

SAMPLE Course Outline and Syllabus

Course Objectives:

Communicating ideas effectively is a critical skill in business and in life. The National Association of Colleges and Employers' Job Outlook Survey of Employers reports that the #1 skill/quality employers look for is verbal communication skills. The goal of this course is to build your knowledge and skills so you consistently generate positive and responses each time you communicate one-on-one, in meetings and during presentations.

Decisions are made with the “emotional” brain first, then we look for facts to justify our feelings. To effectively persuade others to act, we must appeal to both the emotional and logical sides of the brain. We will discuss both the “thinking” and the “things” involved in successful communication. Taking a strategic approach, we examine what you say and how you say it, offering practical tools, techniques and solutions to deliver memorable presentations with action-oriented outcomes. One student said, “By the end of the course I figured out what it takes to effectively communicate an idea, and I now have the confidence.”

As you sharpen your ability to analyze your presentation and your classmate's presentations (looking at both style and content), you will notice how subtle changes can make a big difference. Feedback from your classmates provides multiple perspectives and generates ideas for refining your own presentation. You will hone your observational skills by using a strength-based feedback model. There will be several opportunities to view your taped presentations to assess yourself and create an action plan for improvement. The objective is to demonstrate continuous growth as you add to your skills in designing and delivering a compelling presentation.

Yes, you will work hard and yes, you will have a lot of fun as we examine evidence-based communication strategies and combine these with practical wisdom and knowledge.

The articles selected for this class are generally practical applications of research-based findings.

Required Reading:

Communication Essentials: A Sell-ibration

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 to the audience with whom you are communicating.

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 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 your individual style and see 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 e-mail is the predominant form of business communications, we will review best practices for e-mail 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	30 Second Project Status Report	5		
5	Critique of Individual Presentation	6		25
6	Analysis of Ted.com presentation	7		15
7	Team Presentation	8		Ungraded
8	E-mail YouTube	9		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
9	Final Presentations	11-12		
10	Final Assessment			40
11	Professionalism and Participation. Includes timeliness, attendance, and contribution to class discussion.	<i>Throughout course</i>		10
		Total points		100

Since this is only a 6-week course and each day builds upon the other classes. There are a lot of in class activities and work with a practice partner that are critical to maximizing the course experience. Absences disrupt class activities and your learning. Therefore, ALL classes are mandatory to attend. Please do not sign up for this class if you know you will need to travel or plan to have interviews scheduled when this class meets. Please note: missing the first day is especially problematic, since the fundamentals of the entire course are covered in this session. You may want to consider selecting a different section.

Student comments:

I think the key concepts learned in this class are not only applicable to both work and school, but also in my personal and social life. These skills make me a better presenter, e-mailer, speaker, communicator, relationship builder, and friend. This class has created a foundation for me to cultivate these skills and ultimately achieve my goals. Communication is a skill that requires practice and constructive feedback and I think this class has provided me with all those items. By practicing through presentations, group work, and mini presentations, I am more and more comfortable in front of an audience. In addition, by watching myself on tape and listening to feed forward, I am not only able to self-assess my strengths and areas of improvement but can also get an honest third-party opinion. This introspection and feedback will allow me to recognize correctly the areas of improvement and which strengths I can build upon the most. -JQ

I personally felt like this class was the most impactful training I have received on presentation and public-speaking etiquette. I felt like it was a safe environment to learn, try, fail and improve in. Some of the elements of the class that I thought were very useful were the several opportunities to go up and speak. I think the fact that some of these opportunities to be optional made people more willing to try it out. This class allowed me to focus more on enhancing my strengths in developing my unique presentation style. This class and experience were very timely for me as I have to prepare and deliver presentations as part of two upcoming interviews. I will be sure to incorporate the lessons and takeaways from our class in my presentations to ensure i am telling a persuasive story with a clear call to action. -LO

Taking this course was one of the best decisions I've made at Stern. The ability to practice public speaking in a safe atmosphere is one thing, but the chance to learn from such a wonderful professor and extremely talented classmates is a rare opportunity that people rarely come by. My number one goal was to start feeling comfortable while giving presentations and look forward to presenting and gain some sort of utility from it. I have surprisingly begun to enjoy speaking publicly, and I started to transition some of my anxiety into excitement! In my other classes, I find myself raising my hand more often. This course has moved mountains for me in terms of building up my confidence. Thinking about it, it all comes down to confidence, and I am undoubtedly more confident now than I was before I took this course. -SM

'Management Communication' has been one of the most valuable courses for me in the MBA program. I have never enjoyed public speaking, and I remember how much I wished that my high school graduation ceremony would be cancelled because I was scheduled to give a speech to the class. However, I worked hard to learn and to take advantage of the opportunities that this class provided, and I feel less nervous now speaking in front of others. There were many practical learnings that I can put to use immediately to improve my design and delivery moving forward. -BK

I worked on a data-heavy project but my stakeholders were senior sales leaders. During my multiple check-ins, I focused on simplifying everything. First off, I made the title of the slides more explanatory to guide the reader. I found that to be VERY helpful. For the tables, I simplified them to the bare bones, outlined strong talking points, and then reviewed a few items in the raw file after the deck. This was so key to making the meetings more effective.

During my final presentation, I had the last 20 minutes of my team's weekly lunchtime meeting. This required a real 'know your audience' moment. Since I had a lot of data to walk through, I had to lighten the mood and get people interested. So, thank you for all your help!! I got a lot of great feedback after the final presentation AND a full-time offer :) -MJ