CLASS MEETING DATES AND TIMES
Monday and Wednesday, 10:00a.m.-11:50a.m.
Mendoza College of Business 160
http://sakai.nd.edu

INSTRUCTOR CONTACT INFORMATION
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Office Hours: Monday (noon-2:00), Thursday (11:00-noon), and by appointment (best arranged by email)
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574-631-9153

COURSE RATIONALE
• To give students an appreciation for the importance of effective communication in business and society.
• To help students understand how management writing and the management messages it conveys are the products of a process that begins with critical thinking.
• To improve students’ writing skills, including issues related to language use, style, tone, organization, grammar, and punctuation.
• To facilitate the integration of communication skills with an understanding of theory and strategy.
• To assist students in making decisions about document preparation, including format, layout, and design.
• To provide students with an understanding of the ethical dimensions of management writing.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Textbooks

Assignments
This is a performance course designed to diagnose your current writing abilities, to provide you with a clear sense of writing standards in the North American marketplace, and to assist you in improving your skills of written expression. To achieve the student learning objectives, you will read (and we will discuss) three kinds of texts: textbook chapters about managerial communication processes, technical chapters on the nuts and bolts of managerial writing (which should also serve as a useful resource for you for the future), and case studies about communication problems faced by actual managers.

In addition, you will gain practice with managerial writing through a variety of in-class exercises. Indeed, an important part of the learning process involves your willingness to discuss your writing as well as your reaction to and understanding of the managerial problems presented as writing opportunities during classroom discussion of the case studies. As such, your participation in discussion and in-class activities will be assessed. (For more on this, please read the “Attendance” and “Classroom Decorum” section in the Policies section of the syllabus.)

Outside of class, you will also produce written responses to the communication challenges presented in the cases we will be discussing. Finally, to achieve the goal of identifying and articulating principles of good writing (beyond simply applying them), you will be quizzed on the more technical aspects of our readings.

Assignment #1: Internal Strategy Memo (15%)
Assignment #2: Case Solution / Correspondence (20%)
Assignment #3: Bad News Letter (15%)
Assignment #4: Collaborative Writing Assignment, including peer review (20%)
Mid-Mod Quiz: Part I (on readings up to date of the quiz); Part II (letter) (15%)
Classroom Discussion & Participation (15%)

Writing Center Resources
If you have any concerns about your writing skills, bring those concerns to the professor’s attention early in the course. In addition, please check out the ND Writing Center, which has two locations: Coleman-Morse and the Hesburgh Library (http://www.nd.edu/~writing/). The center’s hours are flexible and the tutors can provide you with valuable assistance. However, you usually need to schedule an appointment. Please visit the website or call 574.631.5390 to schedule an appointment.

International students have a special opportunity to use the English for Academic Purposes (EAP) Program. You must make an appointment for a tutorial session by visiting their website: http://cslc.nd.edu/eap/tutoring. The EAP Fellows will provide linguistic feedback to help you improve your academic English. The EAP is located in 329 DeBartolo Hall in The Center for the Study of Languages and Cultures.
GRADING
Grades are important, of course, for all degree-seeking students. Grades are somewhat less important, however, than learning outcomes. Your careful attention to classroom discussion and written assignments is of considerably greater importance than whether you earned an A, an A-, or, perhaps, a B+ in a 2.0 credit-hour course. We are sensitive to your interest in doing well and will do all that we can to help you.

Minimum Standards
The following minimum standards for student work align with what would be expected of employees in an actual business setting. Texts should be:

• **Clean.** Appearance and format should count toward the grade. The proper use of headings, white space, margins, and other visual devices all contribute to readability and accessibility of information. Handling them skillfully is extremely important.

• **Error-free.** Simple mechanical and grammatical accuracy is absolutely necessary. Nothing destroys an author's credibility faster than spelling or grammatical errors or typos.

• **Audience-appropriate.** Readability, a style and tone chosen for clarity of expression and suitable to the target audience, should also play a significant role in determining the grade on an assignment.

• **Purposeful and well supported.** Whether you set out to explain, analyze, or persuade, your documents should have a clear purpose that is supported by appropriate facts and details. Research should be properly documented in the formal report.

Quality
When your instructor assess the quality of your work beyond these minimum standards with a letter grade, it might be helpful to consider how a letter grade would translate to an actual quality evaluation – and consequences – in the workplace:

• **A**: An employer would be impressed with the professionalism and clear understanding of purpose, audience, content, expression, organization, style, and mechanics. This document would make your boss proud and you could deliver it on her/his behalf.

• **A-**: An employer would be pleased with aspects of the professionalism and understanding of purpose, audience, content, expression, organization, style, and mechanics; however, this document needs improvements in a few of these aspects of clear writing to be truly polished. Your boss would ask you to pay attention to – and to address – certain details before submitting.

• **B+/B**: The document is geared toward an audience and contains some good points. However, it is not well organized, its content could be more specific, there are stylistic problems, and/or the logic is faulty. In other words, it needs some important substantive revisions. Your boss would not want this to be sent out without restructuring and cleaning up the document.

• **B- or lower**: There is a deficiency in content, arrangement, concept of audience, mechanics, and style (or an assignment is late without valid reason). In other words, this work might embarrass your boss and may make him or her question your competence. The employer has to
correct the work and send it back to you for revision, and then factor these new delays into the schedule.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scored Assignments:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A: 93.000 and above</td>
<td>B-: 80.000 to 82.999</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-: 90.000 to 92.999</td>
<td>C+: 77.000 to 79.999</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+: 87.000 to 89.999</td>
<td>C: 73.000 to 76.999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B: 83.000 to 86.999</td>
<td>C-: 70.000 to 72.999</td>
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If you have a concern about a grade you received on an assignment, I generally ask you to observe the 24/7 rule: That is, please wait 24 hours after receiving an assignment back to give yourself time to read and reflect on my written comments, and to set up a time to meet with me to discuss your concerns (this protects your privacy). However, do be sure to meet with me within 7 days after that. I generally do not reopen discussion of assignment grades beyond one week after returning the graded assignment to the class.

**COURSE POLICIES**

This course adheres to the following policies for Management Communication courses in the Fanning Center for Business Communication in the Department of Management. Please seek help as soon and as often as you need. Do not wait until it is too late for us to help you. We are here to assist you with the task of learning and improving your writing.

**Attendance**

Attendance is mandatory for each class period, and you must arrive on time. Your professor will take roll at the beginning of each session. I generally do not get into the habit of adjudicating “excused” and “unexcused” absences for graduate students. If you know you will not be in class, you must let me know about it ahead of time, and you must be proactive to make up what you missed.

**Class Participation**

Your physical presence in class forms the basis for your participation grade: it is “necessary but not sufficient” for a good participation grade. You must participate fully and actively in our classroom discussions and writing/critique sessions. You cannot earn credit if you are not present, but your participation grade will suffer a worse fate if you fail to acknowledge your responsibility to attend class (i.e., by not contacting me ahead of time).

**Classroom Decorum**

Just as in the workplace, respect for your instructor and fellow classmates is important in the classroom. Please do not use your laptops in class, text message, listen to music or use handheld devices in any manner. Such actions are distractions to both your classmates and instructor and will diminish your learning experience and will ultimately result in a low participation grade. **One exception will be the use of laptops during the writing exercise portion of the class only.** I will cue you to open and close your laptops during those moments if you choose to use one. Of course, you may choose to leave the laptop at home and hand-write the exercises.
It will also be appreciated that students do not wear baseball caps. I have found that this interferes with eye contact and therefore student engagement in the class, and (on a more practical note) with my being able to learn your name.

**Assignment Due Dates**
You must complete three assignments and submit them to your instructor for review and grading on the dates listed in the syllabus. Your collaborative writing assignment is due on the last day of class.

**Deadlines**
There are no automatic extensions, make-ups, or incompletes. You will be graded down for failing to meet deadlines. If you believe you cannot meet your responsibilities in the course, contact your instructor well in advance of deadlines. Advance contact with me and documentation (in some cases) will be required for me to make any exceptions. Also, technology breaks, servers go down, transfers time out, files become corrupt, etc. These are not considered emergencies – they are risks embedded in the normal production process. You bear these risks, and just as in the workplace, a problem with technology is generally no excuse for late work. So please be proactive and protect yourself by managing your time well and by backing up your work.

**Last Drop Date**
Your last opportunity to drop MBCM-60420 will expire at the close of business on Friday, April 3, 2015. After that date, you will no longer be able to voluntarily disenroll from the course.

**Grading Philosophy**
Your grade for any particular assignment in this course is a reflection of your professor’s judgment of the quality of your work. We can grade only on the basis of what you give us, not on what you had sincerely intended to do. Submit your work on time, follow the assignment directions, do your own work and you’ll have little trouble achieving the learning objectives for the course.

You will not find grades distributed on a curve. Your instructor is seeking to assess your abilities as measured against the standards of the marketplace. Those standards have been developed over a period of more than 30 years, dealing with business, government, industry, the press and the public. We are asking you to do what your employers will ask of you: prompt, competent, quality work. Your grade in this course will be based on your performance as evaluated by your professor. Please be aware, however, that the University of Notre Dame Grading Guidelines call for a grade point average between 3.3 and 3.6 for each graduate section. As a result, this course will be challenging and your instructor will work hard to discriminate among subpar, good, and truly superior work.

Once a grade has been assigned and recorded, it cannot and will not be changed unless evidence is provided that your professor has made an error. A difference of opinion between you and your professor about the quality of your work is not evidence of error.
The Notre Dame MBA Honor Code
The Mendoza College of Business Graduate Academic Code of Honor applies to this course. Please read it and be familiar with its contents to understand the standards to which you are being held. Two points will be highlighted here.

Exams: Students shall not give or receive aid on exams – whether paper or online. This includes, but is not limited to, viewing the exams of others, sharing answers with others, texting, calling, e-mailing, surfing the Internet, and using books or notes while taking the exam.

Writing: Considering that much of the educational process in Mendoza College of Business involves group discussion and collaborative activities, neither the College nor the Fanning Center for Business Communication wish to hinder the learning that can and often does take place in that environment. Fairness, however, requires that certain limits be observed in the actual production of assignments.

In the Management Communication curriculum (including Management Writing), all writing and speaking tasks are to be accomplished by each student working independently, unless you are specifically advised to work in collaboration on a particular assignment. No student should copy another student’s work or represent work done by someone else as if it were his or her own. Evidence of plagiarism is cause for serious disciplinary action by the College. Please, do your own work.

Incompletes
As a rule, we just do not award incompletes. They’re genuinely a pain in the neck. You begin the new term with the obligations of the previous semester hanging over your head. Both instructor and student feel harried and unhappy about the situation. In unusual cases, though, such as hospitalization or genuine emergency, an incomplete “I” grade will be assigned. The student must complete all class assignments during the following semester or the Registrar will assign a grade of “F” unless an extension is approved by both the instructor and the Dean, and we notify the Registrar.

Appeals
Your first course of appeal for any grade, assignment requirement, due date or other course-related decision is your instructor. If you either do not understand or cannot accept your instructor’s decision, you may appeal in writing to the course director. Subsequent appeals may be directed to the Associate Dean for MBA Programs and, from there, to the Dean of the College. Keep in mind that most administrators will be reluctant to overrule routine, course-related decisions of their faculty.

THE ETHICS OF MANAGEMENT COMMUNICATION
Language, as you know, has great power. It can convey impressions, communicate knowledge and information. It can transmit feelings and emotion, as well. Language, depending on how it is used, can inspire, enrage, inform, persuade, entertain, assure, or offend.
Business writers, as well as those who speak on public occasions, occupy a special position of power. Their words can influence others, urging them to action, or restraining them from acting. Their words can be a source of inspiration and motivation to others. Because of this, writers and speakers must choose their topics, organizational patterns, evidence, and words with great care.

Three basic principles guide our discussion of ethics in this course. First, we contend that all parties in the communication process have ethical responsibilities. Second, ethical writers, readers, speakers, and listeners possess attitudes and standards that pervade their character and guide their actions before, during, and after their speaking and writing. Third, management communication is not value-neutral. What you say, what you write, and how you choose to speak and write will have consequences for your audience. Your obligation is to speak and write for the betterment and benefit of your audience. To do otherwise is a serious ethical lapse for a management communicator.

Public communication is held to a higher standard of responsibility than private communication. To speak or write freely and privately among friends with no expectation that your words will become public is one thing. To speak in public or to write for publication with the expectation that your words will receive widespread attention is quite another. Please understand that public communication is a serious matter, particularly if you occupy a position of responsibility. And please know that if words have the power to injure or harm others, they can inflict harm on the sender, as well.

ASSIGNMENTS

Internal Strategy Memo
For the internal strategy memo assignment, you will be asked to analyze Case Study 1-1, Odwalla, Inc., pp. 13-16. You are an Odwalla manager who must provide advice to Stephen Williamson, President and Chief Operating Officer of the company. This internal business memo will include Overview, Background, Discussion, and Recommendations sections. The document will be evaluated on its thoroughness, organization, critical thinking, conciseness, and format. A sample memo will be supplied in class.

Case Solution/Correspondence
For the case analysis assignment, you will be asked to analyze and write a response to Case Study 1-2, Great West Casualty v. Estate of G. Witherspoon (A), pp. 17-19. You must produce a business memo (Audience: A.C. Zucaro) and a professional business letter (Audience: Joyce Lang) addressing the issues in the case.

Your business memos should contain the following elements (See O’Rourke, Appendix D Sample Strategy Memo):

- A summary paragraph disclosing the key recommendations offered in your analysis of the issues in the case.
- A background section providing details essential to a reader’s understanding of what happened, including the basic facts of the case.
• A discussion section addressing the implications of the facts and assessing both critical issues and stakeholder interests. This should be the largest section of your memorandum.
• A recommendations section listing actions recommended in response to the case and specific, by-name or by-department ownership of those actions. Suspense dates for completion of the actions may be included, as well.

**Bad News Business Letter**
You will be supplied the facts of the situation and the suggested solution to the problem. Your job is to convey this information to customers. The letter should be sensitive to their position, while attempting to meet your goal. It should be clearly organized and expressed, appropriate in tone and in proper letter format.

**Collaborative Writing**
You will be asked to collaborate with one other person from this section of Management Writing to produce a document that provides practical guidance for managers who must communicate corporate policy about some aspect of communication. This assignment is due on the last day of class (**Wednesday, April 29**).

You may select one other person in this section with whom to work on this assignment. If you think there is enough work in your topic selection for three people, please give your instructor a one-page (or single screen) outline of your ideas and explain why you think it will take three people to get it done. We’re open to any reasonable argument. No groups of one, however, and no groups of four.

**Paper Format, Length, and Appearance**
This is a formal, collaborative document. Your paper should be no less than 7 pages and no more than 10 pages in length, single-spaced within paragraphs and double-spaced between paragraphs. If you need an exception to this general guideline, please speak with your instructor. Each paper should have:
• A cover sheet with your paper title, author names, course and section numbers;
• A table of contents with page reference numbers;
• An executive summary;
• Page numbers;
• One-inch margins throughout;
• Proper endnote documentation of all paper-based, telephone or online research;
• A single staple affixed to the upper left-hand corner of the paper.

**Topic Selection**
Now is the time to begin thinking about your writing partner and your topic selection. The goal is for you to investigate and learn about a subject that will be useful and productive for you, both personally and professionally. Here is a brief list of topics that might prove interesting and worthwhile, but other innovative suggestions are welcome. Think about it, talk it over with your teammate, and see your instructor if you would like to use a different topic.
• “When Two Become One: Communicating in acquisitions and mergers.”
“Watch What You Say: What does a manager need to know about libel and slander?”
“Responding to Requests for an Employment Reference: What can you say?”
“Congratulating an Employee: How to say thank-you for a job well done.”
“Communicating in a Product Recall: What should a company say?”
“Communicating Good Intentions: What should a company say about philanthropy and corporate contributions?”
“Communicating Corporate Heritage: Best practices in managerial story-telling.”
“Communicating Grief: The task of telling others when an employee dies.”
“Communicating Promotions: Is it possible to screw up good news?”
“Communicating Corporate Culture: What should a manager say about ethics to employees and other stakeholders?”
“Balancing Privacy with Concern: What can a manager say when an employee is ill?”
“Balancing Privacy with Curiosity: What can a manager say when an employee is dismissed?”

Collaborative Proposal
You will submit a Collaborative Proposal on April 8th that includes a brief discussion of your topic, an outline of key ideas, and a work plan/timeline for completing the assignment.
Spring 2015 Module 4  
MANAGEMENT WRITING  
MBCM-60420/60421

Initial outline of topics, readings, and due dates for your own planning purposes. Specific readings are subject to change. Additional details about readings, assignments, and daily in-class activities will be posted on Sakai (https://sakai.nd.edu).

Monday, March 16, 2015
The Role of Writing in Business
Introductions
Reading:
  - O’Rourke, Chapter 1, “Management Communication in Transition”
  - O’Rourke, Case 7-1: Cerner Corporation: A Stinging Office Memo Boomerangs

For next class: Practice writing an internal memo (addressed to Neal Patterson, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer) and a letter (addressed to all Cerner Corporation employees).

Wednesday, March 18, 2015
The Basics of Correspondence: Memos and Letters
Readings:
  - Alred, Brusaw, and Oliu, Chapter 1: “The Writing Process”
  - Alred, Brusaw, and Oliu, Chapter 4: “Correspondence,” pp. 126-134
  - O’Rourke, Appendix C: “Sample Business Letter”
  - O’Rourke, Appendix D: “Sample Strategy Memo”

Assigned: Writing Assignment #1

Monday, March 23, 2015
Communication and Strategy
Readings:
  - O’Rourke, Chapter 2: “Communication and Strategy”
  - O’Rourke, Case 2-1: “Starbucks Corporation: Can Customers Breastfeed in a Coffee Shop?”
  - O’Rourke, Appendix A: “Analyzing a Case Study”

Assigned: Writing Assignment #4
Assigned: Writing Assignment #2
Wednesday, March 25, 2015
Audience Analysis
Readings:
- O’Rourke, Chapter 5: “Writing”
- Alred, Brusaw, and Oliu on Audience (see p. 3)
- Spartan Industries, Inc. (Distributed in class)

DUE: Writing Assignment #1

Monday, March 30, 2015
Communication and Ethics
Readings:
- O’Rourke, Chapter 3: “Communication Ethics”
- Alred, Brusaw, and Oliu on Ethics (see p. 13-15)

Other: Time in class to collaborate on Writing Assignment #4

Wednesday, April 1, 2015
Writing Reports
Reading:
- Alred, Brusaw, and Oliu, Chapter 6: “Formal Reports”
- Marshall and Adamic, “The Story is the Message: Shaping Corporate Culture” (on Sakai)
- Cox, Martinez, and Quinlan, “Blogs and the Corporation: Managing the Risk, Reaping the Benefits” (on Sakai)
- Pfeil, Setterberg, and O’Rourke, “The Art of Downsizing: Communicating Lay-offs to Key Stakeholders” (on Sakai)

DUE: Writing Assignment #2

Monday, April 6, 2015
Easter Holiday

Wednesday, April 8, 2015
Compact, Informal, and Organized Writing
Readings:
- Alred, Brusaw, and Oliu, Chapter 10: “Style and Clarity”
- O’Rourke, Appendix E: “Documentation: Acknowledging the Sources of Your Research”

DUE: Collaborative Proposal for Writing Assignment #4

Assigned: Writing Assignment #3
Monday, April 13, 2015
Persuasive Writing
Readings:
- O’Rourke, Chapter 6: “Persuasion”
- Alred, Brusaw, and Oliu on Persuasion (see p. 28)

DUE: Writing Assignment #3

Assigned: Part II (Letter for Mid-mod Quiz)

Wednesday, April 15, 2015
How Culture Affects Communication
Readings:
- O’Rourke, Chapter 10: “Intercultural Communication”

Monday, April 20, 2015
Quiz and Collaboration Session

Status Update for Writing Assignment #4

Wednesday, April 22, 2015
How Technology Affects Communication
Readings:
- O’Rourke, Chapter 7: “Technology”
- Alred, Brusaw, and Oliu, Chapter 2: “Workplace Technology”
- O’Rourke, Case 1-3: “Domino’s Special Delivery: Going Viral through Social Media”

DUE: DRAFT Writing Assignment #4

Monday, April 27, 2015
Conflict Management
Readings:
- O’Rourke, Chapter 11: “Managing Conflict”

Wednesday, April 29, 2015
Writing in a Crisis Situation
Readings:
- O’Rourke, Chapter 13, “Dealing with the News Media,” pp. 336-354
- O’Rourke, Appendix F: “Media Relations for Business Professionals,” pp. 399-404

DUE: Writing Assignment #4

Please complete Course Instructor Feedback (CIFs) online before the survey closes.