

Course Syllabus
BUSI1504: Business Communication for Technical Professionals
Fall 2011

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Course Introduction

This course will help students to further develop and enhance their Business Communication skills through the study of selected case studies based within the technical professions. It will also require students to design and conduct a short research project which will last throughout the semester. In each case, the course materials are based upon authentic examples of companies currently involved in various aspects of online and technical business. 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; further developing accuracy and logic in writing, and integrating and presenting their findings with regard to relevant technical applications and 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 so 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 activities and in-class discussions.

Course Objectives:

Primary Aim:

To further enhance and develop communication skills, problem solving skills and critical thinking skills within the context of business studies.

Learning Aims and Intended Learning Outcomes include the following:

I. Communication Skills Development:

Aim: Further develop and enhance communications skills, language learning and 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 formal business reports.
- Utilize in-class discussions and presentations to further enhance effective oral communication skills.
- Negotiate and support various solutions to complex problems by utilizing relevant research and evidence.
- Acquire and incorporate relevant vocabulary in both written as well as oral tasks and activities.
- Develop listening proficiency by performing numerous in-class activities using video and additional multimedia materials.

BUSI 1504 Business Communication for Technical Professionals

- Apply and integrate knowledge acquired from case studies and related topics to build confidence and proficiency in all four language skills.

II. Case Study Analysis:

Aim: To develop effective business communication skills through case study analysis.

Learning Outcomes:

Students should be able to

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

III. Research & Analytical Skills:

Learning Outcomes:

Students should be able to

- Demonstrate effective research and analytical competencies by completing a mini-research project on the internet searching behavior patterns of HKU students.
- Investigate relevant topics and determine important issues by formulating questionnaires for the research project.
- Assess and evaluate the reliability and credibility of online information sources.

IV. Interpersonal Communication Skills:

Learning Outcomes:

Students should be able to

- Interact and participate confidently in group based tasks, discussions and presentations.

BUSI 1504 Business Communication for Technical Professionals

- 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.

Lesson Format: All lessons will be conducted for 110min.

First Half – 55min:

Students will primarily explore the course case studies and related material to give themselves sufficient background knowledge for the mini-research project and written tasks in the second part of the lesson. Student will also participate in critical thinking activities, in-class discussions and speaking tasks within this part of the lesson.

Second Half – 55min:

Students will primarily use this time to work on improving their written communication skills in order for them to be prepared for the written assignments. Additional time will also be given to review report writing and presentation skills. Students will also have the opportunity to have in class consultations with instructors to discuss their assignments and progress throughout the course to ensure that the learning objectives are met.

BUSI 1504 Business Communication for Technical Professionals

Fall 2011 Course Schedule

Session	Class Activity	Assignments
#1	Course Overview (Objectives/Schedule/Assessments) Growing Up Online – Video 1	
#2	Google Article – Searching Behavior & Questionnaire Template Introduction to Mini-Research Project Growing Up Online – Video 2 Endnote Workshop (1-hour) at Main Library (Venue: e-learning lab, G/F, Main Library)	
#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 Written Report First Draft due
#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 Draft Report Feedback / 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	Formal Presentations Written Report Final Due

Formal Assessments

Oral and Written Assessments

The formal assessments within BUSI 1504 are carefully integrated into the course materials. The central articles, business cases and video excerpts are all built around the major theme of the course which explores the relationship between today's youth and their involvement with the online environment. The Oral and

BUSI 1504 Business Communication for Technical Professionals

Written assessments are designed to allow students to benefit from as much instructor and peer feedback as possible. The final assessments on the course have been designed to “tie together” the various “threads” of language and content skills that have been introduced throughout the course. The assessments are also designed to further challenge students’ analytical and problem-solving skills by building on the skills that are introduced through a step-by-step approach. This process culminates in the final written report and oral presentation which focuses on the mini-research project that each student has explored and discussed throughout the semester.

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 feedback from their peers, as well as feedback and evaluations from their teachers.

Formal Assignments & Schedule

Week	Due Date	Assignment	Weighting
7	11 Oct	Written Report (first draft)	10%
9	25 Oct	Marketing Plan Presentations	25%
14	29 Nov	Written Report (Final)	25%
13	22 Nov	Formal Group Presentations	30%
14	29 Nov	Formal Group Presentations	
Class Participation – Throughout the course			10%



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 **10% 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.

BUSI 1504 Business Communication for Technical Professionals

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 student's written work, then the student will be required to give sufficient evidence to their instructor to prove that their work has NOT been plagiarised. 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 formal assignments will be submitted on the appropriate due dates during the specified class session. 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 instructor's records.