



**BCOM 3113: Written Business Communications  
Spring 2016**

**Spears School of Business  
Oklahoma State University**

**Instructor:**

Kim McCrackin

**Contact Information:**

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Office Hours: Monday through Friday 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. by appointment or by phone. You may also e-mail me at any time, and I will respond as quickly as I can. When sending an e-mail please indicate in the subject line your class and section number

Course Site: Desire2Learn (Online Classroom): <http://oc.okstate.edu>

Distance Learning Support: spearsdistance@okstate.edu or 405-744-4048

**Overview of the Course**

The purpose of this course is to help you develop skills in effective written communication. Efficient written communication in the workplace is of the utmost importance in today's fast-paced environment. Learning these skills will make you a more valuable and productive employee and provide you with a competitive edge in the workforce. This course will familiarize you with various types of business writing from the traditional business letter to email correspondence and report writing.

**Course Goals/Objectives**

In this course, you will learn the skills necessary to efficiently and effectively produce written correspondence for work-related situations. You will become acquainted with various types of writing and review basics of correct writing such as grammar and punctuation.

<b>Course Objective</b>	<b>Program Learning Goal</b>
Students should demonstrate proper business formatting in Microsoft Word (resume, email, memo, letter, and 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 resume and cover letters	Business Knowledge & Competency, Critical Thinking, & Written Communication

## Course Textbook

### Required Text

Lesikar’s Business Communication: Connecting in a Digital World 13e by K. Rentz & P. Lentz (This is an e-book. You also have the option of purchasing a hard copy when you register at the McGraw-Hill Campus link through D2L).

## Attendance Policy

Although points are not given for viewing class lectures or reading text chapters, they are not considered optional. In order to get the most out of the class and perform your best on assignments, you will need to access all the materials available to you. Not submitting assignments or accessing online class materials will be considered non-attendance, and it will be recommended that you drop the course.

## Grading Policy

The grades in this class break down as follows:

Messages (3)	300
Message drafts	30
Job Package	155
Report and Transmittal	215
Exams	<u>150</u>
<b>Total Points</b>	<b>850</b>

Letter grades will be assigned according to the standard scale.

90-100%	= A
80-89%	= B
70-79%	= C
60-69%	= D
Below 60%	= F

Grades are rounded up at .5 (i.e., 89.5 = 90; 89.4 = 89)



## Description of Course Requirements

### **Writing Assignments (700 pts)**

For each writing assignment, I will place an assignment sheet in the content section of D2L with instructions and expectations. Each assignment will be between one to five pages in length, which will be specified on the assignment sheet. These assignments will be graded on the following:

- Content based on conventions discussed in class and in your textbook
- Organization techniques typical for the specific type of document
- Format (traditional letter, memo, email, etc.)
- Word choice
- Grammar/spelling
- Punctuation

### ***Written Messages (330 pts)***

You will submit three messages (good news, bad news, and persuasive). For each assignment, you will first submit a rough draft that will receive 10 points. That rough draft will receive detailed feedback to help you improve your assignment or make any necessary changes, and you will later submit the final draft for a grade out of 100. Each assignment should be uploaded to its designated D2L dropbox folder by the due date stated in the accompanying course schedule. You will be able to view your Turnitin report for your draft.

### ***Job Package (155 pts)***

For the job package, you will write a tailored (solicited) cover letter and resume. You will locate a job advertisement you are interested in and write your messages as if you were applying for that position. You will need to submit the job ad as well as the two documents.

### ***Problem Solving Report and Transmittal Message (215 pts)***

You will write a 4-5 page report for which you will research and provide a solution to an operational problem. You will then create a message of transmittal/summary to accompany the more lengthy report and will count toward your overall number of pages. You will also be required to include some type of graphic(s) with this report. A detailed outline and works cited page will be submitted before the final report.

### **Submitting Writing Assignments**

Each assignment should be submitted in the corresponding dropox folder on D2L by the assigned date and time. If you have submitted your assignment and decide you would like to make changes prior to the deadline, you may resubmit your assignment. This will override any prior submissions.



I will then grade your assignment, make comments, and upload your feedback in the corresponding dropbox folder where you submitted your initial assignment. It is important for you to review my comments so that you can identify and practice areas that need improvement. Assignments will be graded carefully, so make sure to proofread before submitting your final drafts. Grading is a time consuming process, so please be patient, and I will return your feedback and grade as quickly as possible.

All assignments will be automatically submitted to Turnitin (plagiarism detection program) when they are downloaded to the dropbox folder, so it is critical that your writing be in your own words. Turnitin checks your work against all online documents, documents submitted by other classes and universities, as well as the assignments submitted by your classmates. I have a zero tolerance policy for cheating in this course. Cheating on exams or assignments will result in a zero for the assignment or an F! in the class (or possibly other sanctions assigned by the university). It is better to receive a lower grade than to receive a zero on your assignment. You may not collaborate on assignments or exams with other members of the class.

A percentage of similarity on your Turnitin report does not automatically indicate plagiarism. The program focuses on similarities, so if your writing is unoriginal, you may notice a higher percentage of similarity. This means that you should consider rewriting portions of your assignment and use fresher, more unique wording.

**If your Turnitin reports shows a 20% or above, you must review it and make sure you have properly documented information from research. If the program is catching phrases or sentences not related to research, then you need to rewrite those portions. This indicates either plagiarism or unoriginal writing.** Any assignment showing high similarity percentage without proper documentation of sources will be subject to academic dishonesty penalties.

Each assignment is expected to be in the corresponding dropbox folder by the date and time assigned. Each day an assignment is late will result in the deduction of a letter grade. There are no exceptions unless you have made prior arrangements with me.

### **Exams (150 pts)**

You will take three exams throughout the semester. These exams include multiple-choice and true/false questions. The exam content will be based on video lectures and readings. Each exam will be worth 50 points. Exams will be administered online and must be monitored by an approved proctor. You cannot take your exams at home. Upon enrolling each semester, contact the CEPD Distance Learning office to inform them of your proctoring site. You can call (405) 744-4048, or read the proctor policies and exam procedures, and complete the appropriate Testing Center form at <http://spears.okstate.edu/distance/guide>. If you are taking your exams on an OSU campus, you only need to fill out the Student Information Form. If you are taking them at any other location, the Proctor Agreement Form is required.

Please be aware that most facilities will charge a fee to proctor your exams and require that you show proper identification. Make sure to check the hours of the testing facility you will be using.



I also recommend that you schedule your testing appointments ahead of time. Some facilities can be booked on the date you wish to take your exam.

Asking for exam information or content to the class via e-mail or other means could be considered a form of academic dishonesty. If you have any questions about an exam, it is best if you ask me.

## **Make-up Policy**

You are expected to take each exam on the date given and submit each assignment in a timely manner. If for any reason you cannot attend an exam or submit an assignment, you must notify me prior to the due date. There is no guarantee that an assignment can be made up. Unless you have made special arrangements with me or have an emergency situation, once a deadline has passed, assignments will receive a letter grade off per day late. Once you have taken the final exam, the class is complete.

Please do your best and be concerned about your grade throughout the entire semester. No additional bonus points will be given at the end of the semester to raise your grade. Please be responsible throughout the semester to follow the schedule, be aware of due dates, and pay attention to any correspondence I send by email or post on D2L. It is each student's responsibility to know what is due and when it is due.

## **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/>

## **EMAIL ETIQUETTE**

This class is a business course and a good place to practice using professional business communications. In keeping with that objective, here are some expectations about the emails you exchange with your professors this semester and with your colleagues, supervisors, and potential employers in the future:

- Use a subject line to explain the purpose of your communication. If your recipient is one of your instructors, be sure to indicate the class and section in which you are enrolled.
- Include a salutation in your communication, and use the highest level of courtesy in addressing the individual. Examples: “Hello, Mr. Smithers;” “Dear Ms. Simpson;” or “Hi, Dr. Flanders.” Hint: Avoid, “Yo, Lisa!” Pay attention to their response. If your recipient says, “call me Ned” or if he signs his emails to you as “Ned,” that response is a clue that you may call him “Ned.”
- Don’t assume a position of informality in your business email. Time and relationship-building efforts can guide when you may “informalize” your business relationships. In some cases, it may never happen.
- Provide relevant information and actionable items. Think about what you want the receiver to do after receiving your message? Do not just vent or express concern; instead, communicate information and request an action. Put yourself on the other side of the communication and think about how you would like to be approached.
- Use common courtesies, e.g., be sure to thank your recipient for his/her consideration to your request when you are asking for anything.
- Pay attention to your grammar, spelling, and punctuation.
- Avoid using all capital letters; in an email, all capital letters can be perceived as SHOUTING!
- Avoid texting language. Exceptions are understandable but should be rare. If you’re sending your professor an email from a battlefield in Afghanistan, we’ll cope with some texting.
- Include a clear signature block with your full name and any contact information the individual will need to reach you. If it’s a business communication to an employer or prospective employer, also include your snail mail address.
- Be careful about including quotations and sayings in your signature block. Think about the impression your message sends to someone who doesn’t know you, and be judicious. In most instances, save the quotations for your emails with friends on your personal email account.
- Sign off on your emails with “Sincerely,” “Best regards,” etc.
- Basic questions to ask yourself before you hit “Send:” Would I write this email if I was trying to impress my boss? If I were the recipient of this email, would the email cause me to feel angry, annoyed, or cooperative? (Hint: Aim for cooperative.)



## BCOM 3113 (Written Communication) Spring 2016 Course Schedule

Week	Topic/Reading	Assignment/Due Dates <i>(all assignments are due by 11:59 p.m.)</i>	Points
<b>Week 1</b> <b>Jan 11 –</b> <b>Jan 17</b>	Introduction to course Chapter 1: Understanding Workplace Communication		
<b>Week 2</b> <b>Jan 18 -</b> <b>Jan 24</b>	Chapter 3: Adapting Your Words to Your Readers	Message 1 draft due 1/22	10
<b>Week 3</b> <b>Jan 25 –</b> <b>Jan 31</b>	Chapter 4: Constructing Clear Sentences and Paragraphs	Message 2 draft due 1/29	10
<b>Week 4</b> <b>Feb 1 –</b> <b>Feb 7</b>	Chapter 5 Writing for a Positive Effect	Message 3 draft due 2/5	10
<b>Week 5</b> <b>Feb 8 –</b> <b>Feb 14</b>	Exam 1: Chapters 1, 3, 4, 5 Chapter 6: Choosing the Best Process and Form	(Exam 1 can be taken from 2/8 – 2/12). Must be taken in proctored setting.	50
<b>Week 6</b> <b>Feb 15 –</b> <b>Feb 21</b>	Chapter 7: Getting to the Point in Good-News and Neutral Messages	Message 1 due 2/19	100
<b>Week 7</b> <b>Feb 22 –</b> <b>Feb 28</b>	Chapter 8: Maintaining Goodwill in Bad-News Messages	Message 2 due 2/26	100
<b>Week 8</b> <b>Feb 29 –</b> <b>Mar 6</b>	Chapter 9: Making Your Case with Persuasive Messages and Proposals (pp. 227-254)	Message 3 due 3/6	100
<b>Week 9</b> <b>Mar 7 –</b> <b>Mar 13</b>	Exam 2: Chapters 6, 7, 8, 9	(Exam 2 can be taken from Mar 7 – Mar 11). Must be taken in proctored setting.	50
<b>Week 10</b> <b>Mar 14 –</b> <b>Mar 20</b>	<b>SPRING BREAK!</b>		
<b>Week 11</b> <b>Mar 21 –</b> <b>Mar 27</b>	Chapter 10: Conducting a Winning Job Campaign (pp. 284-313, 313-325, 330-332)	Job Advertisement Resume and Cover Letter due 3/25	155
<b>Week 12</b> <b>Mar 28 –</b>	Chapter 13: Conducting Research for Decision Makers	Problem Solving Report Works Cited Page due 4/1	5



<b>Apr 3</b>			
<b>Week 13</b> <b>Apr 4 -</b> <b>Apr 10</b>	Chapter 11: Preparing Informative and Influential Business Reports	Problem Solving Report Detailed Outline due 4/8	10
<b>Week 14</b> <b>Apr 11 –</b> <b>Apr 17</b>	Chapter 12: Choosing the Right Type of Report		
<b>Week 15</b> <b>Apr 18 -</b> <b>Apr 24</b>	Chapter 2: Communicating Across Cultures (no lecture for Chapter 2; reading only)	Problem Solving Report and Transmittal/Summary due 4/22	200
<b>Week 16</b> <b>Apr 25 –</b> <b>May 6</b>	Exam 3: Chapters 10, 11, 12, 13, 2	(Exam 3 can be taken from 4/25 – 5/6). Must be taken in proctored setting.	50

**\*Syllabus changes may be made as needed**