MANAGEMENT COMMUNICATION: WRITING, SPEAKING, AND CRITICAL THINKING

(173BUS-228F-1)

FALL 2017, MODULE 1

Contact Information
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Office hours: Mondays and Wednesdays after class (6:30-7:30 p.m.)
T.A. contact information: details will be added at the beginning of the course.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The purpose of Management Communication is to improve both your critical thinking and communication skills, primarily writing. The course gives less attention to speaking than writing because of the limited class time in a module course.

Why does the IBS MBA Program require a course in communication? Only a small percentage of managers and leaders need deep technical knowledge of finance. However, in the real world, every manager needs skill in communication, both writing and speaking. Moreover, leaders often need to persuade an audience through writing or speaking. Beyond fundamental writing and speaking skills, this course teaches persuasion through evidence-backed arguments. Effective communication consists of both knowledge and skill. The only way to improve communication skill is to practice it. The course provides practice through classroom activities, assignments, teamwork, and constructive feedback.

The course uses a "flipped classroom." That means the classroom time is used mostly to apply what you learned when you prepared for the class. Research shows that adults learn far better when they actively work with knowledge as opposed to simply receive it in the classroom through a lecture. For you to learn in a flipped classroom, you have to do the prework.

Note for native English speakers: Fluency in writing and speaking English is a great foundation for this course. However, fluency is not the primary factor in grading. Every graded assignment has an evaluation rubric specific to the assignment. Please read it carefully. If you have any questions or doubts about this issue, please see me at the beginning of the course.
WORKLOAD

Success in this two-credit course is based on the expectation that students will spend a minimum of 6 hours of study time per week in preparation for class (readings and assignments). In the last third of the module, students can expect to spend up to 9 hours per week to prepare for class, write the Shark Tank team pitch, and prepare the Shark Tank presentation.

LEARNING GOALS

Management Communication has four primary learning objectives.

1. Critical thinking: improve your ability to base conclusions about a situation on evidence
2. Writing: improve your ability to write clearly, concisely, and persuasively
3. Argumentation: add to your knowledge of the essential types of practical arguments and improve your ability to build them
4. Presenting: add to your knowledge of presentation audiences and presenter skills and improve your ability to create, organize, and deliver persuasive oral communication

PREREQUISITES

The class has no prerequisites. You need a reasonable proficiency in written English to succeed in the course. If you are concerned about English fluency, please contact me before you enroll or early in the course. Enrollment preference is given to IBS MBAs because they are required to take the course, but BA, BA/MA, and MA students from inside and outside IBS are welcome when there are seats available.
The Course Plan describes each class in the course, readings, and assignment due dates. Many of the readings and instructions for all assignments will be posted on LATTE. The Plan can change, at the discretion of the instructor and as a result of feedback from Teaching Assistants and students. Any changes will be posted on LATTE.

The course does not have a final exam. **However, we use the course exam days for the Shark Tank presentations. Please plan accordingly.**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>#</th>
<th>Class Topic</th>
<th>What We Will Do in Class</th>
<th>Read for This Class</th>
<th>Writing/ Presentation Assignments Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9/6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Efficient Writing Style and “Letter to Members” Discussion</td>
<td>Discuss writing style and edit sentences Discuss &quot;Letter to Members&quot; case and writing assignment Presentation basics</td>
<td>Writing Style Best Practices Handout (LATTE) &quot;Letter to Members&quot; case) and Assignment (LATTE) Sentence Editing Assignment</td>
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<td>9/13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Persuasion through Argument: Decision</td>
<td>Define Decision arguments Exercise: building decision arguments Action Plans Discussion: &quot;To Say or Not to Say&quot; case and writing assignment</td>
<td>The Case Study Handbook, Chap. 11 (bookstore) Decision Argument Template (LATTE) Writing Action Plans (LATTE) &quot;To Say or Not to Say&quot; case (LATTE)</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/18</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Introduction to Shark Tank Assignment and Effective Teamwork</td>
<td>Overview of Shark Tank exercise and questions about the template Teamwork Exercise</td>
<td>BBC Article on MBA Writing Skills Anatomy of an Argument (LATTE) Process for Preparing a Presentation Handout (LATTE) Shark Tank Assignment Instructions and outlines (LATTE)</td>
<td>Assignment 2 due: &quot;To Say or Not to Say&quot;</td>
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| 9/20  | 6  | Persuasion through Argument: Problem Diagnosis  | Define Problem Diagnosis arguments  
Exercise: building diagnosis arguments  
Discuss "DRW Systems" case and writing assignment | *The Case Study Handbook*, Chap. 10  
Diagnosis Template Definitions Handout (LATTE)  
"DRW Systems" case and assignment | |
| 9/25  | 7  | In-class Writing Assignment                      | Write ""DRW Systems" email assignment in class                     | Assignment 3 due:  
In-class "DRW Systems" Email Exercise | |
| 9/27  | 8  | Persuasion through Argument: Evaluation         | Define Evaluation arguments  
Exercise: building evaluation arguments  
Discuss "Radiohead: Music at Your Own Price (A)" case and writing assignment | *The Case Study Handbook*, Chap. 12  
Evaluation Template (LATTE)  
An Evaluation Argument Includes... (LATTE)  
"Radiohead: Music at Your Own Price (A)" case and assignment | |
| 10/2  | 9  | Effective Presentations                          | Review presentation basics and practice presenting                | Assignment 4 due:  
"Radiohead: Music at Your Own Price (A)" | |
| 10/4  | 10 | Review of Arguments and "Peter Guber" case      | Discuss "Peter Guber: The 'Me' vs. 'We' Brand" (coursepack)        | Argument Requirements (LATTE)  
Annotated DRW Tech Assignment  
Is This a Strong Argument?  
"Peter Guber: The 'Me' vs. the 'We' Brand" and assignment | |
### Management Communication

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<td>10/9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Content Organizer and Effective Visual Support for Presentations</td>
<td>Discuss: Template for organizing presentation content  Demonstration and discussion: Designing effective visuals</td>
<td>Various LATTE handouts and video links</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/16</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Shark Tank Preparation</td>
<td>Discuss: writing the Shark Tank pitch and presenting  Optional discussion of Peter Guber assignment</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/18</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Shark Tank Pitches 1 (half of class)</td>
<td>First set of teams present their business idea</td>
<td>Assignment 6: Written Shark Tank Business Plans and visuals/slides due for all groups.  First round of Shark Tank pitches.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/23</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Shark Tank Pitches 2 (half of class)</td>
<td>Second set of teams present their business idea</td>
<td>Assignment 5 due: &quot;Peter Guber&quot;  Revision of previous assignment due (optional)  Second round Shark Tank pitches.</td>
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### EVALUATION

Your final grade will be determined this way:

**Writing assignments = 65%**
You will submit five writing assignments during the course. We give you two opportunities to revise writing assignments and improve your grades on them. **Every writing assignment includes a grading rubric specific to it.**

**Team presentation = 15%**
You will be part of a Shark Tank team that gives a presentation at the end of the course. **The team presentation includes a grading rubric specific to it.**

**Class participation = 20%**
Participation in class discussion and exercises is an important part of the learning in this course. Quality of participation doesn't necessarily mean brilliant insight and elegant expression; it means relevant comments that sustain and enhance the discussion. You lose a participation point if you do not come to class and don't have a valid excuse.

Assignments
- Six writing assignments (one writing assignment will be done in class to simulate real-world conditions and one is written in teams.)
- One team presentation
- One assignment can be revised and resubmitted at the end of the course for up to five additional points.
- One assignment is no risk: if you receive a higher grade on it than on a previous assignment, the higher grade will count. If the grade is lower, the original grade will count.

Late Assignments
- You will lose points for submitting an assignment late.
- If you have a reasonable excuse for turning in an assignment late, we will listen. However, you must tell us before the deadline, unless you have an emergency.

DISABILITIES
If you are a student with a documented disability on record at Brandeis University and wish to have reasonable accommodation made for you in this class, please see me as soon as possible.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY
You are expected to be honest in all of your academic work. Please consult Brandeis University Rights and Responsibilities for all policies and procedures related to academic integrity. Students are required to submit work to TurnItIn.com software to verify originality. Allegations of alleged academic dishonesty will be forwarded to the Director of Academic Integrity. Sanctions for academic dishonesty can include failing grades and/or suspension from the university. Citation and research assistance can be found at LTS - Library guides.

Management Communication is primarily a critical thinking and writing course. Therefore, plagiarism is an especially serious issue. There is no "cultural defense" for plagiarism ("Plagiarism is OK in my country"). Students at IBS have an obligation to understand the policy on academic integrity that IBS and the university explain to every new cohort. If you are unsure about the policy, talk to me.

PRIVACY
Neither your work nor your identity is exposed to parties outside the class. The one exception is for Brandeis administrators who have a legitimate reason for access, such as a plagiarism investigation. Your grades and our feedback to you are strictly confidential.
COMMUNICATIONS

I will communicate with you by email and through LATTE. LATTE is your comprehensive source for information about the course, including descriptions of each class, reading assignments, handouts, assignment due dates, and resources. You will also submit each writing assignment through the LATTE platform.

COURSE MATERIALS

You will have to buy materials for this class at the Brandeis bookstore and online from Harvard Business Publishing. The link for the HB Publishing materials will be provided on LATTE before the first class. Other readings, cases, handouts, and video links will be provided on LATTE. The Case Study Handbook, is sold through the Brandeis bookstore. I regret that you have to use three different sources for course readings: the bookstore, HB Publishing's online platform, and LATTE.

Books and Articles


HBS Cases

- Anita Elberse and Jason Bergsman, "Radiohead: Music at Your Own Price (A)," Harvard Business School Case, 9-508-110 (Harvard Publishing online course pack)

LATTE

- William Ellet, "Letter to Members"
- William Ellet, "Putting Persuasion to Work"
- Mary Gentile and Piya Mukherjee, "To Say or Not to Say," Giving Voice to Values Curriculum, Babson College
- Handouts and video links

CRITICAL DATES

Please see the Course Plan for assignment due dates. They are listed in the far right-hand column.