

SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION  
GENERAL BUSINESS AND FINANCE

COURSE SYLLABUS

Fall, 2005

COURSE NUMBER: GENERAL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION 587

COURSE TITLE: Managerial Communication and Research

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Shirley H. Tucker OFFICE: 200-E 294-1898  
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OFFICE HOURS: 11:00-12:00 & 1:00-2:00 MW  
3:15-3:45 MW  
12:00 - 2:00TTH  
Or By Appointment

REQUIRED TEXT: O'Rourke, James S. *Management Communication: A Case-Analysis Approach*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed, 2004.

SUPPLEMENTAL TEXTS: None *Students are required to purchase a VHS tape for recording/critiquing presentations.*

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course is designed to expand students' understanding of managerial and corporate communication and to enhance writing and speaking skills necessary to a successful management career.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

This course is also designed to prepare graduate students to conduct research and report results. Students will

1. Learn the importance of good business communication skills necessary to success as a manager.
2. Apply problem solving skills and key strategies to communicate effectively on four levels—interpersonally, group, organizational, and intercultural.
3. Improve critical thinking skills by analyzing and solving business problems and planning and composing professional writing assignments in acceptable formats.
4. Plan and deliver professional presentations utilizing high quality visuals when appropriate.

5. Understand and develop interpersonal communication skills including nonverbal, listening and giving feedback, and small group interaction.
6. Understand and enhance intercultural communication skills.
7. Build leadership communication skills through the study of such topics as styles of leadership, professionalism, and planning and conducting meetings.
8. Learn to conduct primary and secondary research on contemporary business issues and develop written and oral reports of the research results that are appropriate for business audiences.

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

1. **Regular and punctual class attendance.** Any unexcused absence beyond one “grace” absence will cost 5 points off your final course grade. Two tardies or early leaving of class equal one absence. If you plan to be absent due to observance of a religious holy day, you must notify the instructor by the 4<sup>th</sup> class period.
2. **Preparation for class.** You are expected to have read the assigned material before the class during which it is discussed.
3. **Participation in all class activities.** Class sessions provide opportunities to practice your communication skills.
4. **Computer proficiency,** especially in the use of MS Word or WordPerfect, PowerPoint graphics software and the Internet for conducting research. All written assignments are to be word-processed.
5. **Timely completion of all course assignments.** All assignments are due at the beginning of the class period on the due date. Late written assignment (exams, reports, homework) grades will be reduced by 10 points per class meeting. If you are absent from class when an assignment is due, you will avoid the late penalty by submitting your work early or in some cases by e-mail.
6. **Appropriate academic conduct.** Unprofessional, disruptive, or disrespectful behavior will not be tolerated. Plagiarism (submitting other’s work without appropriate citation or allowing others to submit your work without citation) will not be tolerated.

### **Academic Misconduct**

**Plagiarizing a speech or cheating on an exam is very serious and will result in a “0” for the assignment or an “F” in the course. Plagiarism sometimes confuses people. It is plagiarism to turn in someone else’s paper or speech as your own work.**

**It is plagiarism to take a passage(s) from someone's work (a direct quote or paraphrase) and include it in a speech or paper without citing the original author. It is plagiarism to include someone's ideas (even in your own words) in your speech or paper without citing the original author. It is plagiarism to knowingly allow another student to use your work as their own.**

**All research sources should be cited using APA style. Any student who does not cite sources or otherwise plagiarizes any work will receive a "0" on his/her research paper and/or an "F" for the course. –no second chances!!**

7. **Computer use in class.** Using computers during class for any purpose other than the assigned tasks or for taking lecture notes will cost 5 points off final course grade for each misuse.

## **Teaching Method**

Lecture, discussion, group projects, individual and group presentations and critiques, interaction in class and among group team members.

## **MAJOR TESTS**

There will be **THREE** major tests; tests may include questions from assigned readings, class discussions, class lectures and slide shows, handouts and written assignments. All tests are open book/open notes except as follows:

1. All graded assignments up to the test must be completed before a test can be taken. Any test missed as a result of unexcused late work, will be "NO notes NOR text can be used."

**NO MAKE-UP TESTS WILL BE GIVEN.**

**The final exam will be administered according to the examination schedule released by the University Administration.**

## **WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS**

### **Case Study**

The major project in this course is to assume the role of consultant and analyze a business situation. Students will make sense of the circumstances surrounding the situation by conducting interviews, reviewing newspaper file accounts, and searching data bases such as Factiva or NYTimes.com; broadcast Web sites such as CNN.com or MSNBC.com; or other news-gathering sources such as Associated Press and Reuters in order to identify the problem. Students will then **compose the case study** in enough detail for readers to understand the nature and scope of the problem.

Students will also **compose a strategy memo**. (See explanation below).

This project will be completed in small groups/teams.

### **Letters/Memos/E-mails**

Students will **compose a variety of business messages** (approximately five) from assigned topics and cases. Several of the writings will be strategy memos that summarize details of a case, rank order critical issues, discuss their implications (what they mean and why they matter), offer specific recommendations for action (assigning ownership and suspense dates for each), and show how to communicate the solution to all who are affected by the recommendations.

**Any work turned in late will be penalized one letter grade for each class period late. No late assignments will be accepted once that particular assignment has been graded and returned.**

### **Current Events**

As assigned, students will **read at least two articles per week from a national newspaper** such as *The Wall Street Journal* or *The New York Times*, as well as a **local newspaper (Houston)**. This is 4 articles per week.

In addition, students should include **two articles per week from weekly news magazines** such as *U.S. News & World Report*, *Business Week*, and *The Economist* and/or **monthly magazines** such as *Fast Company* and *Fortune*. **This is two more articles—for a total of six articles per week. Articles should be printed or photocopied and stapled to a sheet of paper that has an APA style reference for each source printed on it.** Articles should be placed in alphabetical order matching the APA Reference List.

Students should read and highlight articles and be prepared to share main ideas with peers. Class participation and submitted assignment will contribute to grade assigned.

Students also may be asked to search for articles on assigned topics, highlight main points, and be prepared to participate in a “group discussion” on the topic.

### **Other Professional Reading**

Students should select 2 books to read during the semester. Titles must be cleared with professor.

### **ORAL REPORTS**

A major project of this class is to lead (participate in leading) a meeting discussing your team’s case study. It should be 15-20 minutes in length. Students will also complete a 10-minute persuasive presentation. Assignments will be made throughout the semester. Students must utilize multimedia visuals, e.g., Internet, POWERPOINT slides, etc. Students should plan to include slides, handouts, and activities to accompany presentations.

**Students must turn in a complete outline (following assigned format) and copies of all handouts, a disk containing the POWERPOINT slide presentation, and meet with instructor at least one class period before presentation date. Students should expect to "present" part of the presentation to the instructor. NO EXCEPTIONS!**

Shorter oral reports will also be completed. Each student will complete a 5 minute oral presentation. Additionally, short 1-minute impromptu oral reports may be presented. Students will be required to participate in "discussion" groups. Topics will be assigned.

### **RELIGIOUS HOLY DAYS POLICY:**

Students who are absent from class for observance of a religious holy day will be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment scheduled for that day by making prior arrangements with the professor. The student, not later than the 2<sup>nd</sup> class period after the first day of the semester, must notify the instructor of each scheduled class day that he/she would be absent for a religious holy day.

### **HANDICAPPED STUDENT POLICY:**

It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that no otherwise qualified disabled individual shall, solely by reason of his/her handicap, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any academic, Student Life program, or activity. Handicapped students may request academic assistance when needed from a Committee for Continuing Academic Assistance for Disabled Students by visiting the Director of the Counseling Center in the Lee Drain Building Annex, or by calling extension I720.

## **Evaluation**

### Tentative Grading Plan

Written Assignments		45%
Case Study	(15%)	
Case Memo	(5%)	
Letters/Memos, E-Mails	(25%)	
Oral Presentations		30%
Case Study Present.	(10%)	
Persuasive Present.	(10%)	
1-Min. & 5-Min.	(5%)	
Group Dis./Role play/ Mock Interview	(5%)	
Reading Assignments		10%
Major Tests		15%