

Syllabus

Communication 318: Professional Communication

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Course Goals

The overall goal of this course is to develop your professional communication skills and to increase your marketability. While we will cover some theory to enhance your understanding of the business world, the bulk of our time will be spent focusing on your applied skills, including a major service-learning project. I would like you to walk out of this class confident you can deliver excellent presentations; feel comfortable and be successful in interviews; write first-rate cover letters and résumés; perform as an indispensable member of a team; and produce effective, clear and correct business writing. You should also have increased awareness of and ability to manage business, time, social, and interpersonal issues that will affect your work life.

Required Course Materials

Adler, R. B. & Elmhorst, J. M. (2013). *Communicating at work* (11th Ed.). McGraw-Hill.

Barsch, J. (2014). *Resume rebel: an outlaw guide for students and new grads*. CreateSpace Independent Publishers.

Suggested Reading

Danziger, E. (2001). *Get to the point!* New York: Three Rivers Press.

If you think grammar, spelling, and punctuation don't count, you need to know that I vehemently disagree. Mistakes in these areas can be costly here and in the work world. This book should help those of you who need to improve your writing, grammar, and punctuation. Keep a writing reference book on your desk and consult it frequently (or bookmark similar reference sites online). I also recommend Strunk & White's *Elements of Style*, or O'Connor's *Woe Is I*, but there are many such titles available.

Disclaimer: This is an intense course. Stick it out and you'll grow a ton, but you're going to have to work for it. I advise all students to carefully evaluate their lives and determine whether or not the commitment of this course is something manageable, and then to act accordingly. If you are taking this course to "boost your GPA" you are bound to be sorely disappointed; if this refers to you, please consider dropping the class as soon as possible to make room for waitlisted students.

Course Standards

This course will be as action-packed as you should expect your professional life to be. The requirements of frequent Canvas logins (3x/wk), consistent attendance, punctuality and participation are essential to your success. Missing class more than once or twice in the short time we have together is no more acceptable than it would be to miss important workdays at any company. When you have a deadline for an assignment, reading, or a presentation, you must have the work prepared at the very beginning of class. These deadlines will come up often. For the sake of yourself and your team, get a great calendar system figured out early and don't allow yourself to fall behind!

Here's the fine print. Read it. Any student who misses more than two classes may fail the course. If you turn in an assignment after the start of class on its due date it is late. Late assignments will be downgraded by up to one full letter grade for each day they are late. Missing a presentation or an exam will result in a failing grade unless you have physical proof of some serious emergency that prohibited your presence (e.g., a bill from the paramedics or a selfie of you with a firefighter in front of your burning apartment complex*). You must complete all assignments to pass the course!

*Please don't set your apartment complex on fire to avoid presenting.

If you happen to miss a regular class meeting (with no presentation or exam) I expect you to email me a *brief* heads up about why you will be absent, just like you would a supervisor at any job. You should check Canvas and then consult with other students to find out what you missed; please do not ask me until you have done at least this much. Depending on the content of the day your absence, your communication with me, and your situation, your absence may cost you participation points.

Grades will be calculated as follows:

Area of Study Essay	10%	A 95-100
Business Briefing	10%	A- 90-94
Heartbeat Meetings	10%	B+ 86-89
Service Learning Experience	30%	B 82-85
Employment Package	10%	B- 78-81
Mock Interview	10%	C+ 74-77
Ropes Participation & Reflection*	10%	C 70-73
Final Exam	10%	C- 67-69
		D 60-66
		F 0-59

Those unable or unwilling to participate in the ropes course on **Sunday, April 19, from 11am-3pm**, will be required to complete an alternate research assignment to earn credit for the assignment.*

Presence and participation (including Canvas conversations, attendance and promptness, engaging in classroom activities and an insightful synthesis of content knowledge in discussions, courtesy and professionalism) may affect your grade by up to one full letter grade *either direction*. Consistent engagement raises grades; lack of it reduces them.

Please turn your cell phones off during class—not on vibrate, but **OFF**. You do not want to be the person whose phone starts playing Bob Marley or buzzing uncontrollably during another student's presentation! If you have a laptop or tablet with you it should be put away during student presentations and group activities unless you are instructed to use it.

Your personal improvement is highly valued in this class. Even if you already possess superior skills you should incorporate feedback and make improvements from one assignment to the next. The overarching expectation is personal growth—regardless of your starting point coming into the course—and receiving and incorporating feedback is an important part of growing your professional skill set. Demonstrations of improvement can positively affect your grade.

Class Climate

In order to maintain a positive working environment please adopt the following practices for class climate:

- Refrain from eating in class. It's a 2hr class; you'll survive. On the other hand, coffee, water and other beverages are fine so long as you don't spill them and they don't stink.

- Please don't wear overbearing perfume or cologne, come in smelling like smoke of any kind, or cough or sneeze without covering your mouth (all equally distracting and invasive).
- Turn off your phones, music devices, and any other thing on your person which might make noise or distract and disrupt what we're trying to get done in the little time we have together.
- Most importantly, assume good intent by those you work with. Everybody wants to be successful; help them!

Western's Academic Honesty Policy

The Department of Communication Studies is committed to the highest standards of academic excellence and ethical support. It endorses and acts on WWU's policies and procedures detailed in the section titled: "Academic Honesty Policy and Procedure." You can find this information in Appendix D of the WWU Catalog; or here: http://catalog.wvu.edu/content.php?catoid=7&navoid=907#Academic_Honesty_Policy. The policies, procedures, and guidelines will be assiduously upheld. They protect your rights and the rights of your classmates, as well as those of the faculty. In short, I don't mess around when it comes to academic integrity.

It is particularly important that you are aware of and avoid plagiarism, cheating on exams, fabricating data for a project, submitting a paper to more than one professor, or submitting a paper authored by anyone but yourself. Violation of these standards will result in personal and professional detriment. If you have doubts about any of these practices, confer with me or another faculty member or the Secretary to the Academic Honesty Board at AcademicHonestyBoard@wvu.edu.

All-Access Statement

The Americans with Disabilities Act provides reasonable accommodations for students with physical, sensory, cognitive, systematic, learning, and psychiatric disabilities. Accommodations are available for students who have a documented disability, though I am happy to help all of my students succeed any way I can. Please notify me and Office of Student Life promptly of any accommodation(s) needed for the course. Late notification may cause the requested accommodations to be delayed or unavailable, or create other undue stress. Accommodations should be approved through the Director of disAbility Resources for Students, Anna Blick, OM 120, 650-3083, drs@wvu.edu. Visit disAbility Resources on the web for more info on their services. <http://www.wvu.edu/depts/drs/>.

Tentative Course Schedule (*Subject to Change*)

Readings should be completed prior to class the day they are scheduled. Written assignments should be submitted via Canvas (unless otherwise noted) by the beginning of the class they are due. Assignments marked with an asterisk (*) denote formal presentations which require **presentation attire**. See end of syllabus for explicit details.

Week	Date	What's Happening?	What's Due?	Readings
1	W 4. 1	Course Introduction	Arrive on time; bring hardcopy of syllabus New Hire Paperwork (in-class)	Syllabus
2	M 4. 6	Service-Learning Overview Guest: Dan Purdy	Team contact sheets (in-class)	Ch 8
	W 4. 8	Working in Groups-Teams	Team assignment orientation (in-class)	Ch 7
3	M 4. 13	SL Technical Training Guests: AJ Barse; STC Staff	Review memos, agendas, minutes onas Can Team calendar	p.402-408; Canvas
	W 4. 15	Personal Skills <i>Heartbeat #1</i> Guests: Project Panel	Briefing subtopic sign up Ropes release form (in-class)	Ch 3

High Ropes!	SUN 4.19	High Ropes Course	Participate onsite at Lakewood, 11am-3pm	
4	M 4. 20	Interpersonal Strategies <i>Heartbeat #2</i>	Area of Study Essay	Ch 4&5
	W 4. 22	Communicating to Connect	Guest Reflection 1/2 Memo 1/5	
5	M 4. 27	Comfortable & Commendable Work Climates Guests: Diversity Panel	Ropes Reflection Statement	Ch 2
	W 4. 29	Presentations at Work <i>Heartbeat #3</i>	Job Ad Memo 2/5	Ch 9&11
6	M 5. 4	Business Briefings*	5-6min Business Briefing Presentation	RR 1-16
	W 5. 6	Business Briefings* <i>Heartbeat #4</i>	5-6min Business Briefing Presentation Memo 3/5 References Draft	RR 18-40
7	M 5. 11	Killer Résumés & Readiness Guest: Sandy Brown	Cover Letter Draft Resume Draft	Ch 6; p408-417
	W 5. 13	Social Media & Work <i>Heartbeat #5</i>	Cover Letter Peer Reviews Resume Peer Reviews Memo 4/5	RR p46-84
8	M 5. 18	Mock Interviews*	Complete Job Package Potluck Signup	p.380-387; RR p87-94
	W 5. 20	Celebratory Debriefing; Negotiations & Exits <i>Heartbeat #6</i>	Guest Reflection 2/2 Memo 5/5	Canvas
9	M 5. 25 No class	Memorial Day "Decoration Day is the most beautiful of our national holidays... The grim cannon have turned into palm branches, and the shell and shrapnel into peach blossoms." Thomas Bailey Aldrich	Meet with team to complete tasks, prep for showcase, etc.	
	W 5. 27	Team Showcase <i>Heartbeat #7</i>	All SL tasks complete 10min Team Showcase	
Service Day!	S 5. 30	Event Day	Onsite at Civic Field for shift!	
10	M 6. 1 No class	Mental Health Day "There is virtue in work and there is virtue in rest. Use both and overlook neither." Alan Cohen	SL Written Team Report	Everything
	W 6. 3	Closing; Study Guides	SL Individual Reflection	Everything
11	M 6. 8	Finally. Finals!	Completed Study Guide	

ASSIGNMENTS

I try to provide as much information as possible in the syllabus and on Canvas about your assignments, and to allow flexibility in the approach to a lot of the details while retaining core requirements for all students. Please read all of my directions carefully, review rubrics where available, participate in *Heartbeat Meetings* to clarify questions, double-check your perception with your colleagues, and feel free to direct any lingering questions my way after that.

All written assignments should be double-spaced and written in APA format, complete with references as appropriate. Each assignment is **required to be uploaded to Canvas on the corresponding assignment thread by the start of the class period in which they are due unless otherwise noted**. Please **name your attachment with your own name as well as the type of assignment**. (ie: HDavidson_areaofstudy.doc)

High Ropes Course & Reflection Statement

This experience is a cornerstone for this course. This assignment is designed to make you a better team member both now and in your professional future. The high ropes course will take place at Lakewood **Sunday, April 19, from 11-3**. Participation in this assignment directly applies course content by providing an opportunity for you to demonstrate and improve upon your skills when working in teams. The communication, flexibility, creative problem-solving and common goals required of the ropes course will reinforce the work you and your colleagues are doing together and requires direct testing of course theories.

In Washington State a landlord need only provide 20 days notice to you to have you vacate your property. If 20 days is enough notice to have you organize, box up, load and move every tangible aspect of your life in full my hope is that the 20 days I'm giving you will be enough for you to adjust your schedules to attend this highly valuable workshop for a few hours. Participation and reflection on the ropes course will total 10% of your overall grade. If you cannot or choose not to participate you will be given an alternative research assignment to complete to make up the credit. Those who declare intent to attend at the start of the quarter will be asked to confirm the week prior to the training.

After completing the high ropes course you will write a 3-4pg double-spaced reflective statement about your experience. Relating course concepts and readings to your experiential lesson discuss the relevance of the ropes course to your professional development. Be sure to give specific examples of Lakewood activities and how they link to concepts we have discussed, demonstrating a synthesis of learning between theory, action and reflection. A complete reflection will include a minimum of three conceptual connections from our text and an honest appraisal of takeaways.

Area of Study Essay

When you interview for your first job after graduation it is practically guaranteed that you will be asked certain questions. This essay gives you an opportunity to think through these questions and be prepared to reply in a focused way. Write up an argument in 3 double-spaced pages that answers the questions, "What did you get out of majoring in Communication

Studies/your field?" and "Why should we select you over other applicants with the same major?" You'll want to include:

- what advantages a student who majored in your field* has in the professional world
- what *specific* knowledge and skills the line of study (majors/minors) uniquely provides
- a sample of a project you've done which demonstrates prime skills you have

By skills I definitely do *not* mean that you learned "how to communicate" or how to give presentations. Give the question of what you've gotten from your major some serious thought and then write a concise and specific response that would be persuasive to a future employer. Remember to use *details*, not generalizations.

Your "reader" is an educated person who is unfamiliar with the specifics of the major. Do not write as if you're writing to me, your instructor.

* If you are not a Communication Studies major, write the essay about your own major. If you are undeclared, pick a major you're considering. Writing this essay should help you decide. Double majors may write about both majors, extending to five pages if necessary.

Business Briefing*

For this 5-6min extemporaneous presentation I will provide you with a wide range of topics from the world of workplace news from which to choose. You need to find a minimum of three sources on your selected subject, familiarize yourself with the information, and share something useful (and hopefully interesting) with the rest of us in the form of a presentation with accompanying media. You will have the opportunity to select your topic in class on 4/15. There will be no duplicates. Those who do not sign up will be assigned topics of my choosing.

You will speak extemporaneously (review your readings!), using a key word outline if you find that helpful. As a guideline, for such a short presentation, your outline should not be longer than one half of a page.

You will give your business briefing in front of the class accompanying your presentation with visual media (PowerPoint, Prezi, SlideRocket, etc). Relevant, appropriate video content is acceptable but needs to be limited to 90 seconds or less as to not detract from your thoughts and public speaking practice. Please email a copy of the information, slides, media, etc., to yourself prior to class to avoid technological failures at the time of your presentation.

Your grade will be based on the quality of your topic research, extemporaneous public speaking, visual media preparation and aesthetic, professional appearance and presentation readiness.

Job Package

This assignment is designed to teach you how to professionally showcase yourself for consideration in employment, postgraduate, internship or other opportunities. This assignment requires you to research and select a position, and then to create all of the necessary tools you will need to acquire such a position. This project has many components and should be started early for your optimal success. Your job package will include the following:

Th e Ad:	Find a current advertisement for a job you would like to get—and could qualify for—now or in the near future. This should be a career oriented position or internship. Post a <u>screenshot or pdf</u> of the ad to Canvas to ensure it remains accessible for your to work with even if the position is filled.
Co ver Let ter:	This should be tailored to the specific ad you chose. Address the letter to the person who posted the ad and if there was no name listed, see if you can contact the company to find the name of the appropriate person. The content should not repeat what is contained in the résumé—it should identify the specific job for which you are applying, highlight the qualifications that make you a good candidate for the position, and contain a request for an opportunity to be interviewed. It should be no longer than one page.
Rés um é:	Your résumé is a very personal sales piece. You'll see a variety of sample résumés in class including traditional, interactive, designer, creative and video styles. You will select the delivery that best suits your desired industry and create your résumé. You are expected to work with your own until it looks sharp, reads perfectly, and presents well. The résumé should be no longer than one page—two pages are recommended only if you already have extensive professional experience in the field of your choice—or 3min if in an alternate format.
Ref ere nce s:	Identify three individuals who would provide positive recommendations for you. Include their names, addresses, telephone numbers, and relationship to you. This is separate from your résumé, but should be printed on the same paper, in the same font and style, and with the same headings or letterhead.

You will have the opportunity to get feedback on your résumé and cover letter from your peers. Remember that a résumé is always a work-in-progress and cover letters should always be tailored to the ad. By the time you hand in

your final package I expect your résumé and cover letter to be free of typos and grammatical errors or digitally refined to perfection just as they must be when you send them to a prospective employer. Our candid readings from Rebel Resume should help you get through this process with ease.

Mock Interviews*

This assignment readies you for the job market, interviews, and material submission. Preparing materials and practicing these interviews serves multiple purposes. They are a demonstration of your growing self-confidence in articulating how you market yourself, your ability to prepare appropriately for interviews, and your communication skills in an interview context. Additionally, you will serve as an independent evaluator of the interviews of others applying your understanding of course content to your observations.

Watch calendar deadlines for due dates for job ad, references, cover letter, resume and peer feedback!

These 10min interviews will be conducted by a variety of community members and evaluated by multiple observers. You will receive an evaluation based on an average of their overviews in combination with my assessment of your performance. Please come prepared wearing interview presentation attire and bring your completed job package to the interview.

Service-Learning Experience

This assignment is designed to help you develop personally and professionally, and will enhance your organizational, interpersonal and professional communication skills in ways too complex to capture in a one-sentence summary. Service-

Learning is a vital part of a complete liberal arts education, as well as an indispensable component of Communication Studies curriculum. Beyond that service-learning is one of the best ways to both absorb and practice course content. Experiential education in the local community benefits not only those of you assigned to it, but also betters the organizations you serve and the University reputation as well. Additionally, it contributes positively to the growth your personal network. All that said, please act accordingly when working with team members and community partners!

Teams will be formed following the completion of an in-class service-learning survey. Once formed, it is your responsibility to connect and begin working with your community partner to complete the project. The type of project(s) will vary by organizational needs and team skill sets, but you should find connections between course content and your project and be able to articulate these connections in the various components of this assignment. The individual expectation is approximately 18hrs of work each student, though how that breaks down will depend on the team's needs.

The schedule for this assignment will vary according to team responsibility, however each group will present their work at the end of the quarter. To receive full credit for this assignment, you will need to complete the following as a team: □ Team contact sheet

- Team calendar
- Presence, reporting, and collaboration at *Heartbeat Meetings*
- Team Written Report. This 7-8pg double-spaced co-authored paper should include the following:
 - Team Overview: This is a brief (<1pg) introduction to the members of your team. It should include a blurb about each member, as well as their roles in the project completion.
 - Team Tasks for Current and Future of Project: This segment should focus on the history, current status, and future goals relating to the tasks your team tackled. Provide insight into the vision your team worked with, the techniques you used to complete current projects, and how you have helped set the

organization up for continued success in the future. Use APA citations, and reference three or more course lessons, guests, activities, or readings.

- **Team Updates (5):** These are updates in memo form. They should include the current status of your work, challenges you are facing, and your steps for the following week. There are five updates due on the calendar. Each should be written and submitted by a different team member, but the order is up to the team. You will submit each update on Canvas, and email it to your Community Lead when due. If your team has greater or fewer than 5 members you will need to navigate the submission or lack thereof as a team.
- **Team Showcase:** At the end of the quarter your team will give a 10min presentation based on your team tasks and learning outcomes. Whether you created promo videos, conducted community outreach, or participated in hands-on event day tasks, this is your time to show how you fulfilled the assignment. Using any (pre-approved) presentation style you choose your team will showcase your work and talk about your experiences in relation to course materials from the quarter. Be sure to include quality visual media.
- **Individual Reflection Statement:** This 4-5pg double-spaced statement will focus specifically on your personal growth through the service-learning assignment, and include an honest evaluation of each of your teammates. Whether you explore your growth in interpersonal communication skills, technological skills, presentation confidence or career pathways, this capstone piece should highlight and demonstrate your newfound understandings. If things were great, I want to know; if they weren't, I want to know what you learned from it. You will evaluate each of your team members on their contribution to not only your service-learning project, but to you professionally. As in the real world, not everyone you work with will be your favorite or most reliable coworker; others will be outstanding and teach you many unexpected lessons. This is the space wherein you can share these impacts. These are not meant to be read by your teammates, and should be submitted on Canvas on the date of your team presentation. Be sure to reference a minimum of two course readings, activities, guests or presentations in relation your reflection.

Final Exam

The final exam will be a combination of multiple choice, short answer and essay questions. It will be a comprehensive exam covering readings and information presented in class throughout the quarter. While much of our class addresses practical skills, useful theory and information is presented in the text and in class through lecture and your own presentations. The exam will give you an opportunity to show you've absorbed this content.

Presentation Attire*

I would like to see you present in what I would call "business casual." What I mean by this is you should look presentable, but I think it's unreasonable to expect you to spend your day on campus dressed up in formal business attire. Here's what I absolutely do not want to see on your presentation days: your toes, your navel or any other part of your midriff, your cleavage, baseball caps, workout gear, rips, your underwear, or excessive wrinkles in your clothing.

If you do not own clothes that fit this description currently you will need to acquire them. They will be necessary and useful items to own in your professional future, and will be required for your first major presentation. If you cannot acquire them by means of retail store, thrift store, or borrowing from a friend or family member there are other options available in our community.

For women I recommend the Back to Work Boutique. This thrift operation is run by the YWCA, and provides work attire for women in need. There are no income restrictions, but it is designed for women who are entering the workforce or seeking employment who cannot otherwise acquire appropriate clothing. You simply call (360) 734-4820 and set an appointment, then meet with a consultant who will outfit you with several pieces of professional wardrobe staples completely free of charge.

For men I suggest the Men's Haberdashery (Hope House). This operation provides professional attire to men who are entering or returning to the workforce, and is free of charge. To make an appointment, call 360-676- 2178 ext. 4005.

I want you to feel comfortable and confident in your presentation attire both in class and in your professional future. For other clothing resources in our community please visit:

<http://bellingshamschools.org/sites/default/files/departments/FIC/Clothing%20Resources.pdf>.