

# UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON

## C. T. BAUER COLLEGE of BUSINESS BAUER ■ MBA

### GENB 6A50 - Business Communications Fall 2015 Syllabus

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**Office hours:** Mondays 11:30 – 1:30

*Whatever their level, communication is key for workers to advance. "This is really the ability to clearly articulate your point of view and the ability to create a connection through communication," says Holly Paul, U.S. recruiting leader at PricewaterhouseCoopers.*

*-"Must Have Job Skills in 2013," The Wall Street Journal, November 18, 2012.*

#### **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course is designed to help you communicate more effectively, both in writing and speaking. It focuses on the practical applications of writing, communicating, and presenting within a professional business setting. It has been developed based upon feedback received from employers, faculty and staff who interact with Bauer MBA students, as well as direct input from the MBA Advisory Board.

This course will introduce you to the importance of effective communication skills and will provide the opportunity for you to put them into practice through in-class discussions, group projects, writing assignments and video role-plays. These projects provide the opportunity to examine and improve in communication areas that could inhibit your ability to be effective in a professional setting.

If you participate in class, work closely with teammates, and complete assignments on time, you will improve your ability to communicate ideas and become more effective in representing yourself, your company and its products and services. You also will learn what is necessary to build long-term, profitable relationships with employers, coworkers, classmates and clients.

#### **COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

To enhance student proficiencies in the following areas:

- Communication skills
- Effective writing
- Presentation skills
- Business acumen and professionalism
- Interpersonal skills

#### **REQUIRED COURSE MATERIAL:**

**Texts: You can find the textbooks on Amazon – links provided below:**

- **HBR Guide to Better Business Writing**, by Bryan A. Garner
  - Link to Amazon: [http://www.amazon.com/HBR-Guide-Better-Business-Writing/dp/142218403X/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1437415476&sr=1-](http://www.amazon.com/HBR-Guide-Better-Business-Writing/dp/142218403X/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1437415476&sr=1-)

[1&keywords=HBR+Guide+to+Better+Business+Writing&pebp=1437415478316&perid=1EQ7WWTXM66XMC4KHW0B](http://www.amazon.com/Crucial-Conversations-Talking-Stakes-Second/dp/0071771328/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1437415554&sr=1-1&keywords=crucial+conversations&pebp=1437415478316&perid=1EQ7WWTXM66XMC4KHW0B)

- **Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When Stakes are High**, by Kerry Patterson & Joseph Grenny
  - Link to Amazon: [http://www.amazon.com/Crucial-Conversations-Talking-Stakes-Second/dp/0071771328/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1437415554&sr=1-1&keywords=crucial+conversations&pebp=1437415561239&perid=00MFPB70QF3ABR60K5Y9](http://www.amazon.com/Crucial-Conversations-Talking-Stakes-Second/dp/0071771328/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1437415554&sr=1-1&keywords=crucial+conversations&pebp=1437415561239&perid=00MFPB70QF3ABR60K5Y9)

**Course Packet & Case:** *You will need to purchase the course notes/materials and the case that will be used for the course at the University Book Store – it will be under GENB 7A97 – Business Communications.*

**Supplementary Materials:** Available on Blackboard

#### **BLACKBOARD LEARN:**

This class will use Blackboard Learn as a course supplement. With Blackboard Learn you can view class notes, download class readings, communicate with fellow students, and view grades and course progress at any time. Students are encouraged to log onto Blackboard Learn regularly to stay current with the class.

All communication on Blackboard will be monitored by the professor and will be responded to in a timely manner. **For immediate communication with the professor, email directly at [avandaveer@uh.edu](mailto:avandaveer@uh.edu). When emailing via Blackboard Learn or directly, please identify yourself with your name and day of your class so I can quickly address your situation.**

Instructions for assignments are outlined in Folders on Blackboard under Course Content. This is provided for you to review and access the material in order to fully understand the guidelines necessary for the course and assignments. Many of the assignments are due via Blackboard and you can attach your assignment utilizing the **Assignments Link**. The Assignments Link will provide the due date associated with each assignment and you can attach your file and upload your assignment here. Please be aware of the material accessible on Blackboard, as well as any messages that are shared with the class.

#### **CLASS ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION:**

One of my favorite quotes is **“No deposit. No return.”** It’s that simple. You will get out of this class what you put into it. Classes are a combination of presentation, lecture, discussion, with an emphasis on discussion. **You are expected to participate.** The more you come ready to participate, the better the class discussion and interaction, the more you learn and easier the exams and assignments will be. We have a lot to cover in a short amount of time and in order for you to benefit most from the class it is imperative that everyone be respectful of their peers and professor.

**Cell phones, computers, texting, leaving class, or disruptive behavior will not be permitted or tolerated during class.** This is a communications course and in order to learn the skills that are imperative to success in any career, we are going to ‘unplug and engage’ in order to better develop the ability to observe, listen and interact with others to ensure we are taking in and sending out the messages we want.

Another component of the attendance and participation will be engaging in outside activities where you can practice and enhance your communication skills. The following are **REQUIRED ATTENDANCE/PARTICIPATION** with Co-Curricular Activities within the GPP Department: **Etiquette Dinner, Meeting/Assessment with Writing Center, MBA Networking Event.** The dates for these are provided on the Course Schedule outlined below.

#### **COURSE PROCEDURES:**

Given the limited number of class meetings, this course will be conducted at an intense pace. Every class meeting has required activities linked to the course objectives. Extensive class participation is expected. Assigned readings,

and all assignments should be completed prior to class. Assignments are due at the beginning of class and to be handed in to the professor in class, not submitted via email unless you have communicated with the professor ahead of time. Late assignments will not be accepted.

**ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:**

Students in this course who need accommodations for any sort of disability should contact the Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD), 307 Student Service Center (713-743-5400-voice, 713-749-1527- TTY) by September 3, 2013. Reasonable accommodations for persons with documented disabilities will be provided. If you feel you need accommodations in this course, please let me know before September 9, 2013.

**COURSE POLICY ON ACADEMIC HONESTY:**

The University of Houston Student Handbook (<http://www.uh.edu/dos/publications/handbook.php>) presents the University’s policy on academic honesty. Students should be aware that anyone who engages in actions prohibited by the University’s policy on academic honesty (e.g., cheating, plagiarism) will be subject to disciplinary action and may not receive credit for this course.

**BAUER CODE OF ETHICS:**

1. Bauer students shall maintain the standard of academic honesty set forth under the University of Houston’s Academic Honesty Policy.
2. Bauer students shall respect other students, faculty, staff, and the Bauer environment.
3. Bauer students shall maintain individual accountability and integrity.

<b>Learning Goals</b>	<b>Objective</b>
Communication	Students will demonstrate effective written and oral communication skills by writing, presenting and role playing the following: Executive Summary, Personal Introduction, Informational Interview, Written Case Analysis, Presentation to C-Level Executive, Crucial Conversation and Persuasive Conversation video role plays.
Cross Disciplinary Competence	Students will demonstrate ability to integrate different functional areas in solving business problems through utilizing communication skills to uncover needs of boss and co-workers through simulated role plays, case analysis and presentation to C-Level Executive about business assessment, recommendations based upon case.
Critical Thinking	Students will demonstrate ability to analyze business situations and recommend appropriate actions through utilizing communication skills to uncover needs of boss and co-workers through simulated role plays, case analysis and presentation to C-Level Executive about business assessment, recommendations based upon case.

**MEASURES OF SUCCESS:**

**Final grades will be determined as follows:**

Value/Vision/Mission Worksheet	5 points
30 Second Commercial Outline/Profile	5 points
Behavioral/Informational Interview: Video Role Play	10 points
Behavioral Interview: Self-Assessment	5 points
Executive Summary	5 points
Persuasive Presentation: Video Role Play	5 points
Persuasive Presentation: Email Follow Up	5 points
Crucial Conversation: Video Role Play	10 points
Self-Assessment: Video Role Plays/Presentations	10 points
Team Case Written Report	10 points
Team Case Presentation	10 points
Peer Evaluation	5 points
Co-Curricular Activities	5 points
Class attendance/participation	<u>10 points</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100 points</b>

**Grades will be assigned on the following scale:**

A	93 - 100 points
A-	90-92
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D	60-69
F	Below 60 points

**MBA Business Communications  
Fall 2015 Class Schedule\***

Class	Date	Topic	Assignment Due
1	Week of 8/24	Syllabus Review and Class Introductions Feedback from MBA Orientation - Guidelines Birkman Assessment Overview	<b>PRIOR TO CLASS: Purchase Required Books, Course Packet, Access to Blackboard, Review Syllabus</b>  <b>Review Birkman Assessment</b>  <b>Blackboard Assignment: Value/Vision/Mission Worksheet</b>
2	Week of 8/30	Communication and Your Business Career: Verbal, Nonverbal, Listening, Writing	<b>Blackboard Assignment: Student Data Sheet</b>

3	Week of 9/7	Your Personal Commercial: Stand Out in 30 Seconds	<b>Turn in Team Identification Form in Class</b>
4	Week of 9/14	In Class Practice: 30 Second Personal Commercial	
5	Week of 9/21  9/24	Informational & Behavioral Interviewing: Being a STAR in the Interview  Informational/Behavioral Interview Role Play Guidelines  <b>CO-CURRICULAR: MBA ETIQUETTE DINNER, 6:00 – 9:00 PM</b>	<b>Blackboard Assignment:</b> 30 Second Commercial Outline/Profile
6	Week of 9/28	<b>Video Role Play: Informational Interview</b>	<b>Professional Dress - Video Role Play</b> Meet in Room 221-227 MH: Video Labs
7	Week of 10/5	Role Play Debrief/Feedback: Behavioral Role Play  Business Writing: Essentials for Success  Executive Summary Guidelines/Instructions	<b>Blackboard Assignment:</b> Behavioral Interview - Personal Product Assessment  Read C-Stores Report
8	Week of 10/12  10/12	Presentation Skills: Persuasive Presentation/ Analyzing a Communication Situation  Video Role Play Guidelines/Instructions: Persuasive Conversation  <b>CO-CURRICULAR: RSVP for MBA NETWORKING EVENT</b>	<b>Blackboard Assignment:</b> Executive Summary – C Stores Report
9	Week of 10/19  10/23	<b>Video Role Play: Persuasive Conversation with a Boss</b>  <b>CO-CURRICULAR: MBA NETWORKING EVENT, 6:00 – 9:00 PM – HOUSTON CLUB</b>	<b>Persuasive Role Play</b> Meet in Room 221-227 MH: Video Labs

10	Week of 10/26	<p>Video Role Play Debrief/Feedback</p> <p>Crucial Conversations in Business: Using STATE Method to Effectively Communicate in Stressful Scenarios</p> <p>Video Role Play Guidelines/Instructions: Crucial Conversations</p>	<p><b>Blackboard Assignment:</b> Persuasive Follow Up Email to Marketing VP</p>
11	Week of 11/2	<p><b>Video Role Play: Crucial Conversations</b></p>	<p><b>Crucial Conversation Role Play</b> Meet in Room 221-227 MH: Video Labs</p>
12	Week of 11/9	<p>Formal Presentation: Enriching the Presentation, Preparing Slides/Other Media and Communicating the Message</p> <p>Guidelines/Instructions for Team Presentation/Paper on Case</p>	
13	Week of 11/16	<p>Corporate Politics: Navigating the Network – Guest Lecturer, Executive Professor Randy Webb</p> <p><b>Co-Curricular: Assessment from Writing Center Due</b></p>	<p><b>Blackboard Assignment: Review &amp; Summary Video Role Plays</b> – Personal Assessment of Communication Skills incorporating all videos/presentations</p> <p><b>Writing Center Assessment: Executive Summary Due in Class</b></p>
14	Week of 11/23	<p><b>THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY – NO CLASS</b></p>	
15	Week of 11/30	<p><b>Team Presentations in Class</b></p> <p><b>Class Wrap Up – Summary</b></p>	<p><b>Team Paper Due</b></p> <p><b>Peer Evaluations</b></p>

*\*Any changes to the class schedule will be announced in class and posted on Blackboard.*