

FALL 2013

MANAGEMENT WRITING

MSB-60230

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

Management Writing (MSB-60230, Section 01) will meet during Fall Semester 2013 on Monday and Wednesday mornings from 11:00 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. during the first half of the semester, August 26 through October 9, 2013.

The course instructor is Professor James S. O'Rourke (234-B Mendoza College of Business. Office phone: 574.631.8397. Home phone: 574.272.1773. Mobile: 574.339.1836. E-mail: jorourke@nd.edu).

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

Alred, G. J.; Brusaw, C. T.; and Oliu, W. E. *The Business Writer's Companion*, 6th edition. Boston, MA: Bedford / St. Martin's Press (2011). ISBN-13: 978-0-312-63132-1.

O'Rourke, J. S., *Management Communication: A Case-Analysis Approach*, 5th edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall (2013). ISBN-13: 978-0-13-267140-8.

PURPOSES OF THE COURSE

- To give students an appreciation for the importance of effective communication in business and society;
- To help students understand how business writing and the messages it conveys are the products of a process that begins with critical thinking;
- To improve students' writing skills, including expression issues related to language use, style, tone, grammar, punctuation, and organization;
- To facilitate the integration of communication skills with an understanding of theory and strategy;
- To assist students in making decisions about document preparation, including format, layout, and design.

- To provide students with an understanding of the ethical dimensions of business writing.

GENERAL COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Readings. We expect you to read the assigned chapters from the textbooks and reprints distributed in class and to master the material they contain.

Participation. We expect full and active participation by all students in our classroom discussions and critiques.

Attendance. We expect you to attend class. Your instructor will take roll at each meeting session to determine who is present and who is not. We also expect you to arrive at class on time. Since this course has just 14 meeting dates, we regard your absence from any of them as a serious matter. If you incur *more than one unexcused absence*, please expect to receive a lower grade as a result.

GRADES

This is a performance course designed to diagnose your current writing abilities, to provide you with a clear sense of writing standards in the North American marketplace, and to assist you in improving your skills of written expression. While, there are no scheduled examinations, we will administer occasional quizzes based on textbook readings. You will be required to produce written responses to a number of separate writing assignments.

An important part of the learning process involves your willingness to discuss your writing as well as your reaction to and understanding of the managerial problems presented as writing opportunities. Many of these will arise during classroom discussion of the case studies which serve as the basis for our work this semester.

Grade Weights. Each assignment will be weighted according to this scale:

Assignment #1: Case Solution / Correspondence	20%
Due: Monday, September 9, 2013	
Quiz: Grammar, Style and Usage	05%
Due: Monday, September 16, 2013	
Assignment #2: Case Solution / Correspondence	20%
Due: Wednesday, September 18, 2013	

Assignment #3: Collaborative Writing Project	20%
Due: Monday, September 30, 2013	
Final Examination.	20%
Due: Wednesday, October 9, 2013	
Classroom Discussion & Participation.	15%

Grades are important, of course, for all degree-seeking students. Grades are somewhat less important, however, than learning outcomes. Your careful attention to classroom discussion and written assignments is of considerably greater importance than whether you earned an A, an A-, or, perhaps, a B+ in a 1.5 credit-hour course. We are sensitive to your interest in doing well and will do all that we can to help you.

GRADING PHILOSOPHY

Your grade for any particular assignment in this course is a reflection of your professor’s judgment of the quality of your work. We can grade only on the basis of what you give us, not on what you had sincerely intended to do. Submit your work on time, follow the assignment directions, do your own work and you’ll have little trouble achieving the course objectives as well as your own.

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 Grading Guidelines call for a grade point average between 3.2 and 3.6 for each graduate section.

Your instructor is seeking to assess your abilities as measured against the standards of the marketplace. Those standards have been developed over a period of more than 30 years, dealing with business, government, industry, the press and the public. We are asking you to do what your employers will ask of you: prompt, competent, quality work.

Once a grade has been assigned and recorded, it cannot and will not be changed unless evidence is provided that your professor has made an error. A difference of opinion between you and your professor about the quality of your work is not evidence of error.

THE ETHICS OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

Language, as you know, has great power. It can convey impressions and communicate knowledge and information. It can transmit feelings and emotion, as well. Language, depending on how it is used, can inspire, enrage, inform, persuade, entertain, assure, or offend.

Business writers, as well as those who speak on public occasions, occupy a special position of power. Their words can influence others, urging them to action, or restraining them from acting.

Their words can be a source of inspiration and motivation to others. Because of this, writers and speakers must choose their topics, organizational patterns, evidence, and words with great care.

Three basic principles guide our discussion of ethics in this course. First, we contend that *all parties in the communication process have ethical responsibilities*. Second, *ethical writers, readers, speakers, and listeners possess attitudes and standards that pervade their character and guide their actions before, during, and after their speaking and writing*. Third, *management communication is not value-neutral*. What you say, what you write, and how you choose to speak and write will have consequences for your audience. Your obligation is to speak and write for the betterment and benefit of your audience. To do otherwise is a serious ethical lapse for a management communicator.

Public communication is held to a higher standard of responsibility than private communication. To speak or write freely and privately among friends with no expectation that your words will become public is one thing. To speak in public or to write for publication with the expectation that your words will receive widespread attention is quite another. Please understand that public communication is a serious matter, particularly if you occupy a position of responsibility. And please know that if words have the power to injure or harm others, they can inflict harm on the sender, as well.

CASE ANALYSIS ASSIGNMENTS

You will be asked to analyze and write a response to two of the case studies listed in your syllabus. You'll find all of the cases in your textbook, along with a detailed writing assignment. In each instance, you must produce a business memo and a professional business letter.

Your business memos should contain the following elements:

- *A summary paragraph* disclosing the key recommendations offered in your analysis of the issues in the case.
- *A background section* providing details essential to a reader's understanding of what happened, including the basic facts of the case.
- *A discussion section* addressing the implications of the facts and assessing both critical issues and stakeholder interests. This should be the largest section of your memorandum.
- *A recommendations section* listing actions recommended in response to the case and specific, by-name or by-department ownership of those actions. Suspense dates for completion of the actions may be included, as well.

You may select any case listed in the syllabus to submit in satisfaction of these two writing assignments.

COLLABORATIVE WRITING

You must collaborate with at least one other classmate from this section of Business Writing to produce a document that provides practical communication policy guidance for managers. **That assignment is due on Monday, September 30, 2013 at 11:00 a.m.**

You may select one other person in this section with whom to work on this assignment. If (and only if) you think there is enough work in your topic selection for three people, please provide your instructor with a one-page (or single screen) outline of your ideas and explain why you think it will take three people to get it done. We're open to any reasonable argument. No groups of one, however, and no groups of four.

Paper Format, Length, and Appearance. This is a formal, collaborative document. Your paper should be no less than 7 pages and no more than 10 pages in length, exclusive of cover sheet, table of contents, endnotes, and attachments. It should be single-spaced within paragraphs and double-spaced between paragraphs. If you need an exception to this general guideline, please speak with your instructor. Each paper should have:

- A cover sheet with your proposal title, author names, course and section number.
- A table of contents with page reference numbers (cover sheet and table of contents should be separate text files and unnumbered).
- Page numbers (pagination begins on the first page of text); please do not number the cover sheet or table of contents. The first visible page number should appear at the foot of page two.
- One-inch margins throughout.
- Proper and scrupulous endnote documentation of all paper-based, telephone, face-to-face interviews, or online research.
- Boldfaced descriptive headings and subheadings to organize the contents.
- A single staple affixed to the upper left-hand corner of the paper.

Topic Selection. If you choose not to accept the collaborative writing topic as outlined below, you may negotiate an alternative topic with your instructor. Innovative suggestions are always welcome. Think about it, talk it over with your teammates and see your instructor. Now is the

time to begin thinking about your writing partner and your topic selection. Here is a brief list of topics that might prove interesting and worthwhile:

- “When Two Become One: Communicating in acquisitions and mergers.”
- “Watch What You Say: What does a manager need to know about libel and slander?”
- “Responding to Requests for an Employment Reference: What can you say?”
- “Congratulating an Employee: How to say thank-you for a job well done.”
- “Communicating in a Product Recall: What should a company say?”
- “Communicating Good Intentions: What should a company say about philanthropy and corporate contributions?”
- “Communicating Corporate Heritage: Best practices in managerial story-telling.”
- “Communicating Grief: The task of telling others when an employee dies.”
- “Communicating Promotions: Is it possible to screw up good news?”
- “Communicating Corporate Culture: What should a manager say about ethics to employees and other stakeholders?”
- “Balancing Privacy with Concern: What can a manager say when an employee is ill?”
- “Balancing Privacy with Curiosity: What can a manager say when an employee is dismissed?”

You can probably think of a dozen more, given your interests and experience. We’re open to a very wide range of topics, but are mostly interested in having you investigate and learn about a subject that will be useful and productive for you, personally and professionally. Please speak with your instructor early and often about your work on this particular assignment.

One further note: No hypothetical companies, fictitious sources or characters may be used in constructing your collaborative paper. Focus less on your own personal experience and more on the experiences and judgement of professional managers and the companies they work for. Your examples and illustrations must all be authentic and factual, and, of course, must be properly documented with appropriate endnotes.

COURSE POLICIES AND STANDARDS

Please seek help as soon and as often as you need it. 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 writing.

Deadlines. There are no automatic extensions, make-ups, or incompletes. You will be graded down for failing to meet deadlines. If you cannot meet your responsibilities in the course, see or call your instructor in advance of deadlines. We know that, from time-to-time, everything from a job interview to illness may keep you from attending class. Please let your instructor know *in advance* and he or she will make every effort to accommodate your needs.

Absence. We will have just 14 meeting sessions in this course. We regard your presence as especially important, even if your instructor does not formally take roll at the beginning of each class. If you cannot be here, let your instructor know about it in advance. We have found, over the years, a remarkable correlation: those who come to class faithfully seem to do better in the course. If you incur *more than one unexcused absence* from this course, please expect to receive a lower grade as a result.

Incompletes. As a rule, we just do not award incompletes. They're genuinely a pain in the neck. You begin the new term with the obligations of the previous semester hanging over your head. Both instructor and student feel harried and unhappy about the situation. In unusual cases, though, such as hospitalization or genuine emergency, an incomplete "X" 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.

Last Drop Dates. Your last opportunity to drop BACM-30420 will be at the close of business on Monday, September 23, 2013. After that date, you will no longer be able to voluntarily disenroll from the course.

The Notre Dame Honor Code. Much of the educational process at Notre Dame involves group discussion and collaborative activities. Neither the Mendoza College nor the Fanning Center for Business Communication wishes 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 this course, all writing tasks – with the exception of the collaborative writing project – are to be accomplished by each student working independently. 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. We strongly endorse and support the principles and process outlined in the *University of Notre Dame Honor Code*. Please read that document and use its precepts as a guide.

MANAGEMENT WRITING
MSB-60230, Section 01, Monday-Wednesday
August 26 through October 9, 2013

Mon 26 Aug 2013	The Role of Writing in Business
Reading:	O'Rourke, Chapter 1, "Management Communication in Transition."
Reading:	O'Rourke, Appendix A, "Analyzing a Case Study."
PowerPoint:	"Management Communication," 15 slides.
Wed 28 Aug 2013	The Basics of Correspondence: Memos and Letters
Discussion:	"The Principles of Communication."
Reading:	Alred, Chapter 1, "The Writing Process."
Reading:	O'Rourke, Appendix C, "Sample Business Letter."
Reading:	O'Rourke, Appendix D, "Sample Business Memo."
Reading:	O'Rourke, Appendix E, "Sample Strategy Memo."
Case Study #1:	O'Rourke, Case 5-1, <i>Cypress Semiconductor Corporation</i> .
Mon 02 Sep 2013	Communication and Strategy
Reading:	O'Rourke, Chapter 2, "Communication and Strategy."
Reading:	Alred, Chapter 7, "Correspondence."
Lecture:	North American business letter and memo formats.
Case Study #2:	O'Rourke, Case 11-2, <i>Dixie Industries, Inc.</i>
PowerPoint:	"Communication Strategy," 29 slides.
Wed 04 Sep 2013	Audience Analysis
Reading:	O'Rourke, Appendix F, "Documentation."
Reading:	Alred, Chapter 3, "Research and Documentation."
Case Study #3:	O'Rourke, Case 3-1, <i>Excel Industries, Inc.</i>
PowerPoint:	"Writing," 25 slides.
Mon 09 Sep 2013	Communication and Ethics
Reading:	O'Rourke, Chapter 3, "Communication Ethics."
Reading:	Alred, Chapter 4, "Business Writing Documents and Elements."
Case Study #4:	O'Rourke, Case 3-2, <i>A Collection Scandal at Sears, Roebuck & Company</i> .
PowerPoint:	"Communication Ethics," 15 slides.
Assignment:	<u>First case solution (letter and memo) due.</u>

Wed 11 Sep 2013	The Principles of Plain English
Reading:	O'Rourke, Chapter 5, "Writing."
Reading:	Alred, Chapter 6, "Design and Visuals."
Case Study #5:	O'Rourke, Case 7-1, <i>Cerner Corporation: A Stinging Office Memo Boomerangs</i> .
PowerPoint:	"Community General Hospital," 13 slides.
Mon 16 Sep 2013	Compact, Informal, and Organized Writing
Classroom:	<u>Quiz #1: Grammar, Style and Usage (Alred, Chapters 10, 11, 12).</u>
Activity:	Case Review, first writing assignment.
Case Study #6:	O'Rourke, Case 7-3, <i>Facebook Beacon (A): Cool Feature or an Invasion of Privacy?</i>
PowerPoint:	"Punctuation," 43 slides.
Wed 18 Sep 2013	Persuasive Writing
Reading:	O'Rourke, Chapter 6, "Persuasion."
Case Study #7:	O'Rourke, Case 2-1, <i>Starbucks Corporation: Can Customers Breastfeed in a Coffee Shop?</i>
PowerPoint:	"Persuasion," 27 slides.
Assignment:	<u>Second case solution (memo and letter) due.</u>
Mon 23 Sep 2013	Writing about Bad News
Reading:	Alred, Chapter 5, "Formal Reports."
Case Study #8:	O'Rourke, Case 5-2, <i>Carnival Cruise Lines: Fire Aboard a Stranded Cruise Ship</i> .
PowerPoint:	"Collaborative Writing," 18 slides.
Wed 25 Sep 2013	Communication and Crisis
Reading:	Alred, Chapter 10, "Style and Clarity."
Case Study #9:	O'Rourke, Case 1-1, <i>Odwalla, Inc. (A)</i>
PowerPoint:	"Crisis Management," 24 slides.
Mon 30 Sep 2013	Communication and Technology
Reading:	O'Rourke, Chapter 7, "Technology."
Reading:	Alred, Chapter 2, "Workplace Technology."
Case Study #10:	Case: <i>Domino's "Special" Delivery: Going Viral Through Social Media</i> .
PowerPoint:	"E-Mail: Rights, Risks, and Responsibilities," 48 slides.
Assignment:	<u>Collaborative writing project due.</u>
Note:	Your instructor plans to attend the Arthur W. Page Society 30 th Annual Meetings in Boston. You will have a substitute instructor for this lesson.

Wed 02 Oct 2013

How Culture Affects Communication

Reading: O'Rourke, Chapter 10, "Intercultural Communication."
Reading: Alred, Chapter 11, "Grammar."
Case Study #11: O'Rourke, Case 10-1, *Oak Brook Medical Systems, Inc.*
PowerPoint: "Culture," 24 slides.

Mon 07 Oct 2013

Writing for Multiple Audiences

Reading: Alred, Chapter 12, "Punctuation and Mechanics."
Classroom: Return and Review of Collaborative Writing Assignment.
Case Study #12: O'Rourke, Case 1-2, *Great West Casualty v. Estate of G. Witherspoon (A)*.

Wed 09 Oct 2013

Final Examination

Reading: O'Rourke, Chapters 1-3, 5-11.