

ECBA 307: Business Communications

Prerequisite(s): ENGL 111, 112

Credits: 3



I. Course Description

This course provides the foundations of all types of business communication including letters, memos, electronic communication, written reports, oral presentations, microblogging, and interpersonal communication. The course also includes topics of resumes, application letters, interviewing tips, and employment follow-up documents.

II. Course Objectives

1. Evaluate elements of effective business communication.
2. Explain barriers that can create ineffective communication.
3. Analyze ethical issues related to communication.
4. Examine how technology has impacted business communications.
5. Explain the importance of intercultural communication in the business setting.
6. Use the English language appropriately in business communications.
7. Write an effective business message.
8. Develop effective visual aids for a business proposal.
9. Create a resume.

III. Course Textbooks and Reading Materials

***Students must purchase in advance texts and/or materials for this course.**

Business Communication Today, ed. 14th
Courtland L. Bovee and John V. Thill
ISBN: 9780134562186

IV. Weekly Information

Module One – Week 1

Introduction to Business Communications

Objectives

At the end of this Module, you should be able to:

- 1.1 Explain the importance of effective communication to your career and to the companies where you will work.
- 1.2 Explain what it means to communicate as a professional in a business context.

- 1.3 Describe the communication process model and the ways social media are changing the nature of business communication.
- 1.4 Outline the challenges and opportunities of mobile communication in business.
- 1.5 List four general guidelines for using communication technology effectively.
- 1.6 Define ethics, explain the difference between an ethical dilemma and an ethical lapse, and list six guidelines for making ethical communication choices.
- 1.7 Describe the business uses of social media such as Twitter and other microblogging systems.

Reading

Read in your textbook:

Chapter 1: Professional Communication in a Digital, Social, Mobile World
Chapter 8: Social Media

Lecture

Review the PowerPoint lectures for Chapters 1 and 8

Deliverables

Discussion - Introduction

Discussion - Microblogging and Analyzing Communication Effectiveness

Written Assignment - Case Study

Quiz

Module Two – Week 2

Mastering Team Skills and Interpersonal Communication

Objectives

At the end of this Module, you should be able to:

- 2.1 List the advantages and disadvantages of working in teams, describe the characteristics of effective teams, and highlight four key issues of group dynamics.
- 2.2 Offer guidelines for collaborative communication, identify major collaboration technologies, and explain how to give constructive feedback.
- 2.3 List the key steps needed to ensure productive team meetings.
- 2.4 Identify the major technologies used to enhance or replace in-person meetings.
- 2.5 Identify three major modes of listening, describe the listening process, and explain the problem of selective listening.
- 2.6 Explain the importance of nonverbal communication, and identify six major categories of nonverbal expression.
- 2.7 Explain the importance of business etiquette, and identify three key areas in which good etiquette is essential.

- 2.8 Discuss the opportunities and challenges of intercultural communication.
- 2.9 Identify seven steps you can take to improve your intercultural communication skills.

Reading

Read in your textbook:

Chapter 2: Collaboration, Interpersonal Communication, and Business Etiquette

Chapter 3: Communication Challenges in a Diverse, Global Marketplace

Lecture

Review the PowerPoint lectures for Chapters 2 and 3

Deliverables

Discussion - Communicating Across Cultures

Written Assignment - Preparing for a Business Meeting

Quiz

Module Three – Week 3

Composing a Business Message

Objectives

At the end of this Module, you should be able to:

- 3.1 Describe the three-step writing process.
- 3.2 Explain why it is important to analyze a communication situation in order to define your purpose and profile your audience before writing a message.
- 3.3 List the factors to consider when choosing the most appropriate medium for a message.
- 3.4 Identify the four aspects of being sensitive to audience needs when writing business messages.
- 3.5 Explain how to achieve a tone that is conversational but businesslike, explain the value of using plain language, and define active and passive voice.
- 3.6 List four techniques you can use to improve the readability of your messages.
- 3.7 Describe eight steps you can take to improve the clarity of your writing, and give four tips on making your writing more concise

Reading

Read in your textbook:

Chapter 4: Planning Business Messages

Chapter 5: Writing Business Messages

Chapter 6: Completing Business Messages

Lecture

Review the PowerPoint lectures for Chapters 4 – 6

Deliverables

Discussion – Ethics Detective

Written Assignment - Writing Effective Business Messages

Quiz

Module Four – Week 4**Communicating Routine Information and Bad News****Objectives**

At the end of this Module, you should be able to:

- 4.1 Outline an effective strategy for writing routine business requests.
- 4.2 Describe three common types of routine requests.
- 4.3 Outline an effective strategy for writing routine replies and positive messages.
- 4.4 Describe six common types of routine replies and positive messages.
- 4.5 Apply the three-step writing process to negative messages.
- 4.6 Explain how to use the direct approach effectively when conveying negative news.
- 4.7 Explain how to use the indirect approach effectively when conveying negative news.
- 4.8 Explain the importance of maintaining high standards of ethics and etiquette when delivering negative messages.
- 4.9 Describe successful strategies for sending negative messages on routine business matters.
- 4.10 List the important points to consider when conveying negative organizational news.

Reading

Read in your textbook:

Chapter 10: Writing Routine and Positive Messages

Chapter 11: Writing Negative Messages

Lecture

Review the PowerPoint lectures for Chapters 10 and 11

Deliverables

Discussion – Routine Replies

Written Assignment – Written and Oral Communication

Quiz

Module Five – Week 5

Persuasive Communications

Objectives

At the end of this Module, you should be able to:

- 5.1 Apply the three-step writing process to persuasive messages.
- 5.2 Describe an effective strategy for developing persuasive business messages, and identify the three most common categories of persuasive business messages.
- 5.3 Describe an effective strategy for developing marketing and sales messages and explain how to modify your approach when writing promotional messages for social media.
- 5.4 Identify steps you can take to avoid ethical lapses in marketing and sales messages.

Reading

Read in your textbook:

Chapter 12: Writing Persuasive Messages

Lecture

Review the PowerPoint lectures for Chapter12

Deliverables

Discussion - Solving the case of the Incredible Credibility

Written Assignment: Parts A and B

- Part A: Writing a Persuasive Message
- Part B: Marketing and Sales Messages

Quiz

Module Six – Week 6

Composing Business Reports and Proposals

Objectives

At the end of this Module, you should be able to:

- 6.1 Describe an effective process for conducting business research.
- 6.2 Define secondary research and explain how to evaluate, locate, and document information sources.
- 6.3 Define primary research, and outline the steps involved in conducting surveys and interviews.
- 6.4 Describe the major tasks involved in processing research results.
- 6.5 Explain how to summarize research results and present conclusions and recommendations.
- 6.6 Adapt the three-step writing process to reports and proposals.

- 6.7 List the options for organizing informational reports, and identify the key parts of a business plan.
- 6.8 Discuss three major ways to organize analytical reports.
- 6.9 Explain how to choose an organizational strategy when writing a proposal.

Reading

Read in your textbook:

Chapter 13: Finding, Evaluating, and Processing Information

Chapter 14: Planning Reports and Proposals

Lecture

Review the PowerPoint lectures for Chapters 13 and 14

Deliverables

Discussion - Quality and Credibility

Written Assignment – Writing a Business Report with Visual Aids

Quiz

Module Seven – Week 7

Reports, Proposals, and Resumes

Objectives

At the end of this Module, you should be able to:

- 7.1 Explain how to adapt to your audience when writing reports and proposals.
- 7.2 Name five characteristics of effective report content, and list the topics commonly covered in the introduction, body, and close of formal reports.
- 7.3 List six strategies to strengthen a proposal argument, and list the topics commonly covered in the introduction, body, and close of proposals.
- 7.4 Summarize the four tasks involved in completing business reports and proposals.
- 7.5 Identify the elements to include in a request for proposals (RFP).
- 7.6 List eight key steps to finding the ideal opportunity in today's job market.
- 7.7 Explain the process of planning your résumé, including how to choose the best résumé organization.
- 7.8 Describe the tasks involved in writing your résumé, and list the major sections of a traditional résumé.
- 7.9 Characterize the completing step for résumés, including the six most common formats in which you can produce a résumé.

Reading

Read in your textbook:

Chapter 15: Writing and Completing Reports and Proposals

Chapter 18: Building Careers and Writing Resumes

Chapter 19: Applying and Interviewing for Employment

Lecture

Review the PowerPoint lectures for Chapters 15, 18, and 19

Deliverables

Discussion – Communication Challenges at Burning Glass

Written Assignment Parts A and B

- Part A: Resume Writing
- Part B: Writing a Formal Report

Quiz

V. Course Information and Grading

Course Requirements (Weekly)

Each Module will be based on the inclusion and grading of the following segments:
Discussion Boards, Assignments/ Case Studies/ Projects.

Class Discussions

Successful online learning requires active and meaningful participation in the Discussion Board Forum. Critical thinking, appropriate use of judgment and professional comments are required for all responses. Simple agreement or disagreement with a fellow student does not constitute a quality response. Student opinions are important but must be supported by relevant data obtained in the literature or text.

1. One initial discussion board post is due by the fourth day (Thursday @ 11:59 pm) of each weekly module and two response posts are due by the last day (Sunday @ 11:59 pm) of each weekly module.
 - a. Undergraduate Word Count Requirements:
 - i. Initial post must be >200 words
 - ii. Responses must be >150 words
 - b. Graduate Word Count Requirements:
 - i. Initial post must be >250 words
 - ii. Responses must be >200 words
2. Participation – Students must meet initial and response post deadlines to be eligible for full points. Late initial posts may be accepted with a 33% reduction in the overall score assessed for each day late. Two response posts are required. If only one is received, then the overall score will be reduced by 25%. If no

response posts are received, then the overall score will be reduced by 50%.

3. Students should be respectful and write in a proper and professional manner.

Please refer to the Discussion Board Rubric located within course syllabus for specific requirements and guidance on delivering a substantial discussion.

Late and Make-up Assignments

All deliverables are due by 11:59 PM on the due dates indicated. When substantive emergencies occur, acceptance of late submissions is left to the discretion of the course instructor.

Assignments that are submitted after the due date with prior written approval (text or email) from the instructor may receive the following deductions:

1. Late assignments are subject to a deduction of 10% of the available points for each day late.
2. Assignments submitted later than one week after due date will not be accepted and will receive a zero (0).
3. No work may be submitted after the last day of the course.
4. See Class Discussions for late discussion post policy.

Written Work

- All graded assignments must be typewritten, as designated by the professor of record for the course.
- All referenced materials must be presented according to the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA), based on the most current published edition. (current, 7th edition) (Except for English courses that specify use of MLA format.)
- All required written assignments are due on the last night of each lesson week at 11:59pm EST. This information is included in the course scheduler and calendar of every course.
- All written and graded assignments are considered the property of the College of Adult and Professional Studies and should be returned to the appropriate professor of record for the related course.
- SafeAssign may be used to check for plagiarism.

Grading Scale and Assigned Letter Grades

Charleston Southern Online Undergraduate classes follow the following numerical and letter grading scale. Grades will be posted by the Sunday night following the closing of the Module. No grades will be given to students over the phone.

A = 90-100

B+ = 87-89

B = 80-86

C+ = 77-79

C = 70-76

D = 60-69

F = <60

Undergraduate Discussion Board Rubric – Introduction (First week only)

Criteria	Minimal	Effective
Percent Possible: 0 or 50 Initial Post Introduction.	Percent Possible: 0 No post or did not follow instructions at all.	Percent Possible: 50 Posted following instructions.
Percent Possible: 0 or 50 Response Posts Welcome.	Percent Possible: 0 No post or did not follow instructions at all.	Percent Possible: 50 Posted following instructions.

Discussion Board Initial Post Rubric – Undergraduate

Initial Post Rubric	Content	Support & References	Mechanics & Length
Mastery 90-100%	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Relevant and thought-provoking viewpoints• Innovative and indicates a high level of thought• High level of critical thought, analysis, and application of concepts and ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student cites 2 peer-reviewed sources in the body of the posts• Proper APA format	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Post exceeds 200 words• Very well written
Effective 80-89%	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advances the discussion and body of knowledge providing relevant, original thoughts to the question	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student cites 2 peer-reviewed sources in the body of the post	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Post 178-200 words• Well written

Initial Post Rubric	Content	Support & References	Mechanics & Length
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conveys thoughts in a well-rounded manner that show understanding, critical thought, and application of concepts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not in appropriate APA format 	
Competent 70-79%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes mostly complete response to the questions • Mostly restatement of materials • Conveys thoughts adequately; however, need to further develop critical aspects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student cites 1 peer-reviewed source. • Not in appropriate APA format 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post is 158-178 words • A few writing errors
Minimal 0-69%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides weak contribution to the discussion board • Does not convey concept understanding • Shows evidence of critical thought but is not concise or complete 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not cite any peer-reviewed sources • Addresses questions in a manner that is unclear • Not appropriate APA format 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post is less than 158 words • Poorly written • 0 points for posts submitted after 11:59 PM EST on Thursday

Discussion Board Peer Response Rubric – Undergraduate

Peer Response Rubric	Content	Support & References	Mechanics & Length
Mastery 90-100%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advances discussion providing additional commentary that is relevant or offers an alternative • Critical thought development is evidenced by thoughtful and meaningful responses • Source is relevant and published in last 3 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student cites 2 peer-reviewed sources in the body of the posts • Proper APA format 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post exceeds 150 words • Very well written
Effective 80-89%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advances discussion providing additional commentary and critique • Responses are correct but mostly restate the peers' viewpoints 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student cites 2 peer-reviewed sources • Not in appropriate APA format 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post is 133-150 words • Well written

Peer Response Rubric	Content	Support & References	Mechanics & Length
	without development of critical thought <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Source is relevant and published in last 3 years 		
Competent 70-79%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shows adequate understanding of the knowledge and concepts posted by peers • Responses are mostly, "I agree..." • Source is somewhat relevant and published in last 5 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student cites 1 peer-reviewed source • Not in appropriate APA format 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post is 118-132 words • A few writing errors.
Minimal 0-69%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shows minor comprehension of concepts and viewpoints from peers. • Responses are vague and do not show understanding or comprehension 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not cite any peer-reviewed sources • Not appropriate APA format 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post 0-118 words • Poorly written • 0 points for posts submitted after 11:59 PM EST on Sunday

Assignment/Case Study/Course Project Rubric

Assignment Rubric	Critical Thinking	References & Organization
Mastery 90-100%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant use of vocabulary throughout • Demonstrates superior knowledge of concepts and theories • Addresses problem/issue directly • Demonstrates active critical thinking relevant to problem identification and effective solutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional writing structure. • Well-organized response. • Student cites appropriate, current peer-reviewed sources • Proper APA format • Exceeds 500 words
Effective 80-89%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates satisfactory understanding • Lacks answer to all questions/full scenario • Demonstrates some knowledge of content and professional vocabulary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student cites some relevant, current peer-reviewed sources. • Follows directions • APA formatting demonstrated but not extensive. • 450-500 words

Assignment Rubric	Critical Thinking	References & Organization
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content needs additional focus for innovative responses other than restatement of text. 	
Competent 70-79%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inconsistent comprehension Marginal responses Content, concepts, ideas/responses are not fully developed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sources are outdated or ineffective. Lacks focus on content Unorganized Some writing errors Not in appropriate APA format. 400-449 words
Minimal 0-69%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistently below expectations Lacks significant details of the assignment Lacks critical thought, analysis, and application. Partially addresses the topic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not cite any peer-reviewed sources Not appropriate APA format 0-399 words Poorly written. 0 points for late assignments

Short Answer Rubric – Undergraduate

Short Answer Rubric	Clarity	Depth	Quality
Mastery 90-100%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevant use of vocabulary throughout Demonstrates superior knowledge of concepts and theories Addresses problem/issue directly Demonstrates active critical thinking relevant to problem identification and effective solutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Articulates critical thoughts & analysis throughout the answer Obvious use of outside resources to supplement resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional writing structure Well-organized response Free of grammatical, spelling, & formatting errors
Effective 80-89%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates satisfactory understanding Lacks answer to all questions/full scenario Demonstrates some knowledge of content and professional vocabulary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrated some form of outside material used Shows some critical thinking and active thought 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follows assignment instructions Well-written Few writing errors

Short Answer Rubric	Clarity	Depth	Quality
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content needs additional focus for innovative responses other than restatement of text 		
<p>Competent 70-79%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inconsistent comprehension • Marginal responses • Content, concepts, ideas/responses are not fully developed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided enough detail for marginal requirement • “Textbook” in nature (restatement of what was in textbook) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lacks focus on content • Some writing errors
<p>Minimal 0-69%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistently below expectations • Lacks significant details of the assignment • Lacks critical thought, analysis, and application • Partially addresses the topic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lacked detail that demonstrates active thought • One-sentence answer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unorganized and poorly written • 0 points for late assignments