

61A00200 Business Communication Skills (3cr)

Lecturer: Mike Baker MA, eMBA

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Course overview

Business Communication Skills gives you a clear insight into what constitutes effective oral and written business communication in a fast-paced global business environment, and provides you with the opportunity to develop your own workplace communication skills.

The course is highly interactive and task-oriented. Case analyses, simulations, written assignments and individual and team presentations will allow you to practise the theories and key concepts introduced during the course. Peer and lecturer feedback will give you a clear picture of your present communication skills, and an indication of how you can enhance your performance.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the course you will be able to:

- analyse audiences and define objectives to create targeted messages
- write coherent and convincing, reader-friendly business documents
- craft clear, focused and engaging business presentations
- critically assess your own and others' business communications

Assessment

Assign 1	Written request: strategy analysis (10) + request (15). Group.	25
Assign 2	Persuasive presentation: outline (10) + reflection paper (10). Individual.	20
Assign 3	In-class test on Munter textbook. Individual.	20
Assign 4	Team presentation (15) and critical appraisal (10). Group and individual.	25
Class	Preparedness for class; contribution to group activities. Individual.	10

This is a 3 credit course: 81 hours. Lectures, 24 hours; preparation for lectures, 22 hours; preparing assignments, 35 hours. To pass the course you need to:

- complete all the required assignments including the mandatory pre-work
- successfully complete any other tasks assigned by the lecturer
- attend all classes

Course materials

- Munter, Mary: **Guide to Managerial Communication** (7-10th edition)
- Course materials on our MyCourses workspace

Assignments and deadlines at a glance

A1: Written request (25%). Deadlines: 03.11 (draft); 10.11 (final version)

This group assignment requires you to analyse a communication situation (10%) and to write a persuasive request (15%) to top management.

A2: Persuasive presentation (20%). Deadlines: 03.11 (outline); 10.11 (pres.); 17.11 (reflection)

This individual assignment requires you to prepare *and* give a short 6-8 minute persuasive presentation to fellow classmates. You will be graded on two deliverables: a strategy outline (10%) and a reflection paper (10%).

A3: In-class closed book test (20%). Deadline: 17.11

This closed-book test will be based on chapters 1, 3 & 4 of the Munter course textbook.

A4: Persuasive team presentation (25%). Deadlines: 24.11 (outline & preview slide); 01.12 (presentation); 08.12 (appraisal)

In groups, you will give a 15-minute persuasive presentation (15%). You will also write a one-page critical evaluation (single-spaced) of your presentation (10%).

EBC class contribution rubric

Grade 5: Excellent contribution. Came to class thoroughly prepared having done all the required readings and preparation work. Always took an active role in class discussions and group activities. Contributions were always constructive and often insightful.

Grade 4: Very good contribution. Came to class having clearly done the required readings and most of the other preparation work. Regularly took an active role in class discussions and group activities.

Grade 3: Adequate contribution. Came to class having done part of the required readings and preparation work. Participated in class discussions rather seldom and wasn't very active during group-work and other class exercises.

Grade 2: Barely sufficient. Came to class having skimmed quickly through required readings and preparation work. Showed very little interest in class discussion or sharing ideas with others in group activities.

Grade 1: Inadequate contribution. Came to class unprepared. Said next to nothing during class discussions and was unwilling to share ideas with others in group activities. Seemed uninterested.

Grade 0: No contribution. Attended the minimum amount possible. Was always completely unprepared for class having failed to do any of the required readings or preparation work. Didn't participate in class discussions or group activities. Appeared to be totally disengaged.

Schedule

SESSION 1: 27.10

Introductions
 Course overview
 Communicating strategically: case analysis and presentations

Preparation for session 2

- Read Munter chapters I, III and IV
- Read Aristotle and persuasion (Handout 1)
- Prepare written request (A1) in groups for 03.11
- Prepare your presentation strategy outline (A2a) for 03.11

SESSION 2: 03.11

Effective business writing
 Getting the right rhetorical mix: Logos, Pathos and Ethos
 Reviewing and editing written requests (A1)
 Fine-tuning persuasive presentation strategy (A2a)
 High impact introductions and conclusions

Preparation for session 3

- Write final version of written request (A1) for 10.11
- Finalise persuasive presentation (A2) for 10.11
- Prepare for in-class test (A3): read Munter chapters I, III and IV

Deadline for final version of written request (A1): 10.11

SESSION 3: 10.11

60 second presentation trailers
 6-8 minute individual persuasive presentations with peer feedback
 Debriefing presentations
 Final team presentations (A4): choice of topic

Preparation for session 4

- Write your reflection paper (A2b)
- Prepare for in-class test (A3): read Munter chapters I, III and IV
- Prepare final team presentation, including strategy outline
- Read Munter chapters V-VII

Deadline for reflection paper (A2b): 17.11

SESSION 4: 17.11

In-class, closed-book test (A3) on Munter Chapters I, III & IV

Feedback on written request (A1)

Designing effective visuals

Key aspects of team presentations

Preparation for session 5

- Continue preparing final team presentation and send materials to Mike for team consultation session next week: strategy outline, preview slide, questions
- Read Munter chapters V-VII

SESSION 5: 24.11

Team presentation consultation with lecturer. Upload 1) strategy outline, 2) preview slide, and 3) 2-3 questions to MyCourses

Preparation for session 6

- Finalise team presentation

SESSION 6: 01.12

Final team presentations (videoed)

- lecturer and peer feedback

Deadline for critical appraisal (4b): 08. 12

Mike Baker: a brief bio

I'm a Business Communication lecturer here at Aalto University School of Business, where I lecture on undergraduate, graduate (Aalto MSc, Community of Management School's (CEMS) Masters in Management (MIM)), and Aalto Executive Education (AEE) executive MBA programmes in Europe and Asia.

I lecture in numerous universities and training organisations worldwide, most recently at Nanyang Business School, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore (visiting faculty 2010-2012); Harvard University Extension School, Massachusetts, USA; Graduate Institute of Management, Seoul School of Integrated Sciences and Technologies (aSSIST), South Korea; Escuela Superior De Administracion Y Direccion De Empresas (ESADE), Barcelona, Spain; and the Institute of Banking, Poznan, Poland.

I regularly organise intensive negotiation and management communication courses in international companies and organisations in Europe and Asia. Recent clients include ABB, Booz Allen Hamilton, City of Helsinki, City of Tallinn, Danske Bank, Finnair, Fortum, KEPCO Korean Power, Kone, LG (Seoul), Nokia (India, Italy, Philippines, Singapore), Metsä, Nordea, Outokumpu, Shinhan Bank (Seoul), Skanska, and STX.

I majored in English Language and Literature at the University of Lancaster, Lancaster, UK, completed my postgraduate studies in pedagogy at S.Martin's College, Lancaster, UK, and in linguistics at the Centre for Applied Language Studies at the University of Reading, UK. I received my Executive MBA from Aalto Executive Education (AEE).