

Management Communication

MGT 30220-01 & 03

Spring 2014

*The Eugene D. Fanning Center for Business Communication
Mendoza College of Business
University of Notre Dame*

Management Communication will meet during Module III of Spring 2014. Section 01 will meet on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:30 a.m. to 10:45 a.m. in 208 DeBartolo Hall. Section 03 will meet on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 12:30 p.m. to 1:45 p.m. in 121 Mendoza College of Business. The instructor for this course is Professor Amanda G. McKendree (Office phone: 574 -631-9153). Email: amckendree@nd.edu Office: Mendoza College of Business, room 233. Office Hours: Monday (Noon-2:00), Tuesday (11:00-Noon), and by appointment (best arranged by email)

The Director of the Eugene D. Fanning Center for Business Communication is Professor James S. O'Rourke. The Center is located in 234 College of Business. Telephone: 631-8397. Fax: 631-5255. E-mail: jorourke@nd.edu. The assistant for the FanningCenter is Judy Bradford, room 234 Mendoza, 631-4827.

Learning Objectives

- To give students an appreciation for the importance of effective communication in business and society;
- To help students understand how business writing and speaking, and the messages they convey, are the products of a process that should begin with critical thinking;
- To improve students' writing skills, including issues related to language use, style, tone, grammar, punctuation and organization;
- To improve students' speaking skills in small group and public contexts;
- To facilitate the integration of communication skills with theory and strategy;
- To provide students with an understanding of the ethical dimensions of professional communication.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Textbooks

- O'Rourke, James S., IV, *Management Communication: A Case Analysis Approach*, 5th edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall Publishing (2013). ISBN: 978-0-13-267140-8.
- Cases and articles distributed in class and posted on Sakai.

Achieving Student Learning Goals

Management Communication is designed to diagnose your current writing and speaking abilities, to provide you with a clear sense of the standards in the North American marketplace, and to assist you in improving your skills of written and spoken expression. To achieve the student learning objectives, you will read (and we will discuss) textbook chapters about managerial communication processes, case studies about communication problems faced by actual managers, and other readings.

In class, you will gain practice with managerial writing through a variety of in-class exercises. A case method approach asks students to solve authentic problems within the context of a business by communicating with varied audiences, including executives, customers, employees, shareholders, the press, and the public. An important part of the learning process involves your willingness to discuss your writing and speaking assignments as well as your reaction to and understanding of the managerial problems presented in the cases. Conducting peer reviews and participating fully in class discussion will be an important aspect of this course. As such, your participation in discussion and in-class activities will be assessed. (For more on this, please read the “Attendance” and “Classroom Decorum” section in the Policies section of the syllabus.)

You will also complete assignments that will have you writing typical business documents, researching business issues, working in a team setting, and engaging in persuasive speaking. Finally, to achieve the goal of identifying and articulating principles of good writing (beyond simply applying them), you will be tested on the more technical aspects of the communication process through exams that cover the readings and other materials presented in class.

Assignments (Summary)

- 20% Assignment #1: Case Solution / Letter (5%) and Memo (15%)
- 15% Assignment #2: Informative Speech
- 30% Assignment #3: Persuasive Speech (argument formulation 10%; PowerPoint slides 5%; presentation skills 15%)
- 20% Exam (20%)
- 15% Classroom Discussion & Participation (15%)

Assignments (Detailed Description)

- *Assignment #1: Case Solution-Letter and Memo.* For this assignment, you will analyze Case Study 1-1, *Odwalla, Inc.*, pp. 13-16. You are an Odwalla manager who must provide advice to Stephen Williamson, President and Chief Operating Officer of the company. The internal business memo will include Overview, Background, Discussion, and Recommendations sections. The document will be evaluated on its thoroughness, organization, critical thinking, conciseness, and format. A sample memo will be supplied in class. You must also prepare a professional business letter for Williamson’s signature. The document may be addressed to Odwalla retailers or Odwalla retail customers. A sample letter will be supplied in class.
- *Assignment #2: Informative Speech.* This assignment is intended to provide you with the opportunity to research, organize, write, and deliver an original informative speech on a current business-related topic. The time requirement is 3-4 minutes in length and an

outline is required. Feedback will be provided by classmates and the professor. This feedback will be of help to you as you prepare for your persuasive speech.

- *Assignment #3: Persuasive Speech.* This assignment has three parts: a persuasive argument, PowerPoint slides, and presentation skills. The persuasive speech is intended to provide an audience with a description of a business related challenge, opportunity or problem, followed by an assessment of alternative courses of action available to the decision-makers. This speech is intended to be a more or less comprehensive review of the various decision options, leading to a recommendation from the speaker. Your task is to convince the audience of the correctness of a particular position or course of action. Unlike the informative speech, this speech advocates one decision or alternative as opposed to others. This speech should, and in fact must, inform to a great extent, but its purpose is to obtain a sense of conviction from the audience, channeling their concern and energy into a particular solution or action. In this assignment, you will become an advocate. You must research, organize, write and deliver an original persuasive speech on a **business-related** topic of your own choosing. Policy topics or topics dealing with government regulation of business are fine. You should select something that will likely interest both you and your audience; information they can put to some good use is always welcome.

Other requirements for the informative and persuasive speech include:

- **Time Requirement.** The informative speech must be 3-4 minutes in length. The persuasive speech must be 5-7 minutes in length. You will be penalized for delivering a speech that does not meet this requirement.
 - **Outline.** You must produce a standard outline of your main points and key sub-points. Please present this document to your instructor as you rise to speak. It should include proper documentation of all research sources cited in your presentation.
 - **Appropriate Dress.** You have considerable latitude in selecting the clothing that business colleagues would regard as appropriate. Clearly, though, you must present yourself in the way you would if you were addressing a gathering of modern business professionals. Business casual is acceptable.
 - **Visual Support.** You must use PowerPoint slides as visual support. These should be professionally prepared and appropriate for your topic and presentation. You will present a paper copy of PowerPoint slides (printed six-per-page) to your instructor as you rise to speak.
- **Exam.** The exam is based on assigned readings and other materials presented in class. The format is a combination of multiple choice, fill-in, matching, and short answer.

Grading

Your grade in this course will be based on your performance as evaluated by your professor. However, please be aware that the Mendoza College of Business Management Department Grading Guideline calls for an average grade point between 3.0 and 3.4 in each undergraduate section. As a result, this course will be challenging, and your instructor will work hard to discriminate among subpar, good, and truly superior work.

The following minimum standards for student work align with what would be expected of employees in an actual business setting. Texts should be:

- **Clean.** Appearance and format should count toward the grade. The proper use of headings, white space, margins, and other visual devices all contribute to readability and accessibility of information. Handling them skillfully is extremely important.
- **Error-free.** Simple mechanical and grammatical accuracy is absolutely necessary. Nothing destroys an author's credibility faster than spelling or grammatical errors or typos.
- **Audience-appropriate.** Readability, a style and tone chosen for clarity of expression and suitable to the target audience, should also play a significant role in determining the grade on an assignment.
- **Purposeful and well supported.** Whether you set out to explain, analyze or persuade, your documents should have a clear purpose that is supported by appropriate facts and details. Research should be properly documented.

When your instructor assess the quality of your work beyond these minimum standards with a letter grade, it might be helpful to consider how a letter grade would translate to an actual quality evaluation – and consequences – in the workplace:

- **A range:** An employer would be impressed with the professionalism and clear understanding of purpose, audience, content, expression, organization, style, and mechanics. This document would make your boss proud and you could deliver it on her/his behalf.
- **B range:** An employer would be pleased with aspects of the professionalism and understanding of purpose, audience, content, expression, organization, style, and mechanics; however, this document needs improvements in a few of these aspects of clear writing to be truly polished. Your boss would ask you to pay attention to – and to address – certain details before submitting.
- **C range:** The document is geared toward an audience and contains some good points. However, it is not well organized, its content could be more specific, there are stylistic problems, and/or the logic is faulty. In other words, it needs some important substantive revisions. Your boss would not want this to be sent out without significant restructuring and cleaning up the document.
- **D or lower:** There is a deficiency in content, arrangement, concept of audience, mechanics, and style (or an assignment is late without valid reason). In other words, this work might embarrass your boss and may make him or her question your competence. The employer has to correct the work and to send it back to you for revision, and then factor these new delays and into the schedule.

Writing Center Resources

If you have any concerns about your writing skills, please bring those concerns to the professor's attention early in the course. Even if you are confident about your writing ability you should familiarize yourself with the resources available to you from the Writing Center, which has two locations: Coleman-Morse and the Hesburgh Library (<http://www.nd.edu/~writing/>). The center's hours are flexible and the tutors can provide you with valuable assistance, including on speeches! Note that you usually need to schedule an appointment. Please visit the website or call 574-631-5390.

International students have a special opportunity to use the English for Academic Purposes (EAP) Program. You must make an appointment for a tutorial session by visiting their website: <http://cslc.nd.edu/eap/tutoring>. The EAP Fellows will provide linguistic feedback to help you improve your academic English. The EAP is located in 329 DeBartolo Hall in The Center for the Study of Languages and Cultures.

COURSE POLICIES

This course adheres to the following policies for Management Communication courses in the Fanning Center for Business Communication in the Department of Management. Please seek help as soon and as

often as you need. Do not wait until it is too late for us to help you. We are here to assist you with the task of learning and improving your communication skills.

General Expectations

To recap, here is what I expect of you in the course:

- To attend each class period and arrive on time.
- To read the assigned readings for each class period, and to be ready for a quick quiz in the first 5 minutes of class.
- To participate fully and actively in our classroom discussions, writing exercises, and peer review.
- To complete all of the assignments described in this syllabus and to submit them on the specified dates.

Here are the policies that explain what happens if you fail to meet these expectations:

Attendance, Quizzes, and Participation

Since this course has just 14 meeting dates, we regard your absence from any class as a serious matter. **If you incur more than one unexcused absence, expect to receive a lower grade as a result.** We expect full and active participation by all students in our classroom discussions and critiques, and this is assessed as part of your grade.

Classroom Decorum

Just as in the workplace, respect for your instructor and fellow classmates is important in the classroom. Please do not use your laptops in class, text message, listen to music or use handheld devices in any manner. Such actions are distractions to both your classmates and instructor and will diminish your learning experience and will ultimately result in a low participation grade. **One exception will be the use of laptops during any writing exercise portion of the class only.** I will cue you to open and close your laptops during those moments if you choose to use one. Of course, you may choose to leave the laptop at home and hand-write the exercises.

It will also be appreciated that students do not wear baseball caps. I have found that this interferes with eye contact and therefore student engagement in the class, and (on a more practical note) with my being able to learn your name.

Deadlines

There are no automatic extensions or make-ups. You will be graded down for failing to meet deadlines. If you believe you cannot meet your responsibilities in the course, contact your instructor well in advance of deadlines. Advance contact with me and documentation (in some cases) will be required for me to make any exceptions. Also, technology breaks, servers go down, transfers time out, files become corrupt, etc. These are not considered emergencies – they are risks embedded in the normal production process. You bear these risks, and just as in the workplace, a problem with technology problems is generally no excuse for late work. So please be proactive and protect yourself by managing your time well and by backing up your work.

Incompletes

As a rule, we do not award incompletes. In unusual cases, though, such as hospitalization or genuine emergency, an incomplete “I” will be assigned. The student must complete all class assignments within one semester or the Registrar will assign a grade of “F” unless an extension is approved by both the instructor and the Dean, and we notify the Registrar.

The Notre Dame Honor Code

**“As a member of the Notre Dame community,
I will not participate in or tolerate academic dishonesty.”**

The Undergraduate Academic Code of Honor Applies to this course. Please read it and be familiar with its contents to understand the standards to which you are being held. Two points will be highlighted here.

Exams: Students shall not give or receive aid on exams – whether paper or online. This includes, but is not limited to, viewing the exams of others, sharing answers with others, texting, calling, e-mailing, surfing the Internet, and using books or notes while taking the exam.

Writing: Considering that much of the educational process in the Notre Dame Business School involves group discussion and collaborative activities, neither the College nor the Fanning Center for Business Communication wish to hinder the learning that can and often does take place in that environment. Fairness, however, requires that certain limits be observed in the actual production of assignments.

In the Management Communication curriculum (including Management Writing), all writing and speaking tasks are to be accomplished by each student working independently, unless you are specifically advised to work in collaboration on a particular assignment. No student should copy another student's work or represent work done by someone else as if it were his or her own. Evidence of plagiarism is cause for serious disciplinary action by the College. *Please, do your own work.*

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Initial schedule of readings and assignments, subject to change as announced in class an on Sakai.

Class 1 Tuesday, 1/14/14	Introduction & Expectations Readings: O'Rourke: Chapters 1-2 Assignment Given: Informative Speech
Class 2 Thursday, 1/16/14	Public Speaking Reading: O'Rourke: Chapter 4
Class 3 Tuesday, 1/21/14	Effective Business Writing Readings: O'Rourke: Chapter 5; Case Study 1-3, pp. 19-25; Appendices A, C, and D Assignment Given: Internal Business Memo and Business Letter
Class 4 Thursday, 1/23/14	Due: Informative Speeches (Speakers 1-10)
Class 5 Tuesday, 1/27/14	Due: Informative Speeches (Speakers 11-20)
Class 6 Thursday, 1/29/14	Listening Non-verbal communication Readings: O'Rourke: Chapters 8-9 Assignment Given: Persuasive Speech
Class 7 Tuesday, 2/4/14	Persuasive Speaking Reading: O'Rourke: Chapter 6 Due: Internal Business Memo and Business Letter
Class 8 Thursday, 2/6/14	Communication Ethics Reading: O'Rourke: Chapter 3 Due: Persuasive argument for Persuasive Speech
Class 9 Tuesday, 2/11/14	Exam
Class 10 Thursday, 2/13/14	Due: Persuasive Presentations (Speakers 1-4)
Class 11 Tuesday, 2/18/14	Due: Persuasive Presentations (Speakers 5-8)

Class 12 Thursday, 2/20/14 **Due:** Persuasive Presentations (Speakers 9-12)

Class 13 Tuesday, 2/25/14 **Due:** Persuasive Presentations (Speakers 13-16)

Class 14 Thursday, 2/27/14 **Due:** Persuasive Presentations (Speakers 17-20)