



Course Syllabus

Business Communications for Professional Effectiveness

GEB 3213 / 84567 / Fall 2026

Credit Hours: 3

Pre-requisites/Co-requisites: None

Contact Information

Instructor

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By Appointment Only

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Course Information

Catalog Description:

This course introduces students to essential writing and speaking communication skills, organizational strategies and formats used by successful business professionals. It provides opportunities for students to apply these skills in correspondence, research, reports and presentations that prepare them for effective job searches and productive careers.

Student Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of this course, you will be able to:

- **CO1.** Contrast conventional and social communication models while evaluating the influence of intelligent communication technologies on business communications.
 - All Chapter 1 MLOs.
- **CO2.** Explain why listening is such a complex communication process and describe the three steps to becoming a better listener.
 - All Chapter 2 MLOs.
- **CO3.** Assess the importance of business etiquette across five domains, integrating an examination of teamwork's pros and cons, effective team attributes, team progression, and strategies for effective virtual team collaboration.
 - All Chapter 3 MLOs.
- **CO4.** Discuss how the three-step writing process provides a foundation to plan, organize and gather information, and effectively distributes business messages with quality information.
 - All Chapter 5 MLOs.
- **CO5.** Apply effective readability techniques by evaluating drafts and synthesizing design principles while incorporating elements of revision, clarity improvement, and proofreading.
 - All Chapter 7 MLOs.
- **CO6.** Identify major digital channels and describe how businesses use social networking platforms, including the creation of effective content.
 - All Chapter 8 MLOs.
- **CO7.** Illustrate and apply the common types of routine replies and positive messages, strategies for sending direct and indirect negative messages, and persuasive business and marketing messages while avoiding ethical lapses.
 - All Chapter 9 MLOs.
 - All Chapter 10 MLOs.
 - All Chapter 11 MLOs.
- **CO8.** Evaluate methodologies required for identifying opportunities within the current job market and the complexities involved in crafting a resume strategy and optimal format.

- All Chapter 15 MLOs.
- **CO9.** Analyze the standard progression of job interview processes, characterizing the primary categories of interview types and the range of interview inquiries, while also examining traits sought by employers throughout all stages of an interview.
 - All Chapter 16 MLOs.

Course Materials & Resources:

Title: Excellence in Business Communication, Fourteenth Edition

Authors: John V. Thill and Courtland L. Bovee

ISBN: 9780138209391 (Including MyLab Access Code)

Publisher: Pearson

Copyright: 2024

NOTE: The textbook is required and is used throughout the course to provide the foundation for the course learning objectives and assessment activities.

Course Materials: Where to Purchase Your Textbook

The eTextbook and access code (to MyLab) may be purchased from:

- 1) The [GCSC Bookstore](#)[Links to an external site.](#); or
- 2) Directly from [Pearson](#)[Links to an external site.](#).

- You can purchase directly from Pearson by clicking the Access Pearson course navigation link (to the left).
- Then click the yellow "Open Pearson" button.
- Then click the yellow "MyLab and Mastering" button.
- From the Pearson web page, you should see an option to purchase directly from Pearson.

Course Materials: Pearson MyLab Technical Support

This course utilizes the Pearson online component, MyLab. As you work through the course, if you have any technical difficulties accessing or using this online component you should contact the Pearson MyLab Technical Support team directly as the GCSC Help Desk is unable to assist with this online component tool.

[How to Contact Pearson MyLab Technical Support](#)

Delivery Method:

This is a web-based course. All online courses at GCSC utilize the Canvas Learning System. Students should read all information presented in the Canvas course site and should periodically check for updates -- at least every 48 hours.

Reminder: This course is not one in which students may work at their own pace. Each week, there are learning modules, assignments, online lectures, online discussions, and/or online exams with due dates. Refer to the schedule within the syllabus for more information.

Communication & Feedback

In this course, communication and feedback will occur through various channels, including GCSC email, Canvas Inbox, Canvas Announcements, Canvas Discussions, Microsoft Teams or Zoom, assignment feedback, and instructor office hours. Review the statements below so that you understand the expectations for communication.

Student Expectations

As a student at Gulf Coast State College, you are expected to:

- **Adhere to Course Guidelines:** Follow the guidelines detailed in the course syllabus, along with any additional instructions provided by the instructor. This includes understanding and complying with the course objectives, grading criteria, and academic policies.
- **Maintain Regular Contact:** Keep in touch with your instructor and classmates via your GCSC email or other designated communication channels. Regular contact helps clarify doubts, share ideas, and foster a collaborative learning environment.
- **Active Participation:** Engage actively in class discussions and submit assignments on time. Your active participation is crucial for your academic success and contributes to a vibrant learning community.
- **Student Exchange:** On the course Home page, you will find an Open Discussion forum (Student Exchange) for peer-to-peer communication. This space allows you to post questions to classmates, share insights from your experience, and contribute helpful information related to course content. Active participation is encouraged to support collaborative learning.

Instructor's Communication Plan

As your instructor, my commitment to you is to:

- **Provide Timely Feedback:** I will review and provide feedback on your assignments and submissions within one week of the assignment due date. My goal is to help you understand your strengths and areas for improvement, which is crucial for your academic growth.

- **Respond Via Canvas Inbox:** I will respond to your emails or messages within 24-48 hours (Monday through Thursday), unless otherwise noted. I understand the importance of clear and timely communication in addressing your questions and concerns. Please email through the Canvas Class email.
- **Post Regular Announcements:** To keep you updated and help you manage your time effectively; I will send out reminders via announcements. These reminders will include important dates, upcoming assignments, and any changes to the course schedule.
- **Maintain Weekly Office Hours:** I will maintain regular weekly office hours, but I can also be available by appointment. This is to ensure I'm available for any questions or concerns that may come up during the week. As an alternative, I also provide weekly online office hours and am available to meet via Zoom sessions as needed.
- **Ask the Instructor:** On the course Home page, you will find an Open Discussion forum (Ask the Instructor) that is visible to all students. This space is intended for posting course-related questions directly to the instructor. It serves as an additional communication channel to support your understanding of course content and provide clarification on assignments, expectations, or procedures. Students are encouraged to review posted questions and responses as a shared learning resource.

Assignment Feedback

Detailed feedback on each Canvas assignment will be provided (normally) within one week of assignment due date. You may also find additional comments added to the comments section of individual assignments. If you have questions regarding feedback provided, reach out to me via email.

MyLab assignments provide you with immediate feedback.

Use of AI Tools

Artificial Intelligence

See the student handbook for further information. Students with questions about acceptable use should consult their instructor.

Generative AI Use with Permission and Disclosure: Students may use basic assistive technologies for spelling, grammar, and formatting (e.g., PaperRater or SpellCheckPlus). Generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Copilot, Grammarly's AI function, etc.) **may also be used for classes and/or assignments where instructors have given explicit permission. Students must clearly disclose and properly cite any AI-generated content used in their work**, following course guidelines. Students are permitted to use AI only in the manner and means described by the instructor. Unacknowledged or unauthorized AI use will be treated as a violation of academic integrity and may result in penalties, including a zero on

the assignment and additional disciplinary actions as outlined in the college's academic integrity policy.

While AI tools may be used to refine grammar and mechanics, they **should not be used to generate content for assignments**. Misuse of AI may be considered academic dishonesty.

AI tools can provide excellent study options on topics within the course.



Course Schedule

Module	DATES	ASSIGNMENT	TOPIC
Module 1	08/17 - 08/23	Get Oriented	Read all material under the Start Here Module
		Action	Get registered with Pearson MyLab
		Ice Breakers	Get to know your peers
		Discussion Board	DB#1: Introduce Yourself (Canvas)
Module 2	08/24 - 08/30	Reading	Chapter 1: Professional Communication in a Digital, Social World
		In-Class Activity	Discussion / Think-Pair-Share Failing to Consider Negative Consequences
		Video	CH01 Video: The Importance of Effective Communication Career (MyLab)
		Discussion Board	DB#2 - Conventional Communication vs. Social Communication Model (Canvas)
		Simulation	CH01 Mini SIM - Successful Business Communication (MyLab)
		Simulation	CH01 Mini SIM - Improving the Organization of a Message (MyLab)
		Build Your Career	CH01 BYC - What Do You Want to Do? (Canvas)
Module 3	08/31 - 09/06	Reading	Chapter 2: Interpersonal Communication
		In-Class Activity	XO Let's Go! -- Listening Skills
		Video	CH02 Video: Team Meetings (MyLab)
		Apply	CH02 Listening Actively 2-1 (Canvas)
		Assignment	CH02: Personal Inventory Assessment - Strategies for Handling Conflict (MyLab)
		Simulation	CH02 Mini SIM - Improving Writing Professional Messages (MyLab)
		Build Your Career	CH02 BYC - What Do You Have to Offer? (Canvas)
	09/07 - 09/13 Monday, Labor Day	No Monday, 09/07, Face-to-Face class -- COLLEGE CLOSED MONDAY Labor Day	

Module 4	09/14 - 09/20	Reading	Chapter 3: Collaboration and Business Etiquette
		In-Class Activity	Discussion / Think-Pair-Share-Rotate Responding to Criticism
		In-Class Activity	Exit Ticket: One-Minute Paper
		Video	CH03 Video: Teamwork (MyLab)
		Apply	CH03 Communication Etiquette in the Workplace 3-14 (Canvas)
		Simulation	CH03 Mini SIM Interpersonal Communication and Teamwork (MyLab)
		Build Your Career	CH03 BYC - Are You a Quality Hire? (Canvas)
Module 5	09/21 - 09/27	Reading	Chapter 5: Planning Business Messages
		In-Class Activity	Discussion / Think-Pair-Share Storytelling
		Video	CH05 Video: Planning Business Messages (MyLab)
		Apply	CH05 Analyze the Situation; Presentation 5-9 (Canvas)
		Simulation	CH05 Mini SIM - Planning Business Messages (MyLab)
		Build Your Career	CH05 BYC - Construct Your Brand Pyramid (Canvas)
Module 6	09/28 - 10/04	Reading	Chapter 7: Completing Business Messages
		In-Class Activity	Improving Readability Handouts (in teams)
		Video	CH07 Video: Completing Business Messages (MyLab)
		Discussion Board	DB#3 - CH07 Critique the Professionals (Canvas)
		Reflection	Reflection #1: Wrapping It Up (Canvas)
		Simulation	CH07 Mini SIM - Readability in a Blog Post (MyLab)
Module 7	10/05 - 10/11 Fall Break No Classes Thurs/Fri (10/08 - 10/09)	Reading	Chapter 8: Crafting Messages for Digital Channels
		In-Class Activity	Open Class Discussions / Think-Pair-Share Social Media Communications (and handout activity)
		Video	CH08 Video: Crafting Messages for Electronic Media (MyLab)
		Discussion Board	DB#4 - CH08 Critique the Professionals (Canvas)
		Simulation	CH08 Mini Sim - Crafting Content for Digital Channels and Social Media (MyLab)
		Simulation	CH08 Mini Sim - Business Tweets (MyLab)
Module 8	10/12 - 10/18	Reading	Chapter 9: Writing Routine and Positive Messages
		In-Class Activity	Open Discussion: Routine and Positive Message Strategies
		In-Class Activity	Peer Review Activity: Craft thank you message / Share and Respond to Peer Review
		Video	CH09 Video: Writing Routine & Positive Messages (MyLab)

		Discussion Board	DB#5 - CH08 Media Skills: Twitter/Blogs_8-17 (Canvas)
		Simulation	CH09 Mini SIM Writing Routine and Positive Messages (M
		Simulation	CH09 Mini SIM Engaging in Positive Chat (MyLab)
Module 9	10/19 - 10/25	Reading	Chapter 10: Writing Negative Messages
		In-Class Activity	Open Discussions: Strategies for Negative Messages
		In-Class Activity	Think-Pair-Share-Peer Review Rejecting Job Applications (handout activity)
		In-Class Activity	Pair Up - Writing the Story of You (time permitting)
		Video	CH10 Video: Writing Negative Messages (MyLab)
		Simulation	CH10 Mini SIM Writing Negative Messages (MyLab)
		Simulation	CH10 Mini SIM Responding to a Claim Request (MyLab)
		Simulation	CH10 Mini SIM Denying a Request (MyLab)
		At Home Work	Begin compiling an initial draft of your resume (work in gro review - no submission)
Module 10	10/26 - 11/01	Reading	Chapter 11: Writing Persuasive Messages
		In-Class Activity	Think-Pair-Share: Persuade Your Partner (choose a topic
		In-Class Activity	Exit Ticket (groups of 3): Determine the appropriate mes strategy (based on index card scenarios)
		Video	CH11 Video: Persuasive Messaging (MyLab)
		Simulation	CH11 Mini SIM Writing Persuasive Messages (MyLab)
		Simulation	CH11 Mini SIM Persuasive Social Media Messages (MyLa
		Apply	CH11 Ethical Communication: Pushing the Limits of Cred (Canvas)
		At Home Work	Finalize the initial draft of your resume (F2F bring to CH15 discussion)
Module 11	11/02 - 11/08	Reading	Chapter 15: Building Careers and Writing Resumes
		In-Class Activity	Think-Pair-Share: Writing a Resume Messaging Strategies (handout activity)
		In-Class Activity	Peer Review: Resume draft collaboration (peer review ru handout)
		Video	CH15 Video: Building Careers & Writing Resumes (MyLab)
		Simulation	CH15 Mini SIM Resumes (MyLab)
		Apply	Ch15 Build a LinkedIn Profile (Canvas)
		Build Your Career	CH15 BYC - Create Your Resume (Canvas) (not due until 1
Module 12	11/09 - 11/15 Veteran's Day<Wednesday,11/11	Reading	Chapter 16: Applying and Interviewing for Employment
		In-Class Activity	Exit Ticket: One-Minute Paper
		Video	CH16 Video: Interviewing (MyLab)

		Simulation	CH16 Mini SIM Interviewing (MyLab)
		Simulation	CH16 Mini SIM Post-Interview Email (MyLab)
		Simulation	CH16 Mini SIM Cover Letters (MyLab)
		Reflection	Reflection #2: Wrapping It Up (Canvas)
Module 13	11/16 - 11/22	In-Class Activity	Class meeting time will be used to review personal resumé work on revisions for your portfolio
Module 14	11/23 - 11/29 Wed/Thurs/Fri Thanksgiving	Build Your Career	CH16 BYC - Application Letter (in Canvas)
		Final Project	Work on compiling and revising all Build Your Career documentation for final project submission
Module 15	11/30 - 12/06	Final Project	Build Your Career Portfolio (in Canvas)

Grading

GCSC Grading Scale

GRADING SCALE	
90 - 100	A
80 - 89	B
70 - 79	C
60 - 69	D
0 - 59	F

Calculation of Grades

CATEGORY	% OF GRADE
Participation & Metacognitive Activities	15%
Apply Your Knowledge	25%
Simulations	30%
Final Project (Cumulative)	30%

Assessment Instruments

Coursework will be completed in both Canvas and the Access Pearson MyLab online component. Links are provided within your Canvas course to each assignment. The Access Pearson MyLab assignment links will redirect you to the assignment in MyLab.

All assignments in this course are evaluated based on detailed grading rubrics. These rubrics are linked to each assignment and can be viewed by clicking on the respective assignment within the course platform.

Whether you are participating in person or online, your active engagement is critical to your success. The course includes interactive lectures and eText material, and your preparation and participation will significantly enhance your learning and application of concepts.

As your instructor, I am here to facilitate your learning journey and support you throughout the course. If you have questions or need further clarification on any topic, reach out to me. By staying engaged and proactive, you will be better equipped to apply the skills and knowledge you gain here.

Participation and Metacognitive Activities

Percent of Grade: 15%

Metacognitive activities provide students an opportunity for reflection and demonstration of understanding relating to the course learning objectives. These activities are found and completed in Canvas.

Chapter Video assignments comprise brief videos (≤ 5 minutes) designed to introduce chapter topics and engage students aimed at stimulating critical thinking. These activities are found in MyLab.

For face-to-face classes: Participation involves class attendance and clearly engaging during class; participating in open discussions and class activities.

Apply Your Knowledge

- Percent of Grade: 25%
- These activities are designed to analyze communication scenarios, refine your insights, and provide practice crafting professional-quality communications across various channels, to include both expanding your skills by critiquing writing and fine-tuning the technical aspects of your writing.

- In addition to the required activities, students may complete up to three optional Networking Event Reflections throughout the semester by attending professional events and connecting their experiences to course concepts. Networking reflections provide an opportunity to enhance your Apply Your Knowledge grade by demonstrating practical application of business communication skills.
- These activities are found in both Canvas and MyLab and are clearly identified in both the Course Schedule and on the Assignments pages. -- All MyLab assignments are accessed using deep links provided in Canvas directing you to the MyLab online component where the activity is completed.
- For face-to-face sections: These activities encompass both Canvas submissions and exclusive in-class activities, emphasizing the significance of regular attendance.

Simulations

Percent of Grade: 30%

Simulations offer an immersive student learning experience, allowing the application of theoretical knowledge in practical, real-world scenarios providing an opportunity to gain valuable hands-on experience in developing critical problem-solving skills that deepen understanding of professional quality business communication strategies and concepts.

These activities use deep links found in Canvas directing you to the MyLab online component where the activity is completed.

Final Project

Percent of Grade: 30%

The "Build Your Career" activities guide you in crafting comprehensive employment communication materials throughout the course, aimed at preparing you for job applications, regardless of your current employment status. The final project entails a step-by-step journey through a successful job search, culminating in presenting yourself in the most appealing manner to potential employers. Completed incrementally throughout the course, each part of the final project builds upon previous activities, ultimately resulting in the creation of an employment package, including a LinkedIn profile, resume, and cover letter highlighting employability skills.

These activities are found and completed in Canvas.

Course Policies

Accessibility Statement

Gulf Coast State College supports an inclusive learning environment for all students. If there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that hinder your full participation, reasonable accommodations can be arranged. Prior to receiving accommodations, you must register with Student Accessibility Resources. Appropriate academic accommodations will be determined based on the documented needs of the student. Please visit [GCSC's Student Accessibility Resource \(SAR\) webpage](#) to learn more. For information regarding the registration process, email sar@gulfcoast.edu or call 850-747-3243.

Attendance Policy

Regular class attendance and participation are significant factors that help to promote success in college. Students are expected to attend all class meetings of all courses for which they are registered.

You are expected to know the instructor's specific attendance policy, as stated in the syllabus for each course. In the event of absence, you should contact your instructor as soon as possible to indicate the reason and to inquire whether make-up work is possible. (Make-up work is offered solely at the discretion of your professor.)

If your absences in a class become excessive, as stated in the course syllabus, your professor may contact you, indicating that further absence may result in your withdrawal from the course. Your professor can withdraw you from a course for excessive absences without your permission.

Instructors will monitor attendance at the beginning of each semester. If you are not in attendance during this period, you may be withdrawn from the course. You will be financially responsible for the course and a "W or NS" will appear on your transcript. Withdrawal from a course may also have implications for financial aid.

Withdrawal Policy

Two withdrawals are permitted per credit course. After that, a grade will be assigned. Please be concerned about withdrawals. When admitting students into certain programs, universities may calculate withdrawals as grades. It is your responsibility to verify the effects of enrollment and/or withdrawal upon your financial assistance (financial aid, scholarships, grants, etc.). There are two kinds of withdrawals---student and administrative.

- *Student Withdrawal (W1)* - Students wishing to withdraw must complete the online Student Withdrawal Form before the scheduled withdrawal deadline as published

in the College catalog. Student withdrawals initiated prior to the scheduled withdrawal deadline will be recorded as a grade of "W." The withdrawal deadline for an off-term or condensed term is one week after midterm.

- *Administrative Withdrawal (W2)* – A faculty member may withdraw a student up to the published withdrawal deadline for violation of the class attendance policy in which case the student will receive a grade of "W." The withdrawal deadline for an off-term or condensed term is one week after midterm.

Students cannot withdraw from developmental studies courses (college-preparatory classes) after the drop/add period without written permission from their instructor and/or their academic advisor.

Academic Integrity

Honest participation in academic endeavors fosters an environment in which optimal learning can take place and is consistent with the college's mission. Academic misconduct, including cheating or plagiarism, is destructive to the spirit of an educational environment. GCSC professors report every instance of student academic misconduct to the college for inclusion on the student's records.

Most course syllabi include an academic honesty policy and the consequences for violating this policy. Familiarize yourself with course policies regarding authorized or unauthorized use of AI to avoid the pitfalls of academic dishonesty.

The following definitions will apply:

"Cheating"

includes but is not limited to use of any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, or examinations; dependence upon the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments; the acquisition without permission of tests or other academic materials belonging to a member of the College's faculty.

"Plagiarism"

includes, but is not limited to, the use by paraphrase or direct quotation of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment as well as the purchase of papers or projects. It can also include overuse of an editing program like Grammarly or submitting work written by an Artificial Intelligence (AI) generator like ChatGPT. Make certain to consult your course syllabi for your instructor's guidelines of AI material.

"Self-plagiarism"

occurs when a student submits the same or considerably similar document to fulfill requirements in different classes. For example, if a student submits a term paper in Religion they originally wrote for an English class, this is self-plagiarism. Once a paper receives a grade in one class, it cannot be submitted again for another class.

"Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI)"

is technology that uses machine learning to create new content, such as text, images or code, based on user input. These systems are trained on vast amounts of data, including large language models and image or code generators. Common examples include ChatGPT, GitHub, Copilot, Google Gemini, Perplexity, and the Grammarly AI function. Sanctions for incidences of academic misconduct, depending on the severity of the incidence and/or its repetition, may range from receiving an F grade (or O) for the test, assignment, or activity, to failure of the course, to suspension or dismissal from the college.

Classroom Recording

In accordance with federal and state privacy laws, students may record class lectures for their own personal educational use, in connection with a complaint to the college, or as evidence in internal or external legal proceedings. Students may not publish or upload the recordings or any components thereof without the knowledge and written permission of the faculty member. Failure to obtain permission to publish could lead to the students' having to pay damages, attorney fees, and court costs. For more information about what can be recorded, please see the guidelines in the GCSC Student Handbook.

Anti-Discrimination Policy

Gulf Coast State College does not discriminate against any person in its programs, activities, policies or procedures on the basis of race, ethnicity, color, national origin, marital status, religion, age, gender, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, disability, or veteran status. All questions or inquiries regarding compliance with laws relating to non-discrimination and all complaints regarding sexual misconduct or discrimination may be directed to Amanda Reed, Executive Director of Human Resources/Title II/504/Title IX Coordinator and Employment Equity Officer, Gulf Coast State College, 5230 W. US Highway 98, Panama City, FL 32401; 850-769-1551, ext. 3516. Rules, policies, fees, and courses described in this catalog are subject to change without notice.

Syllabus Policy

For any syllabus posted prior to the beginning of the term, the instructor reserves the right to make minor changes prior to or during the term. The instructor will notify students via e-mail or Canvas announcement when changes are made in the requirements and/or grading of the course.

Student Support Resources

Gulf Coast State College is committed to providing you with the resources you need for success as a student and beyond. View all the academic and student support resources provided at GCSC on the [Student Services web page](#).

Course Technology & Support

To successfully participate in this online course, students must have basic computer and digital information literacy skills and meet the following technology requirements:

- **Computer:** Up-to-date web browser that supports the Canvas learning management system; please refer to the system requirements for compatibility and information on using the Canvas app on mobile devices.
- **Internet Speed:** Minimum bandwidth of 8 Mbps upload/download speed to effectively engage in online activities and access multimedia.
- **Office 365 software:** Available for free download through GCSC Information Technology Services (ITS).

If you need technical support, contact the ITS Help Desk, available 24/7 at (850) 913-3303.