

**THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG
FACULTY OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS**

School of Business

**BUSI1504 – Business Communication for Technical Professionals (3 credits)
2010 – 2011 1 Semester**

I. Contact Information for Course Coordinator and Instructors

Course Coordinator: Elsie Christopher
E-Mail: FBELSIE@HKU.HK
Office: Rm. 205A, Meng Wah Complex
Phone: 2219 – 4218

Instructor: Kin Tang
E-Mail: FBKIN@HKU.HK
Office: Rm.601B, Meng Wah Complex
Phone: 2219 – 4467

Consultation times: Please e-mail the relevant instructor for an appointment Monday to Friday.

Pre-requisites: ECEN 1906 and ECEN1907

Teaching Materials: Classroom Materials, PBS Video, “Growing Up Online” (2008) and Asia Case Research Centre (ACRC) Cases and Videos will be provided by the instructor during the class. Students will also be available to view key course materials, videos and interactive language exercises via the course website at: <http://www.busi1504.org>.

II. Course Description

This course will help students to further develop and enhance their Business Communication skills through a multi-media approach using selected Business Case Study Texts and videos, as well as an interactive course website which provides course relevant video clips, links to online writing and research resources, and interactive writing practice exercises. The course materials are based upon authentic examples of companies currently involved in various aspects of modern online business in Hong Kong, China and the wider Asian region.

In order to better prepare students to meet the communication requirements of today’s business world, students will undertake the following: reading and analyzing texts; acquiring and incorporating relevant vocabulary from case texts, videos and the course website; further developing accuracy and logic in writing; and integrating and presenting their research in terms of business development and growth strategies. Case analysis and critical thinking skills will also be developed as students progress through the course. A wide range of multimedia resources including video and online materials will be utilized to encourage student participation and interactivity. Written work as well as presentations will be conducted on both an individual and small group basis in order to ensure that students have plenty of opportunities for feedback and improvement throughout the course. Students will also have sufficient opportunities to interact with each other in group based research and presentations, as well as in class discussion activities.

Primary Course Objective:

To further enhance and develop communication skills, problem solving skills and critical thinking skills within the context of business studies as they specifically relate to the technical professions.

III. Learning Aims and Intended Learning Outcomes

A. Communication Skills Development:

Aim: To further develop and enhance communications skills and language proficiency.

Learning Outcomes:

Students should be able to

- Further enhance and develop written communication strategies and **improve accuracy and logic in business writing** by drafting brief research/ business reports, and proposals.
- **Utilise** in-class discussions and presentations to further enhance **effective oral communication skills**.
- **Negotiate and support various solutions to complex problems** by utilising relevant research and evidence from published cases and articles.
- **Acquire and incorporate relevant vocabulary** in both written as well as oral tasks and activities.
- **Further develop listening proficiency** by performing numerous in-class activities using video and additional online and multimedia materials.
- **Apply and integrate knowledge** acquired from case studies and related topics to **build confidence** and proficiency in all four language skills.

B. Case Study Analysis:

Aim: To develop effective business communication skills through the use of case study analyses.

Learning Outcomes:

Students should be able to

- Demonstrate the ability to critically read and evaluate texts through the process of case analysis.
- Apply relevant business knowledge as well as facts and evidence from research to develop integrated solutions for complex business problems.
- Actively apply reasoning and logic in various problem solving activities associated with authentic business situations, especially in the technical professions.
- Extrapolate and critically evaluate information taken from business texts and videos in order to identify key points for argument and analysis in case study discussions.
- Integrate and present findings of various case analyses within a professional context.

C. Research & Analytical Skills:

Aim: To further develop students' analytical, research and citation skills; especially in terms of making reliability judgments as well as integrating relevant information.

Learning Outcomes:

Students should be able to

- Demonstrate effective research and analytical competencies by completing company and global economic research via the internet.
- Use the course website to explore and identify key information related to the major assessment tasks.

D. Interpersonal Communication Skills:

Aim: To provide opportunities for students to negotiate, present and discuss relevant course materials, concepts and practical applications with their instructors as well as their peers.

Learning Outcomes:

Students should be able to

- Interact and participate confidently in group based tasks, discussions and presentations.
- Demonstrate effective interpersonal skills by collaborating in team-based research projects.
- Utilize feedback from negotiations and consultations with the instructor/facilitator and apply this toward the successful completion of course assignments (i.e. formal written assignments and presentations).

IV. Alignment of Program and Course Outcomes

Program Learning Outcome	Course Learning Outcome
1. Acquisition and internalization of knowledge and skills in key functional areas	Apply and integrate knowledge acquired from case studies and related topics to build confidence and proficiency in all four language skills.
2. Application of business knowledge to solve business problems	Apply relevant business knowledge as well as facts and evidence from research to develop integrated solutions for complex business problems (i.e. formal research report and formal presentations).
3. Developing managerial leadership and inculcating professional ethics and competency in business	Integrate and present findings of various case analyses, articles and videos within a professional context (i.e. simulated business scenarios). Discuss professional ethics in terms of strategic development and innovation issues for today's technical professionals.
4. Developing a global outlook	Read cases and articles, watch video clips and discuss thematic issues concerning technologically based companies involved in international business. Demonstrate effective research and analytical competencies by completing company and global economic research via the internet.
5. Mastering communication skills: The skill areas	Further enhance and develop communication

include: Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening	skills, problem solving skills and critical thinking skills within the context of business studies.
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V. Teaching and Learning Activities

Classes: Case Analysis (110min. /week)

Students will primarily explore the assigned case studies and related articles as well as watch and discuss the documentary video which explores the theme of “Growing Up Online”. Additional materials will also be provided so that students can gain sufficient background knowledge for the formal presentations and written research report included in the course. Students will also participate in critical thinking and negotiation tasks, in class discussions and brief impromptu presentations.

Students will typically use the latter part of the class to work on improving their written communication skills in order for them to prepare their written assessment which is the formal report. Students will also have the opportunity to discuss and peer review a draft of their written assignment with their classmates as well as instructor a week before they submit their final assignment for assessment.

By Appointment: Individual and Group Consultations (app. 50 min. /week)

Instructors will also set aside time each week for individual and small group consultations. This will provide students with timely and relevant feedback on classroom activities as well as formal assessments.

VI. Assessment

Learning outcome	Teaching and Learning Activity	Assessment
1. Further enhance and develop written communication strategies and improve accuracy and logic in business writing by drafting a formal research report.	Case Studies: Text Analyses & Group Discussions Analyses of Sample Reports	Written Report
2. Utilise in-class discussions and presentations to further enhance effective oral communication skills.	Group Discussions and Presentation Preparation	Persuasive Marketing Presentation Informative Research Presentation
3. Apply relevant business knowledge as well as facts and evidence from research to develop integrated solutions for complex business problems.	Online Research via the Course Website. Academic Citation and the incorporation of research in formal writing and presentations.	Final Written Report: Incorporating References and Presentation Contents to Demonstrate Understanding of Key Issues
4. Acquire and incorporate relevant vocabulary in both written as well as oral tasks and activities.	Classroom and Web-based vocabulary exercises related to written cases and documentary video clips.	Completion of contextualized vocabulary exercises and incorporation into assessed written and presentation tasks.

<p>5. Develop listening proficiency by performing numerous in-class activities using video clips and additional online and multimedia materials.</p>	<p>Actively watch and listen to documentary video clips as well as use multi-media web-based materials via the course website.</p>	<p>Completion of case texts vocabulary exercises as well as video transcript vocabulary exercises.</p>
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VII. Standards for Assessment

Oral and Written Assessments

The formal assessments within BUSI1504 are designed to allow students to demonstrate their knowledge of both business language (written and spoken) as well as content. The assessments are carefully integrated into the course materials as they encourage group collaboration and the expression of innovative thoughts and ideas. The business cases and accompanying articles as well as the documentary video clips are all built around the major theme of the course which explores several Asian based IT companies and their innovative approaches to online and technical business development in the region. There are 2 Formal Presentations as well as one Formal Written Assignment which will help students to focus on various aspects of communication such as tone and style, reader/writer awareness, vocabulary use, and the expression of logic. With the implementation of such critical assessment tools as teacher and peer feedback, individual and small group consultations as well as assignment debriefing sessions, students are given ample opportunities to benefit from as much teacher and peer feedback as possible. The formal assessments are designed to fully integrate and explore the various aspects of both language and business content that are discussed throughout the course.

Note: Detailed descriptions of Assessment Criteria for each assessed task are available via the course website at: <http://www.busi1504.org>.

Individual and Small Group Assessments

There is also a mixture of individual and small group assessment elements as formal presentations are evaluated according to individual and small group performance. Because the course is largely built around small group discussions, class participation is crucial to the success of the course. With this in mind, individual students are given timely feedback from their peers, as well as continuous feedback and evaluations from their teachers.

VIII. Academic Conduct

A. Participation and Attendance:

Active participation in all class activities is essential for developing effective communication and language skills. As the participation mark accounts for **20% of the final grade**, students are expected to

contribute both in class and in their group based projects and presentations. Actively participating in all activities will create an enjoyable and productive learning environment for everyone in the classroom.

Respecting and listening to others, as well as attending classes in a timely and consistent manner are expected in all classes. Guidelines for Class Participation and other Formal Assessment details will be distributed and discussed during the first class meeting.

Please Note: *Those who miss THREE classes without the proper documentation, and who fail to comply with the class attendance requirements, will automatically receive a warning letter from the faculty. These students may also be in danger of failing the course due to the specified attendance and course requirements.*

B. Writing and Plagiarism:

Plagiarism is an academic offence. If plagiarism is suspected in a students' written work, then the student will be required to give sufficient evidence to their teacher to prove that their work has NOT been plagiarized. If it is a serious case, then the matter will be referred to the Faculty of Business and Economics directly.

Note: Referencing, incorporating the ideas of others and writing formal acknowledgements are normal academic procedure and, therefore, these are an important set of skills for students to learn. For more information on this issue, please refer to the University of Hong Kong guidelines as set out in the HKU Academic Calendar.

C. Observation of Due Dates & Submission of Assignments:

It is expected that all hard copies of formal assignments will be submitted to course instructors on the appropriate due dates during the specified class sessions. Students will also be required to submit soft copies of formal assignments according to the specified due dates. They will be prompted to submit their assignment via the "Turn it In" button on the course website. If students are late due to illness or various other extenuating circumstances, then the instructor should be notified (in confidence) as soon as possible. A medical note should be attached to the late submission for the teacher's records.

IX. Course Schedule

BUSI1504 Course Schedule

Week	Class Activity	Assignments
#1	Course Overview (Objectives/Schedule/Assessments) Growing Up Online – Video 1 Pre-Course Questionnaire	
#2	Google Article – Searching Behavior & Questionnaire Template Introduction to Mini-Research Project Growing Up Online – Video 2	

#3	Growing Up Online – Videos 2 & 3 Report Writing 1	Case Study 1 Reading Homework
#4	Case Study 1: Jewellworld.com Developing an Online Product Marketing Strategy Report Writing 2	
#5	Case Study 1: Jewellworld.com cont. Developing an Online Product Marketing Strategy Report Writing 3	
#6	Developing an Online Product Marketing Strategy Persuasive Presentations Skills Review	
#7	Marketing Strategy Presentations	Marketing Plan Presentations
	Reading Week	
#8	Growing Up Online – Video 4 Marketing Strategy Presentations Feedback Draft Report Feedback	Case Study 2 Reading Homework
#9	Case Study 2: Go2xpert Mini-Research Project Planning Report Writing 4	
#10	Case Study 2: Go2xpert Informative Presentation Review & Practice Report Writing 5 Final Research Reports Peer Evaluation	
#11	Formal Group Presentations & Instructor Feedback	Formal Presentations
#12	Formal Group Presentations & Instructor Feedback Course Wrap Up and Post Course Questionnaire	Formal Presentations Final Written Report Due