

# UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON

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

### GENB 6A50 - Business Communications Monday, 6-9 p.m., CEMO 101 Spring 2016 Syllabus

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**Office hours:** By appointment

*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 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 your 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 in most bookstores and on Amazon – links provided below:**

- **The Social Styles Handbook: Adapt Your Style to Win Trust** (Wilson Learning Library), by Tom Kramlinger
  - Link to Amazon [http://www.amazon.com/Social-Styles-Handbook-Learning-Library/dp/9077256334/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1436816351&sr=1-1&keywords=wilson+learning](http://www.amazon.com/Social-Styles-Handbook-Learning-Library/dp/9077256334/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1436816351&sr=1-1&keywords=wilson+learning)

- **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=1-1&keywords=HBR+Guide+to+Better+Business+Writing&pebp=1437415478316&perid=1EQ7WWTXM66XMC4KHW0B](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)
- **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)

Note: The above books have not been reserved as the campus bookstore

**Case Study:** You will need to purchase the “Altius Golf and the Fighter Brand” Harvard Business School case study. The case number is 0-913-578.

- Link to HBR: <https://hbr.org/product/altius-golf-and-the-fighter-brand/913578-PDF-ENG>

**Course Notes and Supplementary Materials:** You will find all additional course material on Blackboard Learn, including PowerPoint presentations that will be used during each lecture.

#### **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, send her an email directly to [jenwaldner@gmail.com](mailto:jenwaldner@gmail.com). When emailing via Blackboard Learn or directly, please identify yourself with your name so your inquiry can be quickly addressed.**

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:**

Classes are a combination of presentation, lecture, and 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 important that everyone be respectful of their peers and professor.

**Cell phones, computers, tablets or texting will not be permitted 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.

#### **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. Please pay close attention as to whether an assignment is due in class or through Blackboard Learn. Assignments should not be 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, 2015. Reasonable accommodations for persons with documented disabilities will be provided. If you feel you need accommodations in this course, please let the professor know, as well.

**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.

**MEASURES OF SUCCESS:**

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

Executive Summary	5 points
Persuasive Presentation: Video Role Play	5 points
Persuasive Email – Follow Up	10 points
Team Case Written Report	15 points
Team Case Presentation	15 points
Crucial Conversation: Video Role Play	10 points
Self-assessment/Self Application: Video Role Plays/Presentations	15 points
Peer Evaluation	10 points
Class attendance/participation	<u>15 points</u>
TOTAL	100 points

**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  
Spring 2016 Class Schedule\***

Class	Date	Topic	Assignment Due
<i>There is no class on Monday, January 18 due to the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday. This class date will be made up on Friday, March 13 from 6-9 p.m. Please plan your schedule accordingly.</i>			
1	1/25	Class Introductions and Syllabus Review  Communication and Your Business Career: Verbal, Nonverbal, Communication Styles, Listening, Writing	<b>PRIOR TO CLASS: Purchase Required Books and Case Study, Access to Blackboard, Review Syllabus</b>  <b>Review Social Styles Handbook</b>
2	2/1	Business Writing: Essentials for Success  Executive Summary Guidelines/Instructions	<b>Turn in Student Data Sheet Via Blackboard</b>  <b>Read C-Store Report for class</b>
3	2/8	Presentation Skills: Persuasive Presentation/ Analyzing a Communication Situation  Video Role Play Guidelines/Instructions: Persuasive Conversation	<b>Blackboard Assignment: Executive Summary – C Stores</b>  <b>In Class Assignment: Turn in Team Identification Form</b>
4	2/15	<b>Video Role Play: Persuasive Conversation with a Boss</b>	<b>Persuasive Role Play</b> Meet in Room 221-227 MH: Video Labs  <b>Read Altius Case before class</b>
5	2/22	Video Role Play Debrief/Feedback  Formal Presentation: Enriching the Presentation, Preparing Slides/Other Media and Communicating the Message  Guidelines/Instructions for Team Presentation/Paper on Case	<b>Blackboard Assignment: Persuasive Presentation - Follow Up Email to VP of Marketing</b>
6	2/29	<b>Team Presentations in Class</b>	<b>Due in Class: Team Paper/PPTs to be submitted in class</b>
7	3/7	Presentation Debrief/Feedback  Crucial Conversations in Business: Using STATE Method to Effectively Communicate in Stressful Scenarios  Video Role Play Guidelines/Instructions: Crucial Conversations	

		Video Role Play: Crucial Conversation with a Peer	
8	FRIDAY 3/11	<b>Video Role Play: Crucial Conversations</b> <b>Meet back in class after Video Lab: Role Play Debrief in Class &amp; Course Summary</b>	<b>Blackboard Assignment: Peer Evaluation due 10/16 by midnight</b> <b>Crucial Conversation Role Play</b> Meet in Room 221-227 MH: Video Labs
	Midnight 3/13	<b>Review video role plays</b> – Personal Assessment of Communication Skills incorporating: Persuasive Role Play, Team Presentation, Crucial Conversation	<b>Blackboard Assignment: Personal Assessment of Presentation Skills – Submitted via Blackboard by midnight 3/13</b> <b>Peer Evaluation</b>

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