

Syllabus: Business Communication (BUS368F) - Spring 2016

Instructor: Professor Robyn Jones

Communication: This is a Business Communication course so communication is very important. Please contact me for any questions that you might have. Email and text are the best methods for reaching me.

Virtual Office Hours: I will check the course portal twice daily Monday-Friday between the hours of 8:00 am - 9:00 pm. I will check it once Saturday and Sunday in the evening hours.

Telephone: 404-551-8134 (call or text). I will take phone calls Monday-Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. CST. You can also text over the weekend and I will respond when I can.

Email: rtjones@talladega.edu. I will answer emails within 24 hours during the weekday. I will answer most weekend emails on Saturday or Sunday night.

Meeting Time/Place: Online

Required Textbook: McLean: *Business Communication for Success (2014)*

Textbook Website: The Saylor Foundation: <http://www.saylor.org/books>

Requirements: Internet access and a working email address and computer

Course Justification

Developing excellent communication skills is extremely important to your career success, whether you are already working or are about to enter today's workplace. Surveys of employers show that communication skills are critical to effective job placement performance, career advancement and organizational success. Employers often rank communication skills among the most-requested competencies. Communication skills include writing, reading, listening, nonverbal, and speaking skills.

Writing skills are more important than ever because technology enables us to transmit messages more rapidly, more often and to greater numbers of people than ever before. The most successful players in the new world of work will be those with highly developed communication skills. The discussions, assignments and exercises in this course are designed to improve your practical business communication skills.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSIGNMENTS:

A. Textbook readings and media presentations.

B. Discussion Board Forum Threads (5)

Each Discussion Board requires an initial thread of **150 words** to be posted by 11:55 p.m. (CST) on Wednesday and two replies, at least 80 words each, by 11:55 p.m. (CST) on Sunday of the assigned week.

Discussion Board Posting Rules:

- 1) Personal attacks of other students because of their posts will not be tolerated.
- 2) Provide clear analysis and insight into the topic or questions.
- 3) Post original thoughts to avoid plagiarism and the penalties for plagiarism
- 4) Zero or minimal credit will be given to students with very FEW or NO SUBSTANTIVE postings or who post all posts with in a matter of minutes or all on the last day.
- 5) Proof postings to eliminate offensive references, poor sentence syntax, misspelled words, etc.

C. Quizzes (2)

There will be 2 open-book quizzes over the McLean textbook reading, each comprising of multiple-choice, true/false and essay questions.

D. Assessment Paper (1)

The student will write a 2-3 page personal assessment paper on an assigned concept. Students will assess their past experiences and relationships as it pertains to communications. The goal is self-understanding and application of terms and concepts within the assigned readings.

E. Power Point Presentation – “Who I Am”

The student will prepare a Power Point presentation to give the audience a glimpse of who they are. Learning how to use technology in communication is key, especially in a world that is technology driven.

F. Video – 90 Second Elevator Pitch

In the traditional class setting, oral presentations is part of the business communication curriculum. Since this is an online course, the student will use video technology to perform an oral presentation. The student will have 90 seconds to sale the audience on something he/she is knowledgeable about or a topic that is valued by the student.

G. Article Review

The student will choose an article related to business communications and write a 2-3 page paper summarizing the main ideas and correlating those ideas to specific concepts covered in the textbook reading. The purpose of an article review is to bring the current application of business communication to the course.

H. Final Exam

One final exam based on the McLean textbook and other materials are required in this course. The exam is open-book and contain 25 multiple-choice and true/false questions and two essay questions. The exam will require students to analyze, synthesize, and apply the material in the texts in order to correctly answer the questions.

COURSE GRADING AND POLICIES:

A. Points

Discussion Board (5 @ 25 pts each)	125
Quiz (2 @ 50 pts each)	100
Power Point Presentation	100
Assessment Paper	75
90 Second Elevator Pitch (Video Presentation)	100
Negative News Letter Assignment	75
Article Review	100
Final Exam	100

Total Points 775

B. Scale

A = 698-775 B = 620-697 C = 543-619 D = 465-542 F = 0-464

C. Late Assignment Policy

If the student is unable to complete an assignment on time, he or she must contact the instructor immediately by email.

Assignments that are submitted after the due date without prior approval from the instructor will receive a per diem late penalty of **10%** of the assignment points per day up to four days.

Late Discussion Board threads or replies will not be accepted.

Special circumstances (e.g. death in the family, personal health issues) will be reviewed by the instructor on a case-by-case basis.

Attendance: As in the workplace, students must attend class virtually multiple times per week. Any student who does not log into the class for more than a week will be submitted for academic alert. If you will not be able to log into the class for any given amount of time, you should contact the instructor in advance via email to avoid an inadvertent drop or failing grade.

Submitting Assignments: The class assignments are worth various points of the course grade. Save your assignments as **LastnameFirstname_WK# (e.g., JonesRobyn_WK2)** and submit as the directions indicate. **It is the responsibility of the student to confirm that the assignment was uploaded to the portal. A failed assignment upload will result in a score of 0. Do NOT email the assignment to the instructor.**

COURSE SCHEDULE

BUS368F

NOTE: Any changes to this syllabus will be posted in the Weekly Announcements on the Main Page.

Week	Assignments	Point Value	Due Date
Week 1: Mar 14 - 20	Discussion Board #1 Who I Am Power Point Presentation Review Course Syllabus – Take Syllabus Quiz (Extra Credit)	25 100	March 21
	Read/Review Chapters 1, 2 & 3		
Week 2: Mar 21 - 27	Discussion Board #2 Assessment Paper - WK2 Quiz #1	25 75 50	March 27
	Read/Review Chapters 4, 5, 6 & 7		
Week 3: Mar 28 - Apr 3	Discussion Board #3 90 Second Elevator Pitch Quiz #2	25 100 50	April 3
	Read/Review Chapters 10, 13 & 14		
Week 4: Apr 4 - 10	Discussion Board #4 Negative News Letter Assignment	25 75	April 10
	Read/Review Chapter 17		
Week 5: Apr 11 - 17	Discussion Board #5 FINAL EXAM Article Review	25 100 100	April 17
	Read/Review Chapter 19		
TOTAL GRADE POINTS		775	

GRADING SCALE: A = 698-775 B = 620-697 C = 543-619 D = 465-542 F = 0-464

GRADING RUBRIC: DISCUSSION BOARDS

GRADING AREA #1	2 Points
Initial discussion question was answered/posted by Wednesday	
GRADING AREA #2	10 Points
Initial discussion response was substantive.	
Initial response directly answered the key elements of the discussion question.	
Initial response was based on personal/professional experiences, the unit readings, and/or class materials.	
Initial response must meet the minimum word count of 150.	
GRADING AREA #3	3 Points
Initial discussion post contains references to the course text and/or other resources that are properly cited and fully referenced using proper APA format. EXAMPLE: (Tischler, 2011, p. 38) Tischler, H. (2011). <i>Introduction to Sociology</i> . Belmont, CA: Wadsworth	
GRADING AREA #4	2 Points (1 point per post)
Two (2) student or instructor responses were posted by the Sunday in which they were due.	
GRADING AREA #5	5 Points (2.5 points per post)
Response posts were substantive.	
They were more than "I Agree" or "I Disagree" responses.	
Response was based on personal/professional experiences, the unit readings, and/or class materials.	
Response posts must meet the minimum word count of 80.	
GRADING AREA #6	3 Points (1 point per post)
Posts were free from spelling, grammar, and punctuation errors.	
Total	25 Total Possible Points

ASSESSMENT PAPER 1 (GRADING RUBRIC)

Criterion	Point Rating	Point Rating	Point Rating	Point Rating	Point Rating
	20-16	15-12	11-8	7-4	3-0
Content	Content is accurate and information is presented in a logical order.	Content is accurate but some information is not presented in a logical order, but is still generally easy to follow.	Content is accurate but information is not presented in a logical order, making it difficult to follow.	Content is questionable and information is not presented in a logical order, making it difficult to follow.	Content is inaccurate and information is not presented in a logical order, making it difficult to follow.
Slide Creation & Transitions	Presentation flows well and logically. Presentation reflects extensive use of tools in a creative way. Correct number of slides. Transitions are smooth and interesting. Transitions enhance the presentation.	Presentation flows well. Tools used correctly. Correct number of slides. Overall presentation is interesting. Transitions are smooth and interesting. Transitions enhance the presentation.	Presentation flows well. Some tools used to show acceptable understanding. Correct number of slides. Smooth transitions are used on some slides.	Presentation is unorganized. Tools are not used in a relevant manner. Lacking in number of slides. Very few transitions are used and/or they distract from the presentation.	Presentation has no flow. No tools used. Insufficient number of slides. No transitions used.
Pictures, Clip Art & Background	Images are appropriate. Layout of images is pleasing to the eye.	Images are appropriate. Layout is cluttered.	Most images are appropriate.	Images are inappropriate.	No images.
Mechanics	No spelling errors. No grammar errors. Text is in authors' own words.	Few spelling errors. Few grammar errors. Text is in authors' own words.	Some spelling errors. Some grammar errors. Text is in authors' own words.	Some spelling errors. Some grammar errors. Most of text is in authors' own words.	Many spelling errors and/or text is copied.
Technology Connection	Comprehensive use of technology is apparent.	General understanding of technology.	Acceptable understanding of technology.	Little understanding of technology.	No understanding of technology.

TOTAL POINTS POSSIBLE: 100

ASSESSMENT PAPER - WK#2

Write a 2-3 page Personal Assessment paper on your Comfort with Formal Communication. The paper will assess your comfort level in having to communicate orally to individuals or groups.

Your paper should consider the following points:

Relate at least one story from your past that typifies how you deal with making a formal, oral or written presentation to an individual or a group. Use this story as a basis for assessing your comfort with oral or written communication or both. This assignment covers concepts from the course text for Week 2 (Chapters 4, 5, 6 & 7). However, the focus of the assignment should be on the application of written communication concepts covered in Chapters 6 & 7:

- Organization of writing: introduction, body, and conclusion (Chapter 6)
- General revision points (Chapter 7)
- Specific revision points (Chapter 7)
- Style revisions (Chapter 7)

Be sure to make reference and cite all your readings and resources throughout your paper.

Be honest. There are no extra points for success stories as opposed to stories of failure. The goal is self-understanding. Incorporate terms and concepts from the readings of Weeks 1 and 2. Use APA formatting to document your sources. Refer to the APA resources in the course for guidance.

PAPER GUIDELINES:

Your paper should be formatted as follows:

- Typed, double-spaced, Times New Roman font (12pt), one-inch margin on all sides, APA format.
- Use headers for any subject areas, followed by your response.
- In addition to the three to five (2-3) pages required, a title page is to be included. The title page is to contain the title of the assignment, your name, the instructor's name, the course title and the date. The paper should also have a reference page. ***NOTE: The title and reference pages WILL NOT be counted as part of your 2-3 pages.***
- In addition to the course textbook, a minimum of one (1) additional reference should be used. Wikipedia references will not be accepted. Make sure references are listed in proper APA format.

GRADING RUBRIC: ASSESSMENT PAPER - WK#2

<i>Content and Development</i>	<i>(40 Points) Comments</i>
<p>The following elements of the assignment are covered in a substantive way.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Related at least one story from your past that typifies how you deal with formal, oral or written communication. • Identified at least one concept from previous/current weeks' readings that applies to oral/written communication. • Cited your readings and other resources throughout your paper. • 2-3 pages (not including title & reference page) 	
The paper develops a central theme or idea directed toward the appropriate audience.	
Statements are stated clearly; supported by specific details, examples or analysis	
The introduction provides sufficient background on topic and includes a thesis statement. Summary conclusion of major points present.	
<i>Readability and Style</i>	<i>(15 Points) Comments</i>
The tone is appropriate to the content and assignment.	
Sentences are complete, clear, and concise.	
Sentences are well constructed, strong, and varied.	
Sentence transitions are present and maintain the flow of thought.	
<i>Mechanics</i>	<i>(20 Points) Comments</i>
The paper is laid out with effective use of headings, font styles, and white space.	
Proper use of grammar, punctuation, and spelling	
APA formatted title page present. Proper use of APA in-text citations and reference page is present.	
<i>Total</i>	<i>75 Points</i>

GRADING RUBRIC:

90 Second Elevator Pitch - WK#3

Criterion	Rating Excellent	Rating Good	Rating Satisfactory	Rating Needs Improvement	SCORE
	Points 10-9	Points 8-7	Points 6-5	Points 4-0	
Introduction	(1) Gets attention (2) Clearly identifies topic (3) Establishes credibility (4) Previews the main points	Meets any three of the four criteria	Meets any two of the four criteria	Meets only one of the four criteria	
Body	Main points are clear, well supported, and sources are documented	Main points are somewhat clear, some support, and some documentation	Main points need clarity and support lack of sources and documentation	Main points are not clear and have no support and no sources or documentation	
Conclusion	(1) Reviews main points (2) Brings closure (3) Memorable	Reviews main points , brings closure	Brings closure	Does not bring closure; the audience is left hanging	
Eye Contact	Eye contact with audience virtually all the time (except for brief glances at notes)	Eye contact with audience less than 80% of the time	Eye contact with audience less than 75% of the time	Little or no eye contact	
Use of Language	Use of language contributes to effectiveness of the speech, and vocalized pauses (um uh er etc.) not distracting	Use of language does not have negative impact, and vocalized pauses (um uh er etc.) not distracting	Use of language causes potential confusion, and/or vocalized pauses (um uh er etc.) are distracting	Use of language is inappropriate	
Body language	Body language, gestures, and facial expressions adds greatly to the message	Body language, gestures, and facial expressions compliment message	Body language, facial expressions and gestures lack variety and spontaneity	Body language, gestures, and facial expressions are lacking or inappropriate	
Clarity	Speaks clearly and distinctly all the time with no mispronounced words	Speaks clearly and distinctly nearly all the time with no more than one mispronounced word	Speaks clearly and distinctly most of the time with no more than two mispronounced words	Often mumbles or can not be understood with more than three mispronounced words	
Follows assignment topic and Adapted to audience	Topic is specific, appropriate and adapted	Topic is clear appropriate and somewhat adapted	Topic lacks clarity and focus needs adapting to audience	No specific purpose-- inappropriate for audience or occasion	
Visual Aids	Visual aids well chosen and presented	Minor problems with visual aids	Significant problems with visual aids	No visual aids	
Time	Within allotted time	Within 10% of allotted time	Within 20% of allotted time	Not within 20% of allotted time	

NOTE: There are ten areas of grading with a maximum of 10 points for each area. Total of 100 points possible.

BUS368—NEGATIVE NEWS LETTER ASSIGNMENT

Use guidance from [Table 17.1: “Negative News Message Sample Script”](#) in Scott McLean’s *Business Communication for Success* to write a negative news letter based on the scenario below. Be sure to read the final paragraph of this scenario so you understand the restrictions the assignment places on what you can write. Those restrictions have been incorporated to maximize the learning potential of your efforts. Once you have finished your letter, proof it and upload to the portal for grading. The grading rubric is in the Handout Section on the Main Page.

Customer Complaint: On April 4, 2011, customer Maud Bennett telephoned your store, The Merchant’s Secret, claiming that, on March 8, 2011, she used her Merchant’s Secret department store credit card to purchase a produce scale for \$54.50. However, her credit card billing statement indicates that she was charged for two other purchases from your store on that same day: one for \$8.95 and another for \$4.95. She does not have the receipt for the produce scale because by the time she got her statement she’d used the scale, had no intention of returning it, and so she had thrown out the receipt. However, she notes that since the statement shows the three purchases, that should be sufficient proof that she was charged for items she did not purchase. Moreover, she points out that her card had not been lost or stolen during that time. Mrs. Bennett wants you to credit her account the funds she claims she was wrongly charged.

Business Investigation: You investigate Mrs. Bennett’s claim and discover that two additional purchases were indeed charged to her card on March 8, 2011. A Reuben sandwich combo was purchased for \$8.95 from the store’s lunch counter and a birthday card for \$4.95 was purchased from the gifts department. However, the records of the charges indicated that each purchase was made at a different time: the produce scale was purchased at 10:00 a.m., the sandwich combo at 1:30 p.m., and the birthday card at 2:15 p.m. You check the maintenance records of your cash register and credit card scanner to make sure they were functioning properly during the time frame of the purchases and find nothing was amiss.

You also interview your store personnel to see if anyone remembered any problems with the equipment and if they remembered any of the purchases. A cashier did remember the birthday card purchase because it was a very pretty card and the store doesn’t sell many cards. Unfortunately, while she was sure the purchase was not made by a man (because most of the store’s customers are women and so she would have remembered if the customer had been a man), she is certain that she would not recognize the woman who purchased the birthday card. Meanwhile, records from the lunch counter also confirm the purchase of the Reuben sandwich combo.

Letter Restrictions: Write a letter to Mrs. Bennett that explains why you will not be crediting back to her account the charges from the extra purchases. The letter should include the fact that the cash registers and card scanners used by The Merchant’s Secret do not allow employees to retain any credit card information. It should also clearly reflect your desire to retain Mrs. Bennett as a customer. Use only the details provided in this scenario to develop your letter. Do not add other facts, however, you can discuss realistic circumstances which might have produced the situation, such as another family member may have used Mrs. Bennett’s card. You may also suggest to Mrs. Bennett that she may have forgotten that she returned to the store for lunch and/or that the birthday card was an unplanned purchase she made on her way out after lunch.

GRADING RUBRIC: NEGATIVE NEWS LETTER – WK#4

<p><i>Content and Development</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The letter is written in a correct business letter format and style. • The letter’s purpose is clear, as stated in an introductory paragraph which is supported by details/facts sufficient enough to clearly persuade or inform the reader of the writer’s intent. • The letter is one (1) page in length as required. 	<p><i>(50 Points) Comments</i></p>
<p><i>Readability and Style</i></p> <p>The tone is appropriate to the content and assignment.</p> <p>Sentences are complete, clear, and concise.</p> <p>Sentences are well constructed, strong, and varied.</p> <p>Sentence transitions are present and maintain the flow of thought.</p>	<p><i>(25 Points) Comments</i></p>
<p><i>Mechanics</i></p> <p>The paper is laid out with effective use of headings, font styles, and white space.</p> <p>There is proper use of grammar, punctuation, and spelling.</p>	<p><i>(25 Points) Comments</i></p>
<p><i>Total</i></p>	<p><i>(100 Points)</i></p>

ARTICLE REVIEW - WK 5

The student will choose an article related to business communications and write a 2-3 page paper summarizing the main ideas and correlating those ideas to specific concepts covered in the textbook reading. The purpose of an article review is to bring the current application of business communication to the course.

There is much literature from which to select your articles; however all articles must come from ***recognized publications or online publications***. You may use the *Wall Street Journal*, and other publications such as *Business Week, Inc., Fortune, Forbes, and Entrepreneur*.

The summary is to have two distinct parts, and should follow the following format:

Name of Author, "Title of Article," *Periodical*, Date of Publication, pp. #'s.

Article Summary

Briefly summarize the article focusing on the main topics. This section highlights main ideas in the article; opinions are not given here.

Relevance to the Material

State how the article relates to the materials covered. State the specific concept(s) **and** the **specific chapter** to which your article relates. You may state your opinions here, but it is not necessary.

Your paper should be formatted as follows:

- Typed, double-spaced, Times New Roman font (12pt), one-inch margin on all sides, APA format.
- Use headers for each of the two subject areas, followed by your response.
- In addition to the two to three (2-3) pages required, a title page is to be included. The title page is to contain the title of the assignment, your name, the instructor's name, the course title and the date. The paper should also have a reference page. ***NOTE: The title and reference pages will not be counted as part of your 2-3 pages.***
- In addition to the course textbook, a minimum of one (1) additional reference should be used. Wikipedia references will not be accepted. Make sure references are listed in proper APA format.

GRADING RUBRIC: ARTICLE REVIEW - WK5

<i>Content and Development</i>	<i>(50 Points) Comments</i>
<p>The following elements of the assignment are covered in a substantive way.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summarized an article focusing on the main topics. • Highlighted the main ideas in the article. • Stated how the article relates to the materials covered. • State the specific concept(s) and the specific chapter(s) to which your article relates. • 2-3 pages 	
The paper develops a central theme or idea directed toward the appropriate audience.	
Statements are stated clearly; supported by specific details, examples, or analysis	
The introduction provides sufficient background on topic and includes a thesis statement. Summary conclusion of major points present.	
<i>Readability and Style</i>	<i>(25 Points) Comments</i>
The tone is appropriate to the content and assignment.	
Sentences are complete, clear, and concise.	
Sentences are well constructed, strong, and varied.	
Sentence transitions are present and maintain the flow of thought.	
<i>Mechanics</i>	<i>(25 Points) Comments</i>
The paper is laid out with effective use of headings, font styles, and white space.	
Proper use of grammar, punctuation, and spelling	
APA formatted title page present. In-text citations used and reference page properly formatted.	
<i>Total</i>	<i>(100 Points)</i>