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Office hours
Time: 4-5 p.m. Wednesdays
and by appointment
Location: ACC 407 (Leventhal)

Professor: Todd Henneman **Class information**
Time: 5 to 6:20 p.m.
Location: JFF 312 (Fertitta Hall)

Social media
 [/toddhenneman](https://twitter.com/toddhenneman)
 [/in/toddhenneman](https://www.linkedin.com/in/toddhenneman)

Course description

Welcome to Advanced Writing for Business. I recognize the power of effective communication and the danger of ineffective communication. Through this course, I strive to help you master techniques that elevate your skills. This course will hone your acumen for writing clear, concise documents that advance business-related objectives. You will refine your grammar, rhetoric, and critical-thinking skills to craft effective communications. You also write to inform and persuade internal and external audiences, analyze contemporary business cases, and explore the effects of technology on communication strategy.

Building on skills you developed in WRIT 140 or its equivalent, this course will strengthen your writing and deepen your understanding of business-communication techniques through in-class activities, discussions, individual assignments, and teamwork. Major assignments include writing business reports, opinion pieces, and a business plan as well as exploring a current business-communication crisis through a lens of diversity, equity, and inclusion. As we build toward the assignments, we will explore topics ranging from word-, sentence-, and paragraph-level issues to global considerations such as developing arguments and tailoring messages.

Simply put, this course will elevate your writing and serve you well for years to come.

Learning objectives

At the end of the course, you will be able to ...

1. **Recognize and implement** the qualities associated with effective business writing: conciseness, coherence, clarity, and correctness;
2. **Develop** communication goals for diverse audiences and tailor the messages to specific ones;
3. **Select and strategically use** traditional and new communication media;
4. **Plan, create, and complete** a variety of business documents (e.g. memos, emails, proposals, reports) with appropriate headings, layout, typography, and content;
5. **Conduct research** using a range of sources, **synthesize** the information, and **critique** its quality;
6. **Support** claims with logical reasoning and evaluate claims in other persuasive documents;
7. **Discuss** the importance of ethics and the implications for business communication;
8. **Collaborate productively** with others in research and analysis as well as writing and editing tasks;
9. **Express** ideas in a confident yet professional and respectful manner.

Alignment with USC and Marshall's learning goals

This course is designed to meet USC's requirement for Advanced Writing as well as selected Marshall Learning Goals. Please see Appendix.

Prerequisites

The prerequisite for WRIT 340 is WRIT 140/150 or its equivalent.

MATERIAL

Blackboard

We will use the Blackboard course management system for posting assignments, grades, and more. I will post announcements, reminders, and news that apply to everyone. I also will share reading materials and instructions. I will reserve emails for messages that apply only to specific students. Do not share or distribute elsewhere content posted on Blackboard.

Required text

This section does not use a textbook. I will provide required readings and other material through Blackboard. Please complete these before class sessions, meeting deadlines on the course calendar.

Business news

For some assignments, you also will need to read business-related news stories. I will demonstrate in class how to create a student account through the USC Libraries for free access to the [Wall Street Journal](#). I encourage you also to consume news sources from other sources such as the [Barron's](#), [Bloomberg](#), [Fortune](#), [MarketWatch](#), [New York Times](#), [Los Angeles Times](#) and [TechCrunch](#). Keep in mind that a few of these have paywalls, but you may access the content for free through the [USC Libraries](#). Consider subscribing to a (free) podcast such as [Bloomberg Businessweek](#), [Marketplace](#), NPR's [Business Story of the Day](#), or NPR's [Planet Money](#).

Required technology

- [Adobe Reader](#)
- A laptop or desktop with high-speed internet access
- Microsoft Word or word-processing software compatible with Microsoft Word (Office 365 is available for [free to USC students](#). Questions? Contact [USC ITS](#).)
- Access to a laser printer (Tip: Upload your document to the [Marshall Print Center](#) and swipe your campus ID card at any Marshall Xerox printer to print.)
- A working USC email account that you check daily

Optional resources

Alred, G. J., Brusaw, C. T., & Oliu, W. E. (2017). *The business writer's companion* (8th ed.). New York, NY: Bedford/St. Martin's.

[The Associated Press Stylebook](#) (56th ed.)

Kessler, L. & McDonald, D. (2015). *When words collide: A media writer's guide to grammar and style* (9th ed.). Boston, MA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.

Office of Investor Education and Assistance (1998) [A Plain English Handbook](#). Washington, D.C.: U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission.

WRITING SUPPORT

USC Writing Center

The [USC Writing Center](#) offers writers two 25-minute individual consultations per week, online or in person. Some writing consultants are Marshall School of Business graduate students, and some specialize in working with students for whom English is a second language. The Writing Center also provides video tutorials and other resources online. It is in Taper Hall (THH) 206.

American Language Institute Writing Labs

[All Writing Labs](#) are informal weekly workshops run by USC native English-speaking students who will assist international students in drafting their academic and professional writing and communications.

Writing conferences

You will have an opportunity to meet one-on-one with me during the semester for a coaching session. You also may schedule an appointment to meet with me for additional feedback.

COMMUNICATION

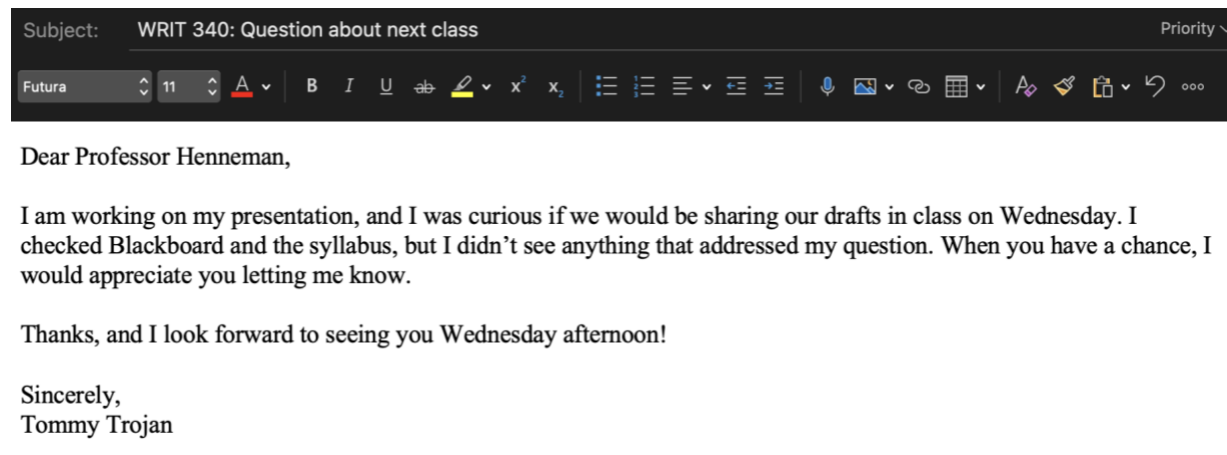
Open expression and respect for all

An important goal of the educational experience at USC Marshall is to be exposed to and discuss diverse, thought-provoking, and sometimes controversial ideas that challenge one's beliefs. In this course, we will support the values articulated in the USC Marshall "[Open Expression Statement](#)."

Email

I don't want to miss your message. If you send me an email, use your USC email account. Otherwise, your message may land in a junk folder. Please include **WRIT 340** in the subject line followed by a few words that describe your email's purpose. Practice the principles of professional emails by including a greeting, clear reason for your message, anything else that I should know, and a signature.

Here's an example:



LEARNING ASSESSMENT

Assignment	Points	Percent
Business memo	125	12.5%
Business report	175	17.5%
Op-ed	175	17.5%
Participation	100	10%
Case study	175	17.5%
Final portfolio	250	25%
Total	1,000	100%

On Blackboard, I will post detailed guidelines and a grading rubric for each of the five major assignments. Below you will find a description of those assignments.

Business memo: Identify a trend that affects a specific company. Explain why this trend matters, considering key stakeholders.

Business report: This assignment simulates developing a common business document: an evidence-based recommendation. Conduct research and then propose a nonprofit organization with whom to partner as part of a new corporate social responsibility initiative.

Op-ed: Write an informed opinion piece or "guest essay" for a publication of your choice that addresses a timely business issue, making well-supported and logical arguments.

Participation: You do not receive credit for merely being in class. As a professional, you should contribute to the learning community. This section of Writing 340 incorporates many in-class exercises, activities, and "mini" assignments. They provide opportunities to contribute in meaningful ways, apply concepts, and practice skills before a major assignment. In general, each one is worth five points, and you receive credit simply for completing it. However, you must be in class to qualify for credit.

Team case: Collaborating with classmates, identify, research, and write a case study about a recent business-communications blunder, particularly considering dimensions of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Also suggest how the company should move forward.

Final portfolio: Revise two of the three individual writing assignments for your final portfolio. Show your best writing. Keep in mind that these portfolios are "collaboratively evaluated," meaning that more than one writing professor will review your portfolio and determine your grade. They will not evaluate it based on how much it has improved compared with the original version. They will evaluate it based on its quality. Therefore, I recommend revising your two strongest assignments.

GRADING POLICIES

Evaluation: On Blackboard, I provide rubrics to help you prepare your work and understand your grades. The rubrics also help make the grading consistent and as objective as possible. As reflected in rubrics, you will lose points for factual errors and typos. You also will lose points for grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors. Follow APA guidelines or journalistic style, as appropriate.

Grading scale

My goal is to provide you with the highest grade for the course that I can justify based on your work.

- At the 300-level, work that earns a grade in the A range is difficult to distinguish from professional writing. It shows mastery of grammar, rhetoric, and logic. It is clear, concise, and accurate.
- Work that earns a grade in the B range demonstrates strong control — though not mastery — of grammar, rhetoric, and logic to reach its audience; the writing is clear but not always concise.
- Work that earns a grade in the C range demonstrates competence yet weakness in grammar, rhetoric, and/or logic; the writing might be verbose or unclear or not fully understand its audience.
- Work that earns a grade in the D range show limited control of grammar, rhetoric, or logic.
- Work that earns a grade in the F range contains content that either is inappropriate or so unclear that it undermines its mission, and lacks command of grammar, rhetoric, and logic.

Course grades are final and are not rounded up. Grade averages are often in the B range for this course. Remember that your final course grade reflects the quality of your work, not necessarily your effort.

Assignment submission policy: Upload your work to Blackboard as a .doc, .docx, or .pdf file by the relevant deadline listed on the course calendar. Don't wait until the last minute to upload because you could encounter a technological problem such as your Wi-Fi crashing or computer dying.

Appealing a grade: If you feel that an error has occurred in the grading of any assignment, you may send me an email in which you request that I re-evaluate the assignment. Attach the original assignment to the email and explain clearly and carefully why you think that the assignment should be re-graded. You must make this request within one week of the date that the assignment is returned to you. Be aware that the re-evaluation process can result in three types of grade adjustments: positive, none, or negative.

Late work: Late assignments decrease by one full letter grade. If the quality of your work merits a B+, for example, then you would receive a C+ if your deliverable arrived late. Late assignments won't be accepted more than one week after the deadline, resulting in a zero. The only exception is the final portfolio. Because it serves as your "final," portfolios will not be accepted after the deadline.

Extra credit: No extra credit is available in this course.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND CONDUCT

Collaboration policy: I encourage you to discuss with others your ideas for completing assignments. However, once you begin writing the deliverable, your work must be your work. In other words, do not seek help with your writing from friends, family, tutors, or online forums. Failing to abide by the above guidelines may constitute a case of suspected plagiarism or cheating, which will be reported.

Plagiarism: Don't do it. Presenting someone else's work as your own is a bad idea. Plagiarism includes using someone else's work without appropriately acknowledging or crediting the source. To avoid problems, I encourage you to complete the USC Libraries [tutorial](#) about academic integrity. Also review the discussion of plagiarism in "Behavior Violating University Standards and Appropriate Outcomes," found in [Part B, Section 1.1](#) of *SCampus*.

TECHNICAL SUPPORT

USC Systems (Blackboard, USC Login, MyUSC, USC Gmail, GoogleApps): Call (213) 740-5555 or send an email to consult@usc.edu weekdays from 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. and weekends from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Marshall Systems (MyMarshall, Outlook email): Call (213) 740-3000 or send an email HelpDesk@marshall.usc.edu. The Marshall Systems office is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Pacific. You also can use the self-help service portal by searching for the needed information, chatting with a technician, and/or inputting a request. To access the service portal, follow these steps:

- Go to MyMarshall Home Page and click the "Help" link on the upper right.
- Log in using your Marshall username and password.

Zoom Video Conferencing (MarshallTALK): Visit the Zoom Support Page or call (888) 799-9666, ext. 2.

COURSE CALENDAR

(subject to change based on circumstances)

Date	Topics	Readings and deadlines
Week 1		
Course introductions and communication fundamentals		
Monday, Aug. 22	Introducing the course Getting to know one another	Read the syllabus Complete three-question survey before class In-class mini assignment: What's the policy?
Wednesday, Aug. 24	Understanding the genre of business writing Using the three-step writing process Applying 'Plain English'	Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Rules of good writing" • "How to improve your business writing" • "A bizspeak blacklist" • "Writing in Plain English" Due: Ungraded writing assessment Mini assignment: Rewrite that!
Week 2		
Writing emails		
Monday, Aug. 29	Writing effective subject lines Effectively using email	Read: "10 tips for writing professional emails" Watch: "How to write better emails at work" In-class activity: subject lines
Wednesday, Aug. 31	Delivering good, bad, and neutral news Recognizing indirect methods	Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Writing professional emails in the workplace" • "This is the best way to deliver bad news, according to science" • "Strategies for delivering bad news" Mini assignment: Sharing bad news
Week 3		
Writing memos		
Monday, Sept. 5	Labor Day — no class	
Wednesday, Sept. 7	Explaining the purpose and format of a memo Recognizing effective strategies for business memos <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Discuss first homework assignment 	Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Checklist for writing action memoranda" • "Business memos" • "What writers can learn from Amazon's famous 6-page memo" In-class activity: Dissect a memo
Week 4		
Considering stakeholders		
Monday, Sept. 12	Identifying stakeholders Understanding audiences	Reading: "Considering your stakeholders" Watch: "Why you should read your memo out loud" In-class activity: What does this mean?
Wednesday, Sept. 14	Managing routine requests	In-class exercise: Requesting versus replying

Week 5		
Preparing business reports		
Monday, Sept. 19	Assessing sources Identifying attributes of quality information	Mini assignment: comparing sources Due by 11:59 p.m.: Business email
Wednesday, Sept. 21	Identifying options for organizing reports ➤ Discuss second homework assignment	Read: "Planning reports and proposals"
Week 6		
Addressing social responsibility		
Monday, Sept. 26	Explaining the Symbiotic Sustainability Model	Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Corporate social responsibility and business ethics" • "Does the CSR message matter?" • "How to make charitable partners part of your PR strategy" In-class activity: Discuss social responsibility
Wednesday, Sept. 28	Discuss Netflix case ➤ Introduce team case	Read: "Netflix employees walk out over company culture" "Diversity, equity and inclusion framework" In-class activity: Self-reflection
Week 7		
Visualizing data		
Monday, Oct. 3	Showing data to tell your story	Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "How to choose the right graph for your data" • "How to use charts and graphs effectively" In-class activity: Tools
Wednesday, Oct. 5	Providing feedback Exchanging feedback Note: Bring a draft of your business report	Read: "Giving feedback for peer review" In-class activity: Exchange feedback
Week 8		
Identifying your case		
Monday, Oct. 10	Reviewing case instructions Developing group contract	Read: "NBA players' strike: How the NBA responded to an unprecedented work stoppage following the Jacob Blake shooting" Mini assignment: Upload group contract
Wednesday, Oct. 12	Working in group	Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Six elements of a crisis communication plan" • "Communicating in a crisis"
Week 9		
Writing op-eds		
Monday, Oct. 17	Understanding leads (or ledes) Discuss op-ed assignment	Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One of the opinion pieces posted on Blackboard • "The eight values that will make your content 'newsworthy'" • "A good lead is everything — here's how to write one" Mini assignment: What's the point?

Week 9 (continued)	Writing op-eds	
Wednesday, Oct. 19	Common structures	Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “6 steps to writing killer op-eds and commentaries” • “Op-ed Writing: Tips and Tricks” Watch: “How to write an editorial” In-class exercise: practice writing leads
Week 10	Writing conferences	
Monday, Oct. 24	Each student will have a chance to sign up for a one-on-one meeting with me to get help with their writing during class. Time both days this week.	You should meet with your groups during class time and work on their cases, if not meeting with me.
Wednesday, Oct. 26		
Week 11	Journalistic style	
Monday, Oct. 31	Becoming familiar with AP style	Read: “The art of persuasion hasn’t changed in 2,000 years” Exercise: Find that term
Wednesday, Nov. 2	Leveraging news releases	Read: Anatomy of a news release Activity: Explore media resources
Week 12	Polishing materials	
Monday, Nov. 7	Pitching media Writing workshop Note: Bring drafts of op-ed	Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Pitching” • “How to pitch an op-ed and why they have staying power” In-class activity: Exchange feedback
Wednesday, Nov. 9	Meeting with case team	Due by 11:59 p.m.: Upload op-ed
Week 13	Finalizing cases	
Monday, Nov. 14	Meeting with case team	
Wednesday, Nov. 16	Meeting with case team	Due by 11:59 p.m.: team case
Week 14	‘Slacking’ in the workplace	
Monday, Nov. 21	Recognizing challenges of Slack and other emerging platforms	Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Should Employers Pick Up Slack?” • “The ultimate Slack etiquette guide” • “Slackers of the world, unite!” In-class activity: Slack guidelines
Wednesday, Nov. 23	No class Thanksgiving holiday Nov. 23 — Nov. 27	
Week 15	Wrapping up	
Monday, Nov. 28	Speed-round presentations	
Wednesday, Nov. 30	Looking ahead	In-class activity: Survey says ...
Upload your final portfolio by 11:59 p.m. Friday, Dec. 2		

IN-CLASS TECHNOLOGY USE

Technology policy

I encourage you to bring laptops to class — for classwork and only classwork. Other e-devices such as cell phones must be completely turned off. Upon request, put your device on the table in off mode and face down. Videotaping faculty lectures is not permitted because of copyright infringement regulations. Audiotaping may be permitted if approved by the professor. Use of any recorded or distributed material is reserved exclusively for the USC students registered in this class. Exceptions to this policy may be granted to individual students with appropriate documentation on a case-by-case basis.

Use of recordings

Pursuant to the USC Student Handbook (www.usc.edu/scampus, Part B, 11.12), students may not record a university class without the express permission of the instructor and announcing it to the class. In addition, students may not distribute or use notes or recordings based on university classes or lectures without the express permission of the instructor for purposes other than personal or class-related group study by individuals registered for the class. This restriction on unauthorized use applies to all information that is distributed or displayed for use in relationship to the class.

USC STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC CONDUCT AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Students with disabilities

The University of Southern California determines through the Office of Student Accessibility Services if/that academic accommodations are necessary to support a student with a disability. It is the academic department and faculty members' responsibility to ensure academic accommodations are provided. It is the student's responsibility to submit accommodation requests in a timely manner as well as follow OSAS's policies and procedures. Accommodations do not go into effect retroactively. OSAS personnel are available for consultation should questions and more complicated accommodation needs arise. Students must register with Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) for each academic term that accommodations are desired. Guidelines for the OSAS accommodation process can be found at <https://osas.usc.edu/>.

Emergency preparedness/course continuity

In case of a declared emergency if travel to campus is not feasible, the *USC Emergency Information* web site (<http://emergency.usc.edu/>) will provide safety and other information, including electronic means by which instructors will conduct class using a combination of USC's Blackboard learning management system (blackboard.usc.edu), teleconferencing, and other technologies.

Counseling and mental health

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention. – Call (213) 740-9355. Available 24/7. Visit studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Call (800) 273-8255 or visit suicidepreventionlifeline.org.

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention and Services (RSVP)

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm. Call (213) 740-9355 (WELL) and press "0" after hours. Available 24/7. Visit studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault.

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants. The university prohibits discrimination or harassment based on the following protected characteristics: race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, physical disability, medical condition, mental disability, marital status, pregnancy, veteran status, genetic information, and any other characteristic which may be specified in applicable laws and governmental regulations. The university also prohibits sexual assault, non-consensual sexual contact, sexual misconduct, intimate partner violence, stalking, malicious dissuasion, retaliation, and violation of interim measures. Call (213) 740-5086. For Title IX, call (213) 821-8298. Visit equity.usc.edu or titleix.usc.edu.

Reporting incidents of bias or harassment

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office of Equity and Diversity | Title IX

for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response. Call (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298 or visit usc-advocate.symlicity.com/care_report.

USC Support and Advocacy

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student. Call (213) 821-4710 or visit uscsa.usc.edu.

Diversity at USC

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students. Call (213) 740-2101 or visit diversity.usc.edu.

USC emergency

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible. Help is available 24/7.

- For the University Park Campus, call (213) 740-4321
- For the Health Sciences Campus, call (323) 442-1000
- Visit dps.usc.edu or emergency.usc.edu

USC Department of Public Safety

Non-emergency assistance or information is available 24/7.

- For the University Park Campus, call (213) 740-6000
- For the Health Sciences Campus, call (323) 442-120
- Visit dps.usc.edu

Appendix



Undergraduate Program Learning Goals and Objectives (last update 12/21/17)

Learning goal 1: Our graduates will demonstrate critical thinking skills so as to become future-oriented problem solvers, innovators and decision makers in diverse and rapidly changing business environments.

- Students will demonstrate the ability to anticipate, identify and solve business problems. They will be able to identify and assess central problems, identify and evaluate potential solutions, and translate a chosen solution to an implementation plan that considers future contingencies
- Students will demonstrate the ability to be accurate, clear, expansive (thorough, detailed) and fair-minded in their thinking
- Students will critically analyze concepts, theories and processes by stating them in their own words, understanding key components, identifying assumptions, indicating how they are similar to and different from others and translating them to the real world
- Students will be effective at gathering, storing, and using qualitative and quantitative data and at using analytical tools and frameworks to understand and solve business problems
- Students will understand the concepts of critical thinking, entrepreneurial thinking and creative thinking as drivers of innovative ideas

Learning Goal 2: Our graduates will develop people and leadership skills to promote their effectiveness as business managers and leaders in the 21st century's evolving work and organizational structures.

- Students will recognize, understand and analyze the roles, responsibilities and behaviors of effective managers and leaders in diverse business contexts e.g., functionally diverse, culturally diverse, geographically diverse, etc.
- Students will understand factors that contribute to effective teamwork including how to elicit, manage and leverage diverse perspectives and competencies.
- Students will recognize, understand, and analyze the motivations and behaviors of stakeholders inside and outside organizations (e.g., teams, departments, consumers, investors, auditors)

Learning Goal 3: Our graduates will be effective communicators to facilitate information flow in organizational, social, and intercultural contexts.

- Students will identify and assess diverse personal and organizational communication goals and audience information needs
- Students will demonstrate an ability to gather and disseminate information and communicate it clearly, logically, and persuasively in professional contexts
- Students will understand individual and group communications patterns and dynamics in organizations and other professional contexts

Learning goal 4: Our graduates will demonstrate ethical reasoning skills, understand social, civic, and professional responsibilities and aspire to add value to society.

- Students will recognize ethical challenges in business situations and assess appropriate courses of action
- Students will understand professional codes of conduct

Learning goal 5: Our graduates will develop a global business perspective. They will understand how local, regional, and international markets, and economic, social and cultural issues impact business decisions so as to anticipate new opportunities in any marketplace.

- Students will understand that stakeholders, stakeholder interests, business environments (legal, regulatory, competitor) and business practices vary across regions of the world
- Students will understand how local, regional and global markets interact and are impacted by economic, social and cultural factors.

Learning goal 6: Our graduates will understand types of markets and key business areas and their interaction to effectively manage different types of enterprises.

- Students will demonstrate foundational knowledge of core business disciplines, including business analytics and business economics
 - Students will understand the interrelationships between functional areas of business so as to develop a general perspective on business management
 - Students will apply theories, models, and frameworks to analyze relevant markets (e.g. product, capital, commodity, factor and labor markets)
 - Students will be able to use technologies (e.g., spreadsheets, databases, software) relevant to contemporary business practices
-