Spears School OF BUSINESS

BCOM 3113.503 & 3113.513 —WRITTEN COMMUNICATION
Spring 2016 (Course Dates: January 11—May 6, 2016)

INSTRUCTOR:

Mrs. Lydia Powell, Instructor of Business Communications

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Office: Spears 436
Email: lydia.powell@okstate.edu
The instructor will respond to student inquiries within 48 hours during Monday-Friday business hours.
Phone: (405) 744-2954
Office Hours: by appointment
Course Site: Desire2Learn (Online Classroom): http://oc.okstate.edu
Distance Learning Support: spearsdistance@okstate.edu
Phone: 405-744-4048 Twitter: @spearsdistance
Graduate Teaching Assistant: Rebekah Spaulding (respaul@ostatemail.okstate.edu; rebekah.spaulding@gmail.com)

OVERVIEW OF THE COURSE

The focus of this course is on the characteristics of effective business writing. This includes not only using different channels of communication (memos, emails, reports, etc.) but also using correct grammar and mechanics.

COURSE PREREQUISITES

50 semester credit hours (junior standing); understanding of English grammar and terminology

COURSE GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Course Objective	Program Learning Goal
Students should demonstrate proper business formatting in Microsoft Word (résumé, email, memo, letter, short reports)	• Technological Competence • Written Communication
Students should be able to properly research, evaluate, incorporate, and document sources	• Critical Thinking • Written Communication • Ethical Decision Making
Students should be able to strategize an effective and grammatically correct written response to a typical business scenario	• Business Knowledge & Competency • Critical Thinking • Written Communication
Students should write effective job search documents, including résumé and cover letters	• Business Knowledge & Competency • Critical Thinking • Written Communication

REQUIRED TEXT

Rentz, K., & Lentz, P. (2014). Lesikar's business communication: Connecting in a digital world. (13th ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill/Irwin.

DO NOT PURCHASE THE TEXTBOOK UNTIL YOU HAVE COME TO CLASS (i.e., logged onto D2L and read the software purchasing instructions)!

Connect Online Software

Use this code to register for the McGraw-Hill Connect software:

7KBW-ML97-OYM0-GAL9-GAOY

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Students who have not participated in at least one assignment in Desire2Learn (discussion board, specific assignment, etc.) within the first two weeks of the course will be reported as not having attended class. The instructor will then recommend the student drop the course.

A large portion of your grade will be interacting with your peers and your instructor. As such, you will likely spend 2-3 hours per week doing group work on D2L or on GoogleDocs. See "Group Work" under the Course Requirements section for further details.

GRADING POLICY

The grades in this class break down as follows:

Major Projects	450 pts
Class work & Homework	400 pts
Exams	150 pts
Total Points	1000 pts

Letter grades will be assigned according to the standard scale.

900-1000 pts. = A
800-899 pts. = B
700-799 pts. = C
600-699 pts. = D
Below 600 pts. = F

Course totals with a percentage point of .5 or above will be rounded up (e.g. 79.5→80.0).

Once the semester has ended, there will be no more opportunities for points (i.e., do not email me at the end of the semester asking for either a grade change or opportunities for extra credit). The only reason for you to email me or the GTA about a grade is if it has been entered incorrectly in the gradebook.

DESCRIPTION OF COURSE REQUIREMENTS & GRADING RUBRIC

Exams

You will take three exams throughout the semester, all delivered through the Quizzes tab on D2L. These exams are open-book, and the content will be largely based on video lectures, readings, and group work. Each exam will be worth 50 points.

Class work & Homework

This is a broad category which includes group work on GoogleDocs, participation in the discussions, peer review, and other individual homework assignments. Each of these categories is discussed below.

Group work. Because more brains create better work, almost every week you will work with your assigned groups to master a concept. Typically this will mean collaboratively working on an assigned document through GoogleDocs. You will be given specific instructions, due dates, and submission requirements for each document.

Students who do not actively participate throughout the week on creating and revising these documents will receive a zero in the gradebook for that document.

These documents will be assessed according to how well your group followed directions, mastered the specific learning goals, and created an error-free text.

Each group will be given a private discussion board on D2L in which members can discuss assignments, delegate tasks, generate ideas, and use for any other class-related purpose.

Discussion board participation. The whole-class discussion board will be used to reinforce writing concepts and theory by: (1) analyzing the documents created on GoogleDocs by the different groups, and (2) discussing theoretical concepts related to business writing.

Peer review. Because writers benefit from having multiple people read their documents, you will work with an assigned partner to edit and proofread each other's major assignments before those documents are submitted.

You will receive instructions on what to look for in each document, as well as what constructive criticism looks like. Shaming and other inappropriate comments will not be tolerated. Information shared in your partner's documents must be kept in strictest confidence.

Homework. Homework consists of problems done through Connect and any other assignment not given as group work or as a major assignment. See the "How to Use Connect" video under the Content tab in D2L for instructions on how to complete your Connect homework. All other assignments will be submitted via individual Dropboxes on D2L. All homework (Connect and otherwise) will be due at 11:59 p.m., CST, unless an alternate time is provided on the assignment sheet.

Major Projects

Projects. We will complete four major projects in this class: 1) Who Am I Memo, 2) Job Package, 3) Message Portfolio, 4) Informal Report. These are *individual projects*, meaning that you should not work with another student or anyone else on these assignments.

Each assignment is structured to measure your mastery of distinct course goals and objectives, specifically:

- application of the communication principles discussed in the textbook, in lectures, and in group work
- correct grammar, punctuation, and business writing style

Document names. Title all documents in this fashion:

Lastname.Firstname.TitleofAssignment-FinalDraft.doc

Example: Powell.Lydia.WhoAmIMemo-FinalDraft.docx

Submission. You will upload the finished documents to their specific folders in the D2L Dropbox, which will check for plagiarism and keep your papers for a year as required. *Do not email me your assignments.* Failure to submit to the Dropbox will result in a zero until the final copy is submitted. All assignments will be due at 11:59p.m., CST, unless otherwise specified on the assignment sheet.

Along with final drafts of your major assignments, you will also submit all earlier drafts. Show that you have proofread your drafts by including all revision markups (hand-written or through MS Word's TrackChanges).

Major assignments submitted without a proofread draft will be penalized 25 percent, and a zero will be entered in the gradebook until you have submitted both a proofread draft and a final draft.

Rubric. All major projects will be graded according to the following rubric:

GENERAL SCORING RUBRIC FOR BCOM ASSIGNMENTS

An *exceptional* document (90-100%) has the following characteristics:

- ✓ The focus is on the audience's needs (audience analysis)
- ✓ The information is complete and accurate; emphasis is effective
- ✓ The organization is appropriate for the situation (direct or indirect order, etc.)
- ✓ The wording is precise, concise, courteous
- ✓ There are no grammar, punctuation, or spelling errors
- ✓ The format follows standard practices for spacing, font, headings, readability, etc.
- ✓ The appearance reflects professional qualities or neatness and attention to detail

An *above-average* document (80-89%) has the same characteristics as the exceptional document, though one or more may reflect a lower level of achievement:

An *average* document (70-79%) conveys the information but contains weaknesses that interfere with the reader's understanding and reflects a lack of professionalism:

An *unacceptable* document (less that 70%) has one or more of the following weaknesses:

- *X* Confusing, incorrect, or incomplete information defeats the purpose of the message
- *X* The organization and emphasis are not appropriate for the purpose of the message
- *X* The tone is not courteous/reader-oriented
- *X* The message is hard to read (numerous grammar, punctuation, or spelling mistakes)
- *X* Appearance (format or neatness) does not follow professional standards

LATE & MAKE-UP POLICY

Students are expected to take each exam on the date given and submit each major assignment in a timely manner. If for any reason a student cannot take an exam or submit a major assignment, he or she must notify the instructor **prior to** the date on which it is due. The instructor and student will then arrange an alternative due date and (if applicable) a grade penalty. **You may only turn in late exams and major projects when missing class due to an OSU-sponsored event; all other late work will not be accepted or graded.**

Students who submit an exam late without permission from the instructor will receive a zero.

Late major assignments will be penalized one letter grade *per calendar day late.*

No late group work or homework will be accepted.

UNIVERSITY POLICY

Drop Policy

Information about university drop policy and dates is at this website:
http://registrar.okstate.edu/
Click on "class schedules," and "short, internet, and outreach courses"

To drop this course, contact the Registrar's office, (405) 744-6876, or drop through SIS (Student Information Services).

Academic Integrity

Oklahoma State University is committed to the maintenance of the highest standards of integrity and ethical conduct of its members. This level of ethical behavior and integrity will be maintained in this course. Participating in a behavior that violates academic integrity (e.g., unauthorized collaboration, plagiarism, multiple submissions, cheating on examinations, fabricating information, helping another person cheat, unauthorized advance access to examinations, altering or destroying the work of others, and fraudulently altering academic records) will result in your being sanctioned. Violations may subject you to disciplinary action including the following: receiving a failing grade on an assignment, examination or course, receiving a notation of a violation of academic integrity on your transcript (F!), and being suspended from the University. You have the right to appeal the charge. Contact the Office of Academic Affairs, 101 Whitehurst, 405-744-5627, http://academicintegrity.okstate.edu/.

Accessibility

Any student in this course who has a disability that may prevent him or her from fully demonstrating his or her abilities should contact the instructor as soon as possible, so we can discuss accommodations necessary to ensure full participation and facilitate your educational opportunity. For more information about OSU Student Disability Services, please go to: http://sds.okstate.edu.

INTERNET NETIQUETTE GUIDELINES

A melding of the words "network" and "etiquette", **netiquette** refers to the manner in which communication is conveyed in an electronic environment.

Here are some guidelines for communication within this course:

- REFRAIN FROM USING ALL CAPS. It is considered SHOUTING when communicating online.
- Do not post or forward offensive or racially insensitive jokes or comments.
- Be careful with humor and sarcasm. As we will discuss, these tropes do not translate well from speech to writing.
- Don't respond to personal attacks: Contact the instructor for action and referral.

- Always add in the subject line a concise statement describing the email or discussion post.
- Respect others' opinions. If you disagree with what another has said, post your thoughts in an objective, respectful manner. Do not make remarks that can be taken personally.
- Reflect upon the text you have entered before posting.
- Keep the discussion within the scope of the course material.
- Communication should be grammatically correct. Adhere to correct sentence structure, grammar, and spelling conventions. Proofread for errors before posting a message.
- Before you respond to a threaded message, read all the messages related to that message that have been previously posted.
- Send out an email to a group using the blind carbon copy field – BCC does not allow your recipients to view who received the email.

EMAIL GUIDELINES

At all times and with all individuals, use best practices for email. This means following standard email protocol such as including an accurate and descriptive subject line, a greeting, clear information in the body section, and a closing which promotes goodwill.

Please begin the subject line of all emails to your instructor and teaching assistant with "BCOM 3113.5__" followed by the subject of your email (e.g., "BCOM 3113.503: Interview Questions for Informal Report").

GOOGLEDOCS & GOOGLEDRIVE

Since most of your group work will be done on GoogleDocs, you will need to have an account with Google. If you have an Orangemail account through OSU, please create an account with Google separate from the one you have through the university: previous students had difficulty accessing GoogleDocs through Orangemail.

One of the easiest ways to manage your account is to use GoogleDrive. Watch the "Using GoogleDocs" video for information on setting up an account and using these digital tools.

WHERE TO FIND IT….

Assignment feedback …Under the D2L Dropbox tabs, on the right side of each submitted assignment.
Assignment sheets …Under the Contents tab, under the week in which the topic is discussed.
Chat …Under the D2L Chat tab.
Connect …Link through the D2L homepage or sign in at: http://www.mcgrawhillconnect.com.
D2L …Sign in at: https://oc.okstate.edu/
Dropbox folders …Under the D2L Dropbox tabs.
Email addresses …Under the D2L Classlist tab.

GoogleDocs ...Sign in at: http://www.docs.google.com/
GoogleDrive …Sign in at: http://www.drive.google.com/
Google+Hangout …Sign in at: http://www.google.com/+/learnmore/hangouts/
Grades …Under the D2L Grades tab.
Group discussion area …Under the D2L Discussion tab, labeled Group *x* Discussion.
Lectures …Under the D2L Contents tab, under the week in which the topic is discussed.
News …On the main D2L Home page.
Self Introduction PowerPoints …Under the D2L Discussion tab.