

SPRING 2014

BUSINESS SPEAKING

BACM-30400

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

Business Speaking (BACM-30400) will meet twice weekly for seven weeks. This course is scheduled for Tuesday and Thursday afternoons from 2:00 p.m. to 3:15 p.m. during Module III from Tuesday, January 14 to Thursday, February 27, 2014.

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 TEXTBOOK

O'Rourke, James S. *The Truth About Confident Presenting*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: The Financial Times Press (2008). ISBN: 0-13-235496-9.

PURPOSES OF THE COURSE

- To give students an appreciation for the importance of effective communication in business and society.
- To help students understand how the elements of the communication process are directly related to successful public communication.
- To improve students' speaking skills in small group and public contexts.
- To help students confront and overcome their fears about speaking in public.
- To provide students with an understanding of the ethical dimensions of professional communication.

GENERAL COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Readings. We expect you to read the assigned chapters from the textbook 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 speech 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 13 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.

Speeches and Speaking Dates. You will deliver three speeches in this course. Please consult the calendar portion of this syllabus for a complete list of dates on which we will deliver and listen to speeches. Your instructor will assign speaking dates. If for some reason you cannot give a speech on a particular date, let your instructor know *immediately*.

Listening. An important part of public communication is the willingness and ability of an audience member to listen. While your classmates are speaking, we will expect you to be a thoughtful, considerate, attentive and courteous audience. You will be asked, from time-to-time, to provide an oral critique for the speaker. This means you must listen carefully and reflectively to the speaker and try in some way to help your classmates improve. They, in turn, will try to help you.

GRADES

You will be required to deliver three speeches that you have personally researched, written, and prepared for this class. Your instructor will evaluate them; your classmates will assist in critiquing them.

You are required to provide your instructor with a copy of your speech outline and copies of your PowerPoint slides (printed 6-per page) as you rise to address the class. You need not make copies of either the outline or the slides for your classmates or others in the room.

Each assignment has a weighted value. Grade weights will be distributed as follows:

Business Briefing.....	20%
Informative Speech.	25%
Persuasive Speech.	25%
Classroom Participation.....	10%
Final Examination.	20%

THE BUSINESS BRIEFING

Background. The business briefing is among the more common informative speaking assignments that a manager or executive will face. In the course of a business career, most managers will deliver hundreds, if not thousands, of brief informative talks, each focused in some way on their businesses. Their intention is to provide listeners with current, accurate, useful information that will shape their investment, purchase, employment, and other decisions.

Assignment. Your task is to research a publicly traded firm, gathering as much relevant, useful information as possible from company publications, corporate web sites on the Internet, annual reports, industry summaries, and third-party sources, such as *Moody's*, *Standard and Poor's*, and others. You must decide which information would be most useful to a prospective investor, employee, or customer, organize it in an easy-to-understand fashion, and trim it to fit a six-to-eight minute timeframe.

Time Requirement. Your briefing should be no less than six minutes but no more than eight minutes in length. You will be penalized for delivering a briefing that does not meet this requirement.

Outline. You must produce a one-page, keystroked outline of your remarks to the class. Please present this document to your instructor as you rise to speak. It should include the following:

- a standard outline of your main points and key sub-points.
- a proper list of the principal research sources cited in your briefing.
- the name and trading symbol (NASDAQ or NYSE) of the firm, your name, the date of your briefing, and the section number.

Speaking Dates and Times. Your instructor will determine the method for selecting the day and time you will deliver your business briefing. Please consult with him or her to make certain you know exactly when you are expected to speak.

How You Will Be Graded. As with the other speeches in this course, the business briefing will be evaluated for three basic ingredients: organization, expression, and support. In order to receive a "B," your briefing must have a clear explanation of the organization, structure, ownership, and purpose of the business you have chosen. It should also include such information as basic products and services (or product and service categories), plant locations, distribution schemes, annual revenues, recent profit-and-loss figures, and other relevant financial information. Your audience must be clear on what this company does, who their principal customers (or markets) are, against whom they compete, and what sort of value they add to the economy. Briefings that are clearly superior may receive a grade of "A." Briefings that fail to

achieve minimum standards in a majority of categories or which fail profoundly in at least one of the requisite categories may receive a lower grade.

Your grade in this course will be based on your performance as evaluated by your professor. Please be aware, however, that the University of Notre Dame Grading Guidelines call for a grade point average between 3.2 and 3.6 for each undergraduate section.

Appropriate Dress. In presenting this briefing, we will expect you to appear in suitable, professional business attire. 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.

Visual Support. This assignment requires that you provide your audience with some form of visual support that is professionally prepared and appropriate for your topic and presentation. For this assignment, you may wish to consider computer graphics such as *PowerPoint*, or *Corel Graphics*. You'll also find that overhead transparencies, chalkboard drawings or diagrams, maps, display boards, or posters will work in our classrooms, as well. Please keep room size in mind when designing font size and graphics.

Topic Selection. You will be asked to select an industry that will serve as the focus for each of your speeches in this course. Within that industry, you should identify a publicly held company for this assignment. And for the Business Briefing, you should specify one of three perspectives for your audience. That is, you will provide them with a briefing on the business you have selected from the point-of-view of a prospective employee, customer, or shareholder.

Again, this is an informative speaking occasion, so you are not to become an advocate on behalf of this company's products, services, stock shares, or employment opportunities. You are simply gathering, organizing, and presenting information that will be of some use to your audience as they make a decision about employment, purchases, or investment. If you have any questions at all about topic selection, please consult with your instructor in advance of your decision.

THE INFORMATIVE SPEECH

Background. The informative speech is essentially a learning occasion for the audience. The speaker becomes a teacher for the occasion. In such presentations, the speaker researches, organizes, writes and delivers a coherent body of information that, presumably, will be of some value to the audience. But in order to assure that the audience will learn what the speaker intends to deliver, certain learning incentives must be present. In other words, a speaker must give the audience a reason to care about the subject under discussion – a reason to learn and retain and possibly act upon the information presented.

Informative presentations are not intended to persuade an audience. They are intended to inform. Do not become an advocate on behalf of one particular position or cause in this speech. Your job is simply to inform an audience that expects to make up its own minds about the subject.

Assignment. You must research, organize, write and deliver an original informative speech on a *business-related* topic of your own choosing that is somehow directly related to the industry in which the subject of your Business Briefing competes. You need not speak about the same company, but must remain within the same, broad industrial category (automotive, financial services, packaged goods, information technology, and so on).

Time Requirement. The speech must be no less than six minutes but no more than eight minutes in length. You will be penalized for delivering a speech that does not meet this requirement.

Speaking Dates and Times. Your instructor will determine the method for selecting the day and time you will deliver your informative speech. Please consult with him or her to make certain you know exactly when you are expected to speak.

Visual Support Requirement. Your speech *must be supported* by visual materials that are professionally prepared and appropriate for your topic and presentation. For this speech assignment, you may wish to consider computer-based presentations, such as *PowerPoint*, *Prezi*, *Corel Graphics*, or others. You'll also find that overhead transparencies, chalkboard drawings or diagrams, maps, display boards or posters will work in our classrooms, as well. Please keep room size in mind when designing font size and graphic displays.

Outline. You must produce a typewritten outline of your remarks to the class. Please submit this document to your instructor as you rise to speak. It should include the following:

- an outline of your speech that includes main points and key sub-points. Do not simply print a *PowerPoint* outline; that information will be contained in the paper copies of your transparencies (see point number three, below);
- a proper list of the principal research sources cited in your speech;
- paper copies of all overhead transparencies you plan to use in the delivery of your speech. Please print those six-per-page.

In the outline, be sure to include your section number, name, speech title, your introductory remarks, main points, key sub-points, and your concluding remarks. You will be penalized if you fail to submit the outline and paper copies (six-per-page) of transparencies as you rise to speak.

One additional thought: it's fine to compose your speech and your *PowerPoint* graphics on the University's central server, but *please* back up all of your materials on a flash drive of your own.

Don't depend on the network being available at precisely the moment you will need it most. Additionally, you might consider e-mailing a copy of your slides to yourself that you can retrieve via Webmail.

How You Will Be Graded. As with the other speeches, this one will be evaluated for three basic ingredients: organization, expression, and support. Specifically, in order to receive a "B," a speech must have a clear focus of topic, a well-defined sense of purpose, an understandable introduction, at least two main points, an understandable summary or conclusion, and must be easy to follow. In addition, it must be adequately expressed, both in diction and delivery.

Further, the speech must be suitably supported with credible, current, understandable information. The greater the variety and credibility of your support, the better. Speeches that are clearly superior may receive a grade of "A." Speeches that fail to achieve the minimum standards in a majority of categories or which fail profoundly in at least one of the requisite categories will receive a lower grade.

Appropriate Dress. In presenting this speech, we will expect you to appear in suitable professional, business attire. There is considerable latitude afforded to you 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.

Assignment Options. Choosing a topic to speak on is never an easy task, but it's one you should give care and thought to. The place to begin is with your own interests, experiences, and background. This assignment should focus not on a particular company or firm, as your business briefing did, but much more specifically on a product, a service, a process, a new business idea, a technological breakthrough or improvement of some sort. Perhaps a business trend, a merger, an alliance, or some development – global or local – will be of interest to you and to your audience.

Your objective here is to provide information for your classmates that will be of some use to them without becoming an advocate on behalf of the idea. As an informative speaker, your role is to gather, organize, and present information that will assist your audience in their own roles as prospective employees, customers, or shareholders.

Your topic must be related in some way to the industry you have selected or your instructor will not approve it. ***Regardless of what you choose to speak about, you must clear your topic selection with your instructor.*** Please keep in mind that our intention is for you to become knowledgeable about an industry in which you intend to work. Further, we hope for you to become familiar with the leaders in that industry, their competitors, their products and services, and the issues that dominate conversations among those who work in the industry. The more you know, the better your chances for a management position that fits your interests, your skills, and your ambitions.

THE PERSUASIVE SPEECH

Background. The persuasive speech is intended to provide an audience with a description of a 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 Business Briefing and Informative Speech, this presentation 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.

Assignment. You must research, organize, write and deliver an original persuasive speech on a topic of your own choosing, as long as it is related in some way to the general industry you selected for your business briefing. It need not be about the same company or any of its products and services. ***It must be business-related and may not be a simple sales pitch.*** To repeat: no sales pitches. Further, please select a topic that is unrelated to beer and/or sports. Some form of visual support for your presentation is *required* for this assignment.

Time Requirement. The speech must be no less than seven minutes but no more than nine minutes in length. You will be penalized for delivering a speech that does not meet this requirement.

Outline. You must produce an outline summary of your remarks. Please submit this document to your instructor as you rise to speak. That will include:

- a one-page outline of your speech that includes main points and sub-points;
- a proper list of the principal research sources cited in your speech;
- paper copies of all overhead transparencies or *PowerPoint* slides you use in your speech. Please print those six-per-page.

In the outline, be sure to include your section number, name, speech title, your introductory remarks, main points, key sub-points, and your concluding remarks. You will be penalized if you fail to submit the outline as you rise to speak. You need *not* produce and distribute copies for all other members of the class.

As with all prior assignments, no fancy binders, please. Please staple your outline, endnotes, and supporting visual-aid copies together and hand them to your instructor as you rise to speak. Your instructor will *not* accept handwritten work.

How You Will Be Graded. As with the other presentations, this one will be evaluated for three basic ingredients: organization, expression, and support. Specifically, in order to receive a grade of “B,” your presentation must have a clear focus of topic, a well-defined sense of purpose, an understandable introduction and overview of the problem or opportunity, an understandable summary or conclusion, and a clear, unambiguous recommendation. It must also be easy to follow. In addition, your presentation must be adequately expressed, both in diction and delivery. Further, the speech must be supported with credible, current and understandable information. The greater the variety and credibility of your support, the better. Presentations that are clearly superior may receive a grade of “A.” Those that fail to achieve the minimum standards in a majority of categories or which fail profoundly in at least one of the requisite categories will receive a lower grade.

Speaking Dates and Times. Your instructor will determine the method for selecting the day and time you will deliver your persuasive speech. Please consult with him or her to make certain you know exactly when you are expected to speak.

Appropriate Dress. In presenting this speech, we will expect you to appear in suitable professional, business attire. There is considerable latitude afforded to you 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.

Assignment Options. As with your informative speech, choosing a topic will not be easy. Your topic *must be related in some way to the industry you chose for your Business Briefing*. 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. ***Regardless of what you choose to speak about, you must clear your topic selection with your instructor.*** Please observe two other topic-selection restrictions: no religious or faith-based arguments and no overt sales pitches. If you are unsure, ask.

One Further Note. Some form of visual support for your presentation is *required* for this assignment. If your support is technical, difficult or conceptually complex, you will find that visual support may help your audience in understanding your purpose and key points. If the decision alternatives are numerous or complex, consider using an overhead projector, the chalkboard, or another visual aid system.

GRADING PHILOSOPHY

Business Speaking, like certain other courses offered here at Notre Dame, is performance-oriented. Although you will receive substantial exposure through both reading and lecture to the theories that underlie effective oral communication, your grade will be heavily dependent on your ability to apply such information in frequent and practical speaking exercises.

Your grade for any assignment in this course is a reflection of your instructor's judgment of the quality of your work. We grade only on the basis of your performance; we do not and cannot grade on the basis of the amount of time and effort you devote to an assignment, or on what you sincerely intended to do but didn't have time to finish.

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 Department of Management Grading Guidelines call for a grade point average between 3.0 and 3.4 for each undergraduate section.

A grade of "A" is, essentially "ready for prime time" in a *Fortune 500*, upper mid-size business, or major public accounting firm. In other words, with just a bit of tinkering, you could deliver that speech essentially as you've prepared it for class.

A "B" speech is basically sound but needs some attention before you think about presenting it to your employers, their customers or clients. The issues may be organizational or structural; they may be associated with the details of expression; or, you may not have the real needs of the audience in mind. In any event, that speech will work for you, but not before you work on it.

Anything in the "C" range is seriously flawed and will not meet the standards of the North American workplace without significant revision. A presentation of this sort could damage your reputation as a competent business communicator if you were to use it without major improvements. Work of this sort is simply a non-starter in a *Fortune 500* or *Big Four* firm. You need to re-think your approach to the problem and try it again. To deliver a such a speech would constitute a serious embarrassment to you, to your employer and, frankly, to those who educated you.

Once a grade has been assigned and recorded, it cannot and will not be changed unless evidence is provided that your instructor has made an error. A difference of opinion between you and your instructor about the quality of your work is not evidence of error. We are sensitive to the differences between instructors who will hear your speeches and we work very hard as a team to look for and listen to the same evaluative issues in each speech. Though complete elimination of inter-rater error is very difficult, our objective is to be as fair and helpful as we possibly can.

THE ETHICS OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

Language, as you know, has great power. It can convey impressions, 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.

Public speakers, as well as those who write for publication, 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, speakers and writers 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 speakers, listeners and writers 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 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 power to injure or harm others, they can inflict harm on the sender, as well.

OTHER COURSE POLICIES AND STANDARDS

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

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 13 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. Remember, please, if you incur *more than one unexcused absence*, 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 "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.

Last Drop Dates. Your last opportunity to drop BACM-30400 is Monday, February 10, 2014. After that date, you will no longer be able to voluntarily disenroll from the course.

Appeals. Your first course of appeal for any grade, assignment requirement, due date or other course-related decision is your instructor. If you either do not understand or cannot accept your instructor's decision, you may appeal in writing to the course director. Subsequent appeals may be directed to the Assistant Dean of the College. Keep in mind that most administrators will be reluctant to overrule routine, course-related decisions of their faculty.

Problems. Please get in touch with one of us if you are in genuine distress. Authenticated illness or sufficiently sordid personal problems may persuade your instructor to grant you some relief from a deadline. We'll do our very best to accommodate your needs, but we must know about them – the earlier the better.

The Notre Dame Honor Code. Much of the educational process in the Mendoza College of Business 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 Business Communication curriculum, unless otherwise specified, all writing and speaking tasks 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.

BUSINESS SPEAKING
BACM-30400 Tuesday / Thursday Sequence
January 14 through February 27, 2014

- Tue 14 Jan 2014 Preparing to Speak**
Reading: O'Rourke, Part I: "Some Initial Truths."
- Thu 16 Jan 2014 Analyzing Audience, Purpose, and Occasion**
Reading: O'Rourke, Part II: "The Truth About Getting Ready to Speak."
PowerPoint: "Business Briefing" and "Sample Decks."
- Tue 21 Jan 2014 Business Briefings**
Reading: O'Rourke, Part III: "The Truth About What Makes People Listen."
Speakers 1-6
- Thu 23 Jan 2014 Business Briefings**
Reading: O'Rourke, Part IV: "The Truth About Developing Support for Your Presentation."
Speakers 7-12
- Tue 28 Jan 2014 Business Briefings**
Reading: O'Rourke, Part V: "The Truth About Getting Up to Speak."
Speakers 13-18
- Thu 30 Jan 2014 Nonverbal Communication**
Reading: O'Rourke, Part VII: "The Truth About Nonverbal Communication."
- Tue 04 Feb 2014 Informative Speeches**
Reading: O'Rourke, Part VI: "The Truth About Managing Anxiety."
Speakers 1-6
- Thu 06 Feb 2014 Informative Speeches**
Reading: O'Rourke, Part VIII: "The Truth About Visual Aids."
Speakers 7-12
- Tue 11 Feb 2014 Informative Speeches**
Reading: O'Rourke, Part IX: "The Truth About Handling an Audience."
Speakers 13-18

- Thu 13 Feb 2014** **Principles of Persuasion & Speaking Persuasively**
Reading: O'Rourke, Part X: "The Truth About What Makes a Presentation Work."
- Tue 18 Feb 2014** **Persuasive Speeches**
Speakers 1-6
- Thu 20 Feb 2014** **Persuasive Speeches**
Speakers 7-12
- Tue 25 Feb 2014** **Persuasive Speeches**
Speakers 13-18
- Thu 27 Feb 2014** **Final Examination**
Reading: O'Rourke, Chapters 1-51.