

New York City College of Technology
Humanities Department
Course Title: Business and Professional Communication
COM 3401; Section _____

Instructor's Name:
Contact Email:
Office:
Office Hour:

Sample Syllabus

3 Credit Hours; Course Prerequisites: ENG 1121 or COM 1330 or higher, or department approval.
PATHWAYS: Individual and Society, Writing Intensive, Capstone.

Course Description

Principles of communication within organizations. Topics and activities include organizational communication and communication theory, group problem solving, resumes, cover letters, interviewing, and formal presentations.

Online Course Description: The minimum technological requirements for fully online sections of this course are a working camera and microphone. Students are expected to turn on cameras and microphones at their instructor's request.

Standard Textbook: Scott McLean *Business Communication for Success* (2015). ISBN 13: 9781946135056

This is an Open Educational Resource (free electronic textbook). It is on the Blackboard site, or available for download here:

<http://www.saylor.org/site/textbooks/Business%20Communication%20for%20Success.pdf>

~Additional Electronic Resources and Readings on the Blackboard site.

Assessment Methods

Assessment is based on written assignments and oral presentations that are supported by specific requirements such as credible citations, organization, reasoning and arguments, arrangement, style, formatting, and other considerations. In addition, a more global assessment will be made on written work (including resumes, cover letters, outlines, exams, and quizzes) to determine comprehension of the text and ability to closely follow assignment instructions. Finally, detailed evaluation of prepared presentations by the professor and classmates (this assesses the evaluators'—not the speaker's—abilities to observe, analyze and record the differences between effective and ineffective speeches).

Welcome to Business and Professional Communication!

This course is geared towards gaining an edge in your career through a better understanding of communication, especially for your occupation. Your Professor is here to serve you and help build confidence and hope. The goal of this course is to develop your professional communication skills and knowledge. We create cover letters and résumés that stand out from the crowd, simulate successful interviews, and give professional multimedia presentations. The goal is to support your career goals and help you achieve a sustainable, satisfying work life.

Why this course may be different from what you are used to:

The best way to get better at communication is by doing it. Many college courses involve passively

receiving information from lectures and the textbook, then restating them on an exam for a grade. This class involves that, but more. Namely, you will be making presentations and actively participating in class discussions and role-playing exercises. Shy students will be gently but firmly nudged outside of their comfort zone to become more vocal in class and groups. Non-participation is not an option.

ASSIGNMENTS

Two Impromptu Speeches

Impromptu speeches are presented with only some preparation. They provide an opportunity to think on your feet and get comfortable speaking in front of others. Students are selected at random to present 2 to 4-minute speech on a topic of the Professor's choosing. Impromptu Speeches require an outline and will be structured using the Introduction/Body/Conclusion format. Graded as Complete/Incomplete.

Online Discussions

Each week the instructor poses questions on the Blackboard Discussion Board, based on the readings, assignments, and things we discuss in class. You are instructed to read articles, watch online videos and write about one page in response. In your response, please pose a least one discussion question that others can respond to. In these responses, you are encouraged to share about your interests and life experiences. Spelling and grammar mistakes detract from your grade. After posting your response, each student is expected to write a paragraph in response to three other "threads." Graded as Complete/Incomplete.

Quizzes

On Blackboard, you will find a link to Quizzes. There is a total of 15 quizzes you need to complete (Syllabus Quiz, Chapters 1-13 and Chapter 19). Each has 25 or 30 multiple choice and T/F questions. You can take the quiz 3 times and there are no time limits. Your highest score will be used. Note, these quizzes are open book. Please note due dates on syllabus. Students are not permitted to take quizzes after due dates. No make-up quizzes.

THE JOB SEARCH

In the first half of the semester, you will:

- 1) Search for a real job, online, that you are qualified for
- 2) Choose one, and save the job posting as a pdf
- 3) Read the job description closely and become familiar with the company or organization
- 4) Create a custom resume and cover letter that has been tailored to the job description
- 5) Go to a mock job interview where you will be interviewed for the position

3 major assignments will be assessed in this process: Your résumé, cover letter and mock interview. More details about these assignments appear below.

Résumé

A résumé is an attractively presented list of your jobs or internships, education, and other information. The résumé should fit on one page. Templates and sample résumés will be provided, and you should follow the required format closely. The resume must be tailored to the job posting and should only contain information relevant to that specific position. You can revise the résumé

and resubmit (once) for a better grade. Résumé must be a Microsoft Word file (.doc or .docx) uploaded to Blackboard using the correct submission link provided. No other format is accepted.

Cover Letter

Each student will submit a one-page cover letter in response to the job posting you have chosen. You should refer to the job description in the letter, attempting to persuade your potential employers that you are the right candidate for the job, and that your unique experience and skills will benefit the company. Model cover letters are provided, and the required format should be closely followed. If you are not satisfied with your grade, you may revise your cover letter according to the Professor's suggestions and resubmit it for regrading. Cover Letter must be a Microsoft Word file (.doc or .docx) and uploaded to Blackboard using the submission link provided. No other format is accepted.

Mock Job Interview

Here we pretend you are at a real job interview. You answer questions based on your résumé, cover letter and job description. Bring printed copies of your cover letter, résumé and job description, for classmates who will spend 15 minutes interviewing you. The roles will then reverse, allowing each person to serve both as an interviewer and interviewee. This is great practice for a real interview. It helps if you dress as you would for a real interview. Those who show up to class without a printed copy of the job description, cover letter and résumé will not receive credit. There are no make-up assignments for those not in attendance on the day of the mock interview. Graded as Complete/Incomplete.

Final Presentation/Oral Exam

This semester you will be researching a topic, creating a speaking outline and PowerPoint presentation, and finally, delivering a concise, well-organized, argued, and polished presentation (6-8 minutes only). This will be your oral examination in this class. You need to speak *extemporaneously*, meaning, not read off a manuscript, word for word but delivered in a conversational style with plenty of eye contact.

In the presentation, teach the Professor and classmates about your major and profession (or the profession you want). You choose the topic, in collaboration with the Professor, who must approve it. Your topic must have something to do with your profession and communication on the job. You need to conduct research about your chosen field using the internet, library materials and/or in-person interviews. You establish credibility by displaying sincere interest in your topic and sharing your own professional and academic experiences.

Topics may include (but are not limited to): what you have learned during your educational and professional experience; communication problems and solutions in your profession; the impact of communication technologies; fast growing careers; personal branding; professional opportunities for multilingual speakers; globalization; migration, or your entrepreneurial business plan. Other topics from the news, textbook and the Blackboard Discussion Board will be considered.

Names drawn out of a hat to assign presentation dates. The final presentation will be evaluated on the following components:

- 1) *Outline*: You will compose a speaking outline, containing your entire speech, submitted on Blackboard well in advance of the oral presentation. The outline should be about 3 to 6 pages, closely following the outline template and sample outline provided. Your outline must contain all the information in your oral presentation. All visual aids should be mentioned on the outline [in square brackets], at the point in the presentation they will appear. Practice giving the presentation using a timer to ensure it is between 6 and 8 minutes. If it is too long, you must remove material, and if it is too short, you must add material. The instructor will be commenting on your outline and returning it to you to incorporate corrections and suggestions. You may revise the outline according to the suggestions provided and resubmit (once) for a chance at a better grade. On the day of your presentation, you need to work with a printed copy of your final outline which you give to the instructor after you finish speaking. Outline must be a Microsoft Word file (.doc or .docx) uploaded to Blackboard using the submission link provided. No other format is accepted.

NOTE: This presentation needs to contain research: facts, stories and ideas which you have obtained from outside sources, such as web pages, news articles, books or interviews. The sources must be prominently identified on the outline and during your presentation.

3-5 outside sources are required, cited in three places

- In a “Work Cited” section at the end of the outline.
- “In-text” (with author or title and year in brackets) whenever you mention a fact obtained through research. For example (Jones, 2015).
- Finally, you should mention your source of information out loud in your speech (“According to the New York Times...” for instance).

NOTE: Outlines with more than 5, or less than 3 sources will be returned, ungraded, and a grade of zero will be assigned.

- 2) *Oral Presentation*: When you give your speech/final presentation, you will be graded on three criteria:
 - *Content*: This is what is in your speech. Did you support your claims with evidence? Was it well organized? Did it have all the right parts, like Intro, Body and Conclusion? Interesting facts and stories? Did you mention your sources out loud? Etc.
 - *Delivery*: This is how you gave the speech. Did you speak clearly and loud enough to be heard? Did you make eye contact with the audience? Did you appear to be well prepared and rehearsed? Etc.
 - *Outline*: Does your outline conform to the assignment? Is it clearly organized? Is it free from spelling and grammatical errors? Did you cite your sources correctly?

Each presentation will be followed by a question-and-answer period.

- 3) *Presentation Power Point*: Your PowerPoint contains visual aids ONLY. Your professor will be looking for interesting, high resolution pictures accompanied by hardly ANY text. Charts and graphs are great if they are easy to read, and you can explain them very clearly. The slides must be attractive and easy-on-the-eyes, complementing your oral presentation and not distracting from it. slides with too much text, low quality images, or distracting transitions or animations will receive a grade of zero on the PowerPoint and an F on the Final Presentation

Peer Evaluation

During Final Presentations, those in the audience will complete a one-page evaluation form for each presentation. The two evaluation criteria are content (words and visuals) and delivery (preparation, voice, eye contact, etc.). You are expected to make numerous comments about the strengths of the presentation as well as where there is room for improvement. Superficial comments such as “good job” or “eye contact ok” are unacceptable and will not receive credit. Your handwriting/ printing must be clearly legible. Graded as Complete/Incomplete.

Class Participation

Your class participation is graded considering:

- a) *Your oral participation during class* (including asking and answering questions; sharing your own knowledge and work experience during class; sharing your informed opinions on issues being discussed, etc.)
- b) *Your professional demeanor* including your attitude; etiquette; punctuality; paying attention; taking notes and appearing to be prepared and engaged. Treat this class like a job.

Grading Distribution

Impromptu Speeches	10%
Online Discussions	10%
Quizzes	10%
Cover Letter	10%
Résumé	10%
Mock Job Interview	5%
Outline draft	5%
Outline revised	5%
Final Presentation	15%
PowerPoint	5%
Peer Evaluations	5%
<u>Class Participation</u>	<u>10%</u>
Total	100%

WEEKLY SCHEDULE (Note: This schedule may be subject to change.)

Week	Class topics	Quizzes	Discussion Board	Other assignments
1	Introductions; syllabus; Blackboard overview			
2	Online research; citing; plagiarism; Final presentation topics due next class.	Syllabus Quiz due	“About you” due	
3	Job searches; Résumés & Cover Letters assigned (due next week); Samples provided.	Ch.1 & 2 due	“TED Talks” due	Final Presentation Topic due

4	Final Presentation Outline Assigned; ‘model’ presentation and sample outline provided	Ch. 3 due	“Find a job” due	Résumé, Cover Letter & Job Description due
5	Dates selected for Final Presentations; Message structure; Visual aids	Ch. 4 & 5 due	“Works Cited” due	
6	Feedback provided on Résumés & Cover Letters; Outlines and PowerPoints due next week	Ch. 6 & 7 due	“Interview prep” due	
7	Mock Job Interview Assigned; Job interviews; Business attire; Sample interview questions provided.	Ch. 8 due	“Avoid death by PowerPoint” due	Final Presentation Outline & PowerPoint due
8	Mock Job Interviews; Show up dressed for a job interview with a copy of your Revised Résumé, Cover Letter & Job Description	Ch. 9 & 10 due		Bring printed copy of Résumé, Cover Letter & Job Description
9	Feedback provided on Outlines and PowerPoints.	Ch. 11 & 12 due	“Giving great presentations” due	
10	Final Presentation workshops; Make up Impromptus	Ch. 13 due		
11	Final Presentation workshops; Impromptus	Ch. 19 due		
12	Final Presentations			<u>Final Outlines</u> (printed) due in class
13	Final Presentations			<u>Final Outlines</u> (printed) due in class
14	Final Presentations			<u>Final Outlines</u> (printed) due in class
15	Final Presentations			<u>Final Outlines</u> (printed) due in class

CLASS POLICIES

Humanities Department Attendance Policy

It is the conviction of the Humanities department that a student who is not in a class for any reason is not receiving the benefit of the education being provided. Missed class time includes not just absences but also latenesses, early departures, and time outside the classroom taken by students during class meeting periods. Missed time impacts any portion of the final grade overtly allocated to

participation and/or any grades awarded for activities that relate to presence in class. Note: Each professor will keep accurate, detailed records of students' attendance.

School of Arts and Sciences Attendance Statement

When students miss class, they do not receive the full benefit of their education. Missing class includes absence, lateness, early departure and stepping out for prolonged periods during the session. Students must attend class consistently and on time: Failure to do so will negatively affect the final grade and could lead to an 'F' in the course.

Learning Center:

The College Learning Centers provide a wide range of academic support to students across the College. Computer facilities, tutoring assistance and workshops are free to students with valid City Tech IDs. Schedules are regularly posted in the Learning Center. Atrium Learning Center Location: Atrium G18
Phone: 718-260-5874

Technology Requirements

Your Instructor uses Blackboard for grading, resume, cover letter and outline submission, quizzes, and other class activities. You are expected to complete all these assignments on Blackboard. In addition, all major course documents are available on Blackboard, including instructions for each assignment and templates.

Documents are submitted electronically as .docx, .doc, .pptx, .ppt. These are file formats for MS Word and PowerPoint. MS Office, which includes Word and PowerPoint, is available free to you as a City Tech student. Please see instructions by clicking on the link below:

<https://www.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/cis/technology-services/office-plus/faqs/>

Technology Support:

iTec, Room G601, (718)254-8565

itec@citytech.cuny.edu

Website: <http://websupport1.citytech.cuny.edu/index.html>

Academic Integrity at City Tech

Students and all others who work with information, ideas, texts, images, music, inventions, and other intellectual property owe their audience and sources accuracy and honesty in using, crediting, and citing sources. As a community of intellectual and professional workers, the College recognizes its responsibility for providing instruction in information literacy and academic integrity, offering models of good practice, and responding vigilantly and appropriately to infractions of academic integrity. Accordingly, academic dishonesty is prohibited in The City University of New York and at New York City College of Technology and is punishable by penalties, including failing grades, suspension, and expulsion.

Accessibility Statement

City Tech is committed to supporting the educational goals of enrolled students with disabilities in the

areas of enrollment, academic advisement, tutoring, assistive technologies and testing accommodations. If you have or think you may have a disability, you may be eligible for reasonable accommodations or academic adjustments as provided under applicable federal, state and city laws. You may also request services for temporary conditions or medical issues under certain circumstances. If you have questions about your eligibility or would like to seek accommodation services or academic adjustments, you can leave a voicemail at 718 260 5143, send an email to Accessibility@citytech.cuny.edu or visit the Center's website <http://www.citytech.cuny.edu/accessibility/> for more information.

Humanities Department Commitment to Student Diversity: The Humanities Department complies with the college wide nondiscrimination policy and seeks to foster a safe and inclusive learning environment that celebrates diversity in its many forms and enhances our students' ability to be informed, global citizens. Through our example, we demonstrate an appreciation of the rich diversity of world cultures and the unique forms of expression that make us human.

Communication Discipline-Specific Policies & Guidelines for Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI)

Analytical and critical thinking skills are part of the learning outcomes of this course and the Communication discipline; therefore, all written and oral assignments must be prepared by the student. The instructor may allow for the limited use of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI). Students will learn both when and how these tools may be used, and when and how to provide attribution. Generative AI can produce inaccurate or biased information, based on limited knowledge or citing fake references, and resulting in copyright and confidentiality infringement. Therefore, you will be held accountable for work that includes

- Incorrect, fake, and fabricated sources, or information misattributed to sources
- AI-generated work presented as original work (including essays, research papers, speech outlines, discussion boards, PowerPoints, etc.)
- Any AI generated text copied/pasted without attribution.
- Assessments, quizzes, and exams completed using AI
- AI generated imagery or multimedia without acknowledgement and citation of AI platform as creator
- AI-generated misinformation, including incorrect, biased, misinformed, or misleading claims

Any use of generative AI tools as described above will be treated as academic dishonesty and/or plagiarism and will be reported to the College Academic Integrity Committee. While understanding *how* and *when* to use generative AI tools may be emerging as a professional job skill, ethics still matter and being careful not to spread misinformation is foremost. Developing strong ethics and a sense of responsibility in this area will prepare you for graduation and a competitive workplace. If you allow AI to think for you, then you may not be able to do the kind of thinking that leads to success.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes and Assessment Details

LEARNING OUTCOMES	ASSESSMENT METHODS
Demonstrate professionalism and composure across various communication channels.	Students receive oral and written feedback from instructor and peers on their communication in oral and written formats. Written assignments, including resumes, cover letters and presentation outlines, are graded on formatting, grammar, clarity, organization, readability and tailoring to job description. Oral assignments verbal/nonverbal delivery, projected confidence, recognition of time restraints, content and use of presentation aids.
Possess an understanding of the how to prepare and deliver professional speeches.	Assessment based on demonstration of communication competencies, including the management of multiple communication goals, comfort with use of information technologies for research, and consistent citation of sources aloud and on written assignments. Students are assessed on ability to substantiate claims with evidence and ability to make reasoned judgements on the validity of evidence. Oral presentation is closely coordinated with presentation aids to emulate best practices.
Demonstrate active listening skills.	Completion of evaluation forms and Discussion Boards requires the demonstration of active listening in summarizing the content of lectures, mock interviews, video recorded talks and multimedia. Student evaluations are in turn evaluated on recall of speech components (including Intro, Main Points and Conclusion) in addition to informational content. During mock interviews, interviewers complete interview summaries which require active listening.

GENERAL EDUCATION INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES/ASSESSMENT METHODS

PATHWAYS LEARNING OUTCOMES: INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIETY	ASSESSMENT METHODS
1. Gather, interpret, and assess information from a variety of sources and points of view.	1. Information searches demonstrated for researching employers, employment-related information and resume and cover letter templates. Students are required to carefully cite information sources when contributing to Discussion Board and composing presentation outlines. Students are expected to consult a wide range of sources and are encouraged to take advantage of information available through libraries, media, internet, and professional organizations. Data gathered for presentations must be cited and derive from relevant, timely,
	and credible sources that appeal to diverse audience members.

<p>2. Evaluate evidence and arguments critically or analytically.</p>	<p>2. In response to Discussion Board prompts, students demonstrate communication concepts in the analysis of case studies of business failure and organizational crises. Evidence for critical thinking includes identification of problem, gathering of relevant supporting evidence and identification of underlying assumptions. Students are prompted to evaluate information sources and identify organizations and interests behind them. Students are expected to use reasoning, logic, and audience analysis. Students must report on potential employers. In-class activities for developing arguments and persuasive appeals are included, and students apply evaluative rubrics to assess claims made by others in Peer Evaluation assignment.</p>
<p>3. Produce well-reasoned written or oral arguments using evidence to support conclusions.</p>	<p>3. Claims made on written assignments and oral presentations substantiated by statistics, case examples, personal experiences and other forms of evidence. Students are required to follow the claim + data = warrant format for arguments, where main point is a general claim supported by specific examples (cited) in supporting points. The instructor assesses how the student incorporates selected information into their argument, through citations and fact checking, where indicated. In addition, students provide critical feedback and responses to other students on their outlines, cover letters, interview skills and presentations. The instructor monitors these responses and evaluates their development and substance.</p>

Last updated: July 26, 2021 David Lee