

FALL 2005

INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNICATION

MBCM-60100

*The Eugene D. Fanning Center for Business Communication
Mendoza College of Business
University of Notre Dame*

Introduction to Communication will meet daily from Monday, October 10 through Thursday, October 13, 2005. Class meetings are scheduled from 8:30 a.m. to 11:35 a.m. The course instructors include:

- **James S. O'Rourke.** Office: 234 Mendoza College of Business. Office telephone: 574.631.8397. Home telephone: 574.272.1773. E-Mail: jorourke@nd.edu.
- **Sandra D. Collins.** Office: 219 Mendoza College of Business. Office telephone: 574.631.3919. E-mail: sandra.d.collins.42@nd.edu.
- **Carol Jambor-Smith.** Office: 111 Notre Dame Law School. Office Telephone: 574.631.7916. E-mail: cjambors@nd.edu.
- **Carolyn Langley.** Office: 234 Mendoza College of Business. Home Telephone: 574.234.1191. E-mail: cjlangley@comcast.net.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

O'Rourke, J. S., *Management Communication: A Case Analysis Approach*, 2nd edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson / Prentice Hall (2003). ISBN: 0-13-101644-X.

PURPOSES OF THE COURSE

- **Diagnosis of your current writing and speaking abilities.** This will happen as a result of lecture, discussion, and exposure to case studies that require a written solution in the form of a decision memo and professional business letter. Each of you will identify a publicly traded firm you hope to interview with (and, perhaps, work for), then research, organize, rehearse, and deliver a 6-to-8 minute business briefing. You will receive peer review from classmates and a personal response from a faculty member on the structure, organization, and content of the talk, as well as critique of your nonverbal behaviors and visual support for the assignment.

- **A clear sense of the standards expected of a manager in the North American marketplace.** During the lecture, reading, and critique processes, we will clearly outline the expectations of the marketplace. In speaking and writing, along with other selected communication skillsets, you will find a clear sense of what’s waiting for you in the workplace and the behaviors you will be expected to exhibit in order to succeed as a business professional.
- **A basic toolkit for improving their abilities to write and speak.** You will leave with four deliverables that form a toolkit for your learning experiences across the remaining three semesters: a textbook focused very specifically on the basic skills of Management Communication that provides detailed advice for managers; a marked and graded case solution that examines your ability to organize and express important issues in writing; a set of four critique sheets following your business briefing assignment; and a set of classnotes and PowerPoint files that reinforce each of the basic behaviors you’ll exhibit.

GRADING

This course involves one written case assignment and one oral presentation. In addition, your instructors will expect active classroom participation during the 12 hours we are together.

Grade weights will be distributed as follows:

Case Writing Assignment	45%
Due no later than 8:30 a.m., Wednesday, October 12, 2005	
Business Briefing	45%
Delivered Wednesday, October 12 and Thursday, October 13, 2005	
Classroom Participation	10%
During case analyses, discussion of readings, and speech critiques. Half of this total will be awarded by the course director and half by your speech/writing section instructor.	

GRADING PHILOSOPHY

Introduction to Communication, like certain other courses offered here at Notre Dame, is performance-oriented. Although you will receive substantial exposure through both reading and lecture to the theories that underlie effective communication, your grade will be heavily dependent on your ability to apply such information in frequent and practical writing and speaking exercises.

Your grade for any assignment in this course is a reflection of the instructional team’s judgement of the quality of your work. We grade only on the basis of what you give us; we do not and

cannot grade on the basis of the amount of time and effort you devote to an assignment, or on what you sincerely intended to do but didn't have time to finish.

We do not grade anything on a curve. You are attempting to meet our standards of quality work; you are not competing against each other. A grade of "A" is, essentially "ready for prime time" in a *Fortune 1000*, mid-size business, or major public accounting firm. In other words, with just a bit of tinkering, you could deliver that speech or use that document essentially as you've prepared it for class.

A "B" speech or document is basically sound but needs some attention before you think about presenting it to your employers, their customers or clients. The issues may be organizational or structural; they may be associated with the details of expression; or, you may not have the real needs of the audience in mind. In any event, that speech or document will work for you, but not before you work on it.

Anything in the "C" range is seriously flawed and will not meet the standards of the North American workplace without significant revision. A speech or document of this sort could damage your reputation as a competent business communicator if you were to use it without major improvements. Work of this sort is simply a non-starter in a *Fortune 1000* or *Big Four* firm. You need to re-think your approach to the problem and try it again. To use such a speech or document would constitute a serious embarrassment to you, to your employer and, frankly, to those who educated you.

Once a grade has been assigned and recorded, it cannot and will not be changed unless evidence is provided that your instructor has made an error. A difference of opinion between you and your instructor about the quality of your work is not evidence of error.

We are sensitive to the differences among the instructors who will hear your speeches, and we work very hard as a team to look for and listen to the same evaluative issues in each speech. Though complete elimination of inter-rater error is very difficult, our objective is to be as fair and helpful as we possibly can. We will apply the same measure of objectivity to your written assignments.

Speaking Dates. You will be assigned a breakout group and given a room assignment for your speech group. You *must be prepared* to speak on Wednesday, October 12, 2005. Your speech section instructor will determine who actually speaks on Wednesday and who speaks on Thursday. We'll hear approximately 15 business briefings in each section, each morning.

Listening. An important part of public communication is the willingness and ability of an audience member to listen. While your classmates are speaking, we will expect you to be a thoughtful, considerate, attentive and courteous audience. You will be asked, from time to time, to provide both an oral and a written critique for the speaker. This means you must listen

carefully and reflectively to the speaker and try in some way to help your classmates improve. They, in turn, will try to help you.

OTHER COURSE POLICIES AND STANDARDS

Please seek help as soon and as often as you need it. Do not wait until the end of our very brief time together.

Deadlines. There are no automatic extensions, make-ups, or incompletes. You will be graded down for failing to meet deadlines. If you cannot meet your responsibilities in the course, see or call your instructor in advance of deadlines.

Absence. We will have just four meeting sessions in this course. We regard your presence as essential, even if we do not formally take roll at the beginning of each class. If you cannot be in class for some reason, let your instructor know about it in advance. Your classmates and your instructor will take it as a sign of professionalism that you are present for class and ready to begin by exactly 8:30 a.m. each day.

Incompletes. As a rule, we do not award incompletes. They're genuinely a pain in the neck. You begin the Second Module with the obligations of the InterTerm course hanging over your head. Both instructor and student feel harried and unhappy about the situation. In unusual cases, though, such as hospitalization or genuine emergency, an incomplete "I" will be assigned. Unless the student completes all class assignments within one semester, an "F" will be assigned by the Registrar unless an extension is approved by both the instructor and the Dean, and the Registrar is notified.

Plagiarism. Much of the educational process in the Mendoza School involves group discussion and collaborative activities. Neither the College nor we wish to hinder the learning that can and often does take place in that environment. Fairness, however, requires that certain limits be observed in the actual production of assignments.

In this course, all writing and speaking tasks are to be accomplished by each student working independently. No student should copy another student's work or represent work done by someone else as if it were his or her own. Evidence of plagiarism may be cause for serious disciplinary action by the College. Please, do your own work. We strongly endorse and support the principles and process outlined in the *University of Notre Dame Graduate Business Honor Code*. Please read that document and use its precepts as a guide.

CASE ANALYSES

Background. Management Communication is a hybrid discipline that seeks to broaden your perspectives of the managerial profession while deepening your understanding of communication and its central role in the day-to-day lives of business managers. Often, the most

useful and interesting approach to these goals is through a case study. These are simply descriptions of circumstances facing a manager and often present business students with choices, limitations, and ambiguity. Case studies are not usually written to demonstrate an effective or ineffective handling of an administrative situation, but rather for the purpose of stimulating classroom discussion.

Your textbook includes a 6-page appendix, entitled “Analyzing a Case Study.” Please read that section thoroughly before preparing a case study for discussion in class or on paper for a writing grade. That appendix contains a number of definitions, suggestions, and ideas that you will find useful as you read, shred, and produce a solution to the many case studies you will see as a student at Notre Dame. If you have specific questions, please speak to your instructor at the earliest possible moment.

Case Selection. You may submit a solution to any of the case studies identified in below:

- Case 1-1, *Odwalla, Inc. (A)*
- Case 2-2, *Great Lakes Garments, Inc.*
- Case 2-3, *Augusta National Golf Club.*
- Case 3-1, *Excel Industries (A).*
- Case 3-3, *The Soul of Dell: The Value of Corporate Philosophy Statements.*
- Case 3-4, *Arthur Andersen, LLP: An Accounting Firm in Crisis.*
- Case 5-1, *Cypress Semiconductor Corporation.*
- Case 6-1, *Cerner Corporation.*
- Case 9-1, *Oak Brook Medical Systems, Inc.*
- Case 10-1, *Hayward Healthcare Systems, Inc.*
- Case 10-3, *Hershey Foods: It’s Time to Kiss and Make Up.*
- Case 12-2, *Bayer AG: Anthrax and Cipro.*

You *must* submit your case solution to your instructor no later than 8:30 a.m., Wednesday, October 12, 2005. If you have questions, please speak with your instructor.

THE BUSINESS BRIEFING

Background. The business briefing is among the more common forms of informative speaking that a manager or executive will experience. In the course of a business career, most managers will deliver hundreds, if not thousands, of brief informative talks, each focused in some way on their businesses. Their intention is to provide listeners with current, accurate, useful information that will shape their investment, purchase, employment, and other decisions.

Assignment. Your task is to research a *publicly-traded* firm, gathering as much relevant, useful information as possible from company publications, corporate web sites on the Internet, annual reports, industry summaries, and third-party sources, such as *Moody’s*, *Standard and Poor’s*, and others. You must decide which information would be most useful to a prospective investor,

customer or employee; must then organize it in an easy-to-understand fashion, and trim it to fit a six-to-eight minute timeframe.

Context and Perspective. You must research and organize this briefing with a *specific perspective* in mind, which you will reveal as you begin your talk. You should focus on one of three viewpoints: that of a customer, an employee, or an investor. Your intent here is not to become an advocate on behalf of the company as an employer, a provider of goods and services, or an investment opportunity. Rather, you are answering a question for your classmates: “If I had money to invest, what would I want to know about this firm,” or “If I were seeking employment in this sector, what should I know about this company.” Your talk is to be entirely informative and will not include either a rhetorical (persuasive) perspective or an exhortation to action by the audience. Offer current, well organized information and let them make up their own minds.

Time Requirement. Your briefing must be no less than six minutes but no more than eight minutes in length. You will be penalized for delivering a talk that does not meet this requirement.

Outline. You must produce a one-page, keystroked outline of your remarks to the class. Please submit this document to your instructor as you rise to speak. It should include these elements:

- a two-level outline of your main points and key sub-points;
- proper documentation of all research sources cited in your briefing;
- the name and trading symbol (NASDAQ or NYSE) of the firm, your name, and the date of your briefing.

Speaking Dates. You will receive a list of students and speaking sections on the first day of the course. That list will specify the room you will meet in and which instructor will hear your speeches.

How You Will Be Graded. As with the other speeches in this course, the business briefing will be evaluated for three basic ingredients: organization, expression, and support. In order to receive a “B,” your briefing must have a clear explanation of the organization, structure, ownership, and purpose of the business you have chosen. It must also include such information as basic products and services (or product and service categories), business locations, distribution schemes, annual revenues, recent profit-and-loss figures, and other relevant financial information.

Your audience must be clear about what this company does, who their principal customers (or markets) are, against whom they compete, and what sort of value they add to the economy. Briefings that are clearly superior may receive a grade of “A.” Briefings that fail to achieve minimum standards in a majority of categories or which fail profoundly in at least one of the requisite categories may receive a lower grade.

Appropriate Dress. In presenting this briefing, we will expect you to appear in suitable, *corporate casual* business attire. You have considerable latitude in selecting the clothing that business colleagues would regard as appropriate. Clearly, though, you must present yourself in the way you would if you were addressing a gathering of modern business professionals, each of whom is dressed in casual yet tasteful attire.

Visual Support Requirement. Your speech must be supported by visual materials that are professionally prepared and appropriate for your topic and presentation. For this speech assignment, you may wish to consider computer graphics, such as *PowerPoint 2005*, *I think 7*, *Corel Presentations 10.0*. You will also find that overhead transparencies, chalkboard drawings or diagrams, maps, display boards, or posters will work in our classrooms, as well. Please keep room size in mind when designing font size and graphic displays.

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Mon 10 Oct 05 Management Communication and Business Writing

8:30 - 8:40 a.m. **Intro:** Syllabus distribution, introduction, and course overview.
8:40 - 9:30 a.m. **Lecture:** The Roles and Functions of Management Communication.
9:30 - 10:00 a.m. **Discussion:** Case Study 2-1, *Great West Casualty v. Estate of G. Witherspoon (A)*.

10:00 - 10:15 a.m. **Break.**
10:15 - 10:45 a.m. **Discussion:** North American Business Correspondence.
10:45 - 11:30 a.m. **Lecture:** Becoming a Better Business Writer.
Readings: Chapter 1, "Management Communication in Transition."
 Chapter 2, "Communication and Strategy."
 Chapter 3, "Communication Ethics."
 Appendix A, "Analyzing a Case Study."
 Appendix C, "Sample Business Letter."
 Appendix E, "Sample Strategy Memo."
 Appendix F, "Documentation."

Tue 11 Oct 05 Communication Strategy and Management Speaking

8:30 - 9:15 a.m. **Discussion:** Case Study 3-2, *A Collection Scandal at Sears Roebuck & Company*.

9:15 - 10:00 a.m. **Lecture:** Corporate Strategy and Communication Strategy.
10:00 - 10:15 a.m. **Break.**
10:15 - 10:30 a.m. **Discussion:** The Business Briefing: structure and purpose of the assignment.

10:30 - 11:30 a.m. **Lecture:** Preparing to Speak: preparation, audience analysis, platform delivery, and the use of PowerPoint.
Readings: Chapter 4, "Speaking."
 Chapter 5, "Writing."
 Chapter 7, "Listening and Feedback."
 Chapter 8, "Communicating Nonverbally."

Wed 12 Oct 05

Business Briefings

Speech Group 1	Room 162 Mendoza	Prof. J. S. O'Rourke
Speech Group 2	Room 160 Mendoza	Dr. Carolyn Langley
Speech Group 3	Room 159 Mendoza	Prof. Sandra Collins
Speech Group 4	Room 158 Mendoza	Dr. Carol Jambor-Smith

Thu 12 Oct 05

Business Briefings

Speech Group 1	Room 162 Mendoza	Prof. J. S. O'Rourke
Speech Group 2	Room 160 Mendoza	Dr. Carolyn Langley
Speech Group 3	Room 159 Mendoza	Prof. Sandra Collins
Speech Group 4	Room 158 Mendoza	Dr. Carol Jambor-Smith