



BUS-310: Business Discourse for the 21st Century Professional

AKA: Biz Comm



Instructor: Alan E. Nelson, EdD, Lecturer
Courses: Thu (7-9:50 pm)
Location: Del Norte (1535)
Office Hours: Thu., 6-7 pm (Del Norte) or via Zoom; flexible per alternative appointment
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YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC280RZ3neguOVOPHNLmVq2Q>

TEXTS/TOOLS

1. HBR Guide to Better Business Writing by Bryan A. Garner (2012). Harvard Business Review Press, Boston, MA (feel free to find used editions online; cover photo on p. 9)
2. On Public Speaking and Presenting: HBR's 10 Must Reads (2020). Harvard Business Review Press, Boston, MA (feel free to find used editions online; cover photo on p. 9)
3. Additional readings (provided on Canvas); most are optional; a few assigned
4. Free or paid subscription to Grammarly (www.grammarly.com)

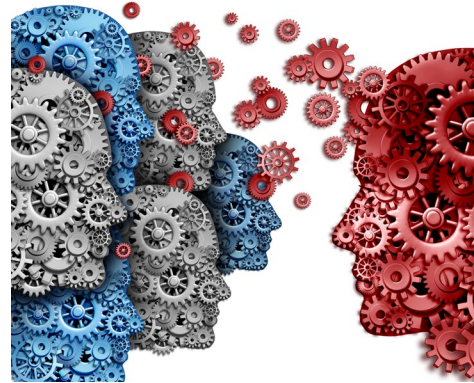
COURSE OVERVIEW

BLUF (Bottom Line Up Front): While sufficiently academic in nature, this course increases your efficacy as a speaker and writer.

Communication (comm) represents the lifeblood of organizations. Studies show that business recruiters consistently rate “effective communicator” as one of the top considerations in hiring. Premier performers exhibit this quality. Another study found that organizations with effective communication practices outperformed those without them. In short, comm matters, and those who’ve “got game” in these areas obtain better-paying jobs and more promotions.

There exists no simple recipe for becoming an effective communicator. Rather, it requires grounding in theory, an ability to assess complex situations, and a broad repertoire of skills. In short, good communicators are flexible.

We view communication as a fundamentally *persuasive* activity. Every time you write or speak, you possess an agenda. Unfortunately, your message must compete for your audience's attention. For that reason, we ground course readings and discussion in terms of understanding what you're trying to accomplish, identifying your receiver's perspectives and needs, and then framing your message to meet these. You'll learn message design principles, born out of the field of psychology and sociology, framed in a business motif.



Student Learning Outcomes:

By the successful completion of this course, you can:

- Distinguish and implement critical characteristics of advanced effective business communication, both written and verbal.
- Express yourself professionally on the spur of the moment.
- Convey analytical results relevant to organizational decision-making in written and oral reports.
- Determine the appropriate voice and style for various professional communication platforms.
- Gain attention through creative means, including but not limited to the use of props, stories, media, active learning, and metaphor.
- Use correct writing mechanics in written work.
- Effectively revise written work that increases impact by decreasing passivity, wordiness, and term fatigue.
- Design and deliver professional oral presentations with PowerPoint.



CLASS FORMAT

This three-unit course consists of weekly sessions

The class combines reading, discussion, lecture, as well as in-class writing and speaking exercises. It is important that you complete the assigned reading before class as lectures build on but won't necessarily replicate them. You will sometimes work in teams but will not do any group projects. These offer feedback for improving projects (written/spoken) and unpacking content.

Prof Nelson designs classes for interaction, including videos, skill labs, small group discussions, and hands-on exercises.

Grading*

Speaking	35%
Writing	35%
Exam (lectures/reading)	15%
Participation/Exercises	15%

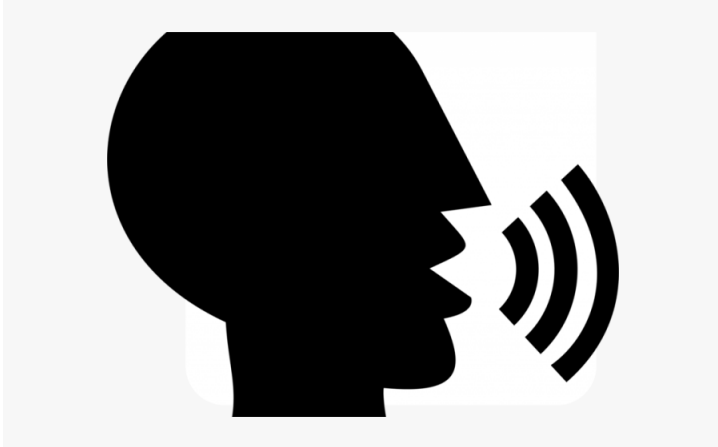
- A = Superb, top performers
- A- = Excellent, exceeded criteria
- B+ = Good performance met criteria
- B = Good performance, missed some criteria
- B- = Fair performance, missed some criteria
- C+ and below = Did not meet the criteria

*Please read the 1-page "Managing Grade Expectations" document, as final grades are not solely based on percentages.

Assignments

Writing Assignments: You will complete 3 graded, writing assignments, designed to help you progressively improve your skills. These will reward excellence as well as improvement and progress. Submit all papers in MS Word with 1-inch margins, Arial 10-point or Times New Roman 12-point font, with 1.5-2.0 sentence spacing. Include your name, assignment and course titles, date, and professor's name. Use a 2- to 4-word running header and section sub-headers. You'll lose points if not in this format, as these reflect message design skills and attention to detail. Name your file uploads as follows: last name, first name, assignment name; e.g. "Nelson, Alan, The Recommendation." You can find expanded instructions for each assignment on Canvas.

1. *The Metaphor* (10%): A 2- to 3-page paper, using a metaphor to describe your job/work/hobby. This includes a Phase 1 submission for feedback, followed by a Phase 2 revision (for grading).
2. *The Recommendation* (10%): A 3- to 4-page assignment, analyzing a case study. The purpose is to apply critical thinking and provide a written response that problem-solves and recommends.
3. *The Pitch* (15%): A 3- to 5-page persuasive paper, proposing a program idea that aligns with The Pitch speech. It includes a numerical graphic (i.e. financial chart, budget).



Speaking Assignments: You will complete 3 graded, speaking assignments, designed to help you progressively improve your presentation skills. These will reward excellence as well as improvement and progress. You can find expanded instructions for each on Canvas.

1. *Story Speech (10%):* A 2- to 3-minute video-recorded speech on a topic of your choice that includes a brief story but is NOT

just a story. You'll upload it to Google Drive, YouTube or a Canvas Dropbox, to view in class with your peers.

2. *Visual Aid Speech (10%):* A 3- to 4-minute live speech on a work/organization-related theme that includes a prop, visual aid, or active learning component. You'll also submit a PowerPoint deck that complements your speech but you will not use it.
3. *The Pitch Speech (15%):* A 3- to 5-minute, persuasive presentation with PowerPoint followed by Q&A. This aligns with your Pitch paper (30% total). Thus, you present in class what you write about, emphasizing persuasion.

Exam (15%): This assessment elevates accountability for the readings and class lectures. The closed-book final consists of multiple-choice questions and a writing exercise. It covers all assigned readings and lectures, but not videos or cases.

Participation (15%): Research shows that participation elevates learning. At the same time, it's always a bit tricky to adequately grade. The following list explains components of this portion:

- Attendance:* Attendance is very important. Yet, you can miss up to 2 without it affecting your grade, unless it's a presentation day. Please let Prof N know if you'll be tardy or absent, out of respect for him and your colleagues. You must verify absences based on health or family crisis issues if you want them excused.
- Readiness:* Coming to class ready to discuss readings, providing a positive attitude, and giving constructive feedback to peers are all vital to our course culture. Don't let others steal your air time. (Don't hog it, either.) Plan to speak 2- to 3 times per class, voluntarily.
- Impromptu:* You'll do 3 impromptu speeches in class for practice.
- Groups:* Some discussions take place in breakout groups, so more successful people tend to avoid multi-tasking, speaking up, and listening well.
- Bio:* You'll write a bio assignment at the start of the class (pass/fail).

6. **Feedback:** A benefit of this course involves peer feedback on 2 of your speeches and potentially other assignments. Offering constructive, specific, and honest input brings value to others. We'll teach you how to do this well.

Scoring: A 12 (out of 15) reflects "Adequate" participation; 13- More-Than-Adequate, 14- Excellent, and 15 reserved for the 2-3 students who emerge as positive class culture catalysts.

WRITING ASSISTANCE

The CSUCI Writing and Multiliteracy Center can help all students, regardless of their perceived writing and speaking competence. You can seek their help while completing written assignments for this class (<https://www.csuci.edu/wmc/>). Please take advantage of this resource.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

As stated in the CSUCI Student Information Handbook and Academic Honor Code, all students are expected to complete their own work, understand and avoid plagiarism, and follow NPS policy on academic integrity and honesty. Anyone found violating these standards will be punished. Simply put: *Give others credit for their ideas and do not misrepresent others' work, words, or creations as your own.* If you have **any** questions, ask **before** you submit your assignments.

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

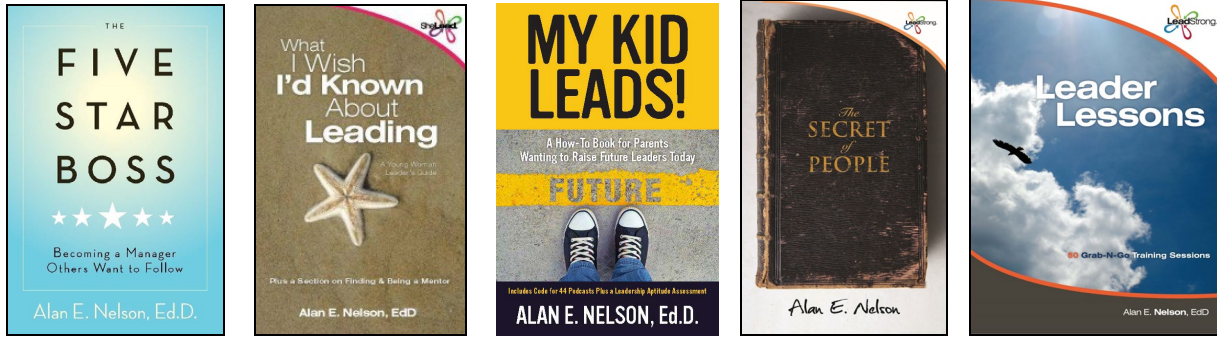
Any student who feels he or she may need accommodation based on the negative impact of a disability on their work should contact their program officer and professor to discuss specific needs. See the CSUCI website for details.



Professor's comments: *Communicating well takes skill. As an author and speaker, I realize that conveying ideas effectively represents a formidable challenge. No doubt I'll commit "comm" snafus while teaching this course. Whether a Kindergartener at show-and-tell, a CI grad interviewing for a job, or POTUS pleading with the UN, people judge you on your ability to communicate. It exists in the DNA of civilization. That's why these issues, strategies, and skills can make or break teams and organizations.*

Leaders need an adept understanding of communication dynamics as well as proficient skills. Unfortunately, no one gains these in a single course. Yet, you should see demonstrative improvement as you focus on these areas, receiving feedback in a safe environment. This course combines theory, strategies, and tactics for greater efficacy in your managerial roles and as a competent team member. It will prove more or less demanding, depending on your experience and strengths in the areas of language and social intelligence. Regardless of your degree of expertise, I want this class to feel creative, rewarding, and meaningful to you. It may represent hard work and a bit of pain for some. Others will bask in opportunities to exercise their presentation chops. I look forward to coaching and encouraging you on this journey.

-Alan E. Nelson, Ed.D.




BIO: Alan E. Nelson earned a graduate degree in psychology-communication and a doctorate in leadership from the University of San Diego. He's written over 40 books (examples above) and delivered more than 2000 speeches in addition to 20+ years of lectures as an adjunct professor. As well as teaching at Naval Postgraduate School, USC Marshall, and LMU Schools of Business, Dr. Nelson runs a non-profit organization that designs project-based leadership training curricula for 3- to 18-year-olds globally (www.KidLead.com). Married to Nancy for over 40 years, the Nelsons have 3 adult sons and 2 granddaughters, and live in Thousand Oaks, CA. www.AlanENelson.com

BUS310 SCHEDULE

Green text involves readings; Red text represents deadlines

Date	Theme(s)	Readings/Responsibilities
Week 1 Aug. 24	Course Introduction & Grammarly Teambuilding (fun stuff) Self-introductions	Course Syllabus & Familiarity with Course Content on Canvas
Class 2 Aug. 31	The Power of Metaphors Message Design 5 Tips to GREAT Writing & Speaking The Power of Storytelling	Read Nelson's GREAT Writing Tips and Nelson's GREAT Speaking Tips Bio Assignment (submit on Canvas)
Class 3 Sep. 7	Lecture on Readings Great Beginnings & Endings Impromptu Speeches Lab	HBR On Public Speaking & Presentations article #1 (How to give a Killer Presentation) HBR Guide Section 1: Delivering the Goods Quickly and Clearly

<p>Class 4 Sep. 14</p>	<p>Lecture on Reading (HBR Sect. 2) Feedforward / Using Zoom effectively Impromptu Speeches Lab</p>	<p>HBR On Public Speaking & Presentation article #3 (Storytelling That Moves People) and #9 (What's Your Story?) HBR Guide Section 2: Developing Your Skills The Metaphor Paper Due</p>
<p>Class 5 Sep. 21</p>	<p>Lecture/Lab: Props, Active Learning and Sticky Messages View Story Speech videos</p>	<p>Story Speech Due (videos to be uploaded 24-hours prior to class, so that we can review them during class)</p>
<p>Class 6 Sep. 28 Live, virtual class</p>	<p>Lecture on Readings & Virtual Tech. Visual media & Using Props Impromptu Speeches #2</p>  <p>https://csuci.zoom.us/j/89774901245</p>	<p>HBR On Public Speaking & Presentations article #6 (The Science of Pep Talks) and #7 (Get the Boss to Buy In) Revised Metaphor Paper Due</p>
<p>Class 7 Oct. 5</p>	<p>Reading a Case & Critical Thinking Lecture on Text Readings Impromptu Speeches #2</p>	<p>Read Sink or Swim Case HBR Guide Sections 3 & 4: Avoiding the Quirks that Turn Readers Off and Common Forms of Business Writing</p>
<p>Class 8 Oct. 12 Online content; NO class meeting</p>	<p>Lecture on Readings (HBR Appendices & TED Part III) Handling Q&A Lecture on Persuasion</p> <p>NOTE: All content this week is on Canvas; PowerPoint decks have video & audio files embedded</p>	<p>HBR Guide: Appendices B, C, D HBR On Public Speaking & Presentations article #5 (The Necessary Art of Persuasion) and article #10 (Visualizations that Work)</p>

Date	Theme(s)	Readings/Responsibilities
Class 9 Oct. 19	Listen to Visual Aid Speeches	Visual Aid Speech and PowerPoint Slides Due 24 Hours Before Class The Recommendation Paper Due
Class 10 Oct. 26	Practicum: special class focusing on resume writing, LinkedIn, and interviewing skills (special guest)	Read articles: 14 Tips for a Rockstar Resume, Ninja Interview Skills, The 31 Best LinkedIn Profile Tips; bring your laptop for classroom work
Class 11 Nov. 2	NOTE: Presentation Lab (student vs. prof-led class) (No normal class; arrange a time during class or other)	Pitch Presentation Lab: Rehearse your presentation with your prep group to give and receive feedback.
Class 12 Nov. 9	The Pitch Speech	Pitch Presentations (PowerPoint Slides Due 24 hours before class)
Class 13 Nov. 16	Impromptu free speech, reflection, final exam prep, and class social	The Pitch Paper Due
Nov. 23		No class!
Final Nov 30*	Final Exam (in class) *(Note, this schedule includes a 1-week buffer if we need to adjust, mid-course.)	Bring your laptop for in-class, online exam

Covers of textbooks and required software (free or subscription):

