



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

AKA: Biz Comm



Instructor: Alan E. Nelson, EdD, Lecturer
 Location: Online (asynchronous)
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 Cell: 805.822.7999
 LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/alanenelson/>
 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. It represents a key quality of top performers. 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. This represents the closest you'll come to having a person, executive communication coach, so please value this course.



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 more professionally.
- 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.

Welcome to Business 310, AKA biz comm.



COURSE FORMAT

This three-unit class consists of eight robust sessions & six practical assignments

We combine reading, online lectures, videos and discussion posts along with writing and speaking exercises. You'll have weekly posts to write, based on the reading and lectures, along with five graded assignments. You will not do any group projects, although I highly encourage collaborating with peers for your speech and writing improvement.

This course compares to having your own executive communication coach, to please take the most of it.

Grading*

Speeches	35%
Writing	35%
Exam (lectures/reading)	15%
Participation	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 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 three, graded, writing assignments, designed to help you progressively improve your skills. These will reward excellence as well as improvement and progress. **IMPORTANT:** Submit all papers in MSWord (not pdf) 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 single-line, 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. All graphics require captions. Wrap text around any visuals that take up less than 2/3 of the page width. 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 writing assignment on Canvas.

1. *The Metaphor* (10%): A 2- to 3-page paper, using a metaphor to describe your job/work/hobby. Papers not receiving a 94% or better will be revised and resubmitted for a final grade.
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 should include a numerical graphic (i.e. financial chart, budget). (You'll combine this with a persuasive speech on the same topic, but it is NOT merely a script of your speech.)



Speaking Assignments: You will complete three graded, speeches, designed to help you progressively improve your presentation skills. I reward excellence as well as improvement. 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 each of the three speeches to Google Drive, YouTube or Canvas Dropbox.
2. *Visual Aid Speech* (10%): A 3- to 4-minute video recorded speech on a work/organization related theme that includes a prop, visual aid, or active learning component.
3. *The Pitch Speech* (15%): A 3- to 5-minute, video-recorded persuasive speech. You'll also submit a separate PowerPoint slide deck that you'd use if presenting live in class. This aligns with your Pitch paper (30% total). Thus, you present what you write about, emphasizing persuasion.

Exam (20%): 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, videos, and lectures, but not cases.

Participation (10%): Online courses offer a limited number of ways to demonstrate participation, but use the following ideas as methods to succeed in this part of the course.

1. *Discussion Posts:* You'll be expected to post at least one salient response on the Canvas Discussion forum, each week. You'll receive more credit if you do more than one and respond to others' posts. To gain credit, posts should consist of three or more articulated sentences, not just "I agree with you" or "Good point." These will typically be based on the assigned lectures, readings, and videos (seven-day window).
2. *Groups:* You'll be assigned to a group of two to three others, with whom you're to interact on writing and speaking assignments. Those active with each other gain participation credits.
3. *Bio:* You'll write a bio assignment at the start of the class (pass/fail).
4. *Zoom meetings:* We will do 1-2 of these. While optional, attending adds to your participation and you'll get to see your colleagues and Prof.
5. *Submitting Punctually:* Another way to express participation involves getting your assignments in on time. Read your syllabus for specifics on formatting and deadlines.

WRITING ASSISTANCE

The CSUCI Writing and Multiliteracy Center can help all students, regardless of your 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 an 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.

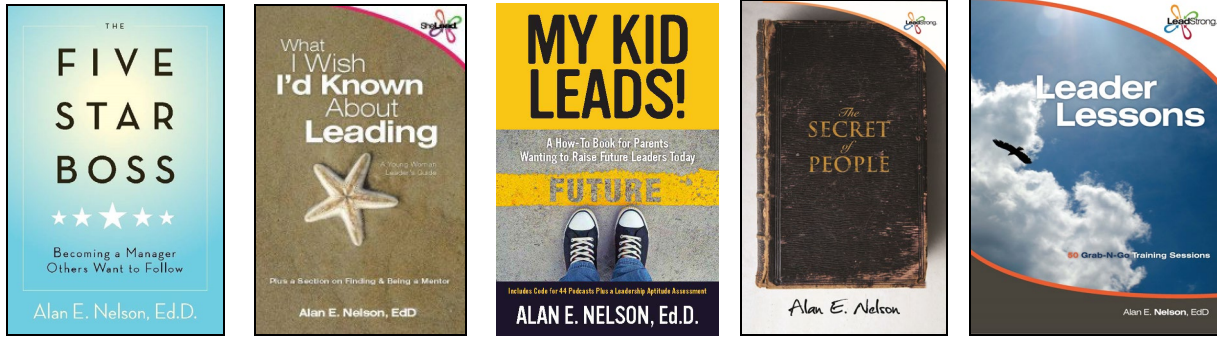


Professor's comments: *Communicating well takes skill. As an author and speaker, I realize that conveying ideas effectively represents a formidable challenge. Whether a Kindergartener at show-and-tell, a CI grad interviewing for a job, or POTUS pleading with the UN, people judge you on your ability to 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 adept understanding of communication dynamics as well as proficient skills. While no one gains these in a single course, you should see demonstrable improvement as you focus on the friendly, specific feedback. 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 speaking and writing. Regardless of your degree or expertise, I want this class to feel creative, rewarding, and meaningful to you. Because it's an eight-week course, it moves fast, so do your best to keep up with the readings and graded assignments. I'm more than happy to hop on a Zoom call with you or arrange a phone call per our schedules. Here's an intro video you might enjoy: <https://vimeo.com/253282520> .

Respectfully,

-Alan E. Nelson, Ed.D.



BIO: Alan E. Nelson earned a graduate degree in psychology-communication from CSU Sacramento 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 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, 2 granddaughters, and live in Thousand Oaks, CA. www.AlanENelson.com

BUS310 SCHEDULE

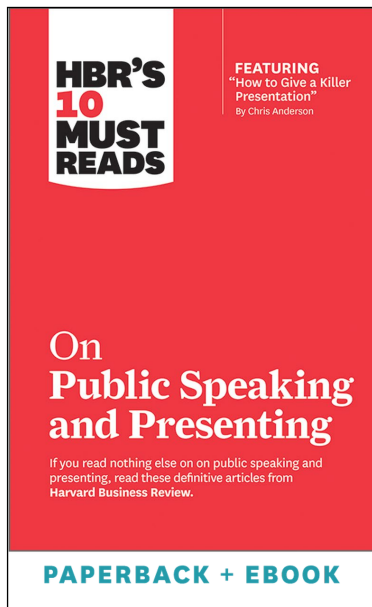
Green text reading assignments; **Red** text represents deadlines; **Blue** text assigned videos
 NOTE: You will likely need to download the lecture files to hear/view them. You may be able to view the videos from the online page, by clicking the live links.

Date	Theme(s)	Readings/Assignments
<p>Session 1</p> <p>Aug 20-26</p> <p>Discussion Post(s)</p>	<p>Just for fun: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-4EDhdAhrOg&ab_channel=JasonHeadley</p> <p>Mini-Lectures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Session 1 Part 1 of 4: Course Intro • Session 1 Part 2 of 4: GREAT Writing Tips • Session 1 Part 3 of 4: HBR Writing Section 1 • Session 1 Part 4 of 4: Using Metaphors <p>Video: Effective openings and closings https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yl_FJAOCfgQ&t=5s</p> <p>Variety and Flow Fixes: https://vimeo.com/449827981</p>	<p>Course Syllabus & Familiarity with Course Content on Canvas</p> <p>Read Nelson's GREAT Writing Tips (pdf)</p> <p>HBR Guide Section 1: Delivering the Goods Quickly and Clearly</p> <p>Bio Assignment due by Fri., Aug. 25, 6pm</p>

<p>Class 2</p> <p>Aug 27- Sep 2</p> <p>Discussion Post(s)</p>	<p>Just for fun: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JMOOG7rWTPg</p> <p>Mini-Lectures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Session 2 Part 1 of 3 HBR Articles (Ch. #1 & #3) • Session 2 Part 2 of 3 Message Design • Session 2 Part 3 of 3 GREAT Speaking Tips <p>Videos: The science of storytelling https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nj-hdQMa3uA</p> <p>Prof Nelson's use of a story and prop: https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/440988464</p> <p>Wired Inc. "Five Levels of Teaching" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eRkgK4jfi6M</p>	<p>HBR On Public Speaking & Presentations article #1 (How to give a Killer Presentation) & #3 (Storytelling That Moves People)</p> <p>Read Nelson's GREAT Speaking Tips (pdf)</p> <p>Zoom meeting: Tue., Aug. 29, 7pm (link on Module 2)</p> <p>The Metaphor Paper Due by Fri., Sept. 1, 6 pm</p>
<p>Class 3</p> <p>Sep 3-9</p> <p>Discussion Post(s)</p>	<p>Just for fun: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HTqYHHks0Zw&t=14s</p> <p>Mini-Lectures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Session 3 Part 1 of 2 HBR Writing Section 2 • Session 3 Part 2 of 2 HBR On Speaking (ch 9) & Talk Like TED (Sect 1) <p>Video: TED: How to Speak so People Listen https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=elho2S0Zahl</p>	<p>HBR Guide Section 2: Developing Your Skills</p> <p>HBR On Public Speaking & Presentation article 9 (What's Your Story?)</p> <p>Story Speech Due by Fri., Sept. 8, 6 pm</p>
<p>Class 4</p> <p>Sep 10-16</p> <p>Discussion Post(s)</p>	<p>Just for fun: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K7agjXFFQJU&t=41s</p> <p>Mini-Lectures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Session 4 Part 1 of 2 HBR Guide Section 3 • Session 4 Part 2 of 2 Props & Active Learning <p>Videos: Sticky messages https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0a8cFtMo8mk</p> <p>Prof Nelson example of prop use https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/407383674</p>	<p>HBR Guide Section 3: Avoiding the Quirks that Turn Readers Off</p> <p>Due Fri., Sep. 15, 6 pm Revised Metaphor Paper Due</p>

<p>Class 5</p> <p>Sep 17-23</p> <p>Discussion Post(s)</p>	<p>Just for fun: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BAJgPZY8sFg</p> <p>Mini-Lectures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Session 5 Part 1 of 2 Reviewing a Case • Session 5 Part 2 of 2 Sink or Swim <p>Video: Great speech; notice his use of props https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bbz2boNSeL0&t=8s</p> <p>Nonverbal (previous speaker comments) https://www.audiomania.lt/video/2713333/4-essential-body-language-tips-from-a-world-champion-public-speaker.html</p>	<p>Read Sink or Swim Case</p> <p>HBR Guide Sections 4: Common Forms of Business Writing and Appendices B, C, D</p>
<p>Class 6</p> <p>Sep 23-30</p> <p>Discussion Post(s)</p>	<p>Just for fun: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QOtuX0jL85Y</p> <p>Mini-Lectures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Session 6 Part 1 of 3 HBR Speaking #6 & #7 • Session 6 Part 2 of 3 Talk like TED (Sect 2-3) • Session 6 Part 3 of 3 Giving Feedforward <p>Giving feedforward</p> <p>Video: Cialdini: The Science of Persuasion https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cFdCzN7RYbw</p>	<p>HBR On Public Speaking & Presentations article #6 (The Science of Pep Talks) and #7 (Get the Boss to Buy In)</p> <p>Due Fri., Sep. 29, 6 pm Visual Aid Speech due</p>
<p>Class 7</p> <p>Oct 1-7</p> <p>Discussion Post(s)</p>	<p>Just for fun: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DYU_bGbZiiQ</p> <p>Mini-Lectures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Session 7 Part 1 of 3 HBR Speaking #5 • Session 7 Part 2 of 3 HBR Speaking #10 • Session 7 Part 3 of 3 Using Visual Media <p>Video: Death by PowerPoint https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lrICG1c1tWY</p>	<p>HBR On Public Speaking & Presentations article #5 (The Necessary Art of Persuasion) and article #10 (Visualizations that Work)</p> <p>Due Fri., Oct. 6, 6 pm The Recommendation Paper</p>

<p>Class 8 Oct 8-14</p> <p>Discussion Post(s)</p>	<p>Just for fun: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lrICG1c1tWY</p> <p>One final slide deck but no Mini-Lectures (yeah); lab time to finish Pitch Speech and Paper, comment on others' Visual Aid speeches and study for final exam (whew)</p> <p>Video: More than funny (Michael Junior) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=twSvd5bQLDw</p>	<p>Due Fri., Oct. 13, 6 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Pitch Paper The Pitch Speech
<p>Final</p>	<p>Final Exam Online (Time window TBD)</p>	



Required course resources



grammarly