

*Welcome to BA 303 for Summer II 2014! I hope to make this course interesting and relevant to today's issues in business communications so that you have a well-rounded, fundamental understanding of communicating in the workplace. Remember, I am not here to fail you - I am here to teach you. YOU just need to put forth the honest effort to complete the requirements of the syllabus and of this course.*

You may post questions to the Virtual Office, however I will only check this about once a day. So, if you have something urgent, use email. I will answer emails within 24 hours – emails are not guaranteed answered between Fri 10 pm to Mon 8 am. Since this is such a short course, email is best.

You can also find me on Yahoo Messenger at [drjenflanagan@yahoo.com](mailto:drjenflanagan@yahoo.com)!

*If you have any questions, please email me – I check my email several times throughout the day.*

[Jennifer.Flanagan@tamuc.edu](mailto:Jennifer.Flanagan@tamuc.edu)

### **About the Instructor:**

Greetings! I am Jennifer Flanagan, instructor for this course. I graduated with my BS in Business Administration from TAMU-C in 1998, my MBA from Texas Woman's University in 2004, and I graduated with my PhD in Educational Psychology (BA minor) in December of 2009. I am also a certified Texas Educator (grades 4-8 Math and 4-8 generalist).

Before teaching, I worked for 4 years as an HR/Payroll manager and Retail Manager. I began teaching in 2002 (5<sup>th</sup> grade) and taught for 4 years (Math, Science, and Social Studies, grades 5-12), as well as coaching for 2 years (tennis and cheerleading). I left teaching in 2006 to pursue my PhD full time and stay home with my son. I began teaching at TAMU-C in the Spring of 2005 as an adjunct faculty, and began teaching full time in 2006. I am currently an Assistant Professor.

I live outside of Commerce with my husband, two sons and a daughter.



## BA 303.01W

### Business Communications

Summer II 2014

**Instructor:** Dr. Jennifer L. Flanagan, PhD  
College of Business and Entrepreneurship, BA & MIS Department

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(Emails answered within 24 hrs/ emails not answered Fri 5 pm to Mon 8 am)

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#### Textbook:

Thill & Bovee. Excellence in Business Communication. 10<sup>th</sup> Edition. ISBN 13: 978-0-13-271904-9

**Course Prerequisite:** Junior Standing

**Course Classification:** Core Business Course

**Course Description:** A study of the fundamentals of writing both formal and informal reports, utilizing primary and secondary research. A team approach is used for problem solving and process improvement. Included is the study of life-long learning skills as related to interpersonal communication and intercultural business communication.

#### Course Objectives:

- Students will understand how businesses communicate through formal and informal communication networks.
- Students will be able to recognize communication meanings that are rooted in cultural experience.
- Students will demonstrate techniques to graphically communicate information for written and oral communication.
- Students will understand the ethical goals of business communication and tools for communicating ethically in business.

**Online Course:** This course is ONLINE, which means that assignment details, schedule changes, and other important announcements will be posted online, so it is VITAL that you check your eCollege course several times during the week. Contact me and/or technical support if you are not able to log onto eCollege the first week of classes. Students are required to complete designated assignments online. Unless otherwise indicated, assignments should be submitted in the DropBox in eCollege.

Please make sure that your email address is kept current in both eCollege and myLeo. When I need to contact you, I will use your myLeo email address (the email address provided on myLeo). If you do not know how to access your myLeo account, are having issues with your myLeo account, please get them resolved as soon as possible.

**University Attendance Policy:** Since this is an online course, your attendance is monitored according to your online participation (i.e. discussions, see below). Per University Procedure 13.99.99.R0.01, effective September 1, 1996, students are responsible for learning about and complying with the attendance policy stated in the catalog, Student's Guidebook, and/or faculty syllabus. The student is responsible for providing the faculty member reason(s) for his/her absence. You will be allowed to make-up work for classes you miss only if your absence is excusable. Excusable absences are defined in the current University Catalog.

**Attendance and Online Discussions:** I expect you to participate in discussions. **THIS IS YOUR ATTENDANCE!!** As designated on the schedule, students will be required to post discussions to topics posed online. Questions are to be answered fully and discussions are to be professional, courteous, intelligent, and well-thought-out. **Part of the online discussion grade is posting responses as requested in the discussion instructions. Points will be deducted if response requirements are not met. Additionally, late discussions will NOT be accepted!** Any questions about the online discussions should be directed to the instructor.

Keep in mind that failure to post at all will result in student not receiving any participation points. In order to achieve the highest possible score for discussion participation, students should post at least the minimum replies to show active engagement in the discussion. Once the discussions have been closed, they will not be re-opened. Grades awarded for

each discussion reflect an average of the three components (i.e., participation, timeliness, and content/subject knowledge/critical thinking). **It is critical that students read ALL the postings for each topic. This will ensure that you not only respond to the topic questions but to your colleagues' comments as well. Also, it will help in ensuring against anyone plagiarizing your work.**

IMPORTANT POSTING RULES:

- 1) Postings may be a few sentences or a couple of paragraphs in length. The key to a quality post is that it provides clear analysis and insight into the topic or questions. Your postings will be carefully read.
- 2) Note that long-winded postings are not necessary. The idea is for quality rather than quantity.
- 3) Plagiarism among students (copying others' postings) will **NOT** be tolerated. Please note that TAMU-C has explicit rules regarding plagiarism and will be subject to penalties. Students are advised to carefully read everyone's postings to ensure that no one has plagiarized your answer.
- 4) Students with very FEW or NO SUBSTANTIVE postings will not receive the highest credit.
- 5) Proof your postings and eliminate any offensive references, poor sentence syntax, misspelled words, etc. Keep errors to a minimum.

**Exams:** Exams are scheduled on the course schedule and are available under each corresponding week. You will be able to log into the test, print it out, and work on it, then go back and enter your answers.

**Students with Disabilities:** The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

**Office of Student Disability Resources and Services**  
**Texas A&M University-Commerce**  
**Gee Library, Room 132**  
**Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835, Fax (903) 468-8148**  
[StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu](mailto:StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu)

**Classroom Demeanor:** "All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment." See Student's Guide Book. Please turn off all cell phones, make sure you are on time to class, and, if you have a personal issue that needs to be addressed during class, take care of it in the quietest way possible.

**Academic Honesty:** Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Instructors "are expected to uphold and support student integrity and honesty by maintaining conditions that encourage and enforce academic honesty. Conduct that violates generally accepted standards of academic honesty is defined as academic dishonesty. "Academic dishonesty" includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism (the appropriation or stealing of the ideas or words of another and passing them off as one's own), cheating on quizzes and exams or other course assignments, collusion (the unauthorized collaboration with others in preparing course assignments), and abuse (destruction, defacing, or removal) of resource material." See 13.99.99.R0.10 Academic Honesty at [http://www.tamuc.edu/administration/Rules%26Procedures/rules\\_procedures.asp?RID=97](http://www.tamuc.edu/administration/Rules%26Procedures/rules_procedures.asp?RID=97)

Some seem to believe that anything found on the Internet is free to use as they please. The "cut and paste" option also makes it easy to plagiarize. The following web site provides valuable insight relating to what constitutes plagiarism and how it may be avoided: <http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/wts/plagiarism.html/>. To avoid plagiarism and individual must give credit wherever he or she uses:

- another individual's idea, opinion, or theory
- facts, statistics, graphs, and drawings that are not common knowledge
- quotations of another individual's spoken or written words
- paraphrase another individual's spoken or written words

Any deviation from the guidelines concerning quotes and citations constitutes plagiarism, as it suggests that you are trying to submit someone else's work and creativity as your own. In accordance with the Texas A&M University-Commerce Code of Student Conduct Section 5.b [1, 2, 3], the penalties for students guilty of academic dishonesty include disciplinary probation, suspension, and expulsion. If you have any questions, please let me know. Anyone caught plagiarizing will receive an "F" for the course and could be referred to the Dean of the College of Business and Technology and/or the Dean of Students.

**First time eCollege users:** eCollege is generally very user friendly; however, should you have any questions or concerns about it, you may want to complete an eCollege orientation. You can access the online eCollege Orientation by clicking on the following link: <http://online.tamuc.org/> The home page will give you directions on how to proceed from there. Your login is your Campus-wide ID # and your password is the same as you use for Webtrax, which is now your MyLeo password.

**Technical Support:** If at any time you experience technical problems (e.g., you can't log in to the course, you can't see certain material, etc.) please contact the eCollege Help Desk, available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The Help Desk can be reached by sending an email to [helpdesk@online.tamuc.org](mailto:helpdesk@online.tamuc.org) or by calling 1-866-656-5511. Additionally, you can click on the "Help" button located at the top of each page for more information.

**Grading:**

Discussions (3)	10%	Persuasive/Negative Letter	10%
3 Memos	15%	Employment Communication	15%
Questionnaire	10%	Report	10%
Midterm Exam	15%	Final Exam	15%

**100%**

<b>100-90%</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>89-80%</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>79-70%</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>69-60%</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>Below 60%</b>	<b>F</b>
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**Assignments:** Assignments are due according to the schedule, unless otherwise altered by the instructor. Late assignments will be accepted but with point reductions and only under certain circumstances. Please try to have everything in the dropbox by the due date. Grammar, sentence structure, and the general flow of the document will be assessed.

Assignments are as follows:

Letters and Memos

- 3 Memos (horizontal, upward, and downward communication)
- Persuasive Letter
- Bad News/Negative Letter

Employment Communication

- Letter of Resignation
- Cover Letter
- Resume

Report/Questionnaire

- Informal Business Report
- Questionnaire

**Assignment Grading Rubrics**

**Report Grading Rubric**

At least 2 pages	15 points	_____
Use at least 1 graphic	10 points	_____
Organization and Flow (i.e. readability)	20 points	_____
Grammar/Spelling	15 points	_____
Look	20 points	_____
Spacing, graphic highlighting, etc		
APA Style	15 points	_____
Reference Section	5 points	_____

**100 points TOTAL** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Questionnaire Grading Rubric**

At least 10 questions	10 points	_____
Introductory paragraph	10 points	_____
At least 2 questions of each type	20 points	_____
Does the questionnaire meet the research objective	20 points	_____
Question “flow” (are the questions flowing, making it easy to read)	20 points	_____
Grammar/Spelling	10 points	_____
Look	5 points	_____
Are questions spaced out, easy to read		
APA Style	5 points	_____

**100 points TOTAL** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Letter/Memo Rubric**

Proper Heading and Proper Salutation (if applicable)	20 points	_____
Length Requirements	20 points	_____
Direction	20 points	_____
Is this written to the appropriate target in the appropriate way (i.e. written UP to a supervisor, or DOWN to a subordinate)		
Use of Graphic Highlighting	15 points	_____
Audience Evaluation	10 points	_____
Is the communication Direct or Indirect, as needed?		
Has the audience been written TO?		
Grammar/Spelling	10 points	_____
APA Style	5 points	_____

**100 points TOTAL** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Resume**

Proper Title	20 points	_____
Objectives Statement	10 points	_____
Length Requirements	20 points	_____
Proper organization	20 points	_____
(i.e. chronological, subject, etc.)		
Use of Graphic Highlighting	10 points	_____
Grammar/Spelling	20 points	_____

**100 points TOTAL** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Discussion Grading Rubric**

Did you follow the topic/answer the questions?	70 points	_____
Posts are respectful and professional	20 points	_____
Grammar/Spelling and References (if applicable)	10 points	_____

## Tentative Class Schedule

### Week 1 (7/7-7/13)

Chapters 1-4  
**Discussion 1** (due by Friday, 11:59 pm)

### Week 2 (7/14-7/20)

Chapters 5-8  
**MIDTERM Exam (open 7/18-7/21) – due by 11:59 pm on 7/21**  
**\*\*Review will be posted under course announcements**

### Week 3 (7/21-7/27)

Chapters 8-10  
**Discussion 2** (due by Friday, 11:59 pm)  
**Discussion 3** (due by Friday, 11:59 pm)

### Week 4 (7/28-8/3)

Chapter 11-14  
**NO DISCUSSION**  
**3 Memos (Upward, Downward, Horizontal) and 2 Letters (Sales & Negative)**  
**Employment Communication (Resume, Cover Letter, and Resignation Letter)**  
**Due by 11:59 pm 8/3**

### Week 5 (8/4-8/8)

**FINAL Exam (open 8/1-8/5) – due by 11:59 pm on 8/6**  
**NO DISCUSSION**  
**\*\*Review will be posted under course announcements**  
**Business Report and Questionnaire Due by 11:59 pm 8/5**

*\* Submit all assignments to the dropbox (please submit each assignment in the appropriate dropbox!)*  
*\*\*All assignments will be automatically scanned through turnitin.com*  
*\*\*\*Late assignments will only be accepted under limited excuse and for possibility large point deductions. Please try to get everything in on time (or early)!*

# Explanation of Assignments

**\*\*For all assignments, there are sample documents in docsharing – take a look!\*\***

## Memos –

- A memo is internal communication (within a company).
- You will need to write three memos total: horizontal, upward, and downward. The direction refers to the intended audience, or the direction in which the memo flows. For instance, a horizontal memo is between two co-workers on the same level, upward is from a subordinate to a supervisor, and downward is from supervisor down to subordinate.
- Use the proper memo headings and set up.
- You can make up the subject, titles, names, company, etc. As long as your subject is related to business interactions. I had someone write a memo from the Head Elf to Santa about the possible toy shortage and need for elves to work overtime! I have had others write the memos in response to each other. One would be a letter from a supervisor and another would be in response to that letter.
- Please put your name somewhere on the memo AND same ALL of your assignments with your last name in the title (for instance, FlanaganMemo1.doc).

## Letters –

- A letter is external communication (outside of a company, for instance, to vendors or customers).
- Direct is use to deliver news up front. For instance, if I know the audience, I know how they will react, the news is neutral or good, I would use direct. I would use indirect for bad news, if I don't know the audience. Most likely, you will use the indirect patter for the bad news letter, and you can choose either for the 2 sales letters. In a sales letter, the entire point is to sell something – an idea, a product, a person for a job, acceptance, etc.
- Use the proper letter headings and set up.
- Be aware of the details on writing persuasive (aka Sales) letters, including direct and indirect patterns.
- You can make up the subject, titles, names, company, etc. As long as your subject is related to business interactions. Many have used real letters they have written to companies.
- Please leave a place to sign the letters, although you will not sign them.
- For both Letters and Memos, Please put your name somewhere on the letter AND same ALL of your assignments with your last name in the title (for instance, FlanaganLetter1.doc).

## Questionnaire Requirements:

- See page 258 and sample documents in docsharing
- Create a short questionnaire to be used in business
- Your questionnaire should have at least 10 questions
- Have at least one open-ended type question
- You will not be doing a study with this questionnaire or even answering the question you are asking

**\*\*\*Submit to me the questionnaire and a one-page (2-3 paragraphs) on:**

- *Purpose of the survey/what you hope to find out*
- *Audience*
- *How it would be administered (advantages and disadvantages of various methods)*

## Letter of Resignation:

Write a letter resigning from a job (you can make it up). I will look for:

- did you give a last day to work and date the letter
- did you thank them for employing you and extend good will and good wishes

- did you give your follow-up contact information
- how much detail did you give on leaving (too much, not enough - they don't need to know EVERYTHING!)

### **Report Requirements:**

- Just as with the letters and memos, you may pick any topic to write about. You can write a supervisor on the status of a project, write your employees (from HR) about new time clock procedures, write a new vendor on procedures, write the company on the reorganization of a department - whatever you choose. You can persuade, inform, analyze - whatever!
- I am looking that you are using the correct technique (direct or indirect) depending on the news you are delivering, the style, format, and the function.
- Keep in mind the steps to the writing process.
- Make sure that you use the appropriate heading (letter or memo) depending on your audience.
- Analyze the purpose of the report (what you want to achieve), the scope of the information (you can't talk about everything), and the audience who will be reading the report (not me, but the person you would really send this report to).
- Visually, make sure to keep in mind the following: paragraphs are single spaced and double spaced between paragraphs, use between 10 and 12 pt print, and make the report easy to read and visually appealing.
- You MUST have one graphic in your report (must make sense to the information, but you can make up the data (when I say graphic, I mean a table, graph, or chart, not a company logo).
- Your report must be at least 2 FULL pages, no more than 4 pages, and your graphic cannot take up 1/2 a page (for example)!! Ideal length is 3-4 pages.
- Your graphic should summarize information NOT presented in your report. For instance, if I am doing a paper on smoking on campus, I SHOULD NOT write a paragraph summarizing the results of what the student's think about smoking then present a graph - one or the other. Graphics are used to present information that is not easily presented in paragraph form.
- This report is an Informal report, but I do want an executive summary (in a paragraph form). Remember the Memo or Letter heading (depending on who it is addressed to)
- If you do gather information from a secondary source, reference it is APA format.
- Review the power points for Chapter 10 for the parts of the report (eg: Introduction, Problem, Reasons/Support, Conclusion/Good Will Statement). As long as you get your point across and the report is organized, you should not have a problem.
- This is NOT a research report. I do not want a double-spaced paper submitted. I want a report that *looks* like the examples in the book!!!

### **Resume and Cover Letter Requirements:**

- Keep your resume to 2 pages or less.
- Choose a style - remember, the point is to accentuate your qualities, not point out your faults. For instance, if you do not have a degree, you don't want to start with your education, because that is the first thing someone will read. If you don't have the experience in the field (starting a new career), you might use a functional or combination.
- You may use your own information or make it up.
- Do not include references.
- Use action verbs to strengthen your resume.
- Remember, the cover letter is just a sales letter (selling yourself to the prospective employer). You can make up the job you are applying for or it can be a general application letter.
- Do not write a scannable resume.



## Course Rubric

Criteria (Course Objectives)	1 (Unsatisfactory)	2 (Emerging)	3 (Proficient)	4 (Exemplary)
<p><b>1. Analytical Writing Skills</b></p> <p>1.1 Students will develop the ability to express themselves in writing, including a thorough knowledge of grammar, mechanics, and basic writing skills, differentiating between positive, negative, neutral and persuasive messages.</p> <p>1.2 Students will analyze information gathered from research to draw accurate conclusions, utilize the formats for "Direct and Indirect" Communication strategies and formal and information styles of reports, and demonstrate techniques to graphically communicate information for written and oral communications</p>	<p>Student cannot effectively perform writing tasks. Work has more than an acceptable amount of grammatical and mechanical errors.</p>	<p>Student can sometimes express themselves in an adequately effective manner, sometimes pick the appropriate method of message delivery, and has several grammatical/mechanical errors.</p>	<p>Student can express themselves in a fairly effective manner, in the appropriate method most of the time, and with minimal grammar/mechanical errors.</p>	<p>Student can express themselves in an effective manner, in the appropriate method, and with no grammar/mechanics errors.</p>
<p><b>2. Business Communication Tools and Responsibilities -</b> Students will understand how businesses communicate through formal and informal communication networks as well as in groups, and understand how the ethical goals of business communication and tools for communicating ethically in business.</p>	<p>Student does not have a sufficient understanding of how businesses communicate through formal and informal communication networks as well as in groups. Student also does not have a sufficient understanding of how the ethical goals of business communication and tools for communicating ethically in business.</p>	<p>Student has an adequate understanding of how businesses communicate through formal and informal communication networks as well as in groups. Student also has an adequate understanding of how the ethical goals of business communication and tools for communicating ethically in business.</p>	<p>Student has a proficient understanding of how businesses communicate through formal and informal communication networks as well as in groups. Student also has a proficient understanding of how the ethical goals of business communication and tools for communicating ethically in business.</p>	<p>Student has an exemplary understanding of how businesses communicate through formal and informal communication networks as well as in groups. Student also has an exemplary understanding of how the ethical goals of business communication and tools for communicating ethically in business.</p>
<p><b>3. Communication Strategies -</b> Students will be able to compare and contrast active, passive, and not listening behavior as well as strategies to listen effectively while demonstrating the communication elements that are part of the communicating using the "you view."</p>	<p>Student cannot adequately compare and contrast active, passive, and not listening behavior. Student does not have sufficient knowledge of strategies to listen effectively while demonstrating the communication elements that are part of the communicating using the "you view."</p>	<p>Student can adequately compare and contrast active, passive, and not listening behavior as well as strategies to listen effectively while demonstrating the communication elements that are part of the communicating using the "you view."</p>	<p>Student is exemplary in comparing and contrasting active, passive, and not listening behavior as well as strategies to listen effectively while demonstrating the communication elements that are part of the communicating using the "you view."</p>	<p>Student is exemplary in comparing and contrasting active, passive, and not listening behavior as well as strategies to listen effectively while demonstrating the communication elements that are part of the communicating using the "you view."</p>
<p><b>4. Communication Across Cultures -</b> Students will be able to recognize communication meanings that are rooted in cultural experience.</p>	<p>Students does not recognize communication meanings and cannot make the connection to these meanings and cultural experiences.</p>	<p>Student adequately recognizes normal understanding communication meanings that are rooted in cultural experience.</p>	<p>Student proficiently recognizes communication meanings that are rooted in cultural experience.</p>	<p>Student recognizes above and beyond normal understanding communication meanings that are rooted in cultural experience.</p>