Fundamentals of Business Communication
COM 2020
2nd Session Summer Course Syllabus

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Office Hours: Before & After Class or Appointment

Course Description: This course focuses on communication skills expected of college graduates entering into business fields. Students who successfully complete this course will be able to produce clear, concise, evidence-based, argumentatively sound, and persuasive professional communication of various types. The course will emphasize the importance of being purpose-oriented and audience-aware. Examples of work to be done include writing e-mails, drafting business memos, creating executive summaries, producing strategic reports, and crafting other types of internal and external business communication. In addition, the course will teach students how to develop good listening skills and also how to develop proficiency in various interpersonal speech situations. The course will inculcate the habit of revising and editing the work one produces, while providing all students with copious opportunities for feedback from their instructor and their peers.

Learning Goals: Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Produce clear, concise, and persuasive professional communication of various types.
- Produce evidence-based and argumentatively sound professional communication of various types.
- Use various forms of technology to enhance the effectiveness of the communication they produce
- Habitually revise and edit work before sending, delivering, or submitting it.
- Display honesty and integrity in all their communications.

Required Materials
Hahn, Allison and Bisbee, Donovan, "Introduction to Business Communication." This OER textbook will be provided to you by your instructor. There is no textbook cost for this class.

Course Methodology and Evaluation

The course is structured around a combination of class discussions, exercises on oral and written communication, and individual and group assignments. Students are expected complete the assigned readings in advance, submit the assignments on time, and actively participate in classroom. Overall class grades will be based 1000 points:

Deliverable	Points
Assignments	440
Class participation	300
Portfolio and Executive Summary	260

Assignments (440 points)

Students will complete 7 substantive written assignments for this class (a total of 440 points). Some assignments will be completed individually while others will require group planning, writing, and/or revision. Details for each assignment and grading rubrics will be provided on Brightspace.

Assignment	Points
Professional Autobiography	60
Professional Email Assignment	60
One-pager assignment	60
Email Synthesis assignment	60
Report assignment	80
Visual Presentation of data assignment	60
Mock Interviewing Assignment	60

Portfolio and Executive Summary (260 points)

At the end of the semester, students will submit three revised assignments of their choice with a cover memo reflecting on their revision goals and outcomes. They will also write a one-page executive summary of what they've learned during the semester, and target one skill they plan to continue to focus on in future business communication. The portfolio and executive summary will constitute the final project.

Late submissions will not be accepted. For assignments requiring teamwork, you must contribute your fair share to receive the full grade. Your instructor retains final discretion in making grade adjustments to the individual score for the Report Assignment and may ask for peer and self-evaluations as part of this work. Any disputes will be addressed on a case-by-case basis.

Attendance and Participation (300 points)

Students are expected to attend all classes, complete the assigned readings before the lectures, and participate actively in class sessions. Ad hoc in-class exercises such in-class assignments, peer review, quizzes, and class discussions will affect your grade. Attendance and participation are important elements of the class and they do make a difference in the final grade. If you miss a class, arrive late, or leave early and miss an in-class exercise as a result, no makeup will be given unless justified. Your instructor may assess additional requirements for attendance and/or grade impacts from absences. Those will be articulated clearly in the syllabus and throughout the class.

Participation and Presence in the Online Environment

In Fall 2024 and Spring 2025, most sections of COM 2020 are operating in the online synchronous modality. Although online classes at CUNY/Baruch were originally not optional during the completely online terms of Summer 2020-Fall 2021, they now are. Therefore, participating in an online course requires more than simply logging in and being in the synchronous meeting.

You will be expected to have your cameras on during class meetings unless it is completely impossible or not feasible. You can reach out to confidentially discuss such situations, but the expectation is that you will use your camera unless there is a reason not to. Participation activities during class will regularly require you to submit work through the chat function or during the synchronous meeting. Failing to do so at the required time because you were away from your screen will not constitute an excuse and you will not be allowed to make up missed work that you did not complete even if you were "in" the meeting.

Finally, please note that this is an online class that requires your full attention. If you are intending to complete this class while actively doing other activities (commuting, being at work, walking, etc) then you should find another section that is at a time when you can commit fully to being present. An occasional need to leave early or arrive late can be worked out, but you cannot take a class where you are not present or able to be part of the course discussion.

Final letter grade

Letter grades are calculated according to the Official Grading System of Baruch College. The instructor reserves the right to curve the scale when computing final grades, if deemed necessary.

From (%)	To (%)	Point Range	Letter Grade
0.0	59.9	0-599	F
60.0	67.0	600-670	D
67.1	69.9	671-699	D+
70.0	72.9	700-729	C-
73.0	77.0	730-770	C
77.1	79.9	771-799	C+
80.0	82.9	800-829	B-
83.0	87.0	830-870	B
87.1	89.9	871-899	B+
90.0	92.9	900-929	A-
93.0	100.0	930-1000	A

General Course Policies

Work Submission Standards

- Assignments are considered *on time* only if they are submitted by the due date/time as per the submission guidelines.
- Extensions can be granted for situations involving illness, family, or personal emergencies. If you need an extension, you must request one via e-mail *before* the due date of an assignment when possible. Extensions are not guaranteed and are up to the discretion of the faculty member.
- For individual assignments or group projects, any instance of copying, cheating or plagiarism will be penalized, and such instances will be reported to the Dean of Students. For students found "responsible," consequences begin with a minimum of an F in the specific assignment to an F or D in the course.

Feedback and Consultation

- You will receive substantive feedback on all major assignments, typically in the Brightspace grade center. That feedback will both explain the evaluation and highlight steps for future improvement. All speeches will be evaluated using a rubric. If, after reading your feedback and consulting the rubric, you have questions or concerns about the grade, please wait 24 hours to review and consider the feedback before reaching out to me to discuss the grade further.
- Feel free to ask me why you received a certain grade on an assignment or exam if the feedback provided is not clear enough. If you received a grade in error, I will correct it. If not, and you still want to dispute the grade, I will consider re-grading requests but I will re-grade the entire assignment or exam. This could result in a grade that is the same, higher, or lower.
- Let me know about any problems or issues such as missing class, long term illnesses, job related problems, problems with the groups, etc. as soon as possible.
- Any concerns, disagreements, or complaints about a grade must first be addressed with your professor. Any such complains or concerns that are brought to the Department of Communication Studies (directly or from the Dean of Students Office) will be returned without further action if you have not first made a genuine attempt to resolve the issue with your professor and been unable to do so in a satisfactory manner.

Students with disabilities

We have a process at Baruch for determining whether a student who identifies as disabled is eligible for reasonable accommodations in order to complete the student's academic program. We strive to ensure that no student with a disability is discriminated against and that none is denied participation in College programs and activities for lack of reasonable accommodations. Some people think that a disability has to be visible to be accommodated. This is not the case. There are many disabilities – diabetes, psychological illness, learning disabilities, AIDS, seizure disorders, arthritis, etc., – that require accommodations. Examples of possible accommodations include additional testing time; adaptive equipment; and taping of classes.
If you feel that you may need a reasonable accommodation based on a disability, please contact the staff at the Office of Disability Services, Newman Vertical Campus, Room 2-271, or by phone at (646) 312-4590.

Academic Integrity Statement

The Communication Studies Department fully supports Baruch College's policy on Academic Honesty, which states, in part: "Academic dishonesty is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Cheating, forgery, plagiarism and collusion in dishonest acts undermine the college's educational mission and the students' personal and intellectual growth. Baruch students are expected to bear individual responsibility for their work, to learn the rules and definitions that underlie the practice of academic integrity, and to uphold its ideals. Ignorance of the rules is not an acceptable excuse for disobeying them. Any student who attempts to compromise or devalue the academic process will be sanctioned." Academic sanctions in this class will range from an F on the assignment to an F in this course. A report of suspected academic dishonesty will be sent to the Office of the Dean of Students. Additional information and definitions can be found at: http://www.baruch.cuny.edu/academic/academic_honesty.html

Regarding Peer-Sharing Websites: based on a straightforward reading, it is a violation of CUNY and Baruch academic integrity policy to upload to a peer-sharing website (such as Course Hero) work that you complete (assignments, speech outlines, group reports, etc) as well as my materials that I share with you (case studies, sample assignments, rubrics, and even this syllabus). The materials I have created are my intellectual property and submitting your own work in this way is collusion in an act that undermines the college's educational mission and student's personal and intellectual growth. I understand the motivations are usually good, and I know that properly used such tools can possibly be useful for students. But I will give you (and future students) anything useful that you might get from these sites as part of the class. Do not upload your work for this class there. If your work for this class, or my materials uploaded by you, is identified on such sites, it may be treated as a violation of our academic integrity policy and sanctioned accordingly.

Regarding AI: "The use of artificial intelligence (AI) is strictly prohibited in all coursework and assignments. This includes, but is not limited to, the use of AI-generated text, speech, or images, as well as the use of AI tools or software to complete any portion of a project or assignment. Any violations of this policy will result in disciplinary action, up to and including a failing grade for the assignment or course. Our goal is to learn effective use of the genres of business communication, and to practice sharing meaning with other humans in a professional environment. The use of AI detracts from this objective. Students are expected to use their own knowledge, research and analysis to complete coursework."

Course Calendar/Schedule
2nd Summer Session 2025
S2BA 8039 11am-1:30pm Room B Vert 11-1:45 M, T, Th

Week/Date		Class Topic and Activities	Assignments	Read/Watch for NEXT Class
Class #1 Introductions: Getting to Know You and Professional Communication	Monday July 14	Introduction: Guiding Principles Students will be introduced to the two Guiding Principles of Business Communication. All communication should be: • Purpose-oriented • Audience-aware	**Professional Autobiography**: Students will write a brief, one paragraph, professional biography focusing on specific skills and career goals. Due: July 14 11:59 PM	**Chapter 1: Communication in the Professional World**
				Chapter 14: Professional Email
Class #2 To BCC or Not to BCC?: Professional Email Conventions and Routine Messages	Tuesday July 15	Students will practice communication that reflects: • Care • Courtesy • Awareness of convention	**Professional Email assignment:** students write two emails with different purposes and to different audiences responding to common workplace scenarios. Due: July 15 11:59 PM	**Chapter 7: Routine, Positive, and Negative Messages**
				Chapter 15: Social Media
Class #3 Social Media, Professionalism, and Brand Visibility	Thursday July 17	Students will practice communication that reflects: • Care • Courtesy • Awareness of convention	In-class speaking practice/activities	**Chapter 2: Speaking in Professional Contexts**
			In-Class Participation Activity or Discussion about Social Media and Professional/Personal Usage	
Class #4 Who is the Audience? Adapting Messages and Organizing your Thoughts	Monday July 21	Students will practice communication that contains: • Central purpose • Organizational structure • Clear language • Purposeful visual design	**One-pager assignment:** students create a one-page product overview that has a central purpose and clear organizational structure, language, and design. Due Monday July 21 11:59PM	**Chapter 3: Understanding Your Audience**
				Chapter 4: Organizing Your Ideas
Class #5 Does it look	Tuesday July 22			**Chapter 9: Revising**

"clean?" Visual Design and Organization				**Chapter 5: Writing Business Messages**
Class #6 **"It's How Many Pages?"** **Synthesis and Summary**	Thursday July 24	Students will practice communication that reflects: • Careful information selection (inclusion, exclusion) • Fine-scale editing	**Email Synthesis assignment:** students synthesize a large dataset to report findings in a short email. Due:Thurs July 24, 11:59pm	**Review Chapter 7: Routine, Positive, and Negative Messages** **Chapter 6: Intercultural Communication**
				Chapter 16: Elevator Pitches
Class #7 **"Selling Yourself": Elevator Pitches and Effective Presentations**	Monday July 28	Students will practice communication that reflects: • Careful information selection (inclusion, exclusion) • Fine-scale editing • Rehearsed delivery	In-class discussion of elevator pitches	**Chapter 8: Delivering Your Presentation**
			In-class speaking practice/activities	**Chapter 18: Business Reports and Graphics**
Class #8 **"Houston, we have a Problem": Identifying and Evaluating Strategic Issues**	Tuesday July 29	Students will practice communication that: • Uses better evidence • Uses evidence better • Cites sources	**Report assignment:** in groups of 2-3, students will conduct research on a company's performance and produce a report that identifies a strategic issue and provides evidence to support that it is a strategic issue requiring attention. Students will co-write in a shared Google Doc, and communicate via MS Teams, Slack, or other typical workplace communication channels. Initial Draft due: Tues July 29 Final Draft due: Thurs July 31	**Review Chapter 5: Writing Business Messages** **Chapter 10: Working in Teams**
				Review Chapter 6: Intercultural Communication
Class #9 **Team Formation and Dynamics; Interpersonal Communication and Group Accountability**	Thursday July 31			**Chapter 11: Research, Evidence, and Persuasion**
			Visual representation of data assignment: students will accompany the above report with two tables/charts/graphs created using Excel/Tableau that visually represent the data most appropriate to their purpose (e.g. firm's performance over time; key performance indicators across	

			geographical areas; comparable profitability of different products/categories; correlation between revenue and marketing expenses; etc.) Final Draft Due: Thurs July 31	
Class #10 **Evidence *Never* "Speaks for Itself": Visualizing Data and Using Evidence Better**	Monday August 4		In-Class Discussion or Activity on project timelines and updates	
			Monday August 4 Prep Interviews	**Chapter 9: Revising**
Class #11 **"Crappy First Drafts": Revision and the Writing Process**				
	Tuesday August 5		August 4 Mock Interviews	**Chapter 12: Interviewing**
Class #12 **"Tell us About Yourself": Employment Interviews and Effective Communication**	Thursday August 7	Students will practice communication that: • Makes points • Connects evidence • Is ethical	**Mock Interviewing assignment:** students will prepare for a mock job interview, identifying a relevant position, creating/tailoring a resume for that position, and researching/preparing for interview questions. Students will then conduct these mock interviews in class. Mock Interviews August 7	**Chapter 13: Ethical and Professional Behavior** **Appendix 1: Starr Career Center Resume, Cover Letter, and Interviewing Guide**
Class #13 **Avoiding "Improvisations": Effective Interviewing and Resumes**	Monday August 11		Mock Interviews August 11	Review Appendix 1 and Chapter 12
				Review Chapter 9: Revising
Class #14 **What Have we Done Here? What Now?**	Tuesday August 12	Students will show proficiency synthesizing the five Core Competencies in their business communications	**Portfolio assignment:** students will submit three revised assignments of their choice with a cover memo reflecting on their revision goals and outcomes Final Portfolios due Thursday August 14, 11:59pm	
Class #15 **Conclusions**	Thursday August 14		Final Portfolio Due August 14, 11:59pm	