

COM 3401 Business and Professional Communication Syllabus [SAMPLE]

3 credit hours Prerequisites: ENG 1121, or COM 1330 or higher, or department approval

PLEASE NOTE: This sample syllabus is intended to give you a general idea of the course, but for correct, up-to-date information, please refer to the syllabus provided to you by your instructor.

Course description:

Principles of communication within organizations. Topics and activities include organizational communication and communication theory, group problem solving, résumés, cover letters, interviewing, and formal presentations.

Required Textbook:

[*Business Communication for Success*](#). (2015). By Scott McLean. ISBN 13: 978-0-9823618-5-6.

This is a free electronic textbook in pdf format. You can download it on the Blackboard Site; the Open Lab Site, and available for download here:

<http://www.oercommons.org/courses/basics-of-written-business-communication/view>

Note that the City Tech Bookstore will *not* be carrying this textbook.

Literacy Requirement

This course requires strong, college-level English literacy skills. You are required to read, write, speak, and understand English beyond the level of high school. Students not meeting these basic literacy requirements are advised to not take this course.

Technology Requirements

As a hybrid course, COM 3401 will take place BOTH in person and online, on Blackboard. We meet once a week for an hour and a half. You are also required to spend an hour and a half completing tests and assignments on Blackboard every week.

You will need:

- A computer with high-speed internet access
- Use of a web browser ([Google Chrome](#) or [Mozilla Firefox](#), preferred).
- A [City Tech email address](#).
- Access to of [CUNY Portal](#), [Blackboard](#), [Open Lab](#)
- Microsoft Office Software (Word and PowerPoint)

Access to City Tech Email, CUNY Portal, Blackboard are available on the “Quick Links” drop down menu of the [City Tech Homepage](http://www.citytech.cuny.edu) (www.citytech.cuny.edu). You must go through the process of free registration.

Microsoft Office Software is available to you for FREE as a CUNY student. To download:

- a. Sign in to your email account at <https://login.microsoftonline.com>.
- b. Click on the “**Settings**” icon in the top right corner.
- c. Select “**Office 365 settings**” in the drop-down menu.
- d. Click on “**Software**” on the settings page.
- e. Select your language preference (below the install button).
- f. Click on **Install Now**.

Technology Support:

iTec is where you can get help with MS Office downloads, Blackboard or other computer questions.

iTec, Room G601, (718)254-8565

itec@citytech.cuny.edu

Website: <http://websupport1.citytech.cuny.edu/index.html>

Please note that these technology requirements are not negotiable. Each week, you will have online assignments and quizzes to complete on Blackboard. Students who don't complete the Blackboard assignments will not pass the class.

Welcome to Business and Professional Communication!

Communication is the number one skill employers look for in potential employees. This course is geared towards gaining an edge in your career through a better understanding of communication, especially for work. Your Professor is here to serve you and help build confidence and hope. The goal of this course is to develop your professional communication skills and knowledge. We create cover letters and résumés that stand out from the crowd, simulate successful interviews, and give professional multimedia presentations. The goal is to support your career goals and help you achieve a sustainable, satisfying work life.

Why this course may be different from what you are used to:

The best way to get better at communication is by doing it. Many college courses involve passively receiving information from lectures and the text book, then restating them on an exam for a grade. This class involves that, but more. Namely, you will be making presentations and actively participating in class discussions and role-playing exercises. Shy and reticent students will be gently but firmly nudged outside of their comfort zone to become more vocal in class and groups. Non-participation is not an option.

ASSIGNMENTS

Two Impromptu Speeches

Impromptu speeches are presented with little or no preparation. They provide an opportunity to think on your feet and get comfortable speaking in front of others. Students are selected at random to present 2 to 4-minute speech on a topic of the Professor's choosing. Impromptu Speeches are not scheduled, so it is important that you are present during each class. Graded as Complete/Incomplete.

Online Discussions

Each week questions are posed on the Blackboard Discussion Board. The questions are based on the readings, things we discuss in class, and they may contain links to articles and videos. Write about one page in response, and respond to others responses too. In your response, please pose a least one discussion question that others can respond to. In these responses, you are encouraged to share about your interests and life experiences. Spelling and grammar mistakes detract from your grade. After posting your response, each student is expected to write a paragraph in response to others posts (in the comments section). Graded as Complete/Incomplete.

Quizzes

On Blackboard, you will find a link to Quizzes. These quizzes are 25-30 multiple choice and T/F questions for each chapter. You can take the quiz 3 times. Your highest score will be used. Note, these quizzes are open-book. Students who don't complete each quiz by the stated deadline will get a grade of zero. No make-up quizzes.

Cover Letter

Each student will submit a one-page cover letter applying for a (real) job posting. Use job search websites (provided) to find a job, and then save the job description webpage as a "pdf" to submit along with your cover letter. You should read the job description closely and refer to it in the letter. In the letter, you need to persuade your potential employers that you are the right candidate for the job, and how your unique experience and skills will benefit the company, based on the job description. Model cover letters will be provided, and the required format should be closely followed. If you are not satisfied with your grade, you may revise your cover letter according to the Professor's suggestions and resubmit it for regrading. Please include the words "REVISED" at the top of the page for the revised cover letter.

Résumé

A résumé is an attractively presented list of your jobs or internships, education, and other information. Like the cover letter, your résumé should be tailored to fit the specific job description. The résumé should fit on one page. Sample résumés will be provided, and you should follow the required format closely. Like the cover letter, you can revise the résumé and resubmit for a better grade. Please include the words "REVISED" at the top of the page for the revised Résumé.

Mock Job Interview

Here we pretend you are at a real job interview. You answer questions based on your résumé, cover letter and job description. Bring printed copies of your cover letter, résumé and job description, for classmates who will spend 15 minutes interviewing you. The roles will then reverse, allowing each person to serve both as an interviewer and interviewee. This is great practice for a real interview. It helps if you dress as you would for a real interview. Those who show up to class without a printed copy of the job description, cover letter and résumé will not receive credit. Graded as Complete/Incomplete.

Final Presentation/Oral Exam

This semester you will be researching a topic, creating a speaking outline and PowerPoint presentation, and finally, delivering a well-organized, argued, and polished presentation (6-8

minutes only). This will be your oral examination in this class. You need to speak *extemporaneously*, meaning, **not read off a manuscript, word for word**, but delivered in a conversational style with plenty of eye contact.

In the presentation, teach the Professor and classmates about your major and profession (or the profession you want). You choose the topic, in collaboration with the Professor, who must approve it. Your topic must have something to do with your profession and communication on the job. You need to conduct research about your chosen field using the internet, library materials and/or in-person interviews. You establish credibility by displaying sincere interest in your topic and sharing your own professional and academic experiences.

Topics may include (but are not limited to): what you have learned in the course of your education and professional experience; communication problems and solutions in your profession; the impact of communication technologies; fast growing careers; personal branding; professional opportunities for multilingual speakers; globalization; migration, or your entrepreneurial business plan. Other topics from the news, textbook and the Blackboard Discussion Board will be considered. Names drawn out of a hat to assign presentation dates. The final presentation will be evaluated on the following components:

- 1) *Outline*: You will compose a speaking outline, containing your entire speech, submitted on Blackboard. The outline should be around 3 to 5 pages, closely following the outline template and sample outline provided. The instructor will be commenting on your outline and returning it to you in order to incorporate corrections and suggestions. You may revise the outline according to the suggestions provided and resubmit for a chance at a better grade. Right after your Final Presentation you must hand in a printed copy of the Outline. **3-5 outside sources are required, cited in three places**
 - In a “Work Cited” section at the end of the outline;
 - “In-text” (with author or title and year in brackets) whenever you mention a fact obtained through research. For example, (Jones, 2015);
 - Finally, you should mention your source of information out loud in your speech.
- 2) *Oral Presentation*: When you give your speech/final presentation, you will be graded on three criteria:
 - *Content*: This is what’s in your speech. Did you support your claims with evidence? Was it well organized? Did it have all the right parts, like Intro, Body and Conclusion? Interesting facts and stories? Etc.
 - *Delivery*: This is how you gave the speech. Did you speak clearly and loud enough to be heard? Did you make eye contact with the audience? Did you appear to be well prepared and rehearsed? Etc. **Reading off a manuscript is not allowed.**
 - *Outline*: Does your outline conform to the assignment? Is it clearly organized? Is it free from spelling and grammatical errors? Did you cite your sources correctly?

Each presentation will be followed with audience questions. Those speaking more or less than a minute outside of the 6 to 8-minute requirement will not receive a grade higher than C. Students must present on assigned date and time. If you don’t show up on your assigned day you get an F on this assignment.

- 3) *Presentation Power Point*: Your presentation will contain visual aids, using PowerPoint. Your professor will be looking for interesting, pleasant pictures accompanied by **minimal text**. Charts and graphs are great as long as they are easy to read and you can explain them clearly. Each slide can have up to three bullet points, maximum. Slides with too much text are NOT acceptable! The slides must complement your oral presentation and not distract from it. **Reading off the slides is not allowed.**

Peer Evaluation

During Final Presentations, those in the audience will complete a one-page evaluation form for each presentation. The two evaluation criteria are content (words and visuals) and delivery (preparation, voice, eye contact, etc.). You are expected to make numerous comments about the strengths of the presentation as well as where there is room for improvement. Superficial comments such as “good job” or “eye contact ok” are unacceptable and will not receive credit. Your handwriting/ printing must be clearly legible. Graded as Complete/Incomplete.

Class Participation

Your class participation will be graded by taking into account:

- a) *Your oral participation during class* (including asking and answering questions; sharing your own knowledge and work experience during class; sharing your informed opinions on issues being discussed, etc.)
- b) *Your professional demeanor* including your attitude; etiquette; punctuality; paying attention; taking notes and appearing to be prepared and engaged. Treat this class like a job. For more information, see the “Etiquette” section below.

GRADING categories with weights (%)

Impromptu Speeches 10%

Online Discussions 10%

Quizzes 15%

Cover Letter 10%

Résumé 10%

Mock Job Interview 5%

Final Presentation/ Oral Exam (Total of 25%)

- Outline (1st draft) (5%)
- Oral Presentation (graded on Content, Delivery and Outline) 5% each
- PowerPoint (5%)

Peer Evaluations 5%

Class Participation 10%

Total 100%

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

(Note: This schedule is for sample purposes only, and may not accurately reflect your section.)

<u>Week</u>	<u>Class topics</u>	<u>Homework due following week</u>
1	Syllabus; Introductions; Overview of assignments; Instructions for downloading free Microsoft Office.	Discussion Board (About You); Syllabus Quiz; Ch. 1 Quiz; Download Microsoft Office
2	More about Blackboard site; Doing research online; Citing; Plagiarism; Impromptu speeches. Final presentation topics.	Discussion Board (Videos); Ch. 2 & 3 Quizzes; Choose Final Presentation topic.
3	Final Presentation topic due. Job Searches; Tailoring your Résumé and Cover Letter to fit the job description; Résumés and Cover Letters assigned; Samples provided.	Discussion Board (Find a job); Ch. 4 & 5 Quizzes. Read Ch. 9 on Résumés and Cover Letters. Job description, Résumé & Cover letter due 2/27
4	Résumé, Cover Letter and Job Description due on Blackboard. Final Presentation Outline Assigned; Professor gives 'model' presentation and provides sample outlines; Online research	Discussion Board (Works Cited); Find 3-5 sources and cite them. Ch. 6 & 7 Quizzes
5	"Works Cited" section due. Dates selected for Final Presentations; Message structure; Visual aids; Group workshops	Discussion Board (Interview prep); Ch. 8 Quiz
6	Feedback provided on Résumés and Cover Letters; More on outlines and PowerPoints due next week	Discussion Board; Ch. 9 Quiz; Final Presentation Outline and PowerPoint due 3/20
7	Final Presentation Outline and PowerPoint due. Mock Job Interview Assigned; Job interviews; Business attire; Sample Interview questions provided.	Discussion Board; Ch. 10 Quiz; Print (revised) Résumés & Cover Letters for next week
8	Mock Job Interviews; Show up dressed for a job interview with a copy of your Revised Résumé, Cover Letter and Job Description	Discussion Board; Ch. 11 & 12 Quizzes;
9	Feedback provided on Outlines and PowerPoints. Group discussions	Ch. 13 Quiz; Practice Final Presentation
10	Final Presentation workshops; Make up Impromptus	Ch. 19 Quiz; Practice
11	Final Presentation workshops; Impromptus	Practice!
12	Final Presentations	Practice!
13	Final Presentations	Practice!
14	Final Presentations	Practice!
15	Final Presentations	

CLASS POLICIES

Statement on Missed Assignments

Do to the numerous deadlines in this course, late assignments will **not** be accepted under any circumstance. For assignments you miss, you will receive a grade of zero (F). No make-up assignments. Put all deadlines in your appointment book to avoid missing deadlines.

Attendance Policy

You are allowed to miss 2 classes for any reason, without it adversely affecting your participation grade. 3 lates count as 1 absence. A student who is not in a class for any reason is not receiving the benefit of the education being provided. Missed class time includes not just absences but also latenesses, early departures, and time outside the classroom taken by students during class meeting periods. The professor will keep accurate, detailed records of students' attendance, and will notify students that a WU grade (withdrew unofficially) may be assigned to anyone who exceeds the limit established for a given course or component. Students are responsible for keeping track of their own attendance. When they exceed the maximum permitted missed class time, they should make an appointment to discuss the problem with the Professor.

Academic Integrity at City Tech

“Students and all others who work with information, ideas, texts, images, music, inventions, and other intellectual property owe their audience and sources accuracy and honesty in using, crediting, and citing sources. As a community of intellectual and professional workers, the College recognizes its responsibility for providing instruction in information literacy and academic integrity, offering models of good practice, and responding vigilantly and appropriately to infractions of academic integrity. Accordingly, academic dishonesty is prohibited in The City University of New York and at New York City College of Technology and is punishable by penalties, including failing grades, suspension, and expulsion.” (NYCCT Academic Integrity Policy).

Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Any information you find on the web or at the library or in books must be cited correctly. Any form of plagiarism, intentional or otherwise, will earn you a grade of F for that assignment. Further offenses will result in a grade of F in the course and you will be reported to the City Tech Office of Student Affairs. More information, see the Citation section on Blackboard.

Professionalism:

You are expected to turn in original work of high standard. Work will be graded on given criteria as well as on spelling, grammar, and formatting. You are expected to have read assigned material before coming to class and be prepared with some discussion questions. You may be asked to give an Impromptu Speech on the assigned material during class, and the Professor may also ask you questions about the assigned reading during class. Please plan ahead. Professional standards require that all assignments must be submitted by the deadline in order to receive credit. No exceptions will be made.

Etiquette:

It is expected that students in this class will conduct themselves with good sense, courtesy, and dignity in all course-related activities. A level of formality is required for this class above and beyond your everyday conduct. This includes your behavior towards other students and the Professor. The following behaviors during class will result in each offender being marked absent for that day:

- Texting or use of electronic devices
- Sleeping (or appearing to be asleep) during class
- Talking while the Professor is trying to get your attention
- Holding side conversations when somebody else is speaking
- Long breaks
- Slouching, eye-rolling, ‘dirty looks’ or other forms of rudeness
- Any other form of behavior that your Professor decides is inappropriate or disruptive

CELL PHONES, TEXT MESSAGING, MUSIC DEVICES, etc., are prohibited in the classroom. No exceptions. You are encouraged to take notes by hand and transfer them to your device after class if needed. This is to help you avoid the temptation of using your laptop or tablet for other reasons during class. If you have an emergency, politely excuse yourself from the room to use the phone.

Suggested attire:

“[Business casual attire](#)” is preferred. Please, no shorts, gym clothes, old sneakers, caps or hats, headphones, t-shirts, ripped jeans, clothing with logos, or anything else that the Professor deems as unprofessional.

Reasonable Accommodation:

Your Professor is committed to providing reasonable accommodation to students with disabilities. Any student who has a disability that may prevent him or her from fully demonstrating his or her abilities should contact me personally so we can discuss accommodations necessary to ensure full participation and to maximize educational opportunities. For more information, contact The Center for Student Accessibility in Namm Hall N-108 or call the Program Manager John Reid Currie at (718)260-5143.