

## SAMPLE Course Outline and Syllabus

### **Course Objectives:**

The Wall Street Journal reported that corporate MBA recruiters ranked communication skills as the most important attribute they consider when evaluating applicants. According to the National Association of Colleges and Employer's latest report, "The Skills and Qualities Employers Want in Their Class of 2013 Recruits", the #1 skill/quality that employers want is the ability to verbally communicate with persons inside and outside the organization.

Communicating your ideas effectively is a critical skill in business. The goal of this course is for each of you to generate positive responses and connect with each audience in a memorable way. We make decisions with our "emotional" brain first and then look for the facts to justify our feelings.

Therefore, to persuade others to take action, you will have to appeal to their emotions as well as their rational and logical brain. We will discuss both the "thinking" and the "things" involved in successful communication. Taking a strategic approach, we will examine both what you say and how you say it, offering practical techniques and solutions for successful communication in business and personal situations.

As you sharpen your ability to analyze a presentation (both style and content) you also refine your observational skills, noticing the subtle details that make a big difference. By observing and offering feedback to your classmates you will add to your own skill set. A strength-based model for constructive feedback will be utilized. Research shows that significant improvement can be made by leveraging your strengths rather than just focusing on improving weaknesses. There will be several opportunities to view your taped presentations. You will assess yourself and create an action plan for improvement. The goal for each of you is to demonstrate continuous growth as you add to your skills and design and deliver a compelling presentation.

Plan to work hard and have a lot of fun as we examine communication theory and combine this with practical wisdom and knowledge.

### **Required Reading:**

#### ***Communication Essentials: A Sell-abration***

Burns, Ronni, Date of publication varies. All editions are the same. Available at the Stern bookstore and on Amazon.)

### **Day 1:**

#### **Topics:** Communication Strategy in Business

Tailored Communication, Emotional Intelligence (EQ) and Likeability

**Objective:** To get others to go along with your ideas and recommendations it is necessary to understand and consider the receiver's (audience's) needs and perspective. By improving your powers of observation and increasing your emotional intelligence you become more influential and persuasive as you learn to you tailor each communication.

**Required Readings:**

*Burns:* Introduction and Chapters 1 and 2

*Articles TBD*

**Day 2:**

**Topic:** Presentation Styles and Controlling Presentation Anxiety

**Objective:** There are many powerful and effective presentation styles. The course is structured to identify and build on each student's individual strengths. You will learn techniques to control not eliminate any performance anxiety.

**Day 3:**

**Topic:** Visual, Vocal and Verbal Aspects of Presenting

**Objective:** The brain starts processing in the first few seconds of meeting someone whether we believe they are trustworthy, credible and likeable. Sending a congruent message is important. If there is a mixed message we will believe what we see rather than the content or words. We will drill down on the visual, vocal and verbal aspects of presenting to sharpen your delivery and assessment skills.

**Required Readings:**

*Articles TBD*

**Day 4:**

**Topic:** Deliver Individual Benchmark Presentation

**Objective:** This first presentation sets a baseline for you to begin to assess how memorable and informative you are as a presenter. The presentation will be recorded for you to view and critique. We will discuss the model we will use for giving constructive feedback, focusing on leveraging your strengths.

**Required Readings:**

*Articles: TBD*

**Day 5:**

**Topic:** Preparation. Know your audience and have a clear objective for any oral or written communication.

**Objective:** Before structuring a presentation it is important to do an analysis of the audience and determine what you want to have happen as a result of your communication. Is your objective to inform, persuade, teach, motivate, or inspire? What do you already know and what do you need to learn about your audience to design a tailored communication or presentation? This preparation gives you the best opportunity to be persuasive and meet your objectives and the objectives of your listener or reader.

**Required Readings:**

*Articles TBD*

**Day 6:**

**Topic:** Strategic Design  
Open/Body/Close  
E-Mail Best Practices

**Objective:** The key elements for designing and structuring an oral presentation or a written communication are similar. Both include the following framework: gain attention, create interest, develop the key points, and have a conclusion and call to action. Additionally, since email is the predominant form of business communications, we will review best practices for email and highlight some of the pitfalls in written communication.

**Required Readings:**

*Burns:* Chapter 4  
View E-mail YouTube

**Day 7:**

**Topics:** Handling objections, difficult situations, and Q &A

**Objective:** We are measured when things don't go as planned. How you handle Q&A and other challenging situations is critical to how well your presentation will be received. We will discuss the skills, attitude and techniques necessary for maintaining credibility in individual and team presentations.

**Required Readings:**

*Articles TBD*

**Day 8:**

**Topic:** Strategies for successful team presentations and impromptu briefings

**Objective:** Senior management often needs to be briefed or updated in a concise and timely fashion. This session will provide the opportunity to look at a short case and then design and deliver a brief update to the CEO. Understanding how to identify roles, executing handoffs and handling Q&A are the keys to delivering successful team presentations

**Days 9 and 10:**

**Topics:** Audience Engagement: Design and Delivery Techniques

**Objective:** The main message is you. Stories and analogies are a powerful way to connect with the audience. PowerPoint slides that are well designed help the audience remember the key points of the

message you deliver. This class will provide examples to illustrate effective design and delivery techniques to make your presentation both meaningful and memorable to your audience. There will be opportunities to practice impromptu presentations and creating a story with a message.

**Required Reading:**

*Burns:* Chapters 6-7

*Articles TBD*

**Days 11-12:**

**Topic: Final presentations (individual)**

**Objective:** Half the class presents each day and the rest of the class is the “intended audience” who will ask questions and then offer critique and feedback. As you watch your classmates present, important concepts are reinforced as you notice and comment on the delivery and organization of your classmate’s presentation.

**Assignments and Grading:**

Item	Description	Day	Due date	Weight
1	Needs Analysis	1		Ungraded
2	Likeability Assessment and Action Plan	2		10
	Individual Presentations	4		-
3	Presentation Practice with Partners			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4	Critique of Individual Presentation	6		25
5	Analysis of Ted.com presentation	7		15
	Team Presentation	8		Ungraded
6	E-mail YouTube	9		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Final Presentations	11-12		
7	Final Assessment			40
8	Professionalism and Participation. Includes timeliness, attendance, and contribution to class discussion.	<i>Throughout course</i>		10
		<b><i>Total points</i></b>		<b>100</b>