

**MKT 309: BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS (CRN #82024)**  
Fall 2018, Thursdays, 6:00 – 8:50pm, MHRA 1208  
**University of North Carolina at Greensboro**

Professor: Cheryl Nakata, Ph.D.  
Email: ccnakata@uncg.edu  
Office: Bryan 348  
Office Hours: Thursdays, 5:00 -5:45pm and by appointment

Graduate Assistant: Dajanae Brooks  
Email: dabrooks@uncg.edu  
Office: Bryan 348  
Office Hours: Thursdays, 5:00 -5:45pm and by appointment

Course Description

Business and professional communication: teamwork, communication technology, verbal and non-verbal strategies in a problem-solving, innovation context. Emphasizes effective persuasive, interpersonal, intercultural, and organizational strategies through business styles, formats, and presentations.

Prerequisites

Junior standing and admission to an approved Bryan School of Business and Economics program.

Student Learning Objectives

These objectives are consistent with and support the mission of the Bryan School of Business and Economics. Upon successful completion of this course, students will...

1. Understand the importance of effective communication in the workplace
2. Identify communication strategies to business situations
3. Create responses to communication needs
4. Conduct business research for evidence-based writings and presentations
5. Use accurate documentation of sources
6. Write concise and organized documents using the appropriate format
7. Use the three-step writing process
8. Write reports based on evaluation of data
9. Develop and demonstrate effective oral presentations with verbal and nonverbal proficiencies
10. Understand the positive human capacities for deep insight, collaboration, and innovative problem solving
11. Develop skills to conceive, research, prototype, and design innovations using verbal, nonverbal, visual-figurative, and written forms of communications

General Education Writing Intensive Student Learning Outcome

Students will be able to write in genres appropriate to the discipline(s) of the primary subject matter of the course.

General Education Speaking Intensive Student Learning Outcome

Students will be able to speak in genres appropriate to the discipline(s) of the primary subject matter of the course.

## The Bryan School of Business and Economics Mission Statement

In the Bryan School of Business and Economics, we create and disseminate knowledge about the theory and practice of business. In addition to our courses and research, we accomplish this through hands-on projects, global experiences, and outreach to the community. Our work produces principled leaders and exceptional problem solvers who have a global perspective, an innovative mindset, a broad understanding of sustainability, and a commitment to improve the organizations in which they work and the communities in which they live.

Common to all business students, students in this course will:

1. Implement the various steps of the critical thinking process, supported by the appropriate use of analytical and quantitative techniques, to formulate recommendations for subsequent decision-making
2. Apply appropriate ethical standards when making recommendations for business decision making
3. Evaluate business decisions in the context of sustainability goals, balancing environmental, social, and economic needs, conditions, and potential decision impacts
4. Formulate appropriate strategies, in the context of global issues and forces, to improve business performance in the world economy
5. Explain the roles of innovation and innovation management in achieving successful business strategies, decisions, and performance
6. Plan, schedule, contribute to, and lead projects

### Course Format

The course teaches effective business writing and speaking through individual and group work. Assignments are structured in relation to a hands-on innovation project to reflect an important business context as well as to cultivate the problem-solving and human capacity skills, knowledge, and mindsets useful for working in changing, challenging, collaborative, and uncertain environments.

This is a university-designated writing intensive and speech intensive course directed at teaching students to write and speak in genres appropriate to business disciplines. As such, students are expected to revise and improve their work iteratively in accordance with the Three-Step Writing process, for both written and spoken assignments.

Students will be provided feedback on their assignments, and moreover are to *apply this feedback to improve all current and future assignments*. Ignoring feedback and failing to integrate the insights provided will result in diminished grades *and* subsequent feedback, i.e. comments will not be repeatedly made on the issues already noted as requiring attention and improvement.

To aid the learning process, a set of positive human capacity skills, mindsets, and practices called Human Flourishing will be taught and practiced to accompany the business communications and innovation content. These skills, mindsets, and practices will aid students in all business communications and innovation tasks, from the planning and revision of written and oral forms of communicating to the collaborating and problem-solving on innovation endeavors.

### Required Materials

*Writing That Works: Communication Effectively on the Job* by Oliu, Brusaw and Alred, 12th Edition. Other articles and readings will be assigned and posted on Canvas.

*Students must bring to class specified printouts, a laptop or tablet, and other materials such as post-it notes, and markers as indicated in this syllabus.* Failure to bring these materials or equipment may result in

dismissal from class (and thus a zero on participation). The instructor will not verbally remind students as these requirements are specified on the syllabus.

Some time will be given in class to do individual and group activities, but significantly more time should be allocated by students outside of class. To produce sections of the project portfolio *teams are advised to use the provided class time well, given the difficulty of scheduling meetings outside of class. Arranging a schedule of team meetings is solely the responsibility of students.*

Students should read the assignments *prior* to attending class per the syllabus. Not having done so will be evident and affect the quality of participation and thus course grade. The readings will be used or referred to during class, but not reviewed in detail in class under the assumption that the content has been digested outside of class. This is known as the flipped class method.

### Attendance and Participation

Attendance of each class is mandatory. Two (2) unexcused absences, which include job interviews and illnesses, are permitted. *Additional absences without prior notification and consent of the instructor will result in a full letter grade penalty for the course.*

Students should arrive on time and remain through the class period. *Later arrival or early departure constitutes an absence and will be marked as such.* Punctuality is expected because business values it. *Students are responsible for signing in at the beginning of each session and will not be permitted to sign in after the session is over* for any reason, such as having forgotten.

In general, quality (i.e. thoughtful) and quantity participation in class discussions is expected. Students will be graded on both aspects. Merely being vocal does not signify quality participation.

### Classroom Policies

The Bryan School is a professional school dedicated to preparing students for careers in business. A proper classroom climate assists students in developing the skills that contribute to their future career success. These classroom policies promote and maintain a professional atmosphere in the classroom conducive for learning:

Students are to treat fellow students, the instructor, graduate assistant, and classroom guests with the *utmost respect and courtesy* by...

- Thoughtful listening and interaction
- Refraining from side conversations
- ***Muting and putting away all cell phones, pagers, tablets, and laptops upon entering class (none are not permitted for note-taking and can only be used in class upon instruction)***
- Not texting, reading a book, typing on a laptop or tablet or being on social media
- Arriving for class on time and leaving at the end of the designated period
- Respecting others' views that may differ from their own
- Using appropriate, professional language
- Supporting the instructor's ability to teach and other students' ability to learn
- Refraining from loud, distracting, aggressive behaviors and communications toward others (derogatory comments or threatening actions will not be tolerated)
- ***Not sleeping in class***
- Conducting themselves in a courteous, attentive, and professional manner at all times
- Raising hands to make comments or ask questions

Students who cannot abide by these policies should consider not enrolling in the course. Students not complying with these policies will be asked to leave the classroom, possibly escorted by the campus police, and be subjected to actions under UNCG's student disciplinary procedures. The instructor has discretion to withdraw a student from the course for disruptive behavior as outlined in Disruptive Behavior in the Classroom policy: <https://sa.uncg.edu/handbook/policies/disruptive-behavior-in-the-classroom/>

### Academic Integrity

Students are expected to abide by the UNCG Student Code of Conduct and act with academic integrity as articulated in two weblinks: <http://sa.uncg.edu/dean/academic-integrity/> and <http://sa.uncg.edu/handbook/student-code-of-conduct/>

In keeping with these policies, *evidence of academic dishonesty, including cheating on an exam or submitting another person's work as one's own, will automatically result in a failing grade for the course and disciplinary review by the University. Cheating will absolutely not be tolerated.*

Plagiarism is also a form of academic dishonesty. It includes passing off someone else's work or ideas as one's own, or paraphrasing material from a source (e.g. the Internet) without proper acknowledgement and citation (whether from web or hard copy sources). Changing one or a few words from an original source can constitute plagiarism. *The instructor will use an electronic service to check for plagiarism on all assignments.*

To avoid plagiarism, do not copy from your sources. You are expected to read the material, and then express the ideas in your own words while giving credit to the source. ***Plagiarism is such a serious offense it is grounds for expulsion from the University*** and can mar your academic transcripts and reduce prospects for hiring and graduate program admission. See the above weblinks or consult with the instructor before submitting any assignment if you are unclear about what constitutes plagiarism. All cases of academic dishonesty will be vigorously pursued and brought before UNCG's student disciplinary committees.

*Also not tolerated is passing off papers written by students in other sections of this course as yours.* The instructor can easily spot plagiarized papers (in part or in total) as well as papers written by other students for this or other courses.

Furthermore, falsification of documents constitutes a violation of UNCG's academic integrity policies. Falsification includes forging another student's signature on a sign-in sheet, taking an exam for another individual, re-using another student's assignment from previous semesters, and paying a service or another individual to write an assignment for you.

### Disability Accommodations

UNCG is committed to maintaining a barrier-free environment so that individuals with disabilities can fully access programs, courses, services, and activities at UNCG. Students with disabilities who require accommodations are to contact the Office of Accessibility Resources & Services at 336.334.5440 the first week of school and discuss arrangements with the instructor as soon as possible.

### Communicating with the Instructor and Graduate Assistant

The best way to reach the instructor and graduate assistant is through email. (***NO texting the graduate assistant is allowed.***) It is imperative that the email be written clearly, politely, and in a timely fashion to practice the communications principles being taught in this course. There should be a subject in the subject line, a formal salutation and name (for example "Dear Dr. Nakata" rather than "hey"), and the request made

with sufficient time to receive a reply. Emails will not be responded to immediately but during normal business hours and usually within one to two business days, though the response may at times be slower as occurs in business.

***All emails to the graduate assistant should be carbon copied or “cc’ed” to the instructor.*** Write your name at the end to formally close the email. Additionally, be mindful of the tone and language used in order to solicit a helpful response. Use of accusatory, volatile, or charged language will not solicit such a response, as is true in organizational life. ***Do not send emails through the Canvas In-box, as they may not be sent or received.***

An alternative to emails is to attend office hours or request an appointment to see the instructor at other times. Often a verbal or in-person exchange is faster and more effective in obtaining the needed information than a series of emails.

***Under no circumstances will grades be negotiated,*** whether electronic or in-person, with the instructor or graduate assistant. The instructor has over twenty years of experience as a professor and business communicator, including having published articles and books, and given business-related speeches to large and small audiences in the U.S. and abroad. Questioning the veracity of grades or expertise by which evaluations have been made will not be entertained. Only if a mathematical calculation is possibly erroneous should a question be raised. Bullying the professor or administration for a better grade is unacceptable.

### Writing Assignments

There are four (4) individual writing assignments including drafts, and one (1) large group writing assignment with four (4) draft sections submitted over the semester before the final written portfolio is turned in. *Drafts are expected to be polished and revised multiple times prior to submission.* It should constitute students’ best work.

Students receive feedback on drafts and are to use it to significantly improve the final submission. Drafts are not graded but are required. ***Non-submission or late submission of any draft will result in a zero on the revised assignment. Non-submission or late submission of any revised assignment also results in a zero.*** The sections of the project portfolio are submitted as drafts and any feedback received should be used to revise the sections before submission of the complete portfolio.

Some assignments require one or more worksheets per the syllabus. Worksheets are available on Canvas. The worksheets must be submitted along with the assignments on the specified due dates. Missing worksheets, not following format requirements, or failure to adhere to other instructions will result in point deductions.

***All written assignments (with worksheets if specified) must be submitted as a MS Word document through Canvas (do not submit as a PDF). All group written assignments must be submitted by the deadlines in BOTH the Turnitin Folders as well as the Project Folders on Canvas.***

***Under no circumstances will a team leader’s failure to submit the correct file on behalf of the team by the deadline result in a pass for the rest of the team. Hence it is highly recommended that files be double checked for proper submission by the entire team.***

The writing assignments are as follows:

- Individual Assignments
  - Draft secondary research report, with preparatory worksheet
  - Revised secondary research report, with draft attached
  - Draft executive summary of project, with preparatory worksheet
  - Revised executive summary of project, with draft attached
- Group Assignments
  - Draft project portfolio sections
  - Revised and complete project portfolio

### Speaking Assignments

Students will prepare and deliver an individual and in person concept pitch presentation using Power Point in draft and revised forms, and a draft and revised second presentation as a group by creating a video, including Power Point and original video footage. As with the written assignments in draft and revised forms, draft presentations are required and ***submitting only the revision will result in a zero. All presentation assignments are submitted through Canvas. Late or non-submissions of draft or revised presentations will result in a zero on the revised assignment.*** The specific assignments are listed below:

- Individual Assignments
  - Draft concept pitch (in person)
  - Revised concept pitch (in person)
- Group Assignments
  - Draft project presentation (video)
  - Revised project presentation (video)

### Innovation Project

Students will work throughout the semester on an innovation project as a means of learning to how to communicate, collaborate, research, problem solve, and design an innovation in a real-world context. Students will be placed into teams and required to develop an innovation for an actual organization. Although innovation is typically thought of as a new product or service, it can be any new or improved product, process, system, or model that addresses a complex organizational problem.

The approach to innovation that will be taught is called *Design Thinking*, a relatively new method adopted by leading companies such as Google, Apple, Pepsi, and even the U.S. Marines. Students will learn the Design Thinking methods, mindsets, steps, and tools in order to apply it to organizations.

The core components will be taught through the innovation project and business communications assignments. This way clarity, structure, insight, persuasion, and other key principles of impactful business communications are instilled in tandem with the ability to solve complex problems adaptively and effectively.

Time will be given in class to work on the project throughout the semester, including assembling the group writing and presentation assignments. However, a greater portion of the work will be done outside of class. At the end of the semester, student teams will assemble a project portfolio and present their work publicly in both written and video forms. The client organization will receive these deliverables to see how effectively students conceive and deliver a targeted innovation as well as communicate the concept, design, and strategy of the innovation.

Human flourishing skills, mindsets, and practices will be taught to facilitate individual and group business communications and innovation activities. Students will therefore learn about listening, empathy, agility, collaboration, problem solving, character strengths, growth mindsets, and resilience (handling setbacks) along the way. Where severe dysfunction occurs, teams have the option to remove a member under specified conditions. Teams have significant authority to manage their affairs, and thus the opportunity to learn how to lead.

*A member who is voted out will have no replacement assignment or recourse with the instructor as the decision made by the group is final.* This situation reflects the reality of business, where uncooperative and unreliable individuals are terminated from employment. The details of the group removal process will be provided in class. Members will also grade each other on the team project, such that there may be variance in grades among members on any team assignment.

On specified days, teams must bring to class specified materials in order to work on the project, such as post-it-sheets, colored markers, post-it-notes. Students who fail to bring materials or equipment (e.g. laptop) will be asked to leave the class and will suffer a lower participation grade. ***Always check the syllabus for dates on which to bring materials.***

### Final Exam

A single cumulative final exam will be given in class. Details will be provided in class.

### Grading

Individual Writing Assignments (2 graded)	25%
Individual Speaking Assignments (1 graded)	10%
Group Writing Assignments (1 graded)	25%
Group Speaking Assignments (1 graded)	15%
Quiz	3%
Final Exam	12%
Participation	<u>10%</u>
Total	100%

The course grading scale is below:

A = 94-100%, A- = 90-93%, B+ = 87-89%, B = 84-86%, B- = 80- 83%, C+ = 77-79%, C = 74-76%, C- = 70-73%, D+ = 67-69%, D = 64-66%, D- = 61-63%, F = 60% or below

***Bonus Points.*** Team leaders are responsible for organizing and communicating on the team project, not doing all the work. They are also responsible for posting all team assignments on Canvas. They automatically get 2 points after all points are tallied to determine their course grade.

All students are encouraged to complete the course evaluation by the university deadline. Students completing the course evaluation and posting on Canvas the email acknowledgment of evaluation completion will receive 1/2 point after all points are tallied to determine their course grade.

***Grades are non-negotiable.*** Assignments can take 6-12 business days to grade and/or provide feedback on. Feedback will be more detailed on earlier than later assignments in the semester, and will not be repeated within an assignment or on future assignments if the same errors are made. This situation (of repeated errors) will be pointed out as such, and the student is encouraged to self-correct once the error is noted.

### Late Submission and Non-Submission Policy

***Late submissions for any individual or group assignment will not be accepted. If a draft assignment, then late submission or non-submission automatically results in a zero or F on the final graded assignment.***

Hence a draft assignment not submitted per the deadline incurs a zero or F on the revised assignment, even if the latter is submitted on time. Drafts count. The same penalty is incurred on the final or revised assignment if late or not submitted.

It is entirely the responsibility of the students to double check timely and correct submissions on Canvas. .

***Students should double check they have properly submitted assignments on Canvas and allot sufficient time for submission in the event of a technology failure. No exceptions will be made for failing to ensure proper submission, whether due to a technology or other issue.*** If you are unsure about how to use Canvas, please see a UNCG information technology consultant. ***The instructor will NOT negotiate grades or make exceptions based on students not understanding how to use Canvas or not double checking proper submission***

### Other Information

***Students should use and check their UNCG email addresses*** to access and send information or questions to the instructor and graduate assistant. Do not assume that your personal email address is known or used to send you information.

Students are advised to read this syllabus carefully to understand course parameters. ***Receipt of this syllabus constitutes acknowledgement of the policies and requirements of the course, and therefore attempts to negotiate special deadlines, assignments, or policies will not be entertained.***

If a student anticipates the course assignments to be incompatible with work and class schedules or other time demands and interests, s/he is strongly advised to enroll in another course. Assignments are consistent with advanced level (junior standing and above) university coursework.

### COURSE SCHEDULE (Subject to Change, 8/16/18)

Date (Lecture #)	Readings or Videos Before Class	Topics	Individual Assignments	Team Assignments & Materials to Bring to Class**
8/16 (L1)	Ch.1	-Course Overview -Communications Fundamentals -Writing Strategy & Methods		
8/23 (L2)	Ch.2, 3, 4;	<b>QUIZ ON SYLLABUS</b> -Writing Strategy & Methods -Human Flourishing, Pt.1		
8/30 (L3)	Ch. 6, 7, Appendix B; Project videos & documents; do VIA survey	-Human Flourishing, Pt.2 -The Innovation Project -Teams & Contracts -Secondary Research (Plan in Class)		-Bring laptop/tablet (phone not acceptable) - <b>Complete VIA Survey and bring results printout to class:</b> <a href="http://www.viacharacter.org/www/Character-Strengths-Survey">http://www.viacharacter.org/www/Character-Strengths-Survey</a> -Bring printout of notes on project videos/docs
9/6 (L4)	Ch.5	-Collaborative Writing & Revising -Project Tools -Project Brief & Context Map	<b>-Draft Secondary Research Memo with Worksheet Due</b>	-Bring 1 printout of secondary research memo with worksheet -Bring laptop or tablet (phone not acceptable) -Bring post-it sheets, post-it notes, markers
9/13 (L5)	Brown; Hoyt & Sutton	-Design Thinking		
9/20 (L6)	Ch. 8, 9	-Writing Solicitations -Primary Research (Plan in Class)	<b>-Revised Secondary Research, with Commented Draft attached, Due*</b>	
9/27 (L7)	Ch.13	-Pitching an Idea -Writing & Delivering Presentations -Mind-mapping		<b>-Secondary Research Portfolio Section Due***</b> -Bring post-it sheets, post-it notes, markers
10/4 (L8)		-Ideating Concepts		-Bring post-it sheets, post-it notes, markers <b>-Design Brief Portfolio Section Due</b>
10/11 (L9)		-Prototyping -Human Flourishing, Pt.3	<b>-Draft Concept Pitch Due</b>	-Bring prototyping materials (scissors, tape, colored paper, playdough, pipe cleaners, etc.) -Bring 7 printouts of presentation & tape -Bring laptop or tablet (phone not acceptable) <b>-Primary Research Portfolio Section Due</b>
10/18		<b>CONCEPT PITCHES</b>	<b>-Revised Concept Pitch, with Draft attached, Due*</b>	
10/25 (L10)	Ch.14	-Prototype Iterating -Synthesizing Content		-Bring rapid prototypes and prototyping materials (scissors, tape, colored paper, playdough, pipe cleaners, etc.)
11/1 (L11)	Ch.11	-Synthesizing Content -Writing Formal Reports -Creating Video Presentations	<b>-Draft Executive Summary with Worksheet Due</b>	-Bring 1 printout of draft executive summary with worksheet -Bring laptop or tablet (phone not acceptable)
11/8		<b>DRAFT PROJECT PRESENTATIONS</b>	<b>-Revised Executive Summary, with Commented Draft attached, Due*</b>	<b>-Draft Project Presentation Due</b> <b>-Prototypes Portfolio Section Due</b>
11/15		<b>FINAL PROJECT PRESENTATIONS</b>		<b>-Revised &amp; Complete Portfolio Due*</b> <b>-Revised Project Presentation Due*</b>
11/22		<b>THANKSGIVING BREAK</b>		
11/29		<b>READING DAY (NO CLASS)</b>		
12/6		<b>FINAL EXAM</b>	<b>-Course Evaluation Acknowledgement Due</b>	

\*Graded, with penalties for late or non-submission as noted in syllabus. Draft assignments must be submitted per the deadline to avoid a zero or F on the revised assignments.

\*\* Bring specified items to class. If you do not, you will be asked to leave class and will lose points.

\*\*\* This and each subsequent portfolio section assignment is a synthesis of team members' work into a brief summary. All data, figures, etc. are to be attached behind the summary to form one section of the Project Portfolio. Your team should use feedback given to these sections to improve and revise them for the final portfolio submission.