

Spring 2008
COMM 380 – Advanced Business Presentations
INSTRUCTIONAL POLICIES AND SYLLABUS

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Course Description

Oral presentation skills in a business or professional setting can have a tremendous effect on individuals' careers. This course seeks to provide students with the opportunity to explore and experience oral presentations within a variety of organizational contexts. Hence, this course involves the preparation of multiple presentations for a single organization (identified by the student) over the course of the semester. These presentations will include a technical presentation, a sales presentation, a ceremonial presentation, a risk presentation, and a crisis response delivered via a press conference. Students will also learn and utilize PowerPoint technology to enhance a presentation.

Course Objectives:

By the end of this semester, you will have:

1. Heightened your awareness of the importance of oral communication in professional settings;
 2. Become more confident and accomplished when giving oral presentations;
 3. Gained familiarity with the concepts and theories relevant to communication in professional contexts;
 4. Learned to recognize varied professional situations and create appropriate responses; and
 5. Gained an appreciation of the importance of ethical practices in professional communication situations.
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Required Text:

DiSanza, J. R. & Legge, N. J. (2005). Business and professional communication: Plans, processes, and performance (3rd Ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Additional readings will be available on WebCT

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND POLICIES:

1) **ATTENDANCE POLICY.** This class relies heavily on your input as a student participating in class discussions and as an audience member for your colleagues' presentations. Therefore, your regular, prompt class attendance is necessary and required. As in modern business settings, your attendance and promptness can be rewarded or penalized. As in many organizational settings today, you will be supplied with a time bank from which absences will be withdrawn. Each time bank contains 3 days worth of class time. This time will be used for all absences, unless prior arrangements are made with the instructor. After these days have been used, 3 points per class session missed will be deducted from your final grade.

On the first day of class, we will begin covering material. Therefore, attendance will be taken and will count beginning the first day of the course. If any of your friends are enrolled in this course, and do not attend the first day, tell them to contact me immediately!

****Bonus**** Students with perfect attendance will receive 5 points extra credit at the end of the semester. For the purpose of this bonus, perfect attendance is defined as having no absences or significant tardies.

I do not usually excuse absences (with the exception of documented official events where you are a representative of the College, documented family emergencies, and long term illnesses). If you are absent, you are absent. You have 3 days to use at your discretion; use them wisely.

*****ATTENDANCE IS MANDATORY ON ALL PRESENTATION DAYS.
DAYS IN THE TIMEBANK CANNOT BE USED FOR PRESENTATION DAYS.*****

Please note: *You are responsible for class notes in case you are absent. You will have to rely on the generosity of your classmates to allow you to copy their class notes. Assignment due dates do not change because of students' absences. If you are absent the day an assignment is due, the assignment is still due. Either have a friend deliver it or email it to me, if appropriate. It is your responsibility to make sure you know your assigned presentation date. Late assignments will not be accepted.*

2) **ASSIGNMENTS:** Expectations for oral presentations—all oral presentations should be presented clearly, actively, and within the given time limits. Practice your presentations so you can deliver the presentations smoothly while maintaining eye contact with the audience. You may not use the podium for any presentation other than the News Conference. For all other presentations you must stand in front of the class and move around the room. Time limits will be strictly enforced. Each presentation will have a time limit with a 30 second grace period either way. Presentations will be docked 5% of the total possible points for each 30 seconds they are over or under the grace period. For instance, if the Technical Presentation runs 5 minutes 12 seconds instead of the assigned 3-4 minutes it will lose 6 points for time penalties.

- A) Organization Paper:** The first assignment for this course will be to select an organization upon which to base all of the other assignments. This paper requires you to select an appropriate organization, research it to make sure it is suited for the rest of the assignments, and write a 3-4 page paper explaining your choice. This paper will make an argument persuading me that the organization is large enough and complex enough to support the remaining assignments. Only one student may select each organization. Let me know your choice soon so I can hold it for you. Once an organization has been selected, it will be posted on WebCT under the “Approved and Selected Organizations” icon. Organizations appearing on this list have already been selected and are not available for other students.
- B) Outlines:** Each Presentation Assignment will require an outline to be written and turned into me in advance. These outlines will encourage you to begin preparing for the presentation beforehand and allow me to help guide you and give advice about the presentations. Outlines should follow the format found under the “Format” and “Outline Format” icons on WebCT and must use complete sentences, be typed, proofread, and include sources. Use APA style citations for all written assignments, unless otherwise specified by the assignment. APA stylesheets will be available under the “Format” and “APA Stylesheets” icons on WebCT. Specific requirements for each outline will be included in the appropriate presentation assignment sheet.
- C) Technical Presentation:** This presentation will inform the class about the company you have chosen to research for the semester. It should give us a general overview of what the organization does, its major product lines, its history, the reasons you find it interesting, or any other information you think will help us understand the following presentations. This briefing will be 3-4 minutes long.
- D) Proposal Presentation:** In this group presentation, you will work with your classmates to discover, research, and create a way to solve a problem facing an organization with which you are familiar, the College of Charleston. Only one group may discuss each problem. As soon as your group has selected one, let me know and I will hold it for you. This group presentation will be 10-12 minutes long.
- E) Questions for Proposal Presenter:** If you cannot answer audience questions about your proposal, the chances of it being accepted will plummet. Each student will be assigned to ask at least 3 questions to a proposal presenter: 1 neutral question, 1 hostile question, and one follow-up question.
- F) Group Practices Memo:** Each group member will write a two-page memo discussing the group’s processes during the proposal assignment. In this memo, you will give and justify for each member of your group, including yourself, a numerical grade describing that group member’s performance throughout the semester. Since no two people can perform in the same way, no two group members can receive the same score. A portion of each group member’s grade (**Group Member Behavior**) will be based on the comments of his/her group members, along with my observations of the group member’s actions and interactions.

- G) Sales Presentation:** Regardless of the position you fill in an organization, you will have to sell something to be successful. This presentation is designed to help you analyze your audience and use that information to build an effective sales pitch. Select a product or service that your organization provides (you may request donations or volunteers if you have chosen a nonprofit) and sell it to the class. This presentation will also give you experience answering audience questions. This presentation will be 4-5 minutes long.
- H) Questions for Sales Presenter:** If you cannot answer audience questions about your product your sales totals will plummet. Each student will be assigned to ask at least 3 questions to a sales presenter: 1 neutral question, 1 hostile question, and one follow-up question.
- I) Risk Presentation:** Virtually every organization must inform or persuade its employees and communities about risks related to its operation. Manufacturing facilities often use dangerous substances, governments have to make difficult decisions about construction and regulation, and transportation organizations face accidents and spills. As a communication specialist at an organization, you will be expected to communicate with various publics about risks. In this assignment, you will choose to either inform or persuade an audience about a risk and prepare a 6-8 minute presentation, using appropriate strategies, to reach the goals you have set.
- J) Impromptu Crisis Statement:** About the only thing organizational practitioners can be sure of about crises is that they will happen and they will need to be responded to. When crisis strikes communicators have very little time to prepare statements about the situation. To help you prepare for this experience, you will be given a crisis situation and only a few minutes to prepare and deliver a statement about the crisis. The statement should be 2-3 minutes long.
- K) Quizzes and Unannounced Impromptus:** Throughout the course of the semester surprise quizzes and will be given at the beginning of class to set the stage for lecture and discussion. Also, as time and circumstances allow, unannounced opportunities for impromptu speaking will be provided to help you become comfortable with speaking in front of a group and preparing remarks on short notice.
- L) Exams:** This course will include 2 exams, a midterm and a final. They will include a combination of multiple choice, matching, short answer, and essay questions. They will cover material from the textbook, WebCT, lecture, and class discussions. Exams will *not* be cumulative.
- 3) WebCT.** Certain course materials (links, samples, reading materials, etc.) will be available on WebCT. You are responsible for checking WebCT before every class. All materials for the following class will be posted no later than 5 pm the day before the class meets. Reach WebCT by clicking on the link at www.cofc.edu. You will use your Cougar Trail identification number and pin to access WebCT.

- 4) **TECHNOLOGY POLICY.** You are welcome to use electronic devices that will aid your learning during most classes (i.e., laptops, PDAs, tape recorders). Please turn off all cell phones during class unless you must be contacted in event of emergency (i.e., you are a first responder). If you must be reachable, please turn the ringer to vibrate to avoid disturbing the class. All electronic devices, including cell phones, must be turned off and put away (under your desk, in your bag, etc.) during all quizzes, tests, and presentations. Any electronic devices actively used in class for non-class purposes (cell phones answered, used for texting, etc.) will be confiscated.
- 5) **EMAIL:** Email is a very effective and time-efficient way of communicating about many course issues. To protect your privacy, College of Charleston policy only allows me to discuss grades over Edisto email accounts. Please use your Edisto account when asking any grade related questions. Otherwise, you will have to resend the question to me via your Edisto account, wasting both of our time.
- 6) **HONOR CODE.** Lying, cheating, attempted cheating, and plagiarism are violations of our Honor Code that, when identified, are investigated. Each instance is examined to determine the degree of deception involved.

Incidents where the professor believes the student's actions are clearly related more to ignorance, miscommunication, or uncertainty, can be addressed by consultation with the student. We will craft a written resolution designed to help prevent the student from repeating the error in the future. The resolution, submitted by form and signed by both the professor and the student, is forwarded to the Dean of Students and remains on file.

Cases of suspected academic dishonesty will be reported directly to the Dean of Students. A student found responsible for academic dishonesty will receive a XF in the course, indicating failure of the course due to academic dishonesty. This grade will appear on the student's transcript for two years after which the student may petition for the X to be expunged. The student may also be placed on disciplinary probation, suspended (temporary removal) or expelled (permanent removal) from the College by the Honor Board.

It is important for students to remember that unauthorized collaboration--working together without permission-- is a form of cheating. Unless a professor specifies that students can work together on an assignment and/or test, no collaboration is permitted. Other forms of cheating include possessing or using an unauthorized study aid (such as a PDA), copying from another's exam, fabricating data, and giving unauthorized assistance.

Remember, research conducted and/or papers written for other classes cannot be used in whole or in part for any assignment in this class without obtaining prior permission from the professor.

Students can find a complete version of the Honor Code and all related processes in the *Student Handbook* at http://www.cofc.edu/studentaffairs/general_info/studenthandbook.html.

- 7) **OFFICE HOURS.** Please come by my office to discuss papers, assignments, presentations, and problems that may arise. I can't help you if you don't ask for help. If my office hours are not convenient for you, we can arrange another time to meet. You can call 953-8289 and leave a message on the answering machine if you need to contact me, and don't forget you can e-mail me at davisj@cofc.edu. Face-to-face meetings are best to solve complex problems and review documents.
- 8) **EVALUATION QUESTIONS.** I am willing to discuss assignment grades in my office no less than 24 hours after an assignment has been returned. This service will end 2 weeks after the assignment has been returned to you. I never discuss grades or evaluations immediately after returning the documents. I take time considering your grades and you cannot make an accurate assessment of the grade until you take the time to examine the comments in light of the assignment and your work. To protect your privacy, these discussions will only be held in my office. You don't want your classmates hearing us discuss your grade.
- 9) **DISABILITIES ACCOMODATION.** Any student who, because of a disability, may require special arrangements in order to meet course requirements, should contact the instructor as soon as possible to make such accommodations as may be necessary. The deadline for student notification of the instructor concerning the need for such arrangements is January 18, 2008.
- 10) **CLASSROOM CLIMATE.** This class is most fun and effective when everyone feels comfortable sharing his/her experiences, examples, and ideas. For this to occur, you need to not only express your own opinions, but also to be receptive to the opinions and experiences of others. You are likely to hear class members express ideas and opinions very different from your own in presentations, class discussion, and group meetings. Be polite and respectful when discussing ideas, i.e. "I think this would have been more effective than what the organization did," rather than "That's the dumbest idea I've ever heard" or, worse yet, "You're an idiot." In short, be respectful of others.
- 11) **GRADING.** Grading for each assignment will be clearly explained in the assignment sheet available on WebCT under the "Assignment Pack" icon. Please ask any questions about how an assignment will be graded before completing the assignment.

Grades will be comprised of the following assignments:

Organization Paper	25 points	A	=	500-465 points
Technical Presentation Outline	6 points	A-	=	464-450 points
Technical Presentation	30 points	B+	=	449-435 points
Proposal Presentation Outline	10 points	B	=	434-415 points
Proposal Presentation	50 points	B-	=	414-400 points
Questions for Proposal Presenters	6 points	C+	=	399-385 points
Proposal Group Practices Memo	10 points	C	=	384-365 points
Group Member Behavior	20 points	C-	=	364-350 points

Midterm Exam	75 Points	D+	=	349-335 points
Sales Presentation Outline	10 points	D	=	334-315 points
Sales Presentation	50 points	D-	=	314-300 points
Questions for the Sales Presenter	6 points	F	=	299- 0 points
Risk Presentation Outline	12 points			
Risk Presentation	65 points			
Impromptu Crisis Statement	30 points			
Final Exam	75 Points			
Quizzes and Unannounced Impromptus	20 points			
Total	500 points			

TENTATIVE COURSE & ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE

DATE	TOPIC	ASSIGNMENT DUE	READING DUE
			DL = DiSanza & Legge Book WebCT = WebCT Links
January 9 Wednesday	Introduction to the Course & Presentations		
January 11 Friday	Communication in Business & Professional Contexts		DL Ch. 1
January 14 Monday	Planning the Presentation: Purpose		DL Ch. 7 (pp. 142-146)
January 15 Tuesday	Last day of Drop/Add		
January 16 Wednesday	Planning the Presentation: Audience		DL Ch. 6
January 18 Friday	Planning the Presentation: Narrowing the Topic		DL Ch. 7 (pp. 146-156)
January 21 Monday	Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday	No Class	
January 23 Wednesday	Planning the Presentation: Research and Evidence	**Organization Paper Due**	DL Ch. 7 (pp. 146-156)
January 25 Friday	Planning the Presentation: Organization and Reasoning		DL Ch. 7 (pp. 156-174)
January 28 Monday	Preparing Technical Presentations		DL Ch. 9
January 30	Delivering	**Technical	

Wednesday	Professional Presentations	Presentation Outline Due**	
February 1 Friday	Listening in Professional Contexts	Graduation Application Due	DL Ch. 3
February 4 Monday	Student Presentations	**Technical Presentations Due**	
February 6 Wednesday	Student Presentations	**Technical Presentations Due**	
February 8 Friday	Student Presentations	**Technical Presentations Due**	
February 11 Monday	Creating and Speaking in Groups		DL Ch. 5
February 13 Wednesday	Persuasion in Professional Contexts		DL Ch. 10 (pp. 232-251)
February 15 Friday	Creating Professional Proposals		DL Ch. 10 (pp. 224-232)
February 18 Monday	Creating and using Professional Presentation Aids	**Proposal Outlines Due** Deadline for Withdrawal with a "W"	DL Ch. 8
February 20 Wednesday	Asking and Answering Questions		WebCT: Asking and Answering Questions
February 22 Friday	Student Presentations	**Group Proposal Presentations**	
February 25 Monday	Student Presentations	**Group Proposal Presentations**	
February 27 Wednesday	Student Presentations Review for Exam	**Group Proposal Presentations and Questions for Presenters Due**	Print Exam Review Sheet off WebCT and come with questions
February 29 Friday	**Midterm Exam**		Study Hard!
March 3 Monday	Spring Break	No Class	
March 5 Wednesday	Spring Break	No Class	
March 7 Friday	Spring Break	No Class	
March 10 Monday	Sales Presentations		DL Ch. 11
March 12 Wednesday	Sales Presentations, Cont.	**Group Practices Memo Due**	WebCT: Sales Presentations
March 14 Friday	Power & Interpersonal Relations in Professional Contexts	**Sales Presentation Outline Due**	DL Ch. 4

March 17 Monday	Power & Interpersonal Relationships, Cont.		
March 19 Wednesday	Student Presentations	**Sales Presentations Due**	
March 21 Friday	Student Presentations	**Sales Presentations Due**	
March 24 Monday	Student Presentations	**Sales Presentations and Questions for Presenters Due**	
March 26 Wednesday	Risk Communication in Professional Contexts		DL Ch. 12
March 28 Friday	Risk Communication		WebCT: Risk Communication
March 31 Monday	When you are the Message: Credibility	**Risk Presentation Outline Due**	WebCT: Credibility
April 2 Wednesday	When the worst happens: Crisis Communication		DL Ch. 13 (pp. 293-305)
April 4 Friday	Student Presentations	**Risk Presentations Due**	
April 7 Monday	Student Presentations	**Risk Presentations Due**	
April 9 Wednesday	Student Presentations	**Risk Presentations Due**	
April 11 Friday	Read about and Reflect on your Organization in Preparation of the Crisis Assignment	No Class	
April 14 Monday	Student Presentations	**Risk Presentations and Questions for Presenters Due**	
April 16 Wednesday	Crisis Communication Message Strategies		DL Ch. 13 (pp. 305-330)
April 18 Friday	Crisis Communication Sample Messages		WebCT: Crisis Communication
April 21 Monday	Student Presentations	**Impromptu Crisis Statements Due**	
April 23 Wednesday	Student Presentations Review for exam	** Impromptu Crisis Statements Due**	Print Review Sheet off of WebCT and come with questions
May 2 Friday 12-3	Final Exam		Study Hard

Note: All readings, assignments, and due dates available on this syllabus are subject to change, with adequate notice, by the instructor