

## CIS 300-010: Strategic Business and Professional Communication

Spring 2016: Tuesday & Thursday | 12:30 p.m. – 1:45 p.m.

Whitehall CB 306

Instructor: Chelsea Woods  
Email: chelsea.woods@uky.edu

Office Location: 310 Lucille C. Little Library Office Suite  
Office Hours: T, R 8:15 – 9:15 a.m. & 11 a.m. – Noon  
and by appointment

---

### Course Description

This communication intensive course prepares students for their careers by developing effective communication skills (integrated written, oral, and visual) applied specifically to today's technology-driven and global business environment. The course will focus on developing strong communication skills in interpersonal settings, on small group teams, and when delivering public presentations. Students will prepare cover letters, resumes, and portfolios; develop effective interviewing skills; communicate effectively based on audience analysis; deliver effective formal public business presentations (informative and persuasive) based on audience analysis and using a variety of presentational aids that enhance the message; and learn to manage data, graphics, and a positive online presence (e.g., websites blogs, social media outlets, email messages, and webinars).

### Prerequisites

Upper division status in accounting, analytics, economics, finance, management, marketing, communication, or permission from instructor

### Course Objectives

By the end of the course, you should be able to:

- Critically evaluate methods of business communication;
- Understand and critically evaluate the role of research in business communication;
- Understand the advantages and disadvantages of technology in communication;
- Write, revise, and proofread effective audience-centered business documents in a variety of formats (e.g., cover letter, resume, press release, memoranda, e-mail correspondence, formal speech outlines, meeting agendas and minutes, websites);
- Prepare and deliver effective formal oral business presentations (informative and persuasive) using appropriate presentational aids based on the rhetorical situation (purpose, audience, occasion, constraints)
- Practice effective small group communication skills (teamwork, leadership, conflict management) in informal settings and as part of formal presentations (face-to-face and online).
- Respond effectively to media and stakeholder inquiries during crisis events and during question and answer sessions

### Required Resources

#### ➤ Textbooks:

Irwin, J., Davis Hopkins, P., Payne, H. J., & Spence, P. (2015). *Competent communication at work: Strategies and standards for success*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt Publishing.  
ISBN: 9781465276513

- #### ➤ Email & Canvas access:
- To obtain instructions for assignments, additional materials for this course, and important announcements.

## Course Policies

### 1. Attendance and Participation

This class is a community whose success is dependent on everyone's participation. Attendance is vital for your achievement. Attendance, class participation and any informal homework assignments are worth 100 points during the semester. Each class period, you will complete an assignment to receive attendance points for the day. These assignments will not be formally graded; rather you will be awarded points for completion.

If you are absent on a day when an assignment is due or an exam is given, you will be allowed to hand in or make-up that work *only* if the absence is **officially excused**. You will be asked to provide official written documentation for excused absences within one week of your return to class. If you do not turn in the written documentation on time, the absence will be counted as unexcused. Please see the definition of excused absences in the next section.

If you know ahead of time that you will be absent from class without an excused absence, please discuss this with your instructor and turn in any assignments ahead of time. Excuses for university-sponsored activities must be made *prior* to such absences. **For unexcused absences, no make-up work is available for in-class exercises, workshops, or exams unless approved in advance by your instructor.** For any emergency situation that arises, **e-mail your instructor** as soon as you know about the situation. It is much easier for me to work with you to resolve an issue *before* it turns into a crisis rather than after.

Students are strongly encouraged to withdraw from the class if more than 20% of the classes scheduled for the semester are missed per university policy.

**Note:** Please reference the definition of excused absence in current edition of *Students Rights and Responsibilities* or on the web at <http://www.uky.edu/StudentAffairs/Code/>.

### Verification of Absences

Students may be asked to verify their absences in order for them to be considered excused. Senate Rule 5.2.4.2 states that faculty have the right to request "appropriate verification" when students claim an excused absence because of illness or death in the family. Appropriate notification of absences due to university-related trips is required prior to the absence. In this course, you must provide appropriate documentation of an excused absence within one week upon your return to class. Please note: a Tier 1 documentation from University Health Services is not considered appropriate verification.

### Excused Absences

Students need to notify the professor of absences prior to class when possible. S.R. 5.2.4.2 defines the following as acceptable reasons for excused absences: (a) serious illness, (b) illness or death of family member, (c) University-related trips, (d) major religious holidays, and (e) other circumstances found to fit "reasonable cause for nonattendance" by the professor.

Students anticipating an absence for a major religious holiday are responsible for notifying the instructor in writing of anticipated absences due to their observance of such holidays no later than the last day in the semester to add a class. Information regarding dates of major religious holidays may be obtained through the religious liaison, Mr. David Beach (859-257-2754).

If you do miss a class, **you are responsible for all information, announcements, and changes addressed in classes and/or Canvas, including any work or updates from your team.**

**Important Spring Semester Dates** (<http://www.uky.edu/registrar/content/spring-2016-semester>)

**Jan. 20** Last day to add a class for the fall semester

**Feb. 3** Last day to drop a course without it appearing on the student's transcript

**Feb. 10** Last day to officially withdraw from the university/reduce course load and receive 50% refund

**March 11** Midterm grades posted by this date

**April 1** Last day to withdraw from the university or reduce course load.

**May 9** Final grades posted by this date

## **2. Academic Integrity**

Per university policy, students shall not plagiarize, cheat, or falsify or misuse academic records. Students are expected to adhere to University policy on cheating and plagiarism in all courses. The minimum penalty for a first offense is a zero on the assignment on which the offense occurred. If the offense is considered severe or the student has other academic offenses on their record, more serious penalties, up to suspension from the university may be imposed.

Plagiarism and cheating are serious breaches of academic conduct. Each student is advised to become familiar with the various forms of academic dishonesty as explained in the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities. Complete information can be found at the following website: <http://www.uky.edu/Ombud>. A plea of ignorance is not acceptable as a defense against the charge of academic dishonesty. It is important that you review this information as all ideas borrowed from others need to be properly credited.

Part II of Student Rights and Responsibilities ( <http://www.uky.edu/StudentAffairs/Code/part2.html>) states that all academic work, written or otherwise, submitted by students to their instructors or other academic supervisors, is expected to be the result of their own thought, research, or self-expression. In cases where students feel unsure about the question of plagiarism involving their own work, they are obliged to consult their instructors on the matter before submission.

When students submit work purporting to be their own, but which in any way borrows ideas, organization, wording or anything else from another source without appropriate acknowledgement of the fact, the students are guilty of plagiarism. Plagiarism includes reproducing someone else's work, whether it be a published article, chapter of a book, a paper from a friend or some file, or something similar to this. Plagiarism also includes the practice of employing or allowing another person to alter or revise the work which a student submits as his/her own, whoever that other person may be.

Students may discuss assignments among themselves or with an instructor or tutor, but when the actual work is done, it must be done by the student, and the student alone. When a student's assignment involves research in outside sources of information, the student must carefully acknowledge exactly what, where and how he/she employed them. If the words of someone else are used, the student must put quotation marks around the passage in question and add an appropriate indication of its origin. Making simple changes while leaving the organization, content and phraseology intact is plagiaristic. However, nothing in these Rules shall apply to those ideas which are so generally and freely circulated as to be a part of the public domain (Section 6.3.1).

Please note: Any assignment you turn in may be submitted to an electronic database to check for plagiarism.

### **3. Accommodations Due to Disability**

If you have a documented disability that requires academic accommodations, please see me as soon as possible during scheduled office hours. In order to receive accommodations in this course, you must provide me with a Letter of Accommodation from the Disability Resource Center (Multidisciplinary Science Building, Suite 407, at the corner of Rose Street and Huguelet Drive, 859-257-2754, email address: dtbeac1@uky.edu) for coordination of campus disability services available to students with disabilities.

### **4. Military Members and Veterans**

We recognize the complexities of being a member of the military community and also a student. If you are a member of the military or a military veteran or dependent, please inform your instructor if you are in need of special accommodations. Drill schedules, calls to active duty, mandatory training exercises, complications with GI Bill disbursement, and other unforeseen military and veteran related developments can complicate your academic life. If you are aware of a complication, we will work with you and put you in contact with university staff members who are trained to assist you. Please contact the Coordinator of the University of Kentucky Veterans Resource Center at 859-257-1148 for additional assistance. Visit <http://www.uky.edu/veterans> for more available resources.

### **5. Classroom Decorum**

Ideally the classroom environment should be supportive and comfortable. Do not equate a relaxed atmosphere with a lack of academic standards. You are expected to act professionally, including arriving on time, being fully prepared for class, and conducting yourself appropriately for a respectful academic environment. For example, frequent tardiness demonstrates a lack of respect for others and violates the values of this learning community. If you are late for class, enter the classroom with as little disruption as possible. Similarly, if you must leave the class early, leave with as little disruption to the activity in the class as possible. Tardiness and leaving early will result in a deduction in participation points. In case you miss class, it is your responsibility to obtain class notes from your classmate(s).

At no time should you be using earphones during class time. These must be put away at all times. If you use earphones, I may ask you to leave the classroom. Inappropriate media use greatly increases your chances of being called on and pulled back into the class discussion. If it continues, I will ask you to leave. Surfing the Internet unrelated to this course, homework for other courses, extended sidebar conversations, reading newspapers and magazines, etc. in class is distracting to other students and the professor, thus detracting from an effective learning environment. Disrespectful behavior will not be tolerated and students who behave in this way will stop this behavior or be removed from the class setting. Unprofessional behavior will result in a deduction of points from your participation points.

#### ***Important Notes***

- Be sure to complete readings prior to the class meeting.
- You are responsible for all information, announcements, and changes addressed in classes and/or Canvas.
- The instructor reserves the right to alter the syllabus during the semester, if necessary. A revised syllabus will be uploaded to Canvas.

### **6. Grading**

Students who have grade or exam concerns must approach the professor during office hours, or through appointment. In order to give our full attention to grade issues, the professor will NOT discuss grades or

exams before or after class. Once grades are posted online, you may visit the professor during office hours or by appointment to review your exam. Grades will not be discussed over email or the telephone.

Students who wish to discuss grades or scores earned have one week from the date grades are posted to do so. Grades will not be addressed after this time period has expired. Students need to contact the professor for an appointment to discuss the issue. Students must bring a written explanation of their dispute with them to this appointment. If the matter is still unresolved, students need to contact the Instructional Communication Coordinator. Students that do not fulfill these requirements will not be addressed and the original grades will be final.

Grades are assigned based on points earned in the class. It is in your best interest to follow assignment guidelines and strive to produce excellent products based on the grading criteria/rubric that is posted to Canvas for all major assignments. Final grades are not curved or rounded up. Please check your grades regularly on Canvas.

## 7. Late Work

You are expected to take exams and turn in assignments on the days listed in the syllabus or assigned by the professor – just as you could complete a task on schedule in the workplace. However, I understand that “life happens.” After the deadline has passed, an assignment can be made up, with the final assignment grade not to exceed 70 percent. All assignments must be submitted to the instructor by Friday, April 29. Assignments not covered by the policy are in-class activities, quizzes, tests, and your team project/presentation. Submitting assignments after class or through incorrect channels will be penalized.

## 8. Technology

**Email:** Please read your UK email and check Canvas regularly, as I will use these for class updates – if information is sent to you via email and you do not read it in time to adjust accordingly, this is not the fault of your instructor. I will also do my best to answer email within 24 hours. Please note that my email access may be limited on weekends. You will be asked to submit some assignments via Canvas. **For your protection and privacy, I will only respond to emails sent from your UK email account.** When communicating with me via email, please do so in a professional manner. All emails must include an appropriate greeting, a message including full sentences, professional language, correct spelling, grammar, and capitalization, and an appropriate closing. If your email does not include these components, I may choose not to respond. Consider it an opportunity to practice professional correspondence.

**Cell Phone Use:** Do not use your cell phone in this course. You may only use your cell phone for class-related activities when announced by your instructor; unpermitted use will result in a loss of points from your participation grade. Please place phones on silent, not vibrate. If special circumstances arrive that require you to need your cell phone (e.g., family emergency), please talk to me before class.

**Save Your Work:** At times, technology can fail. It is your responsibility to communicate any technology concerns to the instructor as soon as they occur; technology excuses conveyed after assignment deadlines will not be considered. Always save duplicates of your work on an external source (e.g., flash/thumb drive, Google Drive, Dropbox.com)! For your protection, keep all assignments that are graded and handed back to you until final grades have been submitted at the end of the semester.

## 9. Working in a Team

Because most professionals must learn to work collaboratively, you will collaborate--cheerfully--with your peers both in and out of class. At various points, you will form groups to provide each other feedback and

support. This course will also require you to work with a peer or peers to complete assignments. Each person is expected to contribute equally. Unless stated otherwise, each group member will receive the same grade for the project. That means that you will honor all deadlines agreed to by your classmates as though I was the one who set them and in general be respectful. Consequences for "slacking" will be determined on a case-by-case basis).

Be warned that your group grade depends on the quality of the completed work. Your group will also evaluate the amount and quality of your contribution to the project, and that evaluation will play a significant role in the determination of your individual grade on the assignment.

### **Additional Student Resources**

**The Graham Office of Career Management** is another tool that will be helpful for aspects of CIS 300. The mission of the Graham Office of Career Management is dedicated to assisting students in their career development process and employment success by working closely with employers who seek to hire world ready interns and graduates. More information can be found at <http://gatton.uky.edu/career/>.

**Presentation U** provides tutoring assistance and training with multimodal communication. UK students have the opportunity to attend scheduled workshops and work individually with highly trained faculty members, graduate students, and peer tutors. Located at the Hub in W. T. Young Library and on the first floor of Champions Court I, Presentation U can help with any of the following: brainstorming project topics, creating outlines, effectively using APA/MLA style, practicing oral presentations, designing and constructing effective visual aids, including PowerPoint, Prezi, websites, videos, and digital projects. Visit our website: [www.uky.edu/presentationu](http://www.uky.edu/presentationu) or call (phone 859-218-5186) for our tutoring hours or to make an appointment.

**The Writing Center** is located in W. T. Young Library, Room 108B in the Hub (phone: 859-257-1368). The staff can help you identify and correct problems with your writing. You can also schedule an appointment online at: <http://wrld.as.uky.edu/writing-center>

### **Course Activities and Assignments**

(All detailed assignment descriptions and rubrics will be posted in Canvas)

**1. Cover letter, resume, and reflective essay (100 points).** Each student will conduct research to locate a job posting for a position he or she might like to hold one day. Each student will prepare a cover letter and resume draft to use for applying for that position (10 points). Documents are to reflect research about the mission of the organization, required and preferred credentials, and the expertise the student would bring to the organization if hired. These documents will be revised later in the semester to reflect what the student learned throughout the term (70 points). Students will prepare a 400-500 word self-reflection articulating how and why they prepared the cover letter and resume as they did, citing at least three credible sources using proper APA style (20 points).

**2. Job Talk Speech and Critique (100 points).** Each student will deliver a 5-7 minute "job talk" answering the prompt provided by the instructor. Points will be earned for the formal and speaking outlines, the construction and integration of presentational aids (e.g., PPT slideshow or Prezi), as well as the content, structure, and delivery of the actual speech (80 points). In addition, students will prepare a 400-500 word self-critique of their presentation (20 points).

**3. Interview and Critique (100 points).** Each student will complete a mock interview using the Career Center's InterviewStream program (80 points). Students will be graded on question choices, answers, and delivery. In addition, students will prepare a 400-500 word self-critique of their mock job interview (20 points).

**4. Written Business Documents (75 points).** Students will prepare an email message (15 points), interoffice memo (25 points), and press release (35 points) that reflect ethical and effective responses to case study scenarios provided by the instructor.

**5. Team Project (300 points).** Students will work together in teams (4-5 students each) to examine a workplace crisis situation and formulate potential solutions, as well as a plan for addressing various stakeholder groups. Each group will produce a proposal describing what and how they would communicate to the various groups and why, and a formal 16-20 minute presentation. A team performance review will be submitted to the instructor after the project is complete.

**6. Online Exams and Quizzes (200 points).** There will be 2 examinations (worth 75 points each) and 5 quizzes (worth 10 points each) to evaluate comprehension of theories and concepts addressed in the textbook and class discussions. Examinations may be comprised of multiple choice, true/false items, matching, and short answer questions. You are responsible for the material in both the textbook and lectures. Instructions will be given for how to complete the exam.

**7. Professional Communication Points (100 points).** You will complete a variety of in-class and short out-of-class activities and small assignments, which may be awarded points. These activities/points cannot be made up. Points may also be deducted surfing the Internet, failure to stay on task, or other distracting behaviors. If you use your cell phone during class, you will lose half of your participation points for that day. These points are meant to assess your work ethic, professional communication, and ability to work with peers. These points will be updated on Canvas at midterm and the end of the semester.

Extra credit MAY be offered at the instructor's discretion. Extra credit is not offered to individuals, only to the entire class.

**8. Pre-test & Post-test (25 points).** Each CIS 300 student is required to complete a short online pre-test at the beginning of the semester and a short online post-test at the end of the semester for departmental assessment purposes. You will receive 25 pts for completing these two assignments; you must complete BOTH tests to receive credit.

### Point Distribution

To summarize, final course grades will be based on the total number of points accumulated:

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Points Possible</b>
Cover Letter/Resume	100 pts
Written Business Documents	75 pts
Job Talk	100 pts
Interview	100 pts
Team Project	300 pts
Exams & Quizzes	200 pts
Participation	100 pts
Pre- and Post-Test	25 pts
<b>Total</b>	<b>1000 pts</b>

## Grading Scale

The following scale will be used to determine your course grade:

<b>A</b>	90-100%	(900-1000 pts)
<b>B</b>	80-89%	(800-899 pts)
<b>C</b>	70-79%	(700-799 pts)
<b>D</b>	60-69%	(600-699 pts)
<b>E</b>	0-59%	(599 pts and below)
<b>Total</b>		<b>1000 pts</b>

## General Grading Standards

- A** Superior. The student goes above and beyond expectations of the assignment. Student shows a very detailed understanding of the concepts and principles. Paper or project is well-organized and makes a strong and coherent argument using thorough analysis. Evidence is incorporated and linked to claims. Transitions are strong and present from point to point. Contains few to no mechanical mistakes (spelling, grammar, APA). Very well-written. Writing is clear and concise.
- B** Very good. Student goes slightly beyond assignment expectations and demonstrates comprehension of the concepts and principles. Argument is clear, precise, well-organized, coherent, but may lack some original insight. Contains minor mechanical errors but no major ones. Analysis is coherent but could be more detailed. Evidence could be more abundant, stronger, and more closely linked to claims. Transitions are present, but weak.
- C** Good. Student completes the assignment requirements. Shows mixed thinking and performance. Work is inconsistent in clarity, precision, and reasoning. Demonstrates a surface level of comprehension of concepts and principles; might show confusion about concepts. Contains numerous mechanical errors, and potentially major ones. Analysis lacks coherence and detail. Evidence is lacking and weak and is weakly linked to claims. Poorly organized; may ramble.
- D** Not good enough. Contains no clear argument of thesis. Major mechanical issues. Poorly organized. Demonstrates no comprehension and misunderstanding of concepts. Writing is unclear, imprecise, and poorly reasoned. Evidence is not included. Analysis is superficial, at best.
- E** Unacceptable. Worse than a D in terms of writing, reasoning, and clarity. Demonstrates no competence. Concepts are used incorrectly and show major misunderstandings of concepts or principles.

*Please note: This syllabus is subject to change. Any revisions will be announced and posted on Canvas.*



## Spring 2016 Tentative Schedule

(Changes may be made at instructor's discretion and posted on Canvas)

Date	Topics & Assigned Readings	Assignments Due
<b>Week 1</b>		
R – 1/14	General introduction to the course	Complete pre-test
<b>Week 2</b>		
T – 1/19	Intro to Organization & Strategic Communication; Ch. 1	
R – 1/21	Resumes, Cover Letters, & Social Media; Ch. 8	Cover letter & resume draft due
<b>Week 3</b>		
T – 1/26	Resumes, Cover Letters, & Social Media; Ch. 8	
R – 1/28	Organizing and Developing Presentations, Ch. 10 – 12	Revised cover letter & resume due w/ reflection
<b>Week 4</b>		
T – 2/2	Informative and Persuasive Communication, Ch. 13 & 14	Complete Quiz 1
R – 2/4	Presentation Rehearsal Day	Bring draft of speech to class
<b>Week 5</b>		
T – 2/9	Speech Day	Speeches – outline due
R – 2/11	Speech Day	
<b>Week 6</b>		
T – 2/16	Interviewing Strategies, Ch. 9	Job Talk Critique due
R – 2/18	Interviewing Strategies, Ch. 9	Complete Quiz 2
<b>Week 7</b>		
T – 2/23	Interview Work Day	
R – 2/25	Interview Work Day	Interviews & interview critiques due on Friday
<b>Week 8</b>		
T – 3/1	Exam 1	Complete Exam 1 on Canvas
R – 3/3	Listening; Verbal & Non-Verbal, Ch. 3 & 4	
<b>Week 9</b>		
T – 3/8	Crisis communication; online PDF	Complete Quiz 3
R – 3/10	Crisis communication; online PDF	
<b>Week 10</b>		
T – 3/15	Spring Break – No Class	
R – 3/17		
<b>Week 11</b>		
T – 3/22	Interpersonal & Team Communication, Ch. 6 & 7	Complete Quiz 4
R – 3/24	Research in Business Communication, Ch. 11	
<b>Week 12</b>		
T – 3/29	Writing in Business Communication, Ch. 5	
R – 3/31	Writing in Business Communication, Ch. 5	Complete Quiz 5
<b>Week 13</b>		
T – 4/5	Writing in Business Communication, Ch. 5	
R – 4/7	Proposal/Presentation Work Day	Written docs due – memo, email, press release
<b>Week 14</b>		
T – 4/12	Globalization and Communication, Ch. 2	
R – 4/14	Proposal/Presentation Work Day	
<b>Week 15</b>		
T – 4/19	Team Presentations	Proposal Due
R – 4/21	Team Presentations	
<b>Week 16</b>		
T – 4/26	Work Day/Make-up Day	Team critique due
R – 4/28	Work Day/Make-up Day	Complete post-test
<b>Finals Week</b>	Exam Day – Exam 2	Complete Exam 2 on Canvas