

Weekly outline and assignments

Additional detail on the weekly discussion topics will be posted at the beginning of the week in which a discussion is assigned.

Date	Reading	Assignment
Week ending January 23	**Chapter 1** Professional Communication in a Digital, Social, Mobile World	**Required** in person meeting on Saturday, January 20 in Room 2460 from 10 AM to 1 PM Read **Chapter 1** in the textbook • review the Week 1 *Assignments* section in Canvas • complete the Week 1 *Discussion* (Introduce Yourself) • take the Chapter 1 Test
Week 2 - ending January 30	**Chapter 2** Mastering Team Skills and Interpersonal Communication	• Chapter 2 *Test* • Week 2 *Discussion*: Conducting a Meeting • *Toolwire game*: Teamwork: Group Dynamics
Week 3 - ending February 6	**Chapter 3** Collaboration, Interpersonal Communication, and Business Etiquette	• Chapter 3 *Test* • Proposed *Research Paper topic* due • Week 3 *Discussion*: Active Listening • *HW3*, Intercultural Exercise • *Toolwire game*: Diversity Check
Week 4 - ending February 13	**Chapter 4** Planning Business Messages	• Chapter 4 *Test* • *Toolwire game:* Planning and Writing: Make the Message

		• Week 4 *Discussion*: Social Media in Business
Week 5 - ending February 20	**Chapter 5** Writing Business Messages	• Chapter 5 *Test* • *Toolwire game:* Communication Process and Meetings: Meeting Success • Week 5 *Discussion*: Ethical Communication • *HW5*, Using the "You" Attitude
Week 6 - ending February 27	**Chapter 6** Completing Business Messages	• Chapter 6 *Test* • Week 6 *Discussion*: Giving a Formal Presentation • *HW6*, Choosing Sources • List of *Research Paper Sources* due • Begin preparing for your Oral Presentation – HW6
Week 7 - ending March 6	**Chapter 7** Crafting Messages for Digital Channels	• Chapter 7 *Test* • Prepare and practice for your Oral Presentation on October 15 • Week 7 *Discussion*: Resolving Conflict
Saturday, March 11	Midterm Oral Presentations	*Mandatory Meeting* for Oral Presentations Room 2460, 10 AM to 1 PM Plan on being present for the entire 3 hour meeting time
Week 8 - ending March 13	**Chapter 8** Writing Routine and Positive Messages	• Chapter 8 *Test*

		• practice for your Oral Presentation on October 15 • *Toolwire game:* Routine and Positive Messages: Stay Positive • Week 8 *Discussion*: Is Letter Writing Dead? • *HW8*, Positive Message
Spring Break is March 20-25		
Week 9 - ending March 27	**Chapter 9** Writing Negative Messages	• Chapter 9 *Test* • Week 9 *Discussion*: Verbal and Non-verbal Communication • *Toolwire game:* Negative Messages: Spin Doctor • *HW9*, Negative Message
Week 10 - ending April 3	**Chapter 10** Writing Persuasive Messages	• Chapter 10 *Test* • *Toolwire game:* Persuasion: Perfect Pitch • Week 10 *Discussion*: Persuasive Messages • *HW10*, Persuasive Message
Week 11 - ending April 10	**Chapter 11** Planning Reports and Proposals	• Chapter 11 *Test* • Week 11 *Discussion*: Analytical Reports • Extra *Discussion Board*, Find a Partner for a Two Person Exercise
Week 12 - ending April 17	**Chapter 12** Writing Reports and Proposals	• Chapter 12 *Test*

		- Week 12 *Discussion*: Rules for New Media - *HW12*, Plagiarism prevention and detection, and citation - Optional material on Using Presentation Software
Week 13 - ending April 24	**Chapter 13** Completing Reports and Proposals **Appendix B** Documentation of Report Sources	- Chapter 13 *Test* - Week 13 *Discussion*: Ask the expert: Citation - *Rough draft of your research paper due*
Week 14 - ending May 1	**Chapter 14** Developing and Delivering Business Presentations	- Chapter 14 *Test* - *Toolwire game:* Presentations: Presentation Power - Week 14 *Discussion*: PowerPoint - *HW14*, Negotiation Exercise - includes Extra Credit option IF you plan ahead
Saturday May 6		First of two dates for presentation of final projects - In Room 2460, 10 AM to 1 PM - Plan on staying for the entire class time - Your project is due on May 6 by midnight regardless of which day you choose to present your talk - You must attend on this date or May 13 and present your

		work to pass the class
Week 16 - ending May 8	**Chapter 15**: Building Careers and Writing Resumes	• Chapter 15 *Test* • *Toolwire game:* Resumes and Cover Letters: Hire Me • Week 16 *Discussion*: First Impressions

Saturday May 13		Second of two dates for presentation of final projects
		  • In Room 2460, 10 AM to 1 PM
		
		  • Plan on staying for the entire class time
		
		  • Your project is due on May 7 regardless of which day you choose to present your talk
		
		  • You must attend on this date or December 10 and present your work to pass the class

Week 17 – ending May 19 (last day of classes)	**Chapter 16:** Applying and Interviewing for Employment	• Chapter 16 *Test* • *Toolwire game:* Interviewing: The Hot Seat • Week 17 *Discussion*: Job Interview Questions • HW17, Resume and Cover Letter due; worth 10% of your grade

Technical Support

For more information on how to log into Canvas and other technical support issues, visit http://www.laspositascollege.edu/onlinelearning/ or call 925 424 1142. Support hours and details are listed here.

Support for the Toolwire product is available from the publisher at [this address](#).

ADA Accommodations

Students with documented disabilities needing accommodations are encouraged to discuss their needs with the instructor either by email or by making an appointment during office hours. More information may be obtained through the Disability Resource Center at 925 424 1510 or online at http://www.laspositascollege.edu/DSPS/index.php . Confidentiality of student's disability is maintained in accordance with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act.

Confidentiality of Email and Online Materials

All students' email addresses may be available to other students in class. Although some assignments in an online course may require peer communication, the instructor will make every effort to protect the confidentiality of any personal communication. However, students should recognize that email and other electronic media are never totally secure. The use of Las Positas's website, email, and Canvas software for the creation and/or distribution of material not pertaining to course participation is prohibited and may be grounds for disciplinary actions according to College Policy. Such actions include, but are not limited to, the inappropriate use of email and discussion boards for harassment, unlawful solicitation, spamming, and use of Canvas to link to inappropriate materials.

[Las Positas Academic Calendar with various deadlines and dates listed on it](#)