BusCom 201 – Business Communication – Spring 2016
Section 010 – Mon., 6:00-8:45 p.m., 1106 MBEB

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Texts: BCOM7 by Carol Lehman and Debbie DuFrene (South-Western, 2016, 2015)

Standard Reference: Writing Styles Guide, College of Business and Economics, Boise State University, August 2007
Download at http://cobe.boisestate.edu/students/writing-styles-guide.

Course Objectives and Assessment Methods
Students completing BusCom 201 should be able to demonstrate the ability to:

1. Appreciate the importance of effective business communication skills for career development and success.
   - Learning strategies and assessment: Class discussion; Written assignment

2. Apply effective principles relevant to the content, organization, channel, and tone/style for the following types of business communication: bad news (negative) messages, persuasive messages, good news (positive) or routine messages, and employment application messages.
   - Learning strategies and assessment: Class discussion; Teamwork activities; Written assignments

3. Use a reader-friendly approach to balance the needs of the audience with the desires of the sender to produce messages that are clear, complete, compelling, concise, and correct.
   - Learning strategies and assessment: Class discussion; Teamwork activities; Written assignments

4. Find and properly incorporate secondary research using the APA style.
   - Learning strategies and assessment: Teamwork activity; Written assignments

5. Develop and present an oral presentation for a targeted audience using effective delivery techniques and visual aids.
   - Learning strategies and assessment: Teamwork activities; Class presentation assignment

Instructor’s Objectives
- Ensure that students master the course subject matter
- Develop students’ ability to use course concepts in thinking and problem-solving
- Develop students’ interpersonal and team interaction skills
- Have students enjoy the class
Course COBE Core Learning Goals

[×] 2.1 Communicate effectively: Write messages and documents that are clear, concise, and compelling
[×] 2.2 Communicate effectively: Give oral presentations that use effective content, organization, and delivery
☐ 3. Solve problems, including unstructured problems, related to business and economics
[×] 4. Use effective teamwork and collaboration skills
[×] 5. Demonstrate appropriate principles of responsible business practices

BusCom 201: Communication in the Discipline (CID)

Boise State's Foundational Studies Program provides undergraduates with a broad-based education that spans the entire university experience.

BusCom 201 satisfies the three credits of the Communicating in the Discipline requirement for business students.

BusCom 201 supports the following University Learning Outcomes (ULO):

ULO1: Write effectively in multiple contexts for a variety of audiences
ULO 2: Communicate effectively as a speaker and listener

BusCom 201 will help students improve their abilities to analyze business communication situations and develop appropriate communication strategies. After successful completion of this course, you will be able to:

- Design, draft, and edit a variety of business message types (routine; bad-news; persuasive; employment-based). (ULO 1)
- Use a reader-friendly approach to balance the needs of the audience with the desires and objectives of the writer. (ULO 1)
- Develop and give an oral business presentation using effective visual aids. (ULO 2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Foundational Studies ULO Criteria and Notions of Exemplary Work</th>
<th>Course Learning Outcomes “By the end of this course, each student should be able to…”</th>
<th>Assessment Method: Evidence of Student Learning</th>
<th>Planned Teaching and Learning Activities/Pedagogy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ULO 1: Write effectively in multiple contexts for a variety of audiences</td>
<td>Design, draft, edit, and assess a variety of business message types: • good-news/routine • bad-news • persuasive • employment-related</td>
<td>Students will participate in instruction for each message type and will draft and edit four separate messages. Instructors, and possibly students in the class, will assess these assignments.</td>
<td>The instructor and the students will (1) discuss the business communication situation and needs, (2) review sample messages prior to drafting, and (3) discuss students’ performance for each message type. The instructor usually will use rubrics for assessment in the instruction and assessment process.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Use a reader-friendly approach to balance the needs of the audience with the desires and objectives of the writer.</td>
<td>The instructor will assess reader-orientation, both in terms of rhetorical content and page format and layout, for all written assignments.</td>
<td>Students will participate in structured exercises and practice for reader-orientation.</td>
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</table>
ULO 2: Communicate effectively as a speaker and listener

| Develop and present an oral presentation using effective visual aids. | Students will make at least one formal oral presentation in the course of the class. | Students will participate in the instruction and review of effective oral business presentations strategies and techniques by discussing sample presentations, best-practice checklists, and assessment rubrics. |

**Statement of Shared Values**

Boise State University upholds the following values as the foundation for a civil and nurturing environment. Campus community members and all who are part of COBE are expected to adhere to the following values.

**Academic Excellence:** Engage in our own learning and participate fully in the academic community’s pursuit of knowledge.

**Caring:** Show concern for the welfare of others

**Citizenship:** Uphold civic virtues and duties that prescribe how we ought to behave in a self-governing community by obeying laws and policies, volunteering in the community, and staying informed on issues.

**Fairness:** Expect equality, impartiality, openness and due process by demonstrating a balanced standard of justice without reference to individual bias.

**Respect:** Treat people with dignity regardless of who they are and what they believe. A respectful person is attentive, listens well, treats others with consideration and doesn’t resort to intimidation, coercion or violence to persuade.

**Responsibility:** Take charge of our choices and actions by showing accountability and not shifting blame or taking improper credit. We will pursue excellence with diligence, perseverance, and continued improvement.

**Trustworthiness:** Demonstrate honesty in our communication and conduct while managing ourselves with integrity and reliability.

**Special Needs**

As we have in the past, BusCom instructors will make all appropriate and necessary accommodations to all students in adherence with the Americans with Disabilities Act, including provisions for additional time for testing, alternate document formats and types, approved transcriptionists in cases of hearing impairment, among other interventions/accommodations.

If you have special needs (including those addressed by the Americans with Disabilities Act) and need assistance, please notify me as soon as possible.

**Team-Based Learning**

This course will in part follow a Team-Based Learning (TBL) format (www.teambasedlearning.org). The primary objective of TBL is to go beyond simply covering content and focus on applying course concepts to solve problems. TBL relies on small group interaction, shifting the focus of classroom time from instructor lectures to application of course concepts by student teams. This instructional method aims to help develop your workplace team communication skills and to hold teams accountable for using course content to complete in-class exercises. You will be assigned to a five or six-member team and will sit with your team during all classroom sessions.
Phase 1: Preparation: You will complete specified readings for each topic (see Schedule for details). Reading guides for each topic will be posted to Blackboard.

Phase 2: Readiness Assurance Tests: At the beginning of most topics, you will be given individual and team Readiness Assurance Tests (RATs). The RATs (10 multiple choice questions) are designed to measure your comprehension of the assigned readings and ensure that you and your teammates have sufficient foundational knowledge to begin applying the concepts in phase 3. Once the test period is over, the instructor will give a short lecture reinforcing the major concepts of the topic.

Phase 3: Teamwork Exercises: You and your team will use the foundational knowledge acquired in the first two phases to discuss and complete various teamwork exercises during class periods.

Accountability counts. You are accountable both to yourself and your team members. Read the material before each topic to be able to do well on the Readiness Assurance Tests and contribute to teamwork exercises. Accountability to your team will be measured in a peer evaluation at the end of the semester.

Instructor’s Expectations

- **Take responsibility for your own learning.** Manage your time well. Check syllabus for assignments and due dates. Read assignments carefully and do your best.

- **Be here.** Class time is valuable. I expect you to be here, both physically and mentally, on a regular basis. Attendance is required to earn points for TRATs and teamwork exercises.

- **Be on time (or early).** Avoid entering the classroom late. If you are running late, please enter without disrupting the class.

- **Turn electronics off.** This includes cell phones, laptops, and tablets. I expect you to pay attention to what’s going on in the classroom while you are here and to participate fully in teamwork exercises. Please, no texting during class. Failure to meet this expectation will impact the instructor’s evaluation of your performance in the class.

- **Follow instructions.** I will provide specific instructions for each assignment. Unless otherwise advised, prepare all written assignments electronically, using 12 point Times New Roman font, 1” margins, and the format I prescribe.

- **Proofread your work.** Grammar and spelling count! Proofread all assignments so they are free of errors. Skipping this step will cost you points.

- **Be honest.** Academic integrity will be strongly enforced in this course. Any student caught cheating on any assignment may fail the assignment in question, be subject to a reduction in the overall course grade, or fail the course dependent on the severity of the violation. Academic misconduct is defined in the Student Code of Conduct (Section 7). It is strongly suggested that you read and understand these definitions: [http://deanofstudents.boisestate.edu/scp-codeofconduct-section7/](http://deanofstudents.boisestate.edu/scp-codeofconduct-section7/).
• **Turn assignments in on time.** Your supervisor at work will expect you to meet deadlines and so do I. Assignments must be turned in at the specified time on the specified due date to be considered on time. If you are unable to attend class, you may e-mail me your assignment. E-mailed assignments must reach me before the class begins to be considered on time. Assignments e-mailed after the start of the class at which the assignment is due are considered late even if they are e-mailed on the same day.

*I will confirm receipt of the assignment by e-mail. Do not assume I have received an e-mailed assignment unless you receive an e-mail confirmation from me.*

If you miss the due date, you may turn in the assignment no later than one week following the due date. The maximum evaluation that may be earned on a late assignment is acceptable.

*Exception: Business case assignments must be turned in on due dates.*

*Note:* Computer failure, printing problems, and work/travel do not constitute acceptable excuses for missing assignment deadlines. Plan wisely to avoid missed deadlines and penalties due to electronic issues, travel, or other situations.

**My Commitment to You**

You may count on me to meet the following expectations:

• Start and end class on time.
• Do my best to prepare engaging class sessions.
• Treat you with respect.
• Learn your name.
• Be fair with grading.
• Grade assignments within one week of deadline.
• Keep Blackboard materials and grades up-to-date.
• Respond promptly to emails.

**Rewrites**

All individual writing assignments (**except the Business Case**) on which the student receives an evaluation of *needs work* may be rewritten and turned in no later than one week after the graded assignment has been returned. The maximum evaluation that may be received on a rewritten assignment is acceptable. The original assignment and rubric must be attached to the rewrite to be considered for additional points.

**Incompletes**

Incompletes are not given.

**Writing Center**

Students are advised to consult with the BSU Writing Center. Documented consultation with Writing Center may increase score on individual writing assignments.
Writing Standards

Rubrics will be provided for all individual assignments. Assignments will be evaluated according to the following four categories:

<table>
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<th>Grade Category</th>
<th>Expectation</th>
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<tr>
<td>Superior (90-100%)</td>
<td>Assignment contains all necessary information, is well organized, and follows the appropriate approach/writing plan. Writing is clear, concise, compelling, and correct. Tone is courteous and sincere. Writing is reader-focused and positive. Grammar and spelling are virtually error-free. Correct format is used. Assignment is turned in on time. In the workplace, a manager would be highly impressed and remember the work when a promotion is considered.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Good (80-89%)</td>
<td>Assignment contains all necessary information, is well organized, and follows the appropriate approach/writing plan. Writing is generally clear, concise, compelling, and correct. Work demonstrates few mechanical and grammatical errors, although some editing is required. Assignment is turned in on time. In the workplace, manager would be satisfied and confident in the employee's ability to perform with minimal supervision.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acceptable (70-79%)</td>
<td>Assignment contains most, if not all, required information, but is somewhat disorganized. Writing is weak and contains multiple errors in style, word choice, tone, mechanics, and/or grammar. Assignment is turned in on time or no more than one week late. In the workplace, manager would be disappointed and ask employee to revise or rewrite sections before allowing others outside the department to see the work.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Needs Work (&lt;70%)</td>
<td>Assignment is missing one or more elements and is poorly organized. Writing is weak and contains an unacceptable number of errors in style, word choice, tone, mechanics, and/or grammar. Assignment is turned in on time or no more than one week late. Manager would be troubled by the poor quality of the work and may consider looking for someone to replace the employee.</td>
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Grade Components and Weights

Grades will be based on the following performance areas:

- 8 Individual Readiness Assurance Tests 10
- 8 Team Readiness Assurance Tests 10
- 5 Individual Writing Assignments 40
- Business Case Project 20
- 11 In-Class Teamwork Exercises 10
- Peer Evaluation 5
- Instructor Evaluation (Effort, Attendance, Participation, Timeliness of Assignments, Make Good Use of Your Time and Mine) 5

Grades will be posted to Blackboard with weighted percentages applied so you will be able to track your cumulative percentage score throughout the semester.
**Final Grades**

Final grades are assigned on the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94-100%</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-93%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>84-86%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-83%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>74-76%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-73%</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60-69%</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>&lt;60%</td>
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