

# MGT 301: Effective Business Communication

Syllabus Spring 2011  
TR 12:30 p.m. - 1:45 p.m.

Instructor: **Erin Blocher, M.A.**

## Contact Information

Office: Room 232 Bloch Hall

Office Phone: 816-235-2624

Email: blochere@umkc.edu

Mailbox: Room 334 Bloch Hall

Office Hours: MW 2:00-3:00 and by appointment. I am in the building most weekdays and appreciate the chance to speak with you in person. In the classroom, I prefer to visit with students after class rather than before class.

## Course Materials

### Required Text:

1. Guffey, M.E. (2008). *Business Communication: Process and Product*. (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Mason, OH: South-Western Cengage.
2. Lipson, Charles (2006). *Cite Right: A Quick Guide to Citation Formats*. University of Chicago Press.
3. Additional readings may be made available on the course Blackboard site or by photo copy. These will be announced in class.

### Required Materials:

4. Computer disks, CDs, or flash drive to maintain a complete record of your work
5. Access to reliable printer and computer, including MS Office software and Internet
6. Active e-mail address
7. Supplies for portfolio
8. Stapler

## Course Goals

This course is designed to give you the oral and written communication skills required in business. Students should become competent in the following areas:

1. message strategies
2. composition of various business documents
3. understanding communication effects in the work place (ethics, gender, group, and digital communication)
4. the writing and revising process
5. the job search processes
6. preparation and delivery of formal presentations

## Requirements and Policies

### Attendance Policy

Regular attendance in this class is required and roll will be taken daily. You need to be present to develop the skills required to meet the course goals, as well as to contribute to the class discussions. Students are allowed **one “free absence”** before losing points. Turn your free day pass into me before or after your absence. If I do not receive that pass from you I will count the absence as unexcused. Each absence thereafter will result in a **10-point deduction** from your final accumulated point total. The only way to earn participation points is by being in class on days when participation point assignments arise.

If you confront extenuating circumstances beyond your control, such as hospitalization, a death in the family, a car accident, or documented illness, you must communicate with me about your situation as soon as possible prior to class to have the absence excused. I hold the final decision as to what is and is not considered an extenuating circumstance. I reserve the right to ask for documentation of your situation, if needed. If a religious holiday precludes your class attendance, please notify me in advance and make arrangements with me for retrieving information and turning in class assignments.

**Attendance is mandatory on ALL presentation days.** Failure to attend on your presentation day will result in a grade of ZERO for that presentation assignment. Absences on presentation days that are not your own will result in a **10-point deduction** from your final accumulated point total, unless you have communicated with me about an excused absence.

You are responsible for obtaining class notes and/or assignments for any day that you are absent from class. I recommend finding at least two people in the class with whom you can trade notes and information about assignments throughout the semester. While not a substitute for contacting a classmate about assignments and due dates, some information is also available on Blackboard.

### Assignment Policy

All assignments must be typed unless otherwise specified. The required letters and memos must follow the proper format and multi-page documents must be stapled.

Presentation, format, spelling, grammar and overall image are important for every assignment. Prepare your written work carefully and apply the concepts we discuss in class. Recall that one of the course goals is a thorough understanding and demonstration of image management. A reader will likely be more positively disposed toward your work when he/she does not have to wade through wordy and obtuse sentences, poor spelling and grammar, messy document appearance, or illogical organization.

### Late Policy

Due dates are an important component of this course. All assignments must be completed and turned in at the beginning of class on the assigned date. You can use ONE “late policy pass” during the semester. **You may turn in an assignment late and receive 50% of the total points you would have earned, if the assignment is turned in before I have started class at the next class period.** Only hard copies of assignments will be accepted, meaning no faxed or e-mailed assignments. **If you are turning something into my mailbox make sure it is stamped by the office staff with the official time and date.**

## Grades

I will assign letter grades and plus grades on the scale below:

A	94-100 %
A-	90-93.99
B+	87-89.99 %
B	84-86.99 %
B-	80-83.99 %
C+	77-79.99 %
C	74-76.99 %
C-	70-73.99 %
D+	67-69.99 %
D	64-66.99 %
D-	60-63.99 %
F	0-59.99 %

## Communication Policy

In order to assist you in this class, I make use of the course Blackboard site as well as email. If you are not familiar with Blackboard (often written as “Bb”) or do not have an active email account registered with the University, please utilize the appropriate campus resources. If you have further questions, please contact me. I will periodically send emails you will be responsible for reading and acting upon. Please verify the email address registered on Blackboard is the address at which you wish to receive correspondence.

## **Portfolio**

The culmination of this class will be a portfolio of documents you have produced and revised throughout the semester. It will serve as a showcase of your business communication expertise and as a selling point to potential employers. I strongly encourage you to “revise as you go” to avoid both stress and panic at the end of the semester. You are welcome to consult with me regarding revisions for the portfolio from the time the graded drafts are returned. Please schedule an appointment or come to my office hours for such meetings. This will be discussed in more detail in class.

You should always **keep an electronic copy of all of your assignments** in at least 2 places (hard drive, disk, CD, e-mail attachment, etc). Additionally, **keep all graded/evaluated drafts of your work**. These are a required component of the portfolio assignment.

## **Plagiarism and Documentation**

Plagiarism is the act of presenting other people’s work or ideas as your own. It will not be tolerated in this class. Plagiarism exists in multiple forms: using others’ ideas as your own or by copying someone else’s work. If you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism or how to reference particular kinds of materials, please feel free to contact me.

**A student enrolling in any UMKC course is expected to exhibit high standards of academic honesty. In the case of academic misconduct, I will assess the affected work and report the incident to Bloch School administration according to the guidelines printed in the University catalog. See student conduct policies at: <http://www.umkc.edu/umkc/catalog/html/append/policy/0020.html>.**

Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. Plagiarism of assignments, projects, and papers is unacceptable, and a grade of zero will be assigned on any such item where plagiarism has been detected.

This class emphasizes your understanding of communication technologies in the business environment. Therefore, using the Internet for research in this class is acceptable but is not an adequate substitute for talking with experts and use of the library. **All sources must be cited in MLA format.** Resources for citation help are available under the external link on Blackboard and I am happy to help you with MLA style prior to an assignment due date.

## **Course Withdrawal**

All course withdrawals must be completed through the Registration Center in the UMKC Administrative Center. Students intending to withdraw from the course after the eighth week of class (fourth week in the summer session) are required to obtain a signature of both the instructor and an academic advisor before the course withdrawal is official. *Telling the instructor that you intend to withdraw from the course or ceasing to attend class does not constitute an official withdrawal.* The academic calendar in the class schedule/registration guide lists the official withdrawal dates.

## **Academic Support**

### **Bloch Communication Center**

The Bloch Communication Center is located in Bloch 201. It is available for assistance with written and oral business communication. The center will focus on brainstorming, writing, and editing for message effectiveness, enhancing public speaking skills, and serving as a resource for the business communication skills that parallel this course. I am interested in feedback from the students in this course about how we can best serve students' business communication needs as the Bloch School develops the Communication Center.

### **Bloch School Computer Lab**

The Bloch School Computer Lab is available for your use. It is located in Bloch 110; the lab's website is: <http://www.umkc.edu/is/oa/IS-Lab-Brochure.pdf>

### **UMKC Writing Lab**

Students who desire assistance in writing basics, conventions, and grammar may contact the UMKC Writing Lab at 816-235-1146. The Lab is located at 5201 Rockhill Road.

### **Office of Disabled Student Services**

If you have any questions about a disability or desire accommodation under the Americans with Disability Act, please contact the Office of Disabled Student Services at 816-235-5696. The Office's website can be accessed at: <http://www.umkc.edu/disability/>. If you have a disability for which you may request accommodation in this course and have not contacted them, please do so as soon as possible. Additionally, please see me in private regarding this matter.

### **Syllabus Changes**

Time and schedule considerations may prompt modifications of this syllabus (deletion of assignments/topics, modification of due dates, etc.). The instructor will explain any changes; however, it is the student's responsibility to keep up with any modifications that are made throughout the semester.

## Assignments

ASSIGNMENT	POINTS	YOUR SCORE
“Who Am I?” Memo	150	
Resume and References Final Draft	30	
Cover Letter	150	
Mock Interview	65	
Feedback Form	15	
Written Answers	50	
Goodwill-Thank You Letter	50	
Bad News E-Mail	150	
Informational Interview Written Report	150	
Informational Interview Presentation	150	
Portfolio	50	
Class Participation	55	
Jung-Meyers-Briggs Print Out	5	
Resume and References Draft I	5	
Resume and References Draft II	5	
Tone Strategy Response	10	
Enron Film Notes	5	
Gender Readings Response	5	
Group Type Assessment	5	
A/C Speech Review	5	
Communication Center Visit	10	
<b>TOAL POINTS</b>	<b>1,000</b>	_____

## Tentative Course Schedule MW

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### WEEKS 1- 3 BUILDING BLOCKS FOR EFFECTIVE MESSAGES

- T 1/11 NO CLASS- Snow Day  
*Intro to Jung-Meyers-Briggs Assignment (www.humanmetrics.com)*
- R 1/13 Intro to MGT 301, Introductions, Syllabus Review  
Working with Personal Communication Styles: the Jung-Meyers-Briggs  
**Jung-Meyers-Briggs print-out due**
- T 1/18 NO CLASS – Martin Luther King Day
- R 1/20 Foundational Communication Concepts (Ch1,2)
- T 1/25 Effective Document Design for Business: Letter and Memo Format (Appendix B)  
*Intro to “Who Am I” Memo Assignment*
- R 1/27 The Writing Process (Ch 4,5,6)  
Grammar and Writing Style (Appendix A)
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### WEEKS 4 & 5 THE JOB SEARCH PROCESS

- T 2/1 Interview Skills (Ch 16)  
Researching Jobs (Ch 15)  
Follow-Up Letters and Calls and Job Offers (Ch 16)  
*Intro to Mock Interview Assignment*
- R 2/3 **“Who Am I” Memo due**  
Developing Interview Question Answers
- T 2/8 Resumes and References (Ch 15)  
*Intro to Resume Assignment*
- R 2/10 **First Draft of Resume due**  
Peer Review of Resumes  
Cover Letters (Ch 15)  
*Intro to Cover Letter Assignment*
- T 2/15 **Second Draft of Resume due**  
No Class--Individual Meetings for Resume Workshop
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**WEEKS 6-10 MESSAGE STRATEGIES and COMMUNICATION EFFECTS:  
ETHICS, DIGITAL COMMUNICATION, GENDER, and GROUPS**

- R 2/17 **Final Resume Due**  
Positive Message Strategies (Ch 8)  
*Intro to Informational Interview Project*
- T 2/22 Negative Message Strategies (Ch 10)
- R 2/24 Persuasive Message Strategies (Ch 9)  
*Intro to Tone Strategy Response*
- T 2/29 **Cover Letter due**  
Ethics and Business Communication Day I  
Film: “Enron: The Smartest Guys in the Room”
- R 3/3 Ethics and Business Communication Day II  
Finish film and discuss
- T 3/8 **Tone Strategy Response due**  
Digital Communication and E-mail Day I (Ch 2, 7)  
NPR Audio Clip: “Talk of the Nation from 8/14/2007, The World is Flat, Thomas Friedman on communication in the digital age”
- R 3/10 Digital Communication and E-mail Day II (Ch 2, 7)  
*Intro to Bad News E-mail Assignment*
- T 3/15 Communicating in Groups and Teams (Ch 2)
- R 3/17 Gender and Business Communication (Supplemental Readings)
- T 3/22 Interpersonal Communication  
**Mock Interview Form, Written Answers, and Thank You Letter due**
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**WEEKS 11 & 13 POLISHING YOUR PRESENTATION AND RESEARCH SKILLS**

- R 3/24 Research Skills and Citation Format Review (Ch 11 and Appendix C)
- T 3/29 NO CLASS: Spring Break
- R 3/31 NO CLASS: Spring Break
- T 4/5 Evaluating and Using Business Research Sources

- R 4/7 NO CLASS—Attending National Conference
- T 4/12 Public Speaking Fundamentals (Ch 14)  
**Bad News Email due**
- R 4/14 Using Visuals & Power Point (Ch 11)
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**WEEKS 14&15 INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW PRESENTATIONS**

- T 4/19 **Informational Interview Report Presentations**
- R 4/21 **Informational Interview Report Presentations**
- T 4/26 **Informational Interview Report Presentations**
- R 4/28 **Informational Interview Report Presentations**
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**Final Portfolio meetings by appointment during Final Exam time period**