

**University of Massachusetts Lowell  
Manning School of Management**

**66.210 Professional Communications**

**Monday & Wednesday**

**Section 213: 2:00 PM to 3:15 PM Pasteur Hall 213**

**Section 211: 3:30 PM to 4:45 PM Pasteur Hall 213**

**Dr. Mark H. Mortensen**

**Version 01 – 4 September 2012**

**Catalog Description:** This course provides students with the theory and practice of successful oral and written communication in business. Emphasis is on the development and improvement of communication skills needed for today's fast-paced organizations. Such skills include written communication in memos, letters and reports. Additionally, the course focuses on oral communication through presentations and discussions as well as the use of current presentation software.

**Place in Curriculum:** This class is required of all sophomores and upper class students in the College of Management BSBA program. Prerequisites: 42.102 (College Writing II.)

**COURSE OVERVIEW:** Communication is a central focus of every manager's job and an important aspect of most non-management jobs. As managers supervise the work of others, they are continually communicating with all levels of employees and with customers, suppliers and other stakeholders. Managers will require excellent communication skills as they communicate organizational goals, solve problems, coach and evaluate others, present their own ideas, and represent their organization to others. Managers must also be excellent listeners and consumers of information, critically assessing information and opinions. Therefore, a great deal of a manager's success is determined by his or her ability to communicate quickly, clearly and effectively. And to become a manager, or even succeed at many non-management jobs, you must learn to communicate effectively.

In this course, you will gain an understanding of the communication process, and will practice the application of good communication skills using a variety of channels (e-mail, letters, reports, meetings, presentations, etc.) This practice will enable you to communicate well in a wide variety of business settings.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:** At the completion of this course, students who attend and participate in classes, complete readings, and complete assignments satisfactorily will be able to:

- Communicate effectively, both in writing and in formal business presentations.
- Understand and demonstrate audience sensitivity, including sensitivity to demographically and culturally diverse audiences.
- Both independently and in conjunction with others, research, analyze and evaluate material from a variety of sources, including the internet.

- Listen well for both content and context.
- Evaluate and think critically about information, opinions and persuasive messages.
- Present a supported argument regarding an issue of their choice.
- Demonstrate appropriate use of visual support for oral presentations.
- Effectively chair a meeting.
- Introduce yourself effectively at a business meeting.

You will also have a good resume and framework cover letter prepared to use.

**TEACHING METHODS:** We will use a variety of teaching methods. These will include lectures, discussion, workshops, group activities, writing, and group and self-assessments.

**Class Policies:**

**Attendance:** I request, and expect, the students to attend class and to be there on time. I expect no more than three absences during the semester – more than that will result in an automatic failure of the course. If you are absent from class, I still expect you to turn in any assignments due, unless we have arranged something else prior. Discuss any exceptional circumstances with me, please.

**Dates for no Classes:** Besides teaching here at UML, I am also a research analyst for a telecommunications research and consulting firm. Several industry meetings will require my on-site attendance. On these days, we will not have class or have a guest lecturer. The days I already know about are shown in the syllabus – there may be others, as the term progresses.

**Academic Honesty:** The University and your College expect high standards of ethical and moral conduct. Except on group projects, I expect you to prepare and present your own original work. The penalty for plagiarism or any other form of cheating will be failure of the course. Review the University’s statement of Academic Honesty/Plagiarism in the University Code of Academic Behavior as set forth in the *Bulletin of Undergraduate Studies*.

**Course Etiquette:** I expect each and every participant to be involved in the class, respect the views of others, and share and support their views with the rest of the class.

**Late Work:** Late work will, in general, not be accepted, unless by prior arrangement or under exceptional circumstances.

## Course Requirements:

### Text Books:

- No textbook is required.
- Guffey, Mary Ellen, Essentials of Business Communication, is highly suggested as a reference book.
- Access to a dictionary (written or on-line) is essential.
- Strunk and White, Elements of Style, will be made available in PDF format. You may also purchase the book – it is worthwhile as a reference.

**Class Preparation:** You are expected to arrive at class fully prepared with all due assignments completed and ready to discuss any material assigned for that day.

**ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATIONS:** Assignments will be graded on both content and writing. You will receive a grading rubric for each assignment beforehand, which will outline specific requirements. All assignments are expected to be grammatically correct and free of typographical and spelling errors.

*Note that much of your grade comes from completing each of the assignments successfully and on time.*

### Assignments are weighted as follows:

Assignment	Fraction of Grade	Grading Criteria
Assignments 1-6, 8, and 10-12	2% each for 20% total	Pass/Fail/Not_Done
Assignment 7 Cover letter and Resume	5%	Business Grading Criteria
Assignment 9	5%	Business Grading Criteria
Assignment 13 – Written (group grade)	10%	Business Grading Criteria
Assignment 13 – Verbal (group grade)	10%	Business Grading Criteria
Assignment 14 – Status report	5%	Business Grading Criteria
Assignment 15 - Verbal	14%	Business Grading Criteria

Assignment 15 – Written and verbal	5%	Business Grading Criteria
Assignment 16 – Written and verbal introduction to yourself	4%	Business Grading Criteria
Assignment 17 – Cover letter and resume	15%	Business Grading Criteria
Successfully being the Chair in one class	7%	Pass/Fail/Not_Done
TOTAL	100%	

### **GRAMMAR/MECHANICS TESTS**

When you take the Grammar/Mechanics Post-Test, I will increase your grade by one increment (e.g. from a B- to a B) if you cut the number of mistakes in half from the first test. Of course if you get them all right, you also get that credit.

### **PASS/FAIL/NOT\_DONE CRITERIA**

**Pass:** Done on time with minimal issues to be corrected.

**Fail:** Done with major issues that need to be corrected.

**Not\_Done:** Not done, or not turned in on time, or not in the form requested.

### **BUSINESS GRADING CRITERIA**

As your boss,

**A:** I would send it out as is or with a very minor change or two that I would tell you to make.

**B:** It would have to have some changes made before it was sent out. I would help you, or ask that you seek the help of someone in the company who was a good writer.

**C:** You would have to make some substantive changes before I would review it again. You should be able to do better.

**D:** I would tell you that this is not good and would probably give the assignment to someone else to complete, or do it myself if it was time critical. You need remedial work. I may place you on probation if this is what much of your work is like.

**F:** I find this work deficient. I may fire you if this is indicative of your work.

**Your Instructor:** Dr. Mark H Mortensen  
<http://www.linkedin.com/in/markhmortensen>

**Office:** No on-campus office

**Telephone:** 603-759-3507 (mobile)

**Email:** [Mark.Mortensen@uml.edu](mailto:Mark.Mortensen@uml.edu) (preferred method of communication)

**Skype:** MarkHMortensen

**Office Hours:** No Office Hours on Campus

Virtual Office Hours online Tuesday and Thursday 9:00 to 11:00  
or e-mail or Skype almost any time.

**This Syllabus, the Charts and Supplementary Materials** will be posted on my Faculty Wiki located at: <http://mark-mortensen.wiki.uml.edu>. You do NOT have to register for access. It is open to anyone on the internet.

**Class Schedule:**

Session 213: Mondays and Wednesdays 2:00 PM to 3:15 PM. Room PAS-213.

Session 211: Mondays and Wednesdays 3:30 PM to 4:45 PM. Room PAS-213.

**NOTE:** There will be some shifting in what we cover in which week. This syllabus will be re-released if changed.

<b>Class Session</b>	<b>Class Actions at this session</b>
<b>3 Sept.</b>	<b>Labor Day – University Closed</b>
<b>Session 1 5 Sept.</b>	<b>Discussion: What is this class? What are communications skills? Note taking skills.</b> <b>Workshop: Introduce yourself to the class.</b>
<b>Session 2 10 Sept.</b>	<b><u>Turn in Assignment 1</u></b> <b>Workshop: Take Grammar/Mechanics Diagnostic Pre-Test in class (no preparation necessary, nor desired.)</b> <b>Discussion: Chairing a meeting and creating meeting notes.</b>
<b>Session 3 12 Sept.</b>	<b><u>Turn in Assignment 2</u></b> <b><u>Class preparation: Bring a resume of yours (if you have one to class) along with a couple of others you have found on the internet.</u></b> <b>Discussion: Resumes – the why, the what and the how.</b>

<b>Class Session</b>	<b>Class Actions at this session</b>
<b>17 Sept.</b>	<i>No class - I will be away. Work on your resume and assignment 3 and 4.</i>
<b>19 Sept.</b>	<i>No class - I will be away. Work on your resume and assignment 3 and 4.</i>
<b>Session 4 24 Sept.</b>	<b><u>Turn in Assignment 4.</u></b> <b>Workshop: Critiquing each other's resumes and introductions.</b> <b>Discussion: The writing process.</b>
<b>Session 5 26 Sept.</b>	<b><u>Bring Assignment 5 to class (turn in at the end).</u></b> <b>Workshop: Reading out loud Assignment 5.</b> <b>Discussion:</b>
<b>1 Oct.</b>	<i>No class - I will be away. Work on Assignment 6 and 7.</i>
<b>5 Oct.</b>	<i>No class - I will be away. Work on Assignment 6 and 7.</i>
<b>8 Oct.</b>	<b>Columbus Day – University Closed</b>
<b>Session 6 10 Oct. Monday Classes</b>	<b><u>Bring Assignments 6 and 7 to class (turn them in at the end).</u></b> <b>Workshop: Reading out loud Assignment 6.</b> <b>Discussion: Public speaking basics.</b>
<b>Session 7 15 Oct.</b>	<b><u>Turn in Assignment 8.</u></b> <b>Workshop: TBD</b> <b>Discussion: E-mail, Twitter and other social media communications.</b>
<b>17 Oct.</b>	<i>No class - I will be away. Work on Assignments 9 and 10.</i> <i>Note that Assignment 9 is 5% of your grade. Make it perfect.</i>
<b>Session 8 22 Oct.</b>	<b><u>Turn in Assignments 9. E-mail me Assignment 10 before class.</u></b> <b>Discussion: Becoming a good public speaker.</b>
<b>Session 9 24 Oct.</b>	<b><u>Turn in Assignment 11. Prepare your speech for today.</u></b> <b>Workshop: Each student present their speech for Assignment 11.</b>

<b>Class Session</b>	<b>Class Actions at this session</b>
Session 10 29 October	Workshop: (Continue presentations on Assignment 11) Discussion: How to persuade.
Session 11 31 October	<u>Turn in Assignment 12. Bring at least one extra copy.</u> Discussion: How to persuade (continued) Discussion: Assign groups and discuss Group Assignment 13.
Session 12 5 Nov.	Discussion: Task team mechanics and team status reports. Workshop: Groups working together on Group Assignment 13 in class.
Session 13 7 Nov.	<u>Turn in a status report (Assignment 14) before class.</u> Workshop: Groups working together on Group Assignment 13 in class.
Session 14 12 Nov.	<u>Groups ready with Assignment 13 paper (turn in) and presentation.</u> Workshop: Group presentations.
Session 15 14 Nov.	Workshop: Group presentations (continued). Discussion: Business presentations
Session 16 19 Nov.	<u>Individuals ready with Assignment 15.</u> Workshop: Individual presentations of Assignment 15.
Session 17 21 Nov.	Workshop: Individual presentation of Assignment 15 (continued). Discussion: The job search, resumes and cover letters.
Session 18 26 Nov.	<u>Turn in Assignment 16. Have an extra copy with you.</u> Workshop: Simulated discussion one-on-one with recruiter.
Session 19 28 Nov.	Workshop: Simulated discussion one-one-one with recruiter (continued). Discussion: Grammar

<b>Class Session</b>	<b>Class Actions at this session</b>
<b>Session 20</b> <b>3 Dec.</b>	<b>Workshop: Grammar/Mechanics Diagnostic Post-Test</b> <b>Discussion: What makes a good cover letter, resume, and elevator pitch?</b>
<b>5 Dec.</b>	<i>I will be away. Work on Assignment 17.</i>
<b>Session 21</b> <b>10 Dec.</b>	<b><u>Turn in Assignment 17.</u></b> <b>Discussion: What have we learned? What changes should be made to the class for the next time?</b>

### **ASSIGNMENTS:**

We are going to be doing a lot of writing and speaking this semester to give you practice. The most important thing is to complete the assignments, using good grammar and spelling, on time and turned in according to the instructions (e-mail or hard copy).

1. Write one page on your strengths and weaknesses in written and verbal communications and what you hope to get out of this class. Also, write a bit about what you read (magazines, books – what type, on-line BLOGS, Twitter, Facebook, etc.) on a regular basis. 300-500 words, more if you like, or if you do not have the time to make it shorter.
2. Write an introduction about yourself that you would use when interviewing for a job. Turn in a hard copy.
3. Practice reading your introduction to yourself that you wrote (rewrite it if you want to) and be prepared to read it to the class. There is nothing to turn in.
4. Write one page on your long-term career aspirations. Turn in a hard copy. Due next class.
5. Write a few paragraphs about what you see yourself doing in five years – where you are, what you do for a living, etc. Dream a little, but keep away from complete flights of fancy, please. This is a typical question that a recruiter would ask you during a job interview. Turn in a hard copy.
6. Find an article in a business magazine or news web site that you thought was interesting. Summarize the article in a few paragraphs for your peers in this class. E-mail your summary to me at [mark\\_mortensen@uml.edu](mailto:mark_mortensen@uml.edu) before the next class. It will be shared with the class.
7. Write a resume and a cover letter for a job that you would like to get (or you think you might like to get) upon graduation, or during your time at UML. Share it within your group, discuss and re-write.



8. Write an e-mail invitation to a lunch party for a colleague who is celebrating their five year anniversary with the company. Turn in a hard copy. Due next class.
9. Write a thank you letter to a noted individual (make up who it is) who came and gave a speech to the class about how to interview for a job. In the speech, she gave many practical pieces of advice on what you should do to prepare yourself, what to wear, how to approach the recruiter, how to talk to your prospective boss, how to talk to your prospective peers. Turn in a hard copy. Due next class. Note that this assignment will be graded according to the more stringent business criteria and count for 5% of your grade. So do a good job!
10. Write a tweet (140 characters or less) about something interesting that happened in the news in the past week or two. E-mail it to me at [mark\\_mortensen@uml.edu](mailto:mark_mortensen@uml.edu) before class.
11. Find an example of writing that you really thought was well written. Turn in a hard copy of the writing and also prepare a 1-2 minute speech (without any visuals) about why you thought it was well written. Be prepared to present it in class.
12. Pick a topic you have an opinion about (or pretend to have an opinion about) what a person or organization should do (e.g. “I think that all drugs should be legalized” or “I think that the US should default on its debt” or “I think that the house of representatives should be staffed by penguins,” or whatever you think and can back up with persuasive arguments and data). Write a paragraph or two explaining your position and half-a-dozen to a dozen bullet points supporting your position. Turn them in next class.
13. Within your group, decide which of the topics that you each worked on in Assignment 12 you want to tackle as a group. Work together to draft a one or two page paper on that subject, which will be turned in for a group grade (please include the names of all members of your group). Prepare presentation material for a group presentation of 5-7 minutes length.
14. Each group write a business-like status report and e-mail to me, telling me where your group is in the process of Assignment 13 and what steps still need to be done, with a schedule for any remaining work.
15. Each *individual* take the group presentation from Assignment 13 and prepare a 3-5 minute version of it to be given by each person, individually. Visuals are optional. Present it in class.
16. Re-write the introduction about yourself that you would use when interviewing for a job. Turn in a hard copy. Due next class. Be prepared to present it verbally, too.
17. Re-write your resume and a cover letter to a prospective employer. E-mail them to me at [Mark\\_Mortensen@uml.edu](mailto:Mark_Mortensen@uml.edu) .

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