

## 036:016 Business and Professional Communication Syllabus

CIMBA Program, Paderno del Grappa, Italy – Spring 2013

Professor: Dr. Charlene Bunnell

Office: CIMBA faculty offices – IC Building, Instituti Filippin

Email: [cbunnell@wcupa.edu](mailto:cbunnell@wcupa.edu) or [charlenebunnell@gmail.com](mailto:charlenebunnell@gmail.com)



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### 1. Course Description

**From UI General Catalogue:** “Introduction to business and professional communication at individual and corporate levels; individual-level topics cover organizational communication, business vocabulary, speaking and writing, professionalism and interviewing; corporate-level topics focus on marketing, advertising, public relations, corporate communications, crisis communication management, business and communication plans, proposals; guest speakers from for-profit and not-for-profit organizations.”

**From CIMBA:** “Basic concepts of skills of communication in workplace settings; interviewing, formal presentations, speeches, teambuilding, managing difference.”

### 2. Goals & Learning Outcomes:

By the end of the course, students will

- Have working knowledge and practice of various types of professional written and oral communication genres and their conventions; examples of such documents:
  - Routine and custom correspondence via letters, memos, and e-mail
  - Job application materials
  - Formal research reports and proposals
  - Instructional/Explanatory and promotional documents involving creative design
  - Presentations (oral, slides)
- Recognize the interconnectivity of purpose, audience, and content in executing a communication task;
- Construct text and visuals for print, oral, and electronic formats;
- Write competent explanatory, persuasive, and informative documents;
- Use grammatically correct prose with effective diction and syntax appropriate to topic, genre, and audience in formal and informal writing tasks;
- Contribute personal and professional skills to produce team-based projects.

### 3. Texts:

- *Excellence in Business Communication*. Thill and Bovée. 6<sup>th</sup> International ed. Pearson Publishers. ISBN: 0-13-127321-3
- *The Business Writer’s Handbook*. Alfred, Brusaw, Olilu. 8<sup>th</sup> ed. Bedford-St. Martin’s. ISBN: 978-0-312-43612
- Supplemental: handouts and web materials as needed.

### 4. Course Policies:

**A. Academic Integrity:** Plagiarism is submitting someone else's idea or work as your own, intentionally or unintentionally, without proper acknowledgment of sources. All sources must be properly documented according to a standard style (e.g., MLA, APA, CM). Incorrect acknowledgment or failure to cite sources will result in a zero grade for that project with the

option to redo. See also UI's policy below.

**B. Grading System:** The percentage equivalents for letter grades are A (95); A- (92); B+ (88); B (85); B- (82); C+ (78); C (75); C- (72); D+ (68); D (65); D- (62); F (ranges from 0 to 59). However, be aware that the University of Iowa's College of Liberal Arts & Sciences requires professors adhere to the following recommended grade distribution for upper-level courses:

	A	B	C	D	F	Average
Intermediate courses	18%	36%	39%	5%	2%	2.63
Advanced courses	22%	38%	36%	3%	1%	2.77

Also, you may find two grades for your assignments: the first reflects content and genre organization; the second, style, grammar, and presentation. The overall grade is an average of the two. In marketing terms, "packaging" is important and makes the first impression on the audience; nevertheless, the best packaging is worthless if its contents do not deliver what is needed or wanted.

**C. Attendance/Participation:** Attendance policy is per CIMBA guidelines:

Attendance at all classes and CIMBA sanctioned activities is MANDATORY. All unexcused absences will have the following consequences:

- a. 1st absence will result in a loss of a 1/3 of a letter grade in that class
- b. 2nd (cumulative) absence will result in a loss of an entire letter grade in that class
- c. 3rd (cumulative) absence will result in a dismissal from the program

Absences due to illness require a note from the CIMBA Undergraduate Office Staff and/or the Istituti Filippin medical staff. If a student is sick and cannot attend class, he/she must inform the CIMBA Staff immediately. Failure to do so will result in an unexcused absence. If you miss a class for excused reasons, follow CIMBA guidelines, keep to the course schedule, and understand that you will be responsible for that day's material.

**D. Writing:** This course focuses on communication in professional, business settings, specifically written communications. As such, it is a skills-based rather than a discipline-specific course in a content area. Improving skills requires practice – and more practice; in other words, learning by doing. "Doing" is not simply writing a letter for an assignment; it is a process that entails reading the textbook and studying the examples, completing exercises for practice and discussion, outlining/brainstorming initial ideas, revising/editing drafts in peer-review workshops, & conferencing with me as needed. Following the process results in significantly better product than taking short cuts.

Although we will review writing techniques for the various communication genres covered in the class, you are expected to be able to develop a focus (thesis or control statement) suitable to the assignment, to construct effective paragraphs or sections and sentences, and to have sound grammatical and usage skills. Layouts and formatting for business documents are often quite different from academic essays, so we will review requirements and options for the various genres we study.

**E. Classroom Environment:** We learn best in a comfortable, collaborative environment with

common courtesy and respect to everyone. Disrespect or harassment of any type will NOT be tolerated; see <http://www.clas.uiowa.edu/faculty/teaching/policies.shtml> for UI's stated policies. Be professional and courteous during presentations and lectures. If you bring your laptop to take notes or use for a workshop, use it for coursework. In other words, while physically in class, be mentally in class as well. All accommodations for students with learning differences are made; please let me know what is needed.

**F. Miscellaneous:**

- **You are responsible for the assigned textbook readings** as well as any handouts. Do NOT assume you can produce quality work without the textbook, which helps you contextualize the writing situations and conventions for your assignments and details basic technical and format procedures not covered in class.
- **Preparation and participation are essential** as this is not a lecture class – we learn from each other as we work on the various documents. Please come prepared; do not hesitate to ask questions; and grant others the courtesy of your attention and feedback.
- **Several classes will be devoted to workshops and conferences** which provide critical reader feedback on your work in progress. Be prepared for them with the required drafts; they may entail group work, peer reviews or instructor-led sessions. Actively engage and be a critical reviewer of peers' writing, in both content and presentation. Note: "critical" does not mean negative; rather, it is a careful, engaged analysis of the draft.
- **Some assignments require documentation.** Use a standard style such as MLA (Modern Language Association), APA (American Psychological Association), or CM (Chicago Manual). ***ALL BORROWED MATERIAL MUST BE CREDITED TO ITS SOURCE, WHETHER YOU HAVE QUOTED, PARAPHRASED, OR SUMMARIZED.*** We will review citation practices for internal documentation and use of signal phrases as well as bibliography pages.
- **Saturday Classes:** Due to the extensive amount of travel time incorporated into the CIMBA Undergraduate program, we may have a Saturday class or two (not during travel times) to ensure that we have the appropriate amount of class sessions (per UI regulations). If we meet on a Saturday, the date will be announced by the CIMBA office by the end of the first or second week.
- **My availability:** I am on campus nearly every week day and on some weekends. Please see me in the faculty offices or e-mail me if you need to schedule a specific time to meet with me. NOTE: although I check e-mail regularly, I do not have internet access at the apartment.
- **Technology & computers.** If you have a MAC, you must also have a VGA connector for the overhead projector as many MAC's do not have a standard port. Also, team members should check for compatible software applications for sharing and sending documents. Saving documents as RTF (rich text format) or PDF usually ensures compatibility. Also, flash drives or USB's are very helpful for large files that may take some time to upload or download.

5. Tentative Assignments

(assignments will be finalized once the class schedule is confirmed; a detailed handout for them will be distributed during the first or second week)

- General Classwork (10% total):
  - Quizzes, homework, & in-class exercises
- Correspondence (15% total):
  - Cover Letter & Résumé, 1-2 Routine Memos, Problem Letter
- Collaborative Promotional Document (brochure series or newsletter) (15%)
- Collaborative Project: (30% total)
  - Formal Profile Report w/SWOT/PEST analysis and Proposal w/ Presentation
- Instructional Fact Sheet or Brochure (15%)
- Final: Communication Case Study (15%)

## 6. TENTATIVE Course Schedule

The detailed course schedule will be distributed the first or second day we meet as a class, at which point CIMBA will have finalized all course schedules (A & B bands) and other program- and course-related activities; however, here is a brief and TENTATIVE overview:

### **Weeks 1-4: (approximately 9-10 class meetings)**

Introduction; Cover Letter/Résumé; Collaborative Promotional Document; Correspondence

### ***Week 5: Travel***

### **Weeks 6-8: (approximately 7 class meetings)**

Instructional Document; begin Collaborative Project

### ***Week 9: Travel***

### **Weeks 10-11 (*w/ travel weekend*): approximately 4 class meetings complete Collaborative Project**

### **Week 12: (2 class meetings including final time)**

Final – Communication Case Study

**University of Iowa CLAS (College of Liberal Arts and Sciences)  
Recommended Syllabi Insert w/ links for more information.**

**Administrative Home**

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS) is the administrative home of this course and governs matters such as the add/drop deadlines, the second-grade-only option, and other related issues. Different colleges may have different policies. Questions may be addressed to 120 Schaeffer Hall, or see the CLAS [Student Academic Handbook](#).

**Electronic Communication**

University policy specifies that students are responsible for all official correspondences sent to their University of Iowa e-mail address (@uiowa.edu). Faculty and students should use this account for correspondences. (*Operations Manual*, III.15.2. Scroll down to k.11.)

**Accommodations for Disabilities**

A student seeking academic accommodations should first register with Student Disability Services and then meet privately with the course instructor to make particular arrangements. See [www.uiowa.edu/~sds/](http://www.uiowa.edu/~sds/) for more information.

**Academic Honesty**

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences expects all students to do their own work, as stated in the [CLAS Code of Academic Honesty](#). Instructors fail any assignment that shows evidence of plagiarism or other forms of cheating, also reporting the student's name to the College. A student reported to the College for cheating is placed on disciplinary probation; a student reported twice is suspended or expelled.

**CLAS Final Examination Policies**

Final exams may be offered only during finals week. No exams of any kind are allowed during the last week of classes. Students should not ask their instructor to reschedule a final exam since the College does not permit rescheduling of a final exam once the semester has begun. Questions should be addressed to the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Programs and Curriculum.

**Making a Suggestion or a Complaint**

Students with a suggestion or complaint should first visit the instructor, then the course supervisor, and then the departmental DEO. Complaints must be made within six months of the incident. See the CLAS [Student Academic Handbook](#).

**Understanding Sexual Harassment**

Sexual harassment subverts the mission of the University and threatens the well-being of students, faculty, and staff. All members of the UI community have a responsibility to uphold this mission and to contribute to a safe environment that enhances learning. Incidents of sexual harassment should be reported immediately. See the UI [Comprehensive Guide on Sexual Harassment](#) for assistance, definitions, and the full University policy.

**Reacting Safely to Severe Weather**

This section has been omitted as we're not in Iowa! However, should we experience extreme weather, follow guidelines from the CIMBA office staff.

\*These CLAS policy and procedural statements have been summarized from the web pages of the [College of Liberal Arts and Sciences](#) and The University of Iowa [Operations Manual](#).

