

Title Professional Communications

Course Prefix & Number IGS 340

Credit Hours 3

Attributes met by this course Writing Intensive, Presentation Skills

Pre-requisites or co-requisites Junior standing and permission of instructor

Grading scale Letter grade A through E

Course Description

Advanced survey study of communication in professional settings, including interpersonal and group dynamics and **intercultural mindfulness**. Application of professional communication strategies including written and verbal communication.

Student Learning Outcomes

- Understand the principles of human communication as they relate to the business and professional context.
- Use appropriate communication behaviors in the workplace to accomplish career-related goals
- Implement communication strategies in oral, aural, and written forms to effectively transmit messages
- Recognize and promote characteristics associated with effective workplace teams: leadership, interpersonal, and intercultural communication

Course format:

This is an asynchronous course with ongoing requirements for engagement in course discussions and additional coursework as described below.

Meeting times if applicable

Asynchronous

Location Online

Statements:

Disability, Diversity, and Academic Integrity statements for the college (or links) **copied at the end**.

General Requirements

- Participation: weekly participation in online discussions.
- Content readings on organizational and leadership theory, ethics, and decision-making foundations.
- Assignments as described below

Required Text

Business Communication for Success (an OER textbook), at <https://open.lib.umn.edu/businesscommunication/>

Supplementary Readings (all open-access)

- Billiet, A., Bruneel, J., & Dufays, F. (2023). Exit, Voice, or Both: Why Organizations Engage With Stakeholders. *Business & Society*, 0(0). <https://doi.org/10.1177/00076503231182612>
- Cheng, B., Guo, G., Tian, J., & Kong, Y. (2023). 'I disdain the company of flatterers!': How and when observed ingratiation predicts employees' ostracism toward their ingratiating colleagues. *Human Relations*, 0(0). <https://doi.org/10.1177/00187267231170175>
- de Colle, S., Freeman, R. E., & Wicks, A. C. (2023). Toward Humanistic Business Ethics. *Business & Society*, 0(0). <https://doi.org/10.1177/00076503231183681>
- Dupree, C. H. (2024). Words of a Leader: The Importance of Intersectionality for Understanding Women Leaders' Use of Dominant Language and How Others Receive It. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 0(0). <https://doi.org/10.1177/00018392231223142>
- Hiebl, M. R. W. (2023). Sample Selection in Systematic Literature Reviews of Management Research. *Organizational Research Methods*, 26(2), 229-261. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1094428120986851>
- Hong, W., Zhang, L., & Gajendran, R. S. (2023). Relative status and dyadic help seeking and giving: The roles of past helping history and power distance value. *Human Relations*, 0(0). <https://doi.org/10.1177/00187267231152055>
- Jarrett, M., & Vince, R. (2023). Mitigating anxiety: The role of strategic leadership groups during radical organisational change. *Human Relations*, 0(0). <https://doi.org/10.1177/00187267231169143>

- Kramm, K. & Isabella, L.A. (1985). Mentoring alternatives: The role of peer relationships in career development. *The Academy of Management Journal*, 28(1), 110-132. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/256064?origin=JSTOR-pdf>
- Quaquebeke, N. V., & Gerpott, F. H. (2023). The Now, New, and Next of Digital Leadership: How Artificial Intelligence (AI) Will Take Over and Change Leadership as We Know It. *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies*, 30(3), 265-275. <https://doi.org/10.1177/15480518231181731>
- Radoynovska, N. (2024). Expectations Meet Reality: Leader Sensemaking and Enactment of Stakeholder Engagement in Multistakeholder Social Enterprises. *Business & Society*, 0(0). <https://doi.org/10.1177/00076503231221537>
- Tuan, A., Corciolani, M., & Giuliani, E. (2023). Being Reassuring About the Past While Promising a Better Future: How Companies Frame Temporal Focus in Social Responsibility Reporting. *Business & Society*, 0(0). <https://doi.org/10.1177/00076503231182627>
- Zhu, Q., Martinescu, E., Beersma, B., & Wei, F. (2023). The double-edged sword of negative supervisor gossip: When and why negative supervisor gossip promotes versus inhibits feedback seeking behavior among gossip targets. *Human Relations*, 0(0). <https://doi.org/10.1177/00187267231165885>

Supplementary Videos

- Build Your [WHO Logic] Resume and Cover Letter, by Academic & Career Advising Pacific University, at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zV4b-6nxASs>
- How to Create a Strong Student LinkedIn Profile, by University of Leeds Careers Services, at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7UX1UEHeZk>
- Professional Networking 101, by Thomas Jefferson University Alumni, at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xt-VdqXhHZM>

Suggested Resources

- *Business and Professional Communication Quarterly* (an open-access journal), at <https://journals.sagepub.com/home/bcq>
- Arthur Andersen Case Studies in Business Ethics, at <https://johnhooker.tepper.cmu.edu/ethics/aa/arthurandersen.htm>
- *Journal of Business Case Studies* (an open-access journal), at <https://clutejournals.com/index.php/JBCS>

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>chs</u>	<u>Assessment</u>	<u>Timing</u>	<u>% grade</u>
<i>PRES (presentation skills)</i>				
Business/Professional Communication Concept Presentation. You will begin by selecting a topic that relates to business and professional situations. You will need to select a topic early in the semester and provide a detailed professional webinar-style (recorded) training presentation to the class. The presentation should last a minimum of 15 minutes and a maximum of 30 minutes. The articles that you use as source material should be from current newspapers (online or other) or trade journals that focus on the world of work.	1-3, 7, 10-13	See rubric	Wk 10-12	20%
Peer-critique: Assess a classmate's Business/Professional Communication Concept Presentation using criteria and concepts for professional communication from the course	8	Pass/fail according to completion and use of course concepts	Wk 11-13	5%
Elevator Pitch. Everyone gets this question in a job interview, "Tell me about yourself." It is essential to be able to answer this question and to answer it well. For this assignment, you will create variations of this speech for both digital	3, 14-15	See rubric	Wk 4-5	15%

<p>and face-to-face networking, along with a résumé that uses WHO Logic. The résumé should help you conceive and plan your presentations. (Think of the presentations as live highlight reels.)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A 2-minute speech including some form of multi-media, which you will share to your LinkedIn, Handshake, Indeed, or other professional networking profile. 2. A 30-second version of the above speech without multi-media <p>You will also submit a critical self-reflection of your “pitch,” with attention to who your target audience is and how your presentation attempts to reach it</p>				
WRIT (writing intensive)				
<p>Professional Dilemma report: a short form report, characterizing an ethical dilemma or ongoing issue in the field your plan to enter, offering a critical analysis of the dilemma and a proposed plan to address it, using support from the course and additional research as appropriate (with attention to interpersonal and intercultural communication, leadership and followership, and/or conflict management, as appropriate to the dilemma). *This paper will undergo a revision process.</p>	1-3, 16-19	See rubric	Wk 5-8	15%
<p>Critical Self Reflections: You will write two 2-3 page papers assessing your professional abilities in the topic areas of interpersonal skills and intercultural competence.</p>	16, 18-19	The papers will be graded on how thoroughly you evaluate yourself on the assigned topic using relevant course material	TBD	5% each (10%)
<p>Truth in AI: Write a company, of a real company, as if you were preparing a job ad, a social media presence, or an About page for the web. Use AI to create the first draft. Go through it carefully to check for clarity, conciseness, and accuracy (research will be needed). Identify the parts that would need to be changed and corrected to make the copy work. Create a second draft using the needed changes. Submit both plus a short summary of what work needed to be done to the AI copy.</p>	3-7	The assignment will be graded based on how carefully you attend to the nuances and details in revising and correcting the AI copy.	Wk 2-3	10%
<p>Authenticity in AI: Have an AI platform write you a letter of application for a current job opening. Next, use AI to write a blog post, as if for your LinkedIn profile, about some selected aspect of the role or importance of communication in the workplace. Read through these documents carefully and critically. Then, write a reflection addressing the following: Would you feel comfortable sending/posting this as yours? Does it sound like you? Is it</p>	3-7	The assignment will be graded based on how thoroughly you apply or integrate relevant course content in your reflection.	Wk 3-5	10%

accurate? Do you agree with it? Would you be able to answer questions or explain it more if an employer asked you about it? Apply appropriate course concepts (ex. audience, effective writing, etc)				
PARTICIPATION				
Professional Social Networking: If you have not already done so, you should set up a profile in Handshake, as well as one in your choice of popular professional networking platform, such as LinkedIn or Indeed. If you already have profiles, make sure they are up-to-date and polished. Monitor these spaces throughout the course for applicable ideas, areas of discussion, or potential questions to raise, which you can integrate into your assignments. This can also be a place to actively use your course work, by sharing your résumé and/or videos, blogging about course concepts, etc.		pass/fail	Wk 1-2	5%
Discussions: You will be asked to write short, 2-4 paragraph, responses to bi-weekly discussion prompts that ask you to apply course concepts from assigned readings to your professional and academic experiences – and to offer brief, but thoughtful, replies to at least one peer response. (first week: Your response, second week: Your reply/ies.)		Posts and responses will be assessed according to relevance, quality, contribution to discussion and community, and mechanics.	ongoing	10%

Grading Scale

GPA, Percent	B+, 87-89	C+, 77-79	D+, 67-69	
A, 93-100	B, 83-86	C, 73-76	D, 63-66	E, 59-0
A-, 90-92	B-, 80-82	C- 70-72	D-, 60-62	

Business/Professional Communication Concept Presentation assessment rubric

Criteria	Instructor's Comments	Score (1-5)	% of Grade	Wtd. Score
Responds to or establishes an exigence in the speaking situation				
Addresses the audience based on their current attitudes, values, and behaviors				
Content and approach fit purpose				
Speaker's self-presentation and persona support specific purpose				
Gains and holds audience interest				
Language and style fit the speaking situation and specific purpose				
Organization and Outline				
Effective introduction				
Clear main points				
Structure fits purpose and thesis				
Clear signposts				
Effective conclusion				
Preparation outline				
Research and Evidence				
Evidence connects with the audience				

Verbal citations are used effectively when appropriate				
--	--	--	--	--

Presentation Aids (if used)

Effectively designed				
Incorporated into delivery				
Content supports purpose				
Channel fits content and context				
Appropriate credits and copyrights				

Recording

Clarity of audio				
Clarity of video				

Adjustments (+ or -)

Reason for Adjustment (especially outstanding aspects, creative or innovative elements, late work, missing assignment requirements, exclusionary language, etc.)	+ / -

Total Weighted Score (out of 100):

Elevator Pitch assessment rubric

Criteria	Instructor's Comments	Score (1-5)	% of Grade	Wtd. Score
Presentation builds connection between speaker and audience				
Taps into important audience values				
Follows appropriate structure				

Organization

Effective introduction				
Clear main points				
Effective conclusion				
Presentation script				

Video Recording & Multimedia

Clarity of audio				
Clarity of video				
Visuals effectively designed				
Media incorporated into message				
Media content supports purpose				
Media modes fits content and context				
Appropriate credits and copyrights				

Resumé

Clear and consistent organization and layout				
Actively articulated experiences and accomplishments				
Complete content (header, contact, education, experience, skills)				

Adjustments (+ or -)

Reason for Adjustment (especially outstanding aspects, creative or innovative elements, late work, missing assignment requirements, exclusionary language, etc.)	Pts+/-

Total Weighted Score (out of 100):

Professional Dilemma report assessment rubric

Criteria	Instructor's Comments	Score (1-5)	% of Grade	Wtd. Score
Content Development				
Provides sufficient, documented support for all relevant statements.				

Targets message to audience; acknowledges and meets audience needs (explicitly, if possible).				
Gives an introduction that could stand alone and gives a clear bottom line for the document.				
Editing/Readability				
Structures each paragraph deductively with a topic sentence that gives a bottom line for the paragraph.				
Transitions between sentences and paragraphs cohesively.				
Chooses words appropriately for the audience; writes in accessible and industry-appropriate language.				
Editing/Usability				
Formats lists, headings, and text consistently for a readable document.				
Writes headings that can stand alone as "headlines," and gives the bottom line for the text that follows.				
Provides readable, usable graphs, charts, and tables that are referenced specifically in the text and convey information effectively.				
Proofreading				
Makes only, and limited, "lower order concern" errors				
Adjustments (+ or -)				
Reason for Adjustment (especially outstanding aspects, creative or innovative elements, late work, missing assignment requirements, exclusionary language, etc.)				Pts+/-

Total Weighted Score (out of 100):

DIVERSITY: SUNY Cortland is dedicated to the premise that every individual is important in a unique way and contributes to the overall quality of the institution. We define diversity broadly to include all aspects of human difference. The College is committed to inclusion, equity, and access and thus committed to creating and sustaining a climate that is equitable, respectful and free from prejudice for students, faculty and staff. We value diversity in the learning environment and know that it enhances our ability to inspire students to learn, lead and serve in a changing world. We are committed to promoting a diverse and inclusive campus through the recruitment and retention of faculty, staff and students. As a community, we hold important the democracy of ideas, tempered by a commitment to free speech and the standards of inquiry and debate. To this end, we are dedicated to developing and sustaining a learning environment where it is safe to explore our differences and celebrate the richness inherent in our pluralistic society. (College Handbook, Chap 130)

ACCESS (ACCOMMODATION OF DISABILITIES): As part of SUNY Cortland’s commitment to a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment, we strive to provide students with equal access to all courses. If you believe you will require accommodations in this course, please place a request with the Disability Resources Office at disability.resources@cortland.edu or call 607-753-2967. Please note that accommodations are generally not provided retroactively so timely contact with the Disability Resources Office is important. All students should consider meeting with their course instructor who may be helpful in other ways.” (College Handbook, Chapter 745). ***Even if you do not have an Access Plan, if there is something I can do to help you succeed in the course, please communicate your needs with me.***

MENTAL, EMOTIONAL, & PHYSICAL WELLBEING: Diminished mental health, including significant stress, mood changes, excessive worry, alcohol and/or substance abuse, or problems with eating and/or sleeping can interfere with optimal academic performance. ***If symptoms are related to your course work, please speak with the instructor.***

If problems with relationships, family worries, loss, or a personal struggle or crisis are negatively impacting your mental health and/or interfering with your academic success, SUNY Cortland offers the following resources to help you manage personal challenges that threaten your personal or academic well-being.

- Counseling Center: 607-753-4728
- Substance Abuse & Prevention Education: 607-753-2066

If challenges securing food or housing are affecting your academic performance, or your emotional wellbeing, you are urged to contact the Associate Vice President of Student Affairs for support (607-753-4721). The college offers a food cupboard and a clothes closet, among other services, that may be able to help.

INCLUSIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT: SUNY Cortland is committed to a diverse, equitable and inclusive environment. The course instructor honors this commitment and respects and values differences. All students enrolled in this course are expected to be considerate of others, promote a collaborative and supportive educational environment, and demonstrate respect for individuals with regard to ability or disability, age, ethnicity, gender, gender identity/expression, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, socio-economic status or other aspects of identity. In an environment that fosters inclusion, students have the opportunity to bring their various identities into conversation as they find helpful but are not expected to represent or speak for an entire group of people who share aspects of an identity. If you have any questions or concerns about this statement, contact the Institutional Equity and Inclusion Office at 607-753-2263.

TITLE IX: Title IX, when combined with New York Human Rights Law and the New York Education Law 129-B, prohibits discrimination, harassment and violence based on sex, gender, gender identity/expression, and/or sexual orientation in the education setting. The federal Clery Act and NY Education Law 129-B provide certain rights and responsibilities after an incident of sexual or interpersonal violence. When a violation occurs, victims and survivors are eligible for campus and community resources. Where the College has jurisdiction, it may investigate and take action in accordance with College policy. If you or someone you know wishes to report discrimination based in sex, gender, gender identity/expression, and/or sexual orientation, or wishes to report sexual harassment, sexual violence, stalking or relationship violence, please contact the Title IX Coordinator at 607-753-4550, or visit cortland.edu/titleix to learn about all reporting options and resources.

DIVERSITY, INCLUSIVITY, EQUITY, & JUSTICE IN THE COMMUNICATION CLASSROOM: A diversity of viewpoints, opinions, and experiences are welcome. We learn and grow when confronted with new ideas and different perspectives. But we are also here to learn to be more effective, more ethical communicators. Therefore, anything that fits the definition of [hate speech](#)¹ or degrades fellow human beings will not welcome, anything that violates ethical responsibilities as speakers by advocating violence or actions that could harm any audience member's pursuit of life and liberty (including such activities as illegal drug use or nonconsensual sexual activity) will not be welcome, and anything that violates the university's commitment to diversity and inclusivity cannot be tolerated. As part of being effective communicators, everyone is encouraged toward ethical use of: trigger warnings when discussing sensitive topics.

Systemic prejudice and oppression, issues of (mis)representation, harm of stereotypes, and necessity of being not just tolerant but also open-minded, are just some of the topics related to concerns of diversity, equity, inclusion, access, and justice that may be discussed in this class. This class acknowledges and respects the validity of each person's standpoint and their lived experiences, and this class expects that every person in it will also acknowledge and respect that diversity. These discussions are learning opportunities, not criticisms of individuals or even groups. Learning about racism, sexism, or homophobia is not, for example, an attack on Whiteness, maleness, or straightness.

Communication is a social science; that means it deals with people. Therefore, we will talk about trends common to people as a whole, but there are always exceptions to the trends because people are unpredictable. There are no absolutes; some things can be real and true for some and not others. In this classroom, you can speak *your* truth but should not assume what the truth of others is. (For example, if you haven't experienced prejudice or oppression, do not assume that means it isn't real.) And no one here is considered a symbol of or spokesperson for their entire social

¹ <https://www.un.org/en/hate-speech/understanding-hate-speech/what-is-hate-speech>

group. Furthermore, the exploration of these issues is integral to the specific focus of this course. Therefore, in order to learn the course material, be open to trying to understand (not necessarily agreeing with or accepting) new ideas and perspectives. Check your reactions to move beyond denial (“this is not a problem”), disengagement (“this not my problem”), and/or derailment (“there are other, more important, problems”), and try to understand that “privilege” does not mean one’s life is free of hardships or obstacles, just that one’s gender identity, sexuality, or race does not generally contribute to those challenges via prejudice or discrimination.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: All students are expected to uphold academic integrity standards. Plagiarism is defined as taking the ideas of others and using them as one's own without due credit. Students who cheat in examinations, course assignments, or plagiarize in this course may be disciplined in accordance with university rules and regulations. (College Handbook, Chapter 340)

ChatGPT and other AI interfaces are proving to be adequate, but bland and generic,² generators of essays, stories, speeches, blog posts, and cover letters. The study and practice of communication is about participation, art, and ethics. It is about the careful creation of messages that link what is uniquely you to what is uniquely your intended audience. These are things AI cannot accomplish. Therefore, use of AI to create content for assignments in this course (**except where specifically assigned to use AI to generate content**) may earn a poor grade because it will miss the point of communication and rhetoric; content created by ChatGPT will not have your voice nor speak to the interests of your audience,³ and it will not capture the nuances of class materials and discussion. Content created by ChatGPT and the like also lacks academic rigor; it does not provide sources or offer examples. And it tends to be very repetitive. Additionally, the main purpose of class assignments is for you to learn through the process of completing them. Without going through the process, you will decrease the value of the course and will not improve the communication skills, organizational abilities, reliability, or problem-solving skills that are key to your employability.⁴ Good uses of AI: It is great to help with brainstorming, offering ideas that you can then explore in more depth (not all of its ideas are good or right or useful). It can be very helpful in providing examples for organizing papers, speeches, proposals – as starting points. It can help you to clarify or clean up your writing, especially if you struggle with English usage or grammar. ***If you use any AI platform to assist you in your classwork, you must clearly identify what you used and how you used it.***

² <https://www.postcontrolmarketing.com/top-10-tips-for-successful-social-media-marketing-chatgpt-wrote-that-article-in-less-than-a-minute-then-i-spent-four-hours-writing-the-rest/>

³ <https://www.businessinsider.com/chatgpt-job-applications-hiring-managers-job-interview-candidate-2022-12>

⁴ <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/finding-a-job/employability-skills>