Marcus Dargan, Adjunct Lecturer
Department of Communications Studies
Weissman School of Arts & Sciences of Baruch College
The City University of New York

com 2020: introduction to business communication

syllabus



course information

COM 2020-JN1B (3 Credits); Winter 2025
Online-Synchronous: Mon – Fri; 9:30 AM – 12:00 PM
Zoom: Registration Link; **Required Authentication:** CUNY users only (.cuny.edu)
Meeting ID: 815 3496 1254**; Passcode:** 2020

Prof. Marcus Dargan (he/him/his)
Email: marcus.dargan@baruch.cuny.edu

- Use your student email account when contacting me.
- Include the course name and section in your email.
- Ensure your emails are clear, concise, and free of spelling or grammar errors.

Online Office Hours: Mon – Fri; 12:00 PM – 12:30 PM
You can also email your availability to schedule a meeting via Zoom.

course instructor



My name is Marcus Dargan, and I prefer to be called Prof. Dargan by my students. I am an educator and theatre artist with a background in arts administration and social activism. I hold a master's degree in Educational Theatre from CCNY and undergraduate degrees in Theatre from CCNY and BMCC. I have been an Adjunct Lecturer with CUNY at various campuses, including BMCC, CUNY in the Heights, and Lehman College, where I have taught communication and theatre courses for over a decade. Currently, I am a faculty member in the Communication Studies department at Baruch College and teach College Now courses at City Tech.

Teaching Philosophy

I teach because helping you succeed is deeply meaningful to me. My goal is to provide you with the tools, resources, opportunities, and guidance you need to achieve your dreams. Seeing you learn something new and apply it to achieve success in your academic, professional, and personal lives is incredibly fulfilling for me. This is what inspires me to teach.

In the classroom, I use an applied theatre approach with techniques like role-playing and improvisation to create a dynamic, inclusive learning environment. This approach encourages active participation, creativity, and collaboration, helping to ignite a passion for learning in each of you.

Diversity and Inclusion

As an educator, I am committed to creating an inclusive and supportive environment in our classrooms and throughout the college community that celebrates and supports the diversity of all members. I deeply value the unique backgrounds and diverse experiences each of you brings, and my goal is to ensure our classroom community is a place where you all feel supported and secure.

I look forward to a productive and engaging semester with you all. Let's work together to make this a transformative learning experience.



course description

This course focuses on communication skills expected of college graduates entering business fields. Successfully completing this course will enable you to produce clear, concise, evidence-based, argumentatively sound, and persuasive professional communication of various types. This course will emphasize the importance of being purpose-oriented and audience-aware. Assignments 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, this course will teach you how to develop good listening skills and proficiency in various interpersonal speech situations. The course will help you build the habit of revising and editing your work while providing plenty of opportunities for feedback from your instructor and peers.

reflection

Students enroll in courses for various reasons.

- Why are you taking this course this semester?
- Why do you think the college requires this course?
- How could this course impact your personal, academic, or professional life?



learning goals

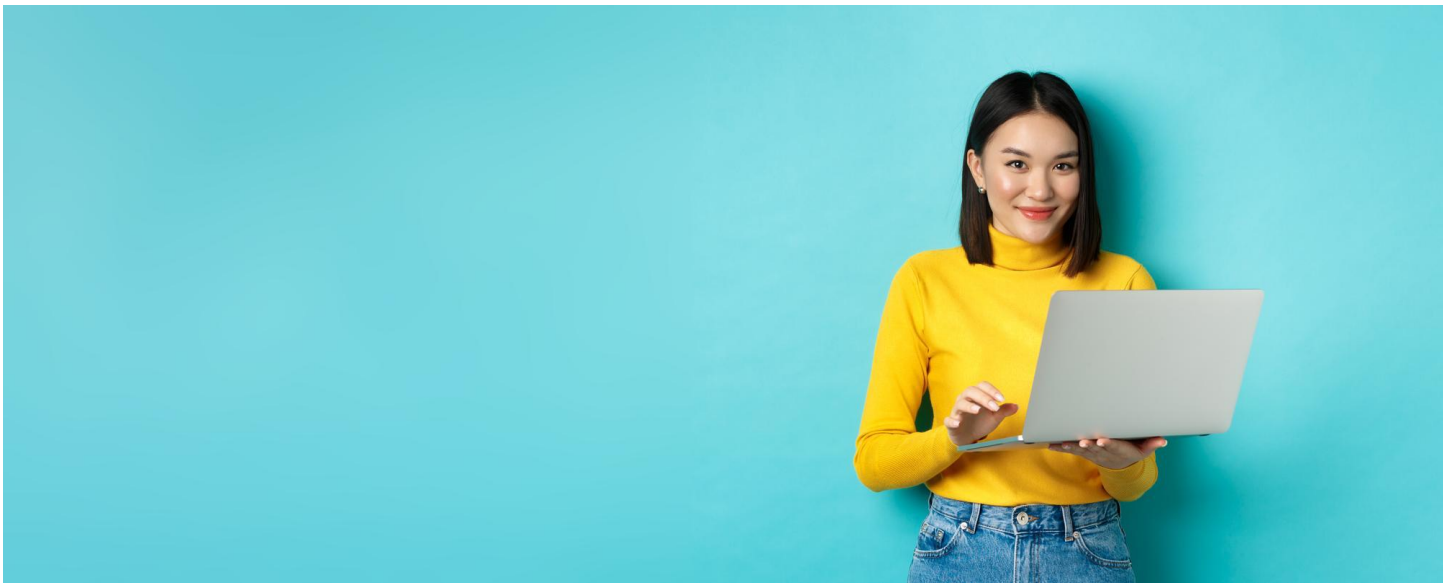
Upon completion of this course, you will be able to:

- 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 you produce.
- Habitually revise and edit work before sending, delivering, or submitting it.
- Display honesty and integrity in all your communications.

reflection

Looking at the course description on the previous page and learning goals above:

- What do you already know how to do well?
- What do you want to know more about?
- What would you like to learn how to do more effectively?



technology and resources

This is a Zero Textbook Cost (ZTC) course. This means that you will not have to pay for access to reading materials, tools, and other media required to successfully complete this course. Course materials, including your textbook and other Open Educational Resources (OER), will be distributed electronically and may include a diverse selection of online textbooks, articles, websites, podcasts, and videos.

Brightspace

Brightspace is the online hub for this course, where you can access announcements, supplemental materials, online tools, academic support, student resources, and assignments to successfully complete and submit your coursework.

Hardware

To fully participate in this online class, you'll need a personal computer, laptop, tablet, or smartphone equipped with a camera, microphone, and a reliable internet connection for meetings via Zoom. You should always remain visible and be able to see, hear, speak, and write in the chat during these meetings. Additionally, you should be comfortable reading, writing, editing, reviewing, creating, distributing, and researching on your device during the session.
Click here for information on the technology loan program.

Software

You'll use various software and online resources throughout this course to engage in activities, create materials, and complete assignments. Applications include those provided by CUNY or ones you can access with a free personal account.



course evaluation

The course is structured around a combination of class discussions, exercises on oral and written communication, and individual and group assignments. You are expected to complete assigned readings in advance, submit assignments on time, and actively participate in classroom activities.

Your overall grade for this course is based on earning a total of 1000 points:

- **Assignments:** 500 points
- **Tasks:** 150 points
- **Final Portfolio:** 150 points
- **Professionalism:** 100 points
- **Attendance & Participation:** 100 points

You'll also have opportunities to earn extra credit points during the semester.

There are no percentages in this course, just points earned for each assignment towards your final grade. You can track your total points earned via the My Grades section of Brightspace and then **click here** to calculate your letter grade.



assignments: 500 points

You will complete 10 major assignments while taking this course for a total of 500 points. Some assignments will be completed individually while others will require group planning, writing, and/or revision. Detailed instructions and grading rubrics for each assignment will be made available to you via Brightspace.

1. **Professional Biography (50 points)** Write a one-paragraph biography.
2. **Professional Headshot (25 points)** Take a photo of yourself for professional use.
3. **Professional Email (50 points)** Compose emails aimed at different audiences.
4. **One-Pager (50 points)** Design a one-page promotional document.
5. **10-K Email (50 points)** Summarize a complex data set in an email.
6. **Elevator Pitch (50 points)** Introduce yourself in a 90 second video.
7. **Team Report (100 points)** Work with a team to prepare a report.
8. **Team Meeting (25 points)** Plan and report on a meeting with your team.
9. **Mock Interview (50 points)** Prepare a resume and materials for a job interview.
10. **Performance Review (50 points)** Reflect on your interview experience.



submitting assignments

The expectation for this course is that you will work on and complete multiple written and reading assignments each week. On the morning of each class session, you'll receive a Morning Announcements email with reminders for the day's agenda, upcoming coursework, and submission deadlines.

One of the learning goals for this course is to instill the habit of continually revising and editing your work prior to submission. For most assignments, you will receive a target deadline followed by a firm deadline at 11: 59 PM on the due date.

After your initial graded attempt, you will receive written feedback and have the opportunity at the end of the semester to revise and resubmit assignments 1-6 to improve your grade. Additionally, if you missed the initial submission window, you could submit your work when these assignments reopen.



submission guidelines

Once a submission period ends it will not be reopened or extended for personal reasons or technical issues and all coursework will be graded as-is. It is your responsibility to double-check and make sure that your submissions are uploaded correctly and that you've received a confirmation email from Brightspace.

Allow yourself enough time to take care of any personal or technical issues that may arise by not waiting until the last day or few hours before assignments are due to attempt to complete and submit coursework. You are strongly advised to submit coursework well before the submission window closes.

Do not email me your coursework. My email is not for submitting coursework. Unsolicited coursework sent via email or placed in my mailbox will not be opened, reviewed, evaluated, or graded.

Please note that extensions are rarely granted. If you decide to email me a request for an extension, do not include your coursework in the email. Extensions will be considered on a case-by-case basis and will require documentation as per the Attendance section of the syllabus.



tasks: 150 points

Throughout the semester, you will receive ad hoc tasks to supplement class lectures, readings, and assignments. Depending on the nature of the task, it may be completed asynchronously in preparation for a class session or administered in-class. Tasks include a broad range of activities from participating in discussion boards, taking a survey, writing a reflection, or providing critical feedback.

The successful completion of all tasks impacts your participation 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 an excused absence is granted.

activity

Let's complete your first graded task:

- Identify an affirming quote that is meaningful to you in some way.
  It can be motivational, inspirational, or just something you like to reflect on.
- Visit Brightspace and locate the Affirming Quote discussion board.
- Create a new thread to share your quote and why you chose it.



final portfolio: 150 points

The Final Portfolio is your culminating project for this course. At the end of the semester, you will create a portfolio that showcases your professional profile, revisits your assignments, and reflects on your overall course experience.

professionalism: 100 points

A significant portion of your grade depends on your active engagement and conduct in class.

Academic professionalism includes the following components:

- Full engagement and consistent presence in online class sessions.
- Timely and meaningful contributions to class discussions and activities.
- Punctual involvement in group work and peer feedback.
- On-time submission of assignments.
- Quality of your assignment submissions.
- Respectful classroom interactions and communication ethics.
- Adequate preparation for class sessions.

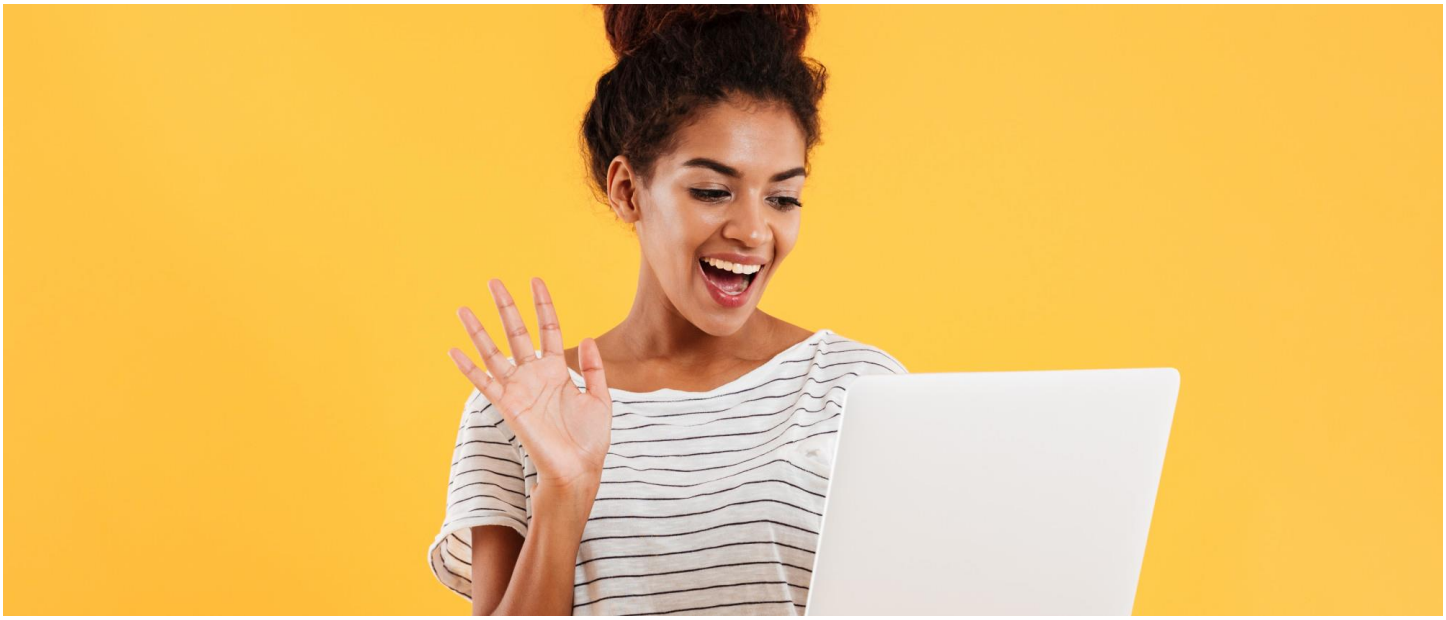


attendance & participation: 100 points

Attendance and participation are mandatory for this course. The class meets online synchronously, and you are expected to join on time for every session. Attendance will be recorded at the start of each class.

Missing one class during the winter session is equivalent to missing an entire week of classes in a traditional semester. If you arrive late, leave early, miss part of the class, do not have your camera on, or are unable to participate or communicate effectively, you may be marked as partially present, significantly late, or absent at the instructor's discretion. These actions will affect your attendance and participation grade.

You will begin the course with 100 attendance and participation points. Each absence deducts 25 points, and each instance of lateness deducts 7.5 points. Significant lateness or partial attendance may also lower your grade at the instructor's discretion. If your total attendance deductions reach 100 points or more, you will not pass the course and will receive a grade of F. Additionally, if you stop attending or participating before the final academic activity of the course, you will receive a grade of WU.



You are expected to be present and fully engaged during online class sessions. Online synchronous class meetings are like traditional on-campus classes, where active participation is essential to the classroom community.

You must commit to scheduled class times. If you plan to attend class while engaging in other activities (such as commuting, working, or walking), please consider enrolling in a different section that aligns better with your schedule.

Being present includes having your camera on with your full face visible, actively communicating, and engaging with the course material. Failure to meet these expectations—such as not having your camera on, not contributing to discussions, or not being mentally present—will impact your participation & attendance grade. Not meeting these expectations may lead to failing the course.

Best practices for participating in a virtual meeting include:

- Register in advance and log in a few minutes early to ensure you are ready.
- Test your technology, camera angle, and lighting before the meeting begins.
- Be seated with your camera on and your full face visible.
- Ensure that your background and attire are appropriate.
- Have your audio muted unless speaking.
- Secure a quiet environment with minimal background noise.
- Inform household members of your online schedule.
- Be mentally present and avoid multitasking.



excused absences

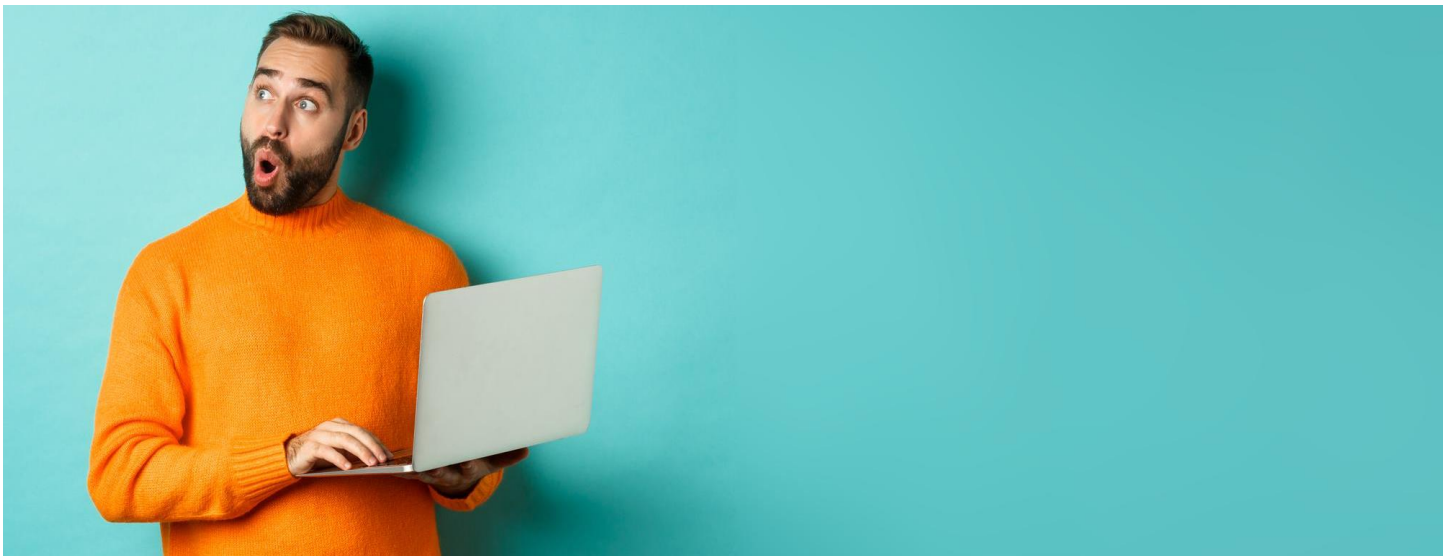
Excused absences will be considered on a case-by-case basis and require documentation. Please do not send your documents directly to me as they may contain sensitive personal information. All documentation should be submitted to the **Office of the Dean of Students**, who will inform me of your request for an accommodation. Please note that excusing an absence is at my discretion unless mandated by college policies or legally required.

non-native english speakers

COM 2020 is a prerequisite for COM 3021, Professional Speech Communication. **COM 3021-T** is exclusively available to non-native English speakers. These sections offer additional instruction in pronunciation and intelligibility, integrated and aligned with the regular 3021 course curriculum. If you are interested in enrolling in COM 3021-T, **click here** to submit a registration request form.

syllabus addendum

Visit the Course Resources section of Brightspace for addendums to the syllabus, including information on support services and technology resources.



academic integrity

Baruch College's policy on Academic Honesty states that academic dishonesty is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Cheating, forgery, plagiarism, and collusion in dishonest acts undermine the college's educational mission and your personal and intellectual growth. You are expected to bear individual responsibility for your 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 course 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. **Click here** for additional information and definitions of academic dishonesty. You are encouraged to familiarize yourself with Baruch's academic integrity policies and to seek help if you have any questions or concerns.

artificial intelligence

You are expected to complete all your assignments with honesty and authenticity. This includes not using artificial intelligence (AI) or other automated tools unless explicitly allowed. In this course, AI may be used in most cases as a tool for grammar checking or to help articulate your original thoughts and ideas, but not to complete assignments for you. Guidelines on how to incorporate AI effectively and ethically will be provided for each assignment. Misuse of AI in this course will be considered a violation of academic integrity.



tools for success

I asked my students what advice they would give to someone taking this course:

“Pay attention to minor details and follow all specifics. Ask your professor or peers for help and advice if you need any and stay on top of your work.”

“Be organized and just get your work done. It's not very hard, and it's useful. Show up, do your part, and you'll do well.”

“Come into class on time and ready to participate.”

“Read the instruction sheets before you submit an assignment so that you have fulfilled each requirement and so that there will be no points taken off for issues that seem minor now but hold more importance in a professional setting.”

“Double-check your writing for simple grammar errors by using tools such as Grammarly and Chat GPT.”

“Have fun and get to know each other because there are group assignments!”

reflection

In reading the quotes from my previous students:

- What is your main takeaway after reading these quotes?
- What personal, academic, or professional factors may impact your grade?
- What actions can you take to improve your success in this course?

This syllabus was adapted from the original work created by Allison Hahn and Donovan Bisbee of the Department of Communication Studies at Baruch College and was adapted by Marcus Dargan under the **CC BY-SA 4.0** license.
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