Course Syllabus
COMM 251: Business and Professional Communication
Fall, 2026

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Department of Communication Studies

Catalogue Description: This course explores a variety of communication issues in business and professional contexts, including gender, diversity, co-worker relationships, interviewing, group and team skills, leadership, and nonverbal communication. Also emphasizes written communication and oral presentation skills appropriate to business.

Course Description: This course emphasizes practical skill sets necessary in business and professional contexts. Students will engage in a variety of activities to develop their business writing, interviewing, and professional skills. Special attention is given to the various communication facets of the job search process including resumes, cover letters, professional emails, employment interviews, networking and building a positive online presence.

Course Rational: This course is an important means for students to develop their professional skills. These skills will be useful in their professional careers and in any situation where they are involved in a group/organization.

Course Content:
Topics to be addressed in this course include the following:
1. The need for communication skills;
2. Different styles of business writing;
3. Ways to communicate effectively in interpersonal and group contexts;
4. Different contexts for interviews;
5. Professional ways to present material.

Prerequisites: None Required

Course Objectives: This course addresses the following departmental learning objectives along with the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) Competencies:

Course Objectives	**NACE Workplace Competencies**
Develop awareness of the various elements in the process of communication in business and professional situations;	Critical Thinking Leadership Communication
Develop awareness of the different areas of communication in the business setting such as written, interpersonal, small group, and public forms of communication;	Communication Teamwork Leadership

Develop practical skills in business and professional communication such as interviewing, business writing, working in group situations, doing business presentations, developing an online presence;	Teamwork Career & Self Development Professionalism
Develop the ability to be ethical and competent producers and consumers of communication in business and professional contexts.	Technology Professionalism Critical Thinking

Course Modality/Structure: This is an online, asynchronous, 7-week course held on Canvas. There are no times where students will all have to log in at the same time, rather there are weekly assignments and tasks students will have to complete by assigned deadlines. It is the student responsibility to stay current with the class and have a working knowledge of Canvas, Panopto, and other technologies the course incorporates.

Required Text: Quintanilla, K., & Wahl, S. (2024). Business and Professional Communication: KEYS for Workplace Excellence (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

There is a copy of the textbook on reserve in the library available for students to check out. There are no extensions for lack of a textbook.

Students' course materials are available via Canvas and through the Ball State First Day partnership with Barnes & Noble. This program ensures students obtain all their course materials the first day of classes. Students are automatically enrolled in the program and charged the flat course material fee on their BSU eBill. Students can opt out of the program by the deadline listed on the "Course Materials" page in Canvas. Please review the program details to make the most informed decision regarding your course materials and participation in this program: Ball State First Day

Course Policies and Expectations

Assignment Scaffolding: Because this is an intensive 7-week course, the learning activities are carefully scaffolded so that each module builds on the knowledge and skills developed in the previous one. To support this structured progression and ensure meaningful engagement with each stage of the learning process, course modules will be released weekly rather than all at once.

New modules will unlock every Monday at 12:00 a.m.. Working ahead is not permitted because later assignments depend on concepts, feedback, and discussions from earlier modules. This pacing helps maintain a manageable workload, supports collaborative activities, and ensures that all students progress through the course with the guidance and context needed for success.

Course Participation Expectations: This course is designed with weekly activities, discussions, and other forms of regular collaboration and communication.
It is recommended that you log into your Canvas course 3 to 4 times a week and check your official Ball State email account daily to view announcements and prepare for the week.
Complete all assignments, quizzes, tests, and any other activities by the stated due dates.

Email Policy: I will respond to email from your official Ball State email address within 48 hours during weekdays (Monday-Friday). I am away from my office and email on weekends and holidays.
Students are expected to communicate in a positive and professional manner. I reserve the right to not reply to questions or comments sent over email that are disrespectful in content or tone.
Emails to your professor should include an introduction including what course and section you are in, as well as an appropriate greeting with the appropriate title. For example: "Hello Dr. Rediger, my name is [your name] and I am in your COMM ___ course." Followed by your email. Then, please allow up to 48 hours for a response.

Feedback Policy: I will read every discussion post but I will not always personally comment on posts.
My goal is to have grades updated within a week of submission.
Contact me directly if you have questions or concerns about your performance in class.

Deadlines: All assignments are due by Friday 5:00 pm the week they are assigned. This is for three reasons:

1. There is a better chance (but no guarantee) of having questions answered by me on a Friday before 5, than midnight if questions arise if you are submitting close to the deadline.
2. To promote better sleep, study, and work/life balance. Cramming at midnight does not produce good work, and you (and I) should be able to enjoy the weekend.
3. In the workplace, most assignments/tasks are due by the end of the workday, not midnight. A major aspect of this Business and Professional Communication course is preparing students for the business and professional workplace. This includes preparing for realistic deadlines that are likely in the workplace.

Late Work: Work that is due by Friday at 5:00pm is accepted until Sunday 11:59pm. There is a 10% penalty PER DAY it is late. There is a 10% penalty PER DAY it is late. I am UNAVAILABLE from Friday 5:00pm through Sunday midnight to help you navigate any issues. This includes questions about instructions, technological issues, or any other issues that would warrant my involvement. Either the assignment is in or it is not. I will not be checking emails during this time. This is for three reasons:

1. To promote appropriate work/life balance for you and for me.
2. Your boss/supervisor will not always be available to answer your questions. In the workplace you will be expected to problem-solve on your own. Late work (after Sunday) will not be accepted.
3. I do not expect students to be working when it is outside of my own working schedule.

Deadlines will only be extended for approved and documented circumstances such as official academic accommodations or university travel. No make-up assignments will be allowed unless a school sanctioned absence or documentation of a medical emergency (health center notes do not count as documentation of a medical emergency) is provided. Student athletes, military, or other university affiliated groups are required to provide official travel notices for accommodations. These accommodations are not retroactive.

The final week of the semester ends Friday 11:59pm. Late work is not accepted Saturday or Sunday of that week.

Assignment Submission Policy:

1. All assignments should be submitted as Word documents with extensions of .doc or .docx unless otherwise indicated in the assignment description.
2. All assignments must be uploaded to the correct Canvas assignment link before the deadline.
3. Emailed assignments will not be accepted.
4. Links to online storage accounts (SharePoint, Google Docs etc.) will receive an automatic 0. Assignments posted to the wrong assignment link will be given a 0 as grading in Canvas relies on assignments being posted to the correct link.

It is the student responsibility to check for accuracy. Assignments that are inaccessible at the time of grading (online storage account, wrong files/assignments, corrupted files etc.) will be given an automatic 0. It is the responsibility of the student to submit correct and accessible assignments before the deadline.

Grading Policy: It is my policy that appropriate evaluation of your academic performance is an integral part of your learning experience. Grades are private and available only on Canvas. Final grades are not rounded up for any student.

Attendance: This is an online asynchronous course meaning students are expected to complete weekly assignments and tasks on their own, with no assigned meeting times virtually or in person. Students are expected to engage each week through the completion of coursework. Deadlines are only extended for documented and approved circumstances. Students are expected to regularly check emails and course announcements.

Course & Instructor Evaluation: Students will have an opportunity to participate in formal assessment of this course and the instructor's teaching performance at the end of the semester through the university's online evaluation process.

Course Assignments: Required work that makes up the total grade for the course include: Discussion Prompts; Reflective Writings; Resume Assignment; Quizzes; and a Final Presentation.

Assignment details, including instructions, relevant readings, due dates, and grading criteria/rubrics will be posted and updated on Canvas. Please check Canvas regularly to stay informed and on track.

Course Schedule: To support a learning experience that is responsive to the needs, interests, and pace of our class community, the course schedule may shift over the semester. The most current version of the schedule will always be available on Canvas. I encourage you to check Canvas regularly for updates and contact me if you have any questions.

Course Grading:

Assignments:	80pts
Discussions:	90pts
Quizzes:	100pts
Final Presentation:	50pts
Total:	320pts

Final Grading Scale:

A	94 – 100%
A-	90 – 94%
B+	87 – 90%
B	84 – 87%
B-	80 – 84%
C+	77 – 80%
C	74 – 77%
C-	70 – 74%
D+	67 – 70%
D	64 – 67%
D-	61 – 64%
F	0 – 61%

University Statements and Policies

University Statement: We are committed to ensuring that all members of the community are welcome, through valuing the various experiences and worldviews represented at Ball State and among those we serve. We promote a culture of respect and civil discourse.

Disability Statement: If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, please contact the instructor of record as soon as possible. Ball State's Disability Services Office coordinates services for students with disabilities; documentation of a disability needs to be on file in that office before any accommodations can be provided. Disability Services can be contacted at 765-285-5293 or dsd@bsu.edu.

Freedom of Expression: In this course, we are committed to fostering a learning environment that values intellectual diversity, encourages free expression, and promotes open inquiry. As members of the Ball State Community, we treat each person in the Ball State community with civility, courtesy, compassion, and dignity and respect and learn from differences in people, ideas, and opinions. Please review Ball State University's Statement on Freedom of Expression, the resources on Ball State's Freedom of Expression webpage, and Ball State's Beneficence Pledge.

University Grade Appeal Policy: If you believe you received a final course grade that does not reflect your performance due to fairness or a procedural issue, you have the right to file an appeal within 5 school days after final grades are posted by the Office of the Registrar. Review the University Grade Appeal Policy and Process.]

Student Academic Ethics Policy: Honesty, trust, and personal responsibility are fundamental attributes of the university community. Academic dishonesty and other forms of academic misconduct threaten the foundation of an institution dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and will not be tolerated. To maintain its credibility and reputation, and to equitably assign evaluations of scholastic and creative performance, Ball State University is committed to maintaining a climate that upholds and values the highest standards of academic integrity.

Visit the VPAA's academic integrity website (Students tab) for resources on understanding academic integrity, citing sources properly, and avoiding inadvertent academic dishonesty. To learn about BSU's academic integrity expectations and students' rights, please read the University Student Academic Ethics Policy.

Academic integrity violations include giving or receiving an unfair academic advantage (cheating), presenting someone else's ideas or work as your own (plagiarism), and falsifying academic records. Unless otherwise indicated, you must work independently by yourself. Check with me if you are unsure whether something constitutes academic dishonesty.

Examples of academic integrity violations include but are not limited to:

- Using resources not authorized by the faculty member (including devices, AI tools, hidden notes, and open books)
- Using commercial study websites to find answers to graded assignments (Chegg, Course Hero, StudyPool, OneClass, etc.).
- Without the instructor's written permission, giving away, buying, or selling graded assignments class notes, exams, study guides, or other course materials to other students or to third-party vendors (Course Hero, Chegg, 24HourAnswers, etc.).
- Working with another person on any assignment other than authorized group projects.
- Sharing or allowing others to access your files, whether done with permission or not.
- Reusing your own work from another semester, course, or section.
- Sharing answers with others during exams (passing notes, texting, whispering, gesturing)

- Discussing exam questions and answers with students who have not taken the exam.
- Soliciting others to complete work for you.

Generative AI Statement: In this course, I value your authentic voice and the development of your skills. Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools like ChatGPT, Google Gemini, or Grammarly may be used to support your learning within the following guidelines:

Permitted Uses:
- Brainstorming ideas.
- Generating outlines or structure suggestions.
- Practicing delivery with AI speech coaches (e.g., Microsoft Presenter Coach, Ovation VR).
- Clarifying grammar or revising drafts of your project outlines.

Prohibited Uses:
- Submitting coursework written entirely or mostly by AI.
- Using AI to generate citations, arguments, personal stories, or other assignment content you present as your own.
- Uploading course materials or other students' work to public AI tools.

All work you submit should reflect your original thinking, your voice, and your preparation as a student in this course. Improper or undisclosed use of AI tools will be treated as a potential academic integrity violation. If you're unsure whether a use of AI is appropriate, please ask.

The Learning Center: The Learning Center offers free Tutoring and Academic Coaching for many courses at Ball State. Students can make appointments for online (Zoom) or in-person (NQ 350) appointments. To make an appointment, visit myballstate.bsu.edu and click on "Navigate" in the Academic Tools section, or just go directly to bsu.navigate.eab.com. Testing accommodations for students with disabilities are available for students who have received the appropriate documentation from Disability Services. Tests may be administered in the Learning Center. Supplemental Instruction is available in select courses. If you have an SI leader for your course, that person will provide students with information the first week of school regarding weekly study sessions. For more information about Learning Center programming, visit bsu.edu/learningcenter or call 765-285-1006. Follow us on Instagram: BallStateLC.

The Writing Center: All writers improve with practice and feedback, so as a student in this course, you are encouraged to use the Writing Center (in Robert Bell 295 during weekdays, Bracken Library First Floor West in the evenings, or online during any of our regularly scheduled hours) to get additional feedback on your writing. The Writing Center offers free planning, feedback, and accountability sessions (in person and online) to all students composing essays, reports, reflections, research projects, web content, lesson plans, slideshows, poster presentations, resumes, and other digital or print texts. To schedule a free appointment to discuss your writing, go to bsu.edu/writingcenter. Online and in-person appointments are available; however, plan ahead because appointments book quickly!

The Basic Needs Hub: If you are having difficulty affording enough food, do not have a safe and reliable place to sleep, and/or experiencing an emergency or crisis, help is available through the Basic Needs Hub. The Basic Needs Hub has information, resources, and provides individualized support to students. To talk with a supportive staff member about your experience, receive one on one assistance, or learn more about resources, you can submit a Basic Needs Assistance Form.

The Counseling Center: The Ball State University Counseling Center offers free and confidential services to all students. The Counseling Center is located in Lucina Hall, Room 320. To schedule an appointment, you can contact us at 765-285-1736. Ball State also offers a 24/7 Crisis Line, which can be reached at 765-285-HOPE (4673). The Crisis Line is a mental health resource for those who are struggling with any mental health concerns, including thoughts of self-harm and/or suicide. At the Ball State Counseling Center, we see students for a variety of reasons, some of which include homesickness, relationship concerns, anxiety, and depression. At your first appointment, you will work with a therapist to create a plan that will connect you with resources that best fit your needs. We assist students with getting connected to therapy at our Center as well as connecting students to self-help resources, other on-campus resources, and community-based resources. All Ball State students also have access to several on-demand, self-help resources through a variety of different platforms. All of these resources, including a direct link to our website, can be found here.

The Speaking Center: The Speaking Center is a free resource available to all members of the BSU community wanting to improve their public speaking abilities. We offer personalized coaching designed to help you become a more confident and effective speaker. Our trained coaches provide constructive feedback and support throughout the entire speech preparation process, whether you are in the early stages of brainstorming ideas and organizing your thoughts, or you need to practice your delivery and refine your message. The Center is in the David Letterman Communication and Media Building, room 302. To schedule an appointment, please access us through your Navigate app or use this direct link to sign up for a time. Appointments are available both in person and on Zoom. Appointments are available in person, on Zoom, and in virtual reality (VR) for those interested in practicing in an immersive speaking environment.

CCIM Student Success and Advising: For academic advising and student success support, visit the **CCIM Student Success and Outreach Hub in BC 210**. Schedule an appointment with an academic advisor through Navigate, or walk in during business hours for assistance from Student Success staff.

Canvas Accessibility: Canvas provides a user experience that is easy, simple, and intuitive. Special attention has been paid to making Canvas screen-readable. The Rich Content Editor encourages users to create accessible content pages (i.e. text formatting is accomplished using styles). Canvas is designed to allow limited customization of colors and schemes to be accessible for all users. The National Federation of the Blind granted Canvas the Gold Level Web Certification in 2010. Find more information by visiting the Canvas Voluntary Product Accessibility Template (VPAT).

FERPA and Privacy: As a student, your educational records are considered confidential. Under FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act), your records are confidential and protected. Under most circumstances, your records will not be released without your written and signed consent. However, some directory information may be released to third parties without your prior consent unless a written request to restrict this is on file. You can learn more about student rights to privacy by reading Ball State's FERPA and Privacy and Protection.

Plagiarism Detection: The campus subscribes to Turnitin, a plagiarism prevention service, through Canvas. You may need to submit written assignments to Turnitin. Student work will be used for plagiarism detection and for no other purpose. The student may indicate in writing to the instructor that he/she refuses to participate in the plagiarism detection process, in which case the instructor can use other electronic means to verify the originality of their work.

Technical Assistance: If you have technical questions, you can contact Ball State's Help Desk. In addition, the Help Desk staff has put together many how-to video clips in its Tech Clips section that can guide you through many of the most common questions. The Help Desk can be contacted at 765-285-1517 or by email at helpdesk@bsu.edu.

Subject to Change Statement: This syllabus is subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances.