Management Writing (MBCM-60420) will meet twice weekly for seven weeks. This course is scheduled for Monday and Wednesday mornings, 10:00 a.m. to 11:50 a.m., during Module IV, from Monday, March 16 through Wednesday, April 29, 2009.

The course instructor is Professor James S. O’Rourke, 234-B Mendoza College of Business. Office phone: 631.8397. Fax: 631.5255. Home phone: 272.1773. Mobile phone: 574.339.1836. E-mail: jorourke@nd.edu.

Required Textbooks


Purposes of the Course

- To give students an appreciation for the importance of effective communication in business and society;

- To help students understand how management writing and the management messages it conveys, are the products of a process that begins with critical thinking;

- To improve students’ writing skills, including expression issues related to language use, style, tone, grammar, punctuation, and organization;

- To facilitate the integration of communication skills with an understanding of theory and strategy;

- To assist students in making decisions about document preparation, including format, layout, and design.
• To provide students with an understanding of the ethical dimensions of management writing.

**GENERAL COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

• You must complete the assignments described in this syllabus and submit them on the specified dates.

• You must participate fully and actively in our classroom discussions and writing critique sessions.

• You must attend class. Your professor will take roll at each meeting session to determine who is present and who is not. You must also arrive at class on time.

**GRADES**

This is a performance course designed to diagnose your current writing abilities, to provide you with a clear sense of writing standards in the North American marketplace, and to assist you in improving your skills of written expression. There are no scheduled examinations. You will be required to produce written responses to a number of separate writing assignments.

An important part of the learning process involves your willingness to discuss your writing as well as your reaction to and understanding of the managerial problems presented as writing opportunities. Many of these will arise during classroom discussion of the case studies which serve as the basis for our work this semester.

**Grade Weights.** Each assignment will be weighted according to this scale:

Assignment #1: Case Solution / Correspondence .............................. 20%
Due: Monday, March 23, 2009

Assignment #2: Case Solution / Correspondence .............................. 20%
Due: Wednesday, April 1, 2009

Assignment #3: Case Solution / Correspondence .............................. 20%
Due: Wednesday, April 15, 2009

Assignment #4: Collaborative Writing Assignment .......................... 25%
Due: Wednesday, April 29, 2009

Classroom Discussion & Participation. .......................... 15%
Grades are important, of course, for all degree-seeking students. Grades are somewhat less important, however, than learning outcomes. Your careful attention to classroom discussion and written assignments is of considerably greater importance than whether you earned an A, an A-, or, perhaps, a B+ in a 2.0 credit-hour course. We are sensitive to your interest in doing well and will do all that we can to help you.

**Grading Philosophy**

Your grade for any particular assignment in this course is a reflection of your professor’s judgment of the quality of your work. We can grade only on the basis of what you give us, not on what you had sincerely intended to do. Submit your work on time, follow the assignment directions, do your own work and you’ll have little trouble achieving the course objectives as well as your own.

You will not find grades distributed on a curve. Your instructor is seeking to assess your abilities as measured against the standards of the marketplace. Those standards have been developed over a period of more than 30 years, dealing with business, government, industry, the press and the public. We are asking you to do what your employers will ask of you: prompt, competent, quality work.

Once a grade has been assigned and recorded, it cannot and will not be changed unless evidence is provided that your professor has made an error. A difference of opinion between you and your professor about the quality of your work is not evidence of error.

**The Ethics of Management Communication**

Language, as you know, has great power. It can convey impressions, communicate knowledge and information. It can transmit feelings and emotion, as well. Language, depending on how it is used, can inspire, enrage, inform, persuade, entertain, assure, or offend.

Business writers, as well as those who speak on public occasions, occupy a special position of power. Their words can influence others, urging them to action, or restraining them from acting. Their words can be a source of inspiration and motivation to others. Because of this, writers and speakers must choose their topics, organizational patterns, evidence, and words with great care.

Three basic principles guide our discussion of ethics in this course. First, we contend that all parties in the communication process have ethical responsibilities. Second, ethical writers, readers, speakers, and listeners possess attitudes and standards that pervade their character and guide their actions before, during, and after their speaking and writing. Third, management communication is not value-neutral. What you say, what you write, and how you choose to speak and write will have consequences for your audience. Your obligation is to speak and write for the betterment and benefit of your audience. To do otherwise is a serious ethical lapse for a management communicator.
Public communication is held to a higher standard of responsibility than private communication. To speak or write freely and privately among friends with no expectation that your words will become public is one thing. To speak in public or to write for publication with the expectation that your words will receive widespread attention is quite another. Please understand that public communication is a serious matter, particularly if you occupy a position of responsibility. And please know that if words have the power to injure or harm others, they can inflict harm on the sender, as well.

**Course Policies and Standards**

Please seek help as soon and as often as you need. Do not wait until it is too late for us to help you. We are here to assist you with the task of learning and improving your writing.

**Assignment Due Dates.** You must complete three case analyses and submit them to your instructor for review and grading. We will read and discuss nearly a dozen separate cases during this course. You may analyze and write about any of them, but **you must submit your case solution on or before the day we discuss that case in class**. Once we’ve conducted a classroom discussion of any particular case, you lose the option of submitting a solution to that case. Your collaborative writing assignment is due on the last day of class.

**Deadlines.** There are no automatic extensions, make-ups, or incompletes. You will be graded down for failing to meet deadlines. If you cannot meet your responsibilities in the course, see or call your instructor in advance of deadlines. We know that, from time-to-time, everything from a job interview to illness may keep you from attending class. Please let your instructor know in advance and he or she will make every effort to accommodate your needs.

**Absence.** We will have just fourteen meeting sessions in this course. We regard your presence as especially important, even if your instructor does not formally take roll at the beginning of each class. If you cannot be here, let your instructor know about it in advance. We have found, over the years, a remarkable correlation: those who come to class faithfully seem to do better in the course.

**IncompleteS.** As a rule, we just do not award incompletes. They’re genuinely a pain in the neck. You begin the new term with the obligations of the previous semester hanging over your head. Both instructor and student feel harried and unhappy about the situation. In unusual cases, though, such as hospitalization or genuine emergency, an incomplete “I” will be assigned. The student must complete all class assignments within one semester or the Registrar will assign a grade of “F” unless an extension is approved by both the instructor and the Dean, and we notify the Registrar.
Rewrites. There is no automatic option to rewrite an assignment if you’ve received a grade you don’t like. Any student who receives a grade on a writing assignment of “C” or lower may petition the instructor for an opportunity to rewrite the assignment with no guarantee of a higher mark. If the rewritten work fails to meet basic instructional standards, the mark received may, in fact, be lower. In no cases will the final grade received be more than one letter higher than the original mark.

Appeals. Your first course of appeal for any grade, assignment requirement, due date or other course-related decision is your instructor. If you either do not understand or cannot accept your instructor’s decision, you may appeal in writing to the course director. Subsequent appeals may be directed to the Associate Dean for MBA Programs and, from there, to the Dean of the College. Keep in mind that most administrators will be reluctant to overrule routine, course-related decisions of their faculty.

Last Drop Date. Your last opportunity to drop MBA-60420 will expire at the close of business on Friday, April 3, 2009. After that date, you will no longer be able to voluntarily disenroll from the course.

The Notre Dame MBA Honor Code. Much of the educational process in the Notre Dame Business School involves group discussion and collaborative activities. Neither the Mendoza College nor the Fanning Center for Business Communication wish to hinder the learning that can and often does take place in that environment. Fairness, however, requires that certain limits be observed in the actual production of assignments.

In the Management Communication curriculum, all writing and speaking tasks are to be accomplished by each student working independently, unless you are specifically advised to work in collaboration in a particular assignment. No student should copy another student’s work or represent work done by someone else as if it were his or her own. Evidence of plagiarism is cause for serious disciplinary action by the College. Please, do your own work. We strongly endorse and support the principles and process outlined in the University of Notre Dame Graduate Business Honor Code. Please read that document and use its precepts as a guide.

Case Analysis Assignments

You will be asked to analyze and write a response to three of the case studies listed in your syllabus. Those case analyses are due on Monday, March 23; Wednesday, April 1; and Wednesday, April 15, 2009. You’ll find all of the cases in your textbook, along with a detailed writing assignment. In each instance, you must produce a business memo and a professional business letter, addressing the issues in the case.

Your business memos should contain the following elements:
• A summary paragraph disclosing the key recommendations offered in your analysis of the issues in the case.
• A background section providing details essential to a reader’s understanding of what happened, including the basic facts of the case.
• A discussion section addressing the implications of the facts and assessing both critical issues and stakeholder interests. This should be the largest section of your memorandum.
• A recommendations section listing actions recommended in response to the case and specific, by-name or by-department ownership of those actions. Suspense dates for completion of the actions may be included, as well.

You may select any case listed in the syllabus to submit in satisfaction of these three writing assignments. Once a case has been discussed in class, you may no longer write about that case. You may choose to analyze and respond to a case study contained in the textbook that is not listed in the syllabus, if you wish, but you must obtain the permission of your instructor to do so.

**Collaborative Writing**

You will be asked to collaborate with one other classmates from this section of Management Writing to produce a document that provides practical policy guidance for managers who must communicate corporate policy. *That assignment is due on Wednesday, April 29, 2009.*

You may select one other person in this section with whom to work on this assignment. If (and only if) you think there is enough work in your topic selection for three people, please give your instructor a one-page (or single screen) outline of your ideas and explain why you think it will take three people to get it done. We’re open to any reasonable argument. No groups of one, however, and no groups of four.

**Paper Format, Length, and Appearance.** This is a formal, collaborative document. Your paper should be no less than 7 pages and no more than 10 pages in length, single-spaced within paragraphs and double-spaced between paragraphs. If you need an exception to this general guideline, please speak with your instructor. Each paper should have:

- A cover sheet with your proposal title, author names, course and section numbers;
- A table of contents with page reference numbers;
- Page numbers;
- One-inch margins throughout;
- Proper endnote documentation of all paper-based, telephone or online research;
• A single staple affixed to the upper left-hand corner of the paper.

**Topic Selection.** If you choose not to accept one of the collaborative writing topic as outlined below, you may negotiate an alternative topic with your instructor. Innovative suggestions are always welcome. Think about it, talk it over with your teammates and see your instructor. Now is the time to begin thinking about your writing partner and your topic selection. Here is a brief list of topics that might prove interesting and worthwhile:

- “When Two Become One: Communicating in acquisitions and mergers.”
- “Watch What You Say: What does a manager need to know about libel and slander?”
- “Responding to Requests for an Employment Reference: What can you say?”
- “Congratulating an Employee: How to say thank-you for a job well done.”
- “Communicating in a Product Recall: What should a company say?”
- “Communicating Good Intentions: What should a company say about philanthropy and corporate contributions?”
- “Communicating Corporate Heritage: Best practices in managerial story-telling.”
- “Communicating Grief: The task of telling others when an employee dies.”
- “Communicating Promotions: Is it possible to screw up good news?”
- “Communicating Corporate Culture: What should a manager say about ethics to employees and other stakeholders?”
- “Balancing Privacy with Concern: What can a manager say when an employee is ill?”
- “Balancing Privacy with Curiosity: What can a manager say when an employee is dismissed?”

No doubt, you can think of a dozen more, given your interests and experience. We’re open to a very wide range of topics, but are mostly interested in having you investigate and learn about a subject that will be useful and productive for you, personally and professionally. Please speak with your instructor early and often about your work on this particular assignment. We don’t want you to wait until it’s too late to get going.
Mon 16 Mar 2009  The Role of Writing in Business
10:00 - 10:15 a.m. Intro: Syllabus distribution and course overview.
10:15 - 11:40 a.m. Lecture: “Principles of Communication”
Reading: O’Rourke, Chapter 1: “Management Communication in Transition”
Reading: O’Rourke, Appendix A: “Analyzing a Case Study”

Wed 18 Mar 2009  The Basics of Correspondence: Memos and Letters
10:00 - 10:50 a.m. Lecture: “North American Business Correspondence”
10:15 - 11:00 a.m. Break
11:00 - 11:50 a.m. Discussion: Case 1-2, Great West Casualty v. Estate of G. Witherspoon
Reading: Alred, Chapter 4, “Correspondence”
O’Rourke, Appendix C: “Sample Business Letter”
O’Rourke, Appendix D: “Sample Business Memo”
O’Rourke, Appendix E: “Sample Strategy Memo”
PowerPoint: “Great West Casualty,” 10 slides.

Mon 23 Mar 2009  Communication and Strategy
10:00 - 10:50 a.m. Lecture: “Communication and Strategy”
10:50 - 11:00 a.m. Break
11:00 - 11:50 a.m. Discussion: Case 11-2, Dixie Industries, Inc.
Reading: O’Rourke, Chapter 2: “Communication and Strategy”
Assignment: Writing assignment #1 due.

Wed 25 Mar 2009  Audience Analysis
10:00 - 10:50 a.m. Lecture: “Writing”
10:50 - 11:00 a.m. Break
11:00 - 11:50 a.m. Discussion: Case 3-l. Excel Industries, Inc. (A)
Reading: O’Rourke, Chapter 5: “Writing”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<th>Activity</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mon 30 Mar 2009</td>
<td>Communication and Ethics</td>
<td>10:00 - 10:50 a.m.</td>
<td>Lecture</td>
<td>“Communication and Ethics”</td>
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<td>10:50 - 11:00 a.m.</td>
<td>Break</td>
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<td>11:00 - 11:50 a.m.</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>Case 3-2. <em>A Collection Scandal at Sears Roebuck and Company.</em></td>
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<td>Reading</td>
<td>O’Rourke, Chapter 3: “Communication Ethics”</td>
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<td>PowerPoint</td>
<td>“Communication Ethics,” 15 slides.</td>
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<td>“A Collection Scandal at Sears,” 14 slides.</td>
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<td>Wed 01 Apr 2009</td>
<td>Collaborative Writing Workshop</td>
<td>10:00 - 10:50 a.m.</td>
<td>Instructor will be in New York, attending the Spring Seminar of the Arthur W. Page Society. Your task for this morning will be to meet with your collaborative writing partners to discuss Writing Assignment #4. You must submit a brief document to your instructor listing the names of the authors, your topic selection, and a preliminary detailed outline of your paper. That document is due on Monday, April 6, along with Writing Assignment #2.</td>
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<td>Mon 06 Apr 2009</td>
<td>Compact, Informal, and Organized Writing</td>
<td>10:00 - 10:50 a.m.</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>“Issues of Style and Tone”</td>
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<td>10:50 - 11:00 a.m.</td>
<td>Break</td>
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<td>11:00 - 11:50 a.m.</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>Case 2-3: <em>Taco Bell Corporation: Public Perception and Brand Protection.</em></td>
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<td>Reading</td>
<td>O’Rourke, Appendix F: “Documentation: Acknowledging the Sources of Your Research”</td>
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<td>PowerPoint</td>
<td>“Community General Hospital,” 13 slides.</td>
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<td>PowerPoint</td>
<td>“Punctuation,” 43 slides.</td>
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<td>Assignment</td>
<td>Writing assignment #2 due.</td>
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<td>Wed 08 Apr 2009</td>
<td>Persuasive Writing</td>
<td>10:00 - 10:50 a.m.</td>
<td>Lecture</td>
<td>“Persuasion”</td>
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<td>10:50 - 11:00 a.m.</td>
<td>Break</td>
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<td>11:00 - 11:50 a.m.</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>Case 6-1: <em>The United States Olympic Committee: Persuading Business to Participate in the Olympic Movement.</em></td>
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<td>Reading</td>
<td>O’Rourke, Chapter 6: “Persuasion”</td>
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<td>PowerPoint</td>
<td>“Persuasion,” 27 slides.</td>
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Wed 15 Apr 2009  Writing Reports and Proposals
10:00 - 10:50 a.m.  Lecture:  “Collaborative Writing”
10:50 - 11:00 a.m.  Break
11:00 - 11:50 a.m.  Discussion:  Case 2-1:  *Starbucks Corporation: Can Customers Breastfeed in a Coffee Shop?*
Reading:  Alred, Chapter 3:  “Formal Reports”
PowerPoint:  “Collaborative Writing,” 18 slides.
Assignment:  Writing assignment #3 due.

Mon 20 Apr 2009  How Culture Affects Communication
10:00 - 10:50 a.m.  Lecture:  “Communication and Culture”
10:50 - 11:00 a.m.  Break:
11:00 - 11:50 a.m.  Discussion:  Case 10-1, *Oak Brook Medical Systems.*
Reading:  O’Rourke, Chapter 10:  “Intercultural Communication”

Wed 22 Apr 2009  How Technology Affects Communication
10:00 - 10:50 a.m.  Lecture:  “E-Mail: Rights, Risks, and Responsibilities”
10:50 - 11:00 a.m.  Break:
11:00 - 11:50 a.m.  Discussion:  Case Study, *RadioShack Corporation: You’ve Got Mail!*
Reading:  O’Rourke, Chapter 7:  “Technology”

Mon 27 Apr 2009  Conflict Management
10:00 - 10:50 a.m.  Lecture:  “Conflict Management”
10:50 - 11:00 a.m.  Break:
11:00 - 11:50 a.m.  Discussion:  Case 11-1, *Hayward Healthcare Systems, Inc.*
Reading:  O’Rourke, Chapter 11:  “Managing Conflict”

Wed 29 Apr 2009  Writing in a Crisis Situation
10:00 - 10:50 a.m.  Lecture:  “Crisis Management”
10:50 - 11:00 a.m.  Break:
11:00 - 11:50 a.m.  Discussion:  Case 1-1.  *Odwalla, Inc. (A)*
“Crisis Management,” 12 slides.
Assignment:  Writing assignment #4 due.
Reminder:  Please complete Course Instructor Feedback online.