

The Hugh Downs School of Human Communication
COM 259 – Communication for Business and the Professions

Instructor:
Office:
Office Hours:
Email:

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OVERVIEW

Course Goal: By the end of the course, students should be able to understand, apply, and extend to new situations the basic principles and theories of interpersonal, small group, organizational, public, and written communication in professional contexts.

This course, intended for non-communication majors, focuses on the development and strengthening of these knowledge and skill areas. Students will learn communication principles and processes and apply this knowledge to successfully complete the coursework—including consistent participation and a team project.

Read this syllabus carefully. By remaining enrolled, you have accepted the conditions and expectations of the course.

Required Text: (ISBN 9781323151471) *Bring the textbook to in-person class meetings.*

Beebe, S. A., & Mottet, T. P. (2013). *Business and professional communication: Principles and skills for leadership* (Arizona State University ed.). New York, NY: Pearson Education, Inc.

Additional Requirements: 1) Basic experience with computers and the Internet and 2) access to both a reliable computer (with a webcam and appropriate software) and reliable high-speed Internet are essential.

Course Objectives

As a result of this course, the student should:

- Understand the dynamic nature, components, and influence of communication.
- Be able to discuss the inherent relationship between communication and leadership.
- Have an increased awareness, sensitivity, and mindfulness to one's own and others' communication.
- Be able to effectively use and interpret verbal and nonverbal messages.
- Practice active and emphatic listening and thoughtful responding.
- Be able to adapt messages to different audiences.
- Be able to function effectively in groups and teams.
- Have developed skills for: adapting to differences, engaging in effective role performance, engaging in effective problem solving and decision-making, and conducting presentations.
- Be able to apply the knowledge and skills acquired for practical applications and collaborations inside and outside of the classroom.
- Regularly apply course content to practice mindful and professional communication.

As a result of this course, students will also have:

- Improved their abilities to critically and creatively apply communication skills to daily life, particularly in business and professional contexts.
- Enhanced their leadership skills.
- Improved their critical thinking.
- Completed the class with skills that can enhance career development.

Course Schedule, Time-management, and Deadlines: Pay close attention to the course schedule, announcements, and emails. All are likely to contain important information, and students who choose to ignore elements of the course (including, but not limited to, course communication) will be at a disadvantage. Newly posted Blackboard announcements typically generate an email notification, but this may not always be reliable. Check the course Blackboard site for updates regularly. Due dates are not flexible; they are firm. Online assignments/quizzes are always due on or before 11:59PM on the day indicated by the course schedule. In-person assignments are due at the beginning of the designated weekly class meeting. Refer to the course schedule for all due dates. Review the textbook appendix for reminders and good tips for effective time-management.

Language of Instruction: This class, as all others in the School, is taught in English. If English is not your first language and you are having difficulty in speaking, writing, or understanding—please seek assistance at the Writing Center on campus or with the International Student office which provides conversational groups for non-native speakers. Since this class is taught in English, all work in this course will be graded based on a common rubric that assumes an understanding of English.

Honors Enrichment Contracts: This class is not eligible for an Honors Enrichment Contract. Please see your Faculty Honors Advisor if you are interested in discussing the requirements in your major for negotiating an Honors Enrichment Contract. For COM majors, the Faculty Honors Advisor is Dr. Amira de la Garza, who may be contacted at delagarza@asu.edu.

GENERAL COURSE EXPECTATIONS

1. *Be prepared for class.*

The interactive nature of this class requires your preparation and engagement. Students who require special assistance or accommodation, and students participating in university-sanctioned absences (including religious holidays), should let their instructors know within the first week of class. Students with university-sanctioned travel generally will need to complete assignments and exams in advance. No late work will be accepted without advance arrangements made with the instructor or extensive documentation of an emergency situation.

2. *Accept and respect that your classmates are here to learn.*

It is important that we work together for an atmosphere of respect and support. An important part of your development as a professional is modeling how to disagree with the concept versus the person. Any form of disruptive behavior can result in loss of attendance points. Verbal or physical aggression before, during or after class will result in permanent removal from the class and notification of proper authorities. See the Student Conduct information, below.

3. *Attend all in-person and online class sessions.*

Your input is valuable to your classmates, to the instructor, and to your learning. You cannot participate if you are not present. In-person class meetings will start promptly; be on time. Expect the class to last the full period. If a class session is missed, you are responsible for getting any notes from your classmates. See the Attendance policy, below.

4. *Maintain high standards of personal civility.*

What you learn in this course is highly relevant to today's workplace and marketplace. We will model ourselves on standards of behavior reflecting professionalism and respect. For a detailed discussion of expected standards, see the Student Conduct section, below.

5. *Maintain the highest standard of academic integrity.*

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and the Hugh Downs School of Human Communication strongly believe in academic integrity; thus, instructors in the College and School do not tolerate cheating or plagiarism. Review the Plagiarism Policy, below.

COURSE POLICIES

Email

Allow 48 hours (not including weekends and holidays) to receive a response to email. Be certain to use the subject line to clearly indicate the purpose of your message. I will contact you only through ASU email. If you use another email address most of the time, please redirect your ASU-email to that account.

All communication that takes place in this course, including e-mails, is expected to be professional. Emails should be well written, grammatically correct, and properly punctuated (and not acronym laden). The subject line of all e-mails should accurately reflect the reason for the message and list the course COM259 in the subject line. If your e-mail is of an urgent nature, please put “URGENT” in the subject line, followed by the subject of your message and course information. We will generally respond to e-mails within 48 hours (longer if over a weekend or holiday). If you do not receive a response within this time, *please resend your message* as it may not have reached our inboxes.

NOTE: Emails that pertain to questions easily answered in the syllabus, course announcements, etc. will be given low priority. Display your professionalism and competence by utilizing your available resources.

Technical Issues

When it comes to assignments, we are aware that technology can break down. Computers power down, files corrupt, and so on. Technology sometimes fails us, but since we are all aware that technology crashes, it is no excuse for turning in late work. There are open access computer centers on campus for your use in case something happens to your home computer. Also, printing early copies, saving your work often, and having backups are all methods of avoiding technology issues.

If you have computer/Internet or course site-related problems or questions, please contact the ASU Help Desk, since we are unable to assist in these matters. Help is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at help.asu.edu, where you can call, chat, or email regarding your issue and its resolution (get a support ticket number!). This is also available in the ASU Resources & Links area of Blackboard.

Student Conduct

The Hugh Downs School of Human Communication strives for a classroom climate that is comfortable for all. In a communication class, it is especially important that we...

1. display respect for all members of the classroom – including the instructor and students;
2. pay attention to and participate in all class sessions and activities;
3. avoid unnecessary disruption during class time (e.g., having private conversations, reading the newspaper, surfing the internet, doing work for other classes, making/receiving cell phone calls, text messaging, etc.); and
4. avoid racist, sexist, homophobic or other negative language that may unnecessarily exclude members of our campus and classroom.

This is not an exhaustive list of behaviors; rather, it represents examples of the types of things that can have a dramatic impact on the class environment. Your final grade may be reduced each time you engage in these sorts of behaviors.

Students are entitled to receive instruction free from interference by other members of the class. An instructor may withdraw a student from a course when the student’s behavior disrupts the educational process under USI 201-10 (<http://www.asu.edu/aad/manuals/usi/usi201-10.html>). This includes students who are verbally or physically aggressive towards the instructor or another student before, during, or after class. As noted in this document, “An instructor may withdraw a student from a course with a mark of ‘W’ or ‘E’ when the student’s behavior disrupts the educational process. Disruptive classroom behavior for this purpose is defined by the instructor.” In cases where disruptive behavior does not warrant removal from class, at the instructor’s discretion a student’s final grade will be lowered by 25% instead.

Students are required to adhere to the behavior standards listed in the Arizona Board of Regents Policy Manual Chapter V – Campus and Student Affairs: Code of Conduct (<http://students.asu.edu/srr/code>) as well as the ACD 125: Computer, Internet, and Electronics Communications (<http://asu.edu/aad/manuals/acd/acd125.html>).

Attendance

We move at a *very* fast pace in this class. Your attendance is necessary and required for each class session. You have 2 freebies, as in 2 unexcused absences. After that, each absence = 4 points deducted from your final grade.

Students are expected to be in class, to be on time, and to be well prepared to participate. The only reasons that may warrant the creation of alternate make-up assignment/s to earn points for a missed class period follow:

- If you are too ill to come to class, you must have a signed (and dated) document from your doctor saying you had to miss the class (on that particular day) because of your illness.
- If you miss class because of the death of a loved one, you must provide proof as requested by your instructor.
- If you will miss class because of the observance of a religious holiday, please let us know at the start of the semester.
- If you are active in University-sponsored events (athletic teams, debate, etc.) you must supply the appropriate school-provided documentation. When possible, assignments should be completed prior to departing campus.

The course instructor reserves the right to determine what qualifies as a legitimate reason for missing class and/or as acceptable documentation.

NOTE: Group presentations must be given on the assigned date and follow-up assignments will rely on viewing other teams' presentations. If a student is late or absent, the group must still make the presentation. Additionally, being absent on a day that an assignment is due does NOT mean you can turn the assignment in late.

Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism

Plagiarism is intentionally or unintentionally using another's work (including wording, phrases, or original ideas) without giving the person proper credit. This includes representing anyone else's words as your own. Exact words can be used ONLY in direct quotes, clearly presented as such.

Examples of academic misconduct include (but are not limited to) plagiarism, collusion (unauthorized collaboration), copying the work of another student, or allowing another student to copy your work, and possession of unauthorized materials during an examination.

Please be advised that all work for this class must be **original** to this class. You may not recycle papers or work from other courses you've taken, including if you are taking this course over again, we consider this behavior to be academically dishonest. If you have turned the work in for another class, it is considered self-plagiarism and violates University policy. Even within this course, each assignment must be a new paper; you may not duplicate material across assignments.

Instructors who find compelling evidence of academic dishonesty will actively pursue one or more of the following actions: Assigning a grade of XE ("failure through academic dishonesty") to the student, advocating the suspension or expulsion of the student from the College, and/or referring the student to Student Judicial Affairs. If a student who is charged with academic dishonesty is found to be in violation, then one or more of these disciplinary actions will be taken. For further information, please read the Student Academic Integrity policy and the code of conduct for Arizona State University: <http://provost.asu.edu/academicintegrity>.

Grade Disputes

If you would like to discuss a grade, we would be happy to have a respectful conversation with you. In order for this to occur, we ask that you:

- **Take a deep breath.** We put a lot of thought and effort into grading, but we are willing to hear your perspective and rationale.
- **24/7 Rule.** Wait at least 24 hours after receiving your assignment back before approaching us. Be sure to make contact with the appropriate instructor within one week (7 days) of receiving your assignment. Please do not speak with us at the end of the semester about a grade you received early on in the semester. We will not entertain such discussions.

- **Write it down.** If you have a question about a grade or feel a grade was unfair, communicate with your instructors. It is important to understand your score and to amend any misunderstandings. If you would like us to reconsider the points earned by your assignment, please make a logical written argument based on both 1. the assignment description and required elements and 2. your submitted work. Be specific and offer examples of where/why you feel you deserve more points. We are then properly equipped to consider and discuss your request.

TIP: Carefully review and connect the assignment requirements with your work before you finalize and submit.

Assignment Deadlines

The due dates for all assignments are listed in the course schedule. All online assignments must be submitted correctly before 11:59 p.m. Arizona Standard Time on their respective due dates to be eligible for credit. Deadlines are real; late assignments will not be accepted, except under very special circumstances and with penalty. Prepare for the unexpected by recognizing deadlines as the latest possible moment that assignments will be accepted, and plan to submit assignments well in advance. Assignments that are due during the in-person class period are to be turned in at the beginning of the class period.

NOTE: While instructors may offer reminders about upcoming deadlines, it is each student's responsibility to follow the course schedule provided. Online reminders will generally be contained in course announcements posted on Blackboard. Courtesy email notifications of newly posted announcements do not always work; check our Blackboard site regularly to stay up to date.

Disability Service

Students needing accommodations in this course due to disabilities must be registered with the Disability Resource Center (DRC) before requesting accommodations. Please contact me at the beginning of the semester, as I will be more than willing to make the necessary arrangements. The DRC is located on the first floor of Matthew's Center. They can be contacted at <http://www.asu.edu/studentaffairs/ed/drc/>. They can also be contacted at 480-965-1234 (voice)/480-965-9000 (TDD).

Important Caveat

Updates or adjustments to this syllabus may be made in order to make the course a better experience for everyone. This may be in response to suggestions from students, from instructor observations, or as the result of requirements by the School, College, or University. Changes will be announced in class and posted on the course Blackboard site.

EVALUATION

Midterm Exam (75 points)

The midterm exam is administered during the in-person meeting period indicated on the schedule and serves as one measure of students' mastery of course material. Questions may be drawn from all areas of the course covered thus far (not just the textbook) and, in addition to definitional and factual types of questions, conceptual and applied knowledge is required to excel. The exam will consist of multiple-choice, true/false, matching, and/or short answer questions.

Online Quizzes (140 points)

There are 15 online quizzes. With the exception of the syllabus & course quiz, each covers the assigned textbook chapter and consists of 10 multiple-choice, true/false, and/or matching questions worth 1 point each. Quizzes must be completed on or before the deadline (see course schedule). The lowest quiz grade will be dropped.

NOTE: Do not rely on mobile devices or Wi-Fi connections for the online quizzes; this is risky. Quizzes are only taken once. If the Internet connection fails, the quiz will submit as is. It is recommended that quizzes are taken from a desktop computer connected through a landline. These are available in ASU's computer labs.

Mindful Communication Day (25 points)

After the completion of Module 1 (but before the deadline), students will select a day to pay extra special attention to communication and its many facets. A written reflection essay regarding the experience of

engaging in mindful awareness for the entire day will be submitted in class (paper copy). Full assignment description and requirements will be provided during Module 2.

Collaborative Team Project

Students will work together in teams to complete a communication audit on an organization of their choice. A range of assignments—some graded individually and some as a group—directly connect to this endeavor. Full assignment descriptions and requirements will be provided.

Information Gathering Interview (25 points, earned individually)

Each team member will conduct an interview that contributes to the communication audit.

Team Informational Briefing Presentation (25 points, earned as a group)

Teams will present the status of their projects to the class. Classmates from other teams will provide feedback to help advance all communication audits. Students must be in class to both present and be able to fully complete the feedback multimedia assignment that will follow.

Formal Report (50 points, earned as a group)

This culminating part of the team project is the client deliverable. It will communicate the team's processes, findings, and recommendations in a written formal report.

Team & Peer Assessment (20 points, assigned individually)

Students will reflect on their group experience and group members' contributions. Generally, students report an equal distribution of work and contribution to the project as a whole and all students receive the same grade on the final report. However, this is not always the case. This assessment allows each member's perspective and team contribution to be considered. See assignment form for additional details. Severe inequities may affect an individual's report score.

Short Exercises and Assignments (75 points)

Short exercises and assignments help students to actively engage with and apply course topics.

Descriptions will be given in class.

SA #1 (15 points) – Organizational culture exploration

SA#2 (15 points) – Intercultural communication exploration

SA #3 (5 points) – Job posting

SA #4 (15 points) – Interview questions (employment interview)

SA #5 (25 points) – Reflective planning (course takeaways and goal setting)

Class Participation and Quality of Deliverables (65 points)

Class attendance and participation are both required and vital for success in this course. On-time attendance, full participation in class activities, and quality in-class deliverables (when applicable) are required. Simply showing up, but not engaging (for instance, looking at a cell phone or other mobile device during class and/or not contributing to discussions) will result in a lowered participation and quality score for that day.

FINAL GRADE COMPOSITION

EXAMS & ASSIGNMENTS	Point Value	# of	Total Points
Midterm Exam	75	1	75
Quizzes <i>*lowest quiz score will be dropped</i>	10	15	140
Mindful Communication Day	25	1	25
Short Exercises/Assignments	5-25	5	75
Information Gathering Interview	25	1	25
Team Informational Briefing Presentation	25	1	25
Team Formal Report	50	1	50
Team & Peer Assessment	20	1	20
Class Participation & Quality of Deliverables			65

TOTAL = 500

GRADING SCALE

A+ = 99-100% = 495-500 pts	A = 93-98.9% = 465-494.5 pts	A- = 90-92.9% = 450-464.5 pts
B+ = 87-89.9% = 435-449.5 pts	B = 83-86.9% = 415-434.5 pts	B- = 80-82.9% = 400-414.5 pts
C+ = 77-79.9% = 385-399.5 pts	C = 70-76.9% = 350-384.5 pts	
D = 60-69.9% = 300-349.5 pts	E = 0-59.9% = 0-299.5 pts	

Note: Grades are not given. Grades are earned based on performance through the semester. The point breakdown listed here will be strictly followed; points are NOT “rounded.” You may be tempted to skip assignments that appear to have a small point value. This approach is strongly discouraged; deficiencies add up.