



**The University of Hong Kong
Faculty of Business and Economics**

**BUSI1802: Advanced Business Communication Skills
Course Syllabus**

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I. COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

This course aims at enhancing students' communication skills and preparing them to meet the communication requirements of today's business world. Students will undertake the following: attending lectures, participating in class discussion, reading and analyzing cases, developing a business writing piece with good style, and presenting their analysis and research in selected business topics. Special topics will be extracted from the following areas: interpersonal communication, organizational communication, intercultural communication, conflict management and negotiation, persuasion, business writing and presentation.

Teaching and learning tools used to achieve better learning outcomes include class readings, case discussion, videos, role-playing, simulations, presentations, as well as lectures and various assessment tools.

Students in this class are expected to ask questions, to participate in class activities, and to be prepared for class discussions regarding readings and cases. A successful learning experience depends on contributions from both the instructor and the students to the communication process. Full and active participation is critical for achieving the optimal learning outcome for all the students.

II. COURSE MATERIALS:

Required Readings:

Clawson, J. G., Yemen, G., and pazFigini, M. (2004). Listen up! How to be appropriately assertive. HBP.

Heath, C., & Heath, D. (2010). *Made to stick* (Ch. 1 & 2). Random House, NY.

Locker, K. O., & Kienzler, D. S. (2015). *Business and administrative communication*. McGraw-Hill Irwin (selected chapters). - **TEXTBOOK**

Morgan, N. (2008). How to be an authentic speaker. Harvard Business Review.

Neale, M. A. & Bazerman, M. H. (2015). Negotiating rationally: The power and impact of the negotiator's frame. In R. J. Lewicki, B. Barry, and D. M. Saunders (Eds.). *Negotiation: Reading, exercises, and cases*

(pp.143-152). McGraw-Hill Education.

Sebenius, J. (2008). Tom Muccio: Negotiating the P & G relationship with Mal-Mart (A). Harvard Business Publishing.

Wezowski, K. (2017). 6 ways to look more confident during a presentation. Harvard Business Review.

(HBP article) Confronting Directly and Indirectly: Are You Attuned to Notice (2015)?

(HBP article) Types of negotiation: Many paths to a deal.

(HBP article) The Influence of cultural values on business practice (2015).

Class materials, including Asia Case Research Centre (ACRC) Cases and Videos, will be distributed in class or uploaded on our course website on Moodle.

III. INTENDED COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES (CLOs)

Through applying and integrating knowledge in business communication acquired from the above teaching and learning tools, the following Learning Outcomes may be expected:

CLO 1. Master key knowledge in communication related to intercultural communication, conflict management, persuasion, business writing, and business presentations.

CLO 2. Communicate ideas clearly and persuasively by strategic choice of structures, vocabularies, logic, and arguments in business writing and presentations.

CLO 3. Negotiate and provide solutions to complex problems by utilizing strategic interaction, research and evidence in both oral and written forms.

CLO 4. Interact with colleagues, customers, business partners, and competitors from different cultural backgrounds with understanding, comfort and competence, as reflected in both oral and written forms.

CLO 5. Use proper coping strategies for conflict and negotiations, as reflected in both oral and written forms.

I. ALIGNMENTS OF INTENDED FACULTY LEARNING GOALS & COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

Faculty Learning Goals	CLOs
1. Acquisition and internalization of knowledge and skills in key functional areas	1, 2, 3, 4, & 5
2. Application and integration of business knowledge	1, 2, 3
3. Inculcating professionalism	1, 2, 4, & 5
4. Developing global outlook	4
5. Mastering communication skills	1, 2, 4, & 5
6. Cultivating leadership	1, 2, 3, 4, & 5

V. ASSESSMENT

Group presentation on communication topics

(OL: Research and present findings and cases on communication topics) 40%

Individual memo (WL: Write a persuasive email or memo to propose a change)	40%
Class participation (discussions, mini interview, etc.)	20%
Total	100%

1. Individual Memo. You need to write a memo/email, make a request or propose a change to an organization that you are involved in, for the purpose of enhancing productivity, work environment, or management effectiveness. Please address to the person in charge of the organization. Your writing needs to reflect the integrated communication skills learned in class. This assignment is worth 40% of your course grade.

Focus: CLO 1, 2, 3, 4, & 5

2. Presentations. You and your group will conduct a presentation regarding a communication topic that we have covered in class, such as intercultural communication, conflict management and negotiation, crisis communication, etc. You will need to choose one topic, research it, then present some key takeaways and extra findings on the topic, and elaborate with real cases.

The presentation takes 20 minutes. All team members need to be involved in the presentation. Use business presentation techniques to deliver your presentation in a logical and organized way. Your speech will be graded on a group basis, as well as on each member's individual contributions. You will also be responsible for providing feedback to other groups' presentations and for conducting peer performance reviews of your team members and your own work. The presentation is worth 40% of your course grade.

Focus: CLO 1, 2, 3, 4, & 5

Please note: Detailed instructions for the memo and presentations will be distributed in class on the days when these tasks are assigned.

3. Class Participation. All class members are expected to read the materials (readings or cases) assigned for each class meeting. Participants need to contribute to the class discussion throughout the term: 1) share with the class your ideas, viewpoints, and experiences; 2) ask and answer questions; 3) present results of the mini interview; and so on. The quality and quantity of your discussion participation throughout the term is worth 20% of your course grade.

Mini Interview: During the semester, you will conduct an interview with a person who is in a leader position and interview them on their view and experience on the importance of communication in their job and in their profession. You will need to report on your findings in the last week of class.

Focus: CLO 1, 2, & 5

VI. COURSE GRADING DESCRIPTOR

Grade	Course Grade Descriptor
A+, A, A-	Strong evidence of superb ability to fulfill the intended learning outcomes of the course at all levels of learning: describe, apply, evaluate and synthesize in all communication topics covered, in oral and written forms.
B+, B, B-	Strong evidence of ability to fulfill the intended learning outcomes of the course at all levels of learning: describe, apply, evaluate and synthesize in all communication topics covered, in oral and written forms.

C+, C, C-	Evidence of adequate ability to fulfill the intended learning outcomes of the course, as reflected in oral and written forms, at low levels of learning, such as describing and applying, but not at high levels of learning, such as evaluating and synthesizing.
D+, D	Evidence of basic familiarity with the communication topics covered.
F	Little evidence of basic familiarity with the subject.

VII. STUDY LOAD

Course Teaching and Learning Activities	Expected Study Hours	Study Load (% of study)
T&L 1. Interactive lectures	39	32.5%
T&L 2. Group project, case analysis and homework	40	33.3%
T&L 3. Self-study	41	34.2%
Total	120	100%

VIII. COURSE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Attendance: Attendance and participation are vital if you are to do well in this course and enhance your effective business communication skills. Students who miss THREE classes without legitimate documentations will receive a warning letter from the faculty. Not meeting the attendance requirement may result in a failure for this course.

There are four legitimate excuses for missing class: illness, religious observance, participation in University activities at the request of the University authorities, or compelling circumstances beyond the student's control. Written documentation will not be accepted after the 7th calendar day after the due day, at which time the lateness/absence will be considered unexcused. In the case of an emergency, you are responsible for contacting your instructor as soon as possible.

Late Assignment Policy: Because presentations are conducted in front of the whole class, there will be no make-up presentations. All presentations need to be conducted at their scheduled time slot. For the formal business report, for every calendar day that the assignment is late, 20% of the assignment grade will be deducted (e.g., lose 6 points for a 30-point assignment). Except for illness or other emergencies, any student expecting to miss a course deadline must have the approval from instructor *prior to* the assignment due date. Failure to turn in an assignment on time without explicit exemption by the instructor may result in a grade of ZERO for the assignment.

Academic Integrity: plagiarism in assigned work will result in a score of zero in that assignment, and a potential failure of the entire course. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to: quoting scholarly materials without acknowledgement; and turning in work completed by another person but represented to be your own.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: Appropriate academic accommodations will be provided to students with documented disabilities. Please provide the official documentation by the end of the second week of class. Academic accommodations will not be provided without official documentation.

Tentative Schedule

ANY NECESSARY CHANGES WILL BE ANNOUNCED AND A REVISED SCHEDULE DISTRIBUTED

DATE	TOPICS	READINGS and ASSIGNMENTS
WEEK 1		
Session 1	Course Introduction; Introduction to Business Communication.	Syllabus
WEEK 2		
Session 1	Components of Communication (Message, Perceptual Screen, and Noise) Activity: Class discussion and analysis on effective use of communication channels (OL & WL)	
Session 2	Components of Communication (Channel and Media) Activity: Group discussion on examples of good communicator and good communication practice (OL).	Textbook, Cp. 1 & 4
WEEK 3		
Session 1	Intercultural Communication Activity: Student sharing on intercultural communication experience (OL)	

Session 2	Intercultural Communication (Lecture)	Textbook, Cp. 5 <i>HBP Readings</i>
WEEK 4		
Session 1	Intercultural Communication Activity: Case analysis and discussion on intercultural communication (OL)	Group Formation.
Session 2	Intercultural Communication Activity: Debate on validity of different cultural values based on established cultural dimensions (OL)	Supplementary Reading
WEEK 5		
Session 1	Conflict Management and Negotiation (Lecture)	Assign mini-interview.
Session 2	Conflict Management and Negotiation Activity: Negotiation simulation (OL)	Types of Negotiation Assign group presentation.
WEEK 6		
Session 1	Conflict Management and Negotiation Activity: Planning and Negotiation simulation with student counterpart of foreign university (WL & OL)	Thomas-Kilmann Questionnaire and analysis;
Session 2	Conflict Management and Negotiation Activity: Debriefing session for intercultural negotiation, with negotiators for both parties sharing thoughts and experiences (OL)	
WEEK 7		
Session 1	Assertive Communication (Lecture)	<i>HBP article</i>

Session 2	Persuasion (Lecture)	<i>Made to Stick (Ch. 1-2)</i> Textbook, Cp. 5, 6
WEEK 8		
Session 1	Business Writing (WL)	Textbook, Cp. 2 & 3
Session 2	Business Writing Activity: Writing workshop – students exchange and provide feedback to each other’s persuasive writing piece (WL)	Textbook, Cp. 9, 10, 11 Assign individual memo.
WEEK 9		
Session 1	Business Writing; Activity: Writing workshop (cont.) – instructor feedback with student examples (WL) Presentation of proposal idea and feedback (OL)	
Session 2	Presentation Skills (OL)	Textbook, Cp. 19; Case Readings on Presentation
WEEK 10		
Session 1	Presentation Skills (OL)	
Session 2	Presentation Skills Activity: In-class presentation practice (OL)	
WEEK 11		
Session 1	Formal Group Presentation (OL)	Group 3, 5, & 7

Session 2	Formal Group Presentation (OL)	Group 2
WEEK 12		
Session 1	Formal Group Presentation (OL)	
Session 2	Formal Group Presentation (OL)	Group 6, 1 & 4
WEEK 13		
Session 1	Mini-Interview Presentation (WL & OL) Activity: Students conduct interviews with business leaders on communication topics and present results in class (OL)	
Session 2	Presentation Feedback (OL)	

Assignment: Presentation on Selected Communication Topic(s)

Presentation dates and venue:

Task:

You and your group will conduct a presentation regarding a communication topic or a couple of topics that we have (or haven't) covered in class, such as communication media, perception and biases, intercultural communication, conflict management and negotiation, persuasion, crisis communication, business writing or presentation. As a group, you will need to choose one or more topics, review class discussion and readings, research the specific topic(s) of interest, and present 3 to 5 key points and elaborate with examples or/and cases.

Requirements:

You may cover those points we have discussed in class, but you will also need to present some knowledge points that are new to the class (not covered in class material) for the topic based on your research. Explain the concepts/theories involved in each point, use examples to illustrate the points, and discuss implications in some practical area of interest, such as business, management, innovation, marketing, human resources, etc.

The presentation takes 20 minutes followed by 5 minutes of Q-and-A. All team members need to be involved in the presentation. Use oral communication techniques to deliver your presentation in a logical and organized way.

You will also be responsible for providing feedback to other groups' presentations and conduct peer performance review for your team members and your own work.

The presentation is worth 40% of your course grade.

Presentation order:

Group	Presentation Date and Order
3	
5	
7	
2	
6	
1	
4	

Rubrics for Assessing Presentation

Group: _____

Category	Specific Items	Ratings
Structure (8 points)	Overall Coherence (2): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The presentation fulfills the task requirements. ■ The presentation is within the time limit. 	
	Attention-getter (2): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Use of proper tool to build emotional bond with audience and draw connection to the central idea 	
	Theme and overview (1): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Provides the central idea and an overview which clearly introduces the structure 	
	Conclusion (2): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Clearly summarizes the main ideas and recaps the central idea 	
	Transitions (1): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The use of internal summery, forecast or signpost 	
Content, Organization, and Persuasiveness (17 points)	Show correct understanding of communication concepts (6)	
	A rich variety of supporting information in the slides contributes to the understanding of the main idea (6)	
	Build credibility (2): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Show familiarity of the material ■ Orally quote external sources of high credibility ■ Show honesty and sensitivity to audience needs 	
	Logical argument (3): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Adopt Minto Pyramid, spiral of premises-and-proof, OR storyline structure ■ Free of reasoning fallacies ■ Discuss the effectiveness and feasibility of proposal (if applies) 	
Delivery (10 points)	Vocal delivery (5): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Dynamic and active tone ■ Appropriate pitch ■ Enunciation ■ Vocal variety ■ Control of meaningless utterance, e.g., “Uhs”, “you know” ■ Appropriate speed and pace ■ Present with enthusiasm 	
	Build connection (3): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Natural gestures and proper posture ■ Appropriate eye contact building connection with audience 	
	Appropriate use of visual aids (2): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Content logical, relevant, clear and concise 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Original/reused images & graphics suitably selected, and key points explained and reinforced during the presentation. 	
Q-and-A (5 points)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Concise and relevant answer ■ Proper and effective Q-and-A strategies 	
Total Score (40):		

Individual Assignment Memo/Email for Change

Due Date:

Points: 40 points

Instruction:

Please write a memo/email proposing a change or raising a request to your school, organization, dorm, community, etc., for the purpose of improving work/study productivity, work/study environment, management effectiveness, or other business/operation related performance. The memo/email needs to be directed to the key person(s) in charge of the particular organization that your suggestion is made for.

The assignment needs to begin with a brief introduction that familiarizes your instructor with necessary background information of your proposal (e.g., the nature of the organization/group, the person involved, the current status...). Then, you may write the memo/email on the second page, addressing to the appropriate audience.

Please utilize the communication, negotiation, writing and persuasion skills learned in class to enhance the quality of your writing.

Format:

This is an individual assignment.

The assignment is composed of two pages: Page 1 – Background introduction of the issue to your instructor (half to one page); Page 2 – The Memo/Email.

Page format: Font size Times New Roman 12 and page margin 1".

Grading Criteria:

Grading is based on the following criteria:

- 1) Demonstration that you are aware of your audience, as shown in the content as well as in the writing style.
- 2) Correct understanding and use of communication and persuasion skills (the three-part framework), as demonstrated in your writing.
- 3) Persuasiveness of your message.
- 4) Clear, coherent, and concise writing.
- 5) Absence of grammatical and spelling errors.

Please see the breakdown of grading rubrics on the next page.

Rubrics for Assessing Individual Memo

BUSI1802

Name:

Category	Specific Items	Ratings
Task Completion (5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Relevant response to the writing task ■ Comprehensive response to the writing task ■ Not excessively under or over the word limit 	
Content and Persuasiveness (16)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Demonstrate understanding of relevant communication concepts and theories where appropriate ■ Proper use of negotiation strategies and persuasion appeals ■ Arguments fit together to build a compelling case ■ Skillful integration and synthesis of sources to support arguments, if needed ■ Show effectiveness and feasibility of your proposal. ■ Free of reasoning fallacies 	
Structure and Organization (12)	<p>Logical argument and persuasive appeal (12):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Clear background / introduction ■ Use Minto Pyramid structure ■ Paragraphs not too long or too short ■ Flow of arguments and ideas coherently developed at whole essay, paragraph and sentence level. 	
Language (5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Grammar and/or vocabulary errors may be present but do not impact readability. ■ Appropriate tone (formality) for the assignment ■ Appropriate use of technical vocabulary and phrases appropriate to the context (e.g., business, legal, social science or medical terminology) ■ Writing is always very clear, direct, concise and easy to follow. 	
Mechanics (2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Follows the correct font, line spacing and margin requirements 	
Total (40)		