
BUAD 302: Communication Strategy in Business

Date: 5/14/2007
To: BUAD 302 Students
From: Robert M. McCann, Ph.D.
Re: Syllabus for BUAD 302

Instructor Information

Course name: BUAD 302 Communication Strategy in Business

Faculty name: Dr. Robert M. McCann

Office: ACC 215 E

Office phone: 213-740-6874

Email address: robertmc@marshall.usc.edu

Office hours: Mondays 2:45-3:45 and by appointment

No matter what your career goals, the levels of success you reach will depend on your ability to communicate. Will you become a powerful CEO, investment banker, consultant, entrepreneur, marketing or management director, financial executive, or any other type of business leader? The women and men at the top of quality organizations are skillful communicators. Almost without exception, successful business professionals are recognized for their ability to write well, to speak dynamically, and to cultivate business relationships through strong interpersonal communication skills. This course is designed to help you develop or polish those skills and to help you identify the areas you should continue to improve as you pursue your professional career.

Course Description

BUAD 302 is an experientially based course that focuses on oral presentations and the fine-tuning of business communication skills. This course is a valuable step in the ongoing process of becoming an effective communicator.

Goal and Learning Objectives

Business Communication Strategy—Theory:

Demonstrate understanding of the elements of business communication theory and apply this understanding to communications in a wide range of business contexts.

Business Communication Strategy— Application:

Apply communication theory to develop business communication strategies, including evaluation of purpose, audience, context, and channel choice. Demonstrate the ability to analyze, compare and critique these strategies, and effectively communicate this assessment.

By the end of your BUAD 302 experience, you should have acquired knowledge and skills in the following areas:

Business Presentations

- Analyze a communicative situation and develop a strategy to create effective persuasive business presentations.
- Demonstrate understanding of and apply the principles of effective business presentations, including managing question-and-answer sessions and employing visuals.

Interpersonal Communication

- Demonstrate understanding of the elements of nonverbal communication and apply them in interpersonal communication situations.
- Demonstrate understanding of the principles and processes of effective listening and apply them in interpersonal communication situations.
- Demonstrate understanding of the principles of effective feedback and apply them to provide effective and appropriate feedback to peers.

Organizational Communication

- Demonstrate understanding of organizational communication practices—external and internal—and apply this knowledge in various communication contexts.
- Demonstrate awareness of intercultural factors that affect communication and apply this knowledge in intercultural communication situations.
- Demonstrate understanding of the principles of small group communication, including problem solving

Students will enter this class at varying skill levels. The goal is for each student to leave with a higher skill level and a broader understanding of the business communication strategies needed to continue to develop and improve as a student and a professional.

Required Texts

The required reading material for this course is

Communication Strategy in Business. Customized text for this course.

You also should have a small, recently published dictionary and a thesaurus. And, you should use the spell-checking and grammar-checking features built into Microsoft Word, along with the already installed dictionary and thesaurus. Check the program documentation to see how to use them.

If you are having difficulties with the mechanics of writing, I strongly suggest a self-study program. If you exhibit serious deficiencies in your writing or your speaking, it will be wise for you to make plans early to visit the University Writing Center on a regular basis and consider getting a tutor to help you. Located on the third floor of Taper Hall, the Writing Center will allow you to schedule 30-minute appointments with writing consultants trained to assist you in planning, organizing, and revising your assignments. Some consultants are graduate business students in the Marshall School of Business. Others have special skills in working with students for whom English is a second language. The Writing Center also offers daily workshops on troublesome language and grammar issues, and makes available a number of handouts on an array of grammar and usage points:

<http://www.usc.edu/dept/LAS/writing/writingcenter/>.

Online resources to help you improve your writing are also abundant. A number of colleges and universities have developed OWLS (online writing labs) that can assist you with almost any aspect of writing. You may want to investigate several of these sites and see which one has the right “personality” for you. You could begin your investigation by visiting a metasite created by Capital Community College in Hartford, Connecticut: <http://webster.commnet.edu/writing/writing.htm>.

International students and non-native writers and speakers of English will also want to investigate the help available to them through USC’s American Language Institute: <http://www.usc.edu/dept/LAS/ALI/>.

Attendance

Please be present in every class and ready to begin work at the time class is scheduled to start. Remember that absence from class and/or a pattern of lateness will adversely affect your grade (in the same way that such behavior would adversely affect your performance evaluations in a professional setting). Because we often have activities at the start of class, being late means you might miss the quiz, exercise, group project, or impromptu opportunity and the points associated with it.

Also note that ELC dates are locked well in advance and cannot be changed.

Academic Matters

- Class cancellations
- Plagiarism
- Retention of graded papers
- Students with disabilities

Class Cancellation

Only official notices written on Management Communication letterhead, dated, and signed by the Director (Paul Frommer) will constitute a notice of cancellation for a class session.

Plagiarism

“Plagiarism is the unacknowledged and inappropriate use of the ideas or wording of another writer and can result in severe penalties including an “F” in the course. The best way to avoid plagiarism is to carefully document your sources, even when you are only making use of data or ideas rather than an actual quotation. To avoid having your writing marked by illegitimate assistance, ask yourself whether you would be able, on your own and without further assistance, to revise and improve the writing in question. If the answer is ‘No’---if you would not be able to maintain the same conceptual and stylistic quality without outside assistance—then you should not submit the writing as your own work.”

—*Student Guide to the Freshman Writing Program*

Retention of Graded Papers

Returned paperwork, unclaimed by a student, may be discarded 4 weeks after grades are posted by the University and, hence, will not be available should a grade appeal be pursued by a student following the receipt of his/her course grade.

Students with Disabilities

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. You can obtain a letter of verification for approved accommodations from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 am – 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.

Productivity Tools

The Marshall School of Business computing environment supports the Microsoft Office bundle of productivity tools and the Blackboard course management system. All out-of-class assignments must be prepared with these tools--or tools that produce compatible files--and printed on a laser or inkjet printer.

Additionally, you should have a good, recently published dictionary and a thesaurus and be familiar with the spell-checking and grammar-checking features built into Microsoft Word. Check the program documentation to see how to use these programs and be aware of the program's limitations. Remember that computer programs are insufficient to adequately proofread a document.

Assignments and Coursework

Final grades in the course will depend on your performance in the following types of assignments:

- Oral presentations
- Written communications
- Classroom activities, exercises, and participation
- Examinations

Additional Information (Assignments and Coursework)

Classroom Activities and Exercises

Throughout the term, you will participate in interactive exercises both in the classroom and in the Experiential Learning Center (ELC). Some of the exercises will be credit/no credit based simply on participation in the exercise. Others will be graded. Late arrivals will receive partial credit. Excused absences will be reviewed on an individual basis. Unexcused absences will receive no credit.

Examinations

There will be a graded midterm examination. This exam will cover the lecture materials and course readings. Course readings include those that are assigned from the course textbook as well as any that are posted to Blackboard. You are responsible for reading and understanding the assigned readings; we will not review all of them in class.

Assignment Protocol

- Assignments are due at the beginning of the class period on the date assigned. Any assignment turned in late will receive half credit as a starting point. Late assignments must be turned in within one week of the original due date.
- If you are unable to attend class on the day a written assignment is due, make arrangements for it to be delivered to the classroom or to my box by the start of class. I will not accept assignments via FAX or email.
- Any written assignment or presentation that is not turned in will receive an "F."
- Your written assignments should be free of spelling, punctuation, or grammar errors. Any errors in mechanics reduce the effectiveness of written communication and will dramatically lower your grade.
- Where a bibliography, reference notes, or other stylistic requirements are used, the information must conform to a standard style manual (APA or MLA).

Presentation Grading

I am particularly interested in your developing an ability to connect with your audience. It is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to make this connection when you are reading your presentation or reciting it word-for-word. Reading verbatim – or even appearing to read – a presentation will lower your grade significantly.

It is permissible to use notes, of course, but my task is to wean you from the temptation to write out your presentation in complete sentences and memorize it. Doing this virtually destroys your effectiveness as a presenter. If you are using detailed notes during a presentation, be forewarned that I reserve the right to take them away from you.

Grading Policies

The Marshall School of Business grading policy is rather explicit:

“In order to avoid substantial disparities across courses, instructors in the Marshall School of Business are required to adhere to specific target grade point averages for each course they teach. The target average GPA for an undergraduate required course is 3.00. Instructors are not permitted to have their average GPA in a single course deviate by more than 0.1 above the target.”

An A = Outstanding or exceptional work.

- "A" work reflects mastery of course, concepts, tools, and techniques, plus a solid understanding of implications, applications, or interrelationships, as may be appropriate.
- "A" work also reflects your ability to apply and express that understanding with meaningful language. In business, this would mean your manager would accept the work with no revision, be willing to put his or her name on it, and send it forward.
- To put it another way, an 'A' on a written or oral communication signifies that the communication
 - contains a clear, early statement of the main idea
 - states the sender's conclusion as the receiver's main idea
 - has a carefully developed opening, middle, and close
 - recognizes complexities by thoughtfully addressing more than one of them
 - includes strongly supportive details
 - is logically developed and well organized
 - employs a style and tone appropriate to the occasion
 - demonstrates mature sentence variety and paragraph development
 - contains few, if any, clichés
 - considers who does what next
 - and is free of grammar and usage errors

Grade Review

If an assignment is returned to you and you believe that some error has occurred in the grading, you can, within one week of the date the assignment is returned to you, request—using a memo—that I re-evaluate the assignment. The original assignment or the videotape should be attached to the memo, and the new memo should carefully explain why you think the assignment should be re-graded. It's important to also realize that the re-evaluation process can result in three types of grade adjustments: positive, none, and negative.

Components of Final Grade

All assignments are graded on a 100-point scale. Percentages are out of 100 possible percent.

Individual Assignments

First Oral Presentation	35%
Examination	35%
Class Participation	5%
Groups Teach Groups Presentation (individual component)	12.5%
Groups Teach Groups (group component)	12.5%

Experiential Learning Center (ELC)

You will be videotaped in business speaking situations and participate in exercises and simulations in the Experiential Learning Center (ELC) in Popovich Hall, Rooms 301. PCs in the ELC are equipped with a CD player and a Zip drive.

Exercises in the ELC are important to your mastery of communication skills. ELC sessions begin promptly, and punctuality is vital. "Dress for Success" and maintain a professional appearance whenever our class meets in the ELC--unless I change the dress code for the occasion. What an audience sees when you speak influences what it hears and thinks, and what you wear is an important aspect of ELC presentations.

You Are Always an Audience Member

You learn as much from observing presentations as you do from making presentations. Be an attentive, active listener when others are making presentations. You will be asked to comment on them.

Courtesy to Fellow Students

It is important that each of us demonstrates respect for our peers. When others are speaking, you must give them your utmost attention. We may not agree with each other's interpretations of selected information, but such evaluations should be conducted in the spirit of critical inquiry.

Make sure you turn off all electronic devices upon entering the classroom (i.e. watch alarms, beepers, and cellular telephones).

Services

Two other facilities within the Marshall School of Business offer a broad range of informational, software and hardware services. Schedules for these facilities can be found on the Marshall School homepage:
www.marshall.usc.edu

LSOA Library (1st floor ACC)	(213) 740-8520
Instructional Technology Support (ITS)	(213) 740-5577

Emergency Numbers

USC Emergencies	(213) 740-4321
USC Emergency Information Line	(213) 740-9233
USC Information Line	(213) 740-2311
KUSC Radio	91.5 FM