

# UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON

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

### GENB 6350 - Business Communications Fall 2016 Syllabus

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*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 to ensure your personal and professional success.

#### **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's 10 Must Reads on Communication**, by Harvard Business Review
  - Link to Amazon: [https://www.amazon.com/Communication-featured-Necessary-Persuasion-Conger/dp/1422189864/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1469567292&sr=1-](https://www.amazon.com/Communication-featured-Necessary-Persuasion-Conger/dp/1422189864/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1469567292&sr=1-)

[1&keywords=hbr+10+must+reads+on+communication](#)

- **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)

**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 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 and Rockwell Career Center: **Approved Resume and LinkedIn Profile by Rockwell Career Center, MBA Networking RSVP, and attending MBA Networking Event.** The dates for these are provided on the Course Schedule outlined below.

**COURSE PROCEDURES:**

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 via Blackboard before the beginning of class. I will accept assignments via email. They are all due via Blackboard. 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 & SWOT Worksheet	5 points
o Values, Core Competencies, Vision & Mission Statement – 2.5 points	
o Goals, SWOT and Strategies Worksheet – 2.5 points.	
30 Second Commercial Outline/Profile	5 points
Behavioral/Informational Interview: Video Role Play	5 points
Behavioral Interview: Self-Assessment	5 points
Executive Summary	5 points
Persuasive Presentation: Video Role Play	5 points
Persuasive Presentation Role Play: Self Assessment	5 points
Persuasive Presentation: Email Follow Up	5 points
Crucial Conversation: Video Role Play	10 points
o STATE Method – 5 points	
o Coaching Feedback – 5 points	
STATE Method and Coaching Role Play: Self Assessment	5 points
Team Case Written Report	10 points
Team Case Presentation	10 points
Self-Assessment/Course Application: Video Role Plays/Presentations	10 points
Peer Evaluation	5 points
Co-Curricular Activities	5 points
o RCC Approved Resume – 1 point	
o RCC Approved LinkedIn Profile – 2 points	
o MBA RSVP for Networking – 1 point	
o MBA Networking Event – October 28 <sup>th</sup> – 1 point	
Class attendance/participation	<u>5 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 2016 Class Schedule\***

<b>Class</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Assignment Due</b>
M	8/22	Syllabus Review and Class Introductions Feedback from MBA Orientation - Guidelines Birkman Assessment Overview	<b>PRIOR TO CLASS:</b> <b>Purchase Required Books, Access to Blackboard, Review Syllabus</b>  <b>Review Birkman Assessment PPT</b>
W	8/24	Communication and Your Business Career: Verbal, Nonverbal, Listening, Writing	<b>Reading Due Before Class:</b> HBR 10 Must Reads - The Power of Talk, Is Silence Killing Your Company  <b>Blackboard Assignment:</b> Student Data Sheet
M	8/29	Communication and Your Business Career Continued: Verbal, Nonverbal, Listening, Writing	<b>Blackboard Assignment:</b> Value/Vision/Mission Worksheet  <b>Blackboard Assignment:</b> Goals, SWOT & Strategies
W	8/31	Your Personal Commercial: Stand Out in 30 Seconds	<b>Reading Due Before Class:</b> HBR 10 Must Reads - Telling Tales, How to Become and Authentic Speaker  <b>Co-curricular Assignment DUE:</b> Meet with Rockwell Career Center to review/approve Resume and LinkedIn Profile
M	9/5	<b>LABOR DAY HOLIDAY – NO CLASS</b>	
W	9/7	In Class Practice: 30 Second Personal Commercial	
M	9/12	In Class Practice: 30 Second Personal Commercial	
W	9/14	Informational Interviewing: Being a STAR in the Interview	<b>Blackboard Assignment:</b> 30 Second Commercial Outline/Profile
M	9/19	Behavioral Interviewing: Being a STAR in the Interview	

		Informational/Behavioral Interview Role Play Guidelines	
W	9/21	<b>Video Role Play: Informational Interview</b>	<b>Professional Dress - Video Role Play</b> Meet in Room 221-227 MH: Video Labs  OR Room 403, 405, 413, 415, 417, 419 of CBB: Video Labs
M	9/26	Role Play Debrief/Feedback: Behavioral Role Play	<b>Blackboard Assignment:</b> Behavioral Interview - Personal Product Assessment
W	9/28	Business Writing: Essentials for Success	<b>Reading Due Before Class:</b> Social Media Report – Posted on Blackboard & HBR Guide to Better Business Writing
M	10/3	Business Writing: Essentials for Success Continued  Executive Summary Guidelines/Instructions	
W	10/5	Guest Lecturer	<b>Blackboard Assignment:</b> Executive Summary – Social Media Report
M	10/10	Effective Persuasive Presentations: Analyzing a Communication Situation	<b>Reading Due Before Class:</b> HBR 10 Must Reads – Change the Way you Persuade, Harnessing the Art of Persuasion, The Necessary Art of Persuasion
W	10/12	Video Role Play Guidelines/Instructions: Persuasive Conversation	
M	10/17	<b>Video Role Play: Persuasive Conversation with a Boss</b>	<b>Professional Dress - Video Role Play</b> Meet in Room 221-227 MH: Video Labs  OR Room 403, 405, 413, 415, 417, 419 of CBB: Video Labs
W	10/19	Role Play Debrief/Feedback: Persuasive Role Play	<b>Co-Curricular Point: RSVP for MBA Networking Event</b>  <b>Blackboard Assignment:</b> Persuasive Follow Up Email to Marketing VP  <b>Blackboard Assignment:</b> Written Assessment of Persuasive Presentation Skills
M	10/24	Crucial Conversation Case Discussion  Crucial Conversations in Business: Using STATE Method to Effectively Communicate in	<b>Reading Due Before Class:</b> HBR 10 Must Reads – Taking the Stress out of Stressful Conversations; Book: Crucial Conversations

		Stressful Scenarios	& Crucial Conversation Case – Posted on Blackboard
W	10/26	Crucial Conversations in Business: Using STATE Method to Effectively Communicate in Stressful Scenarios	
FRIDAY	10/18	<b>Bauer MBA &amp; Alumni Networking Event</b>	<b>DUE: Co-curricular Activity – TDECU Stadium</b>
M	10/31	<b>Video Role Play: Crucial Conversations</b>	<b>Crucial Conversation Video Role Play</b> Meet in Room 221-227 MH: Video Labs  OR Room 403, 405, 413, 415, 417, 419 of CBB: Video Labs
W	11/2	Guest Lecturer	
M	11/7	Video Role Play Debrief/Feedback – Team Assessment	<b>Blackboard Assignment:</b> Written Assessment of STATE Method and Coaching Skills
W	11/9	Guidelines/Instructions for Team Presentation/Paper on Case  Formal Presentation: Enriching the Presentation, Preparing Slides/Other Media and Communicating the Message	<b>Watch Team Video: Orientation</b>  <b>Reading Due Before Class:</b> HBR 10 Must Reads – How to Pitch a Brilliant Idea, The Five Messages Leaders Must Manage
M	11/14	Formal Presentation: Enriching the Presentation, Preparing Slides/Other Media and Communicating the Message	
W	11/16	<b>Final Team Presentations</b>	<b>Blackboard Assignment:</b> Team Paper Due – All Teams
M	11/21	<b>Final Team Presentations</b>	
W	11/23	<b>THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY – No Class</b>	
M	11/28	Career Management: Putting the Pieces Together	<b>Blackboard Assignment: Peer Evaluations</b>
W	11/30	<b>Summary and Class Wrap Up</b>	<b>Blackboard Assignment: Review &amp; Summary Video Role Plays – Personal Assessment of Communication Skills</b>

			incorporating all videos/presentations, course materials and readings
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*\*Any changes to the class schedule will be announced in class and posted on Blackboard.*