

Management 3033W: Business Communication

Syllabus — Fall 2018

Matthew Kaul, Lecturer

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(I check email daily during the week and rarely, if ever, on weekends.)

Class Time/Location

Mondays, 5:45 – 8:15 p.m.

CSOM 2-228

Office Hours Time/Location

Thursdays, time TBA and by appointment

Office: CSOM 4-131

If you are planning on meeting during office hours, please send me an email to let me know you are coming. This guarantees that I will be available for your meeting. Occasionally my office hours get preempted for other student or faculty meetings, especially during the weeks that we do persuasive speeches. Please feel free to stop by to discuss assignments, questions, ideas, or concerns about the course. It just may save you some time if you let me know when you're coming.

Course Materials

Required Materials

- MGMT 3033W course packet, available in the U bookstore in Coffman Union
- Alan Jacobs, *How to Think*, available in the U bookstore in Coffman Union
- Other course materials, posted on the course website (3033w.org) and the shared Drive folder

You must purchase the course packet before the second class session. Each of you is required to have your own packet. You will not be able to share course packets with others—too much is done in class that requires tearing out pages and writing in the booklets. Each semester’s packet is different from previous semesters’, so you are also unable to use old packets. Also, other instructors’ booklets are different from mine, so sharing is impossible.

Be sure to get the right course packet. It should have my name on the cover. Each communications instructor uses a different, individually designed course packet. Do not get another instructor’s packet. You will have to take it back and get the right one.

You must bring your course packet to every class. Failure to do so will lower your participation grade for those days.

Optional Materials

- **Bryan Garner’s *Modern English Usage*** is not required, but is recommended. It’s a book you can refer to throughout your entire professional career—a complete resource for all writing- and grammar- and language-related questions.
- A style manual of your choice. If you do not already have one, I recommend the *Global English Style Guide* and the *Chicago Manual of Style*. These are available at most bookstores and at Amazon.com. See the end of your course packet for other recommended books.
- *The Non-Designer’s Design Book* by Robin Williams. Available at most major bookstores and Amazon.com.

Course Objectives

The goals of this course are to help students learn to effectively:

- Communicate and deliver written and spoken messages that are adapted to the specific needs of the audience and situation.
- Deliver poised, professional presentations to small and large groups.
- Create agendas and lead business meetings.

- Employ the principles of Plain English, document design, and visual communication in written messages.
- Use effective nonverbal communication skills.
- Communicate and write in team situations.
- Use audience analysis to design effective persuasive strategies.
- Build sound arguments that use data, logic, and other evidence to persuade.
- Critically judge information and information sources.
- Design persuasive visual communication.
- Use technology to increase the effectiveness of communication.

Communication Topics and Formats

MGMT 3033W focuses on the following topics and communication formats:

Topics:

- Audience analysis
- Persuasion
- Grammar and mechanics
- Plain English and professional style
- Document design
- Graphics
- Designing visual aids
- Case-study analysis
- Providing peer feedback
- Team interaction

Speaking formats:

- Introduction speeches
- Persuasive presentations
- Individual presentations

- Team presentations
- Impromptu presentations

Writing formats:

- Memos
- Emails
- Letters
- Executive summaries
- Reports
- Proposals
- Agendas
- Visual aids
- PowerPoint decks
- Take-away documents
- Social media

Course Description/Design

MGMT 3033W: Business Communication combines writing and speaking into a single, semester-long course required of all Carlson School undergraduates. This course will give you opportunities to develop your critical thinking and communication skills through discussing, speaking, and writing assignments that simulate real business communication. In order to participate successfully in this communications course, you must come to class every day prepared to *actively* take part in

discussions, writing, speaking, and other communications activities. You will also be asked to lead a discussion during the semester.

A Writing-Intensive Course

Written communication is a key skill in the business world. Your colleagues and supervisors will value your ability to express yourself clearly, concisely, and accurately. This class will help you to improve that skill. Writing-intensive courses at the University of Minnesota require students to:

- Complete a significant amount of writing (at least 10 pages).
- Revise and rewrite some assignments after receiving instructor feedback on drafts.
- Receive class instruction on writing expectations in this field (business communications).

Coursework

University Senate Academic Workload Policy

For undergraduate courses, one credit is defined as equivalent to an average of three hours of learning effort per week (over a full semester) necessary for an average student to achieve an average grade in the course. For example, a student taking a three credit course that meets for three hours a week should expect to spend an additional six hours a week on coursework outside the classroom. In other words, you should expect to spend about six hours per week outside of class on the work for this course for an average grade.

Read the university policy:

<http://policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/STUDENTWORK.html>

Short Assignments/Participation/Discussion (12% of your final grade)

You will frequently be asked to do short, informal writing and speaking assignments and to actively participate in class discussions. You are expected to contribute on a daily basis. This includes in-class writings, take-home short assignments, grammatical exercises, impromptu speaking, peer critiquing, class discussions, small group discussions, speech questions, and more. These assignments and activities are assessed on your understanding of the course concepts, your willingness to participate in class activities, your ability to complete the assigned work on time. If you are not clearly a class leader, you will not receive an “A” in this category.

Absences will negatively affect this grade since you will not be allowed to make up any participation assignments. You will also receive zeroes for missed assignments or for days when you come but do not actively participate. Participation assignments are usually worth 6 – 11

points. At the end of the semester, these points will be calculated separately from regular assignment points to determine your “participation grade.” This will translate into how many points you will receive out of the 140 possible points for this category (see course packet page 4 for more explanation).

Throughout the class you will be asked to evaluate and assess your own and classmates’ written and oral work. This kind of review process has several advantages. First, it will help you and your classmates receive evaluations and suggestions from multiple audiences. Second, it will help you become a better critical reader and listener. Third, the ability to evaluate and constructively critique others’ work is extremely important in the business world. As managers you will constantly be required to give specific, critical feedback to your colleagues.

Short Reading Quizzes (6% of your final grade)

There will be five unannounced quizzes (10 points each) on the assigned readings throughout the course of the semester. If you are absent on a day that a quiz is given for any reason, you cannot make it up. However, I will drop your lowest quiz score at the end of the semester. Quizzes can cover both previous and current readings.

Business Communication Foundations (54% of your final grade)

This unit will introduce you to many of the basics of effective business communication, such as choosing appropriate channels, formats, and organizational patterns; analyzing your audience and other prewriting decisions; and employing the elements of persuasion. You will practice professional writing and document design. You will also give an introduction speech, one formal persuasive presentation, a small group position speech, as well as some impromptu speeches, and one timed writing exam.

Your individual persuasive speech in this unit will be delivered outside of class time in a small group of seven people from my classes. You will sign up for a 1.5 hour time slot and must attend that session. There will be no make-up sessions for missed appointments. This counts as the lab session listed on the course description.

Team Case-Study Proposal and Presentation (28% of your final grade)

In teams of 5 people, you will write a formal proposal and deliver a 20-minute team presentation addressing the Deloitte case study posted on Moodle. Your team goal is to persuade Deloitte to implement your recommendations to improve its profits. Deloitte judges will be presenting the top teams with cash awards.

Email/Computer Policy

Email: You are expected to have access to a computer with word-processing capabilities and web access and to have active email accounts. Please check your email every day, especially on the day before your class meets; some important course correspondence will occur via email. You are responsible for this information.

Email assignments: I may ask you to send class work to me via email. Whenever you send me an assignment, I will always acknowledge receipt within a day or two. If I haven't done so, assume that I have not received your work.

Laptops and other electronic devices: There is no need to use a computer during most classes. If you bring one, feel free to use it during class—but only as a paperweight. It must remain off and closed during class. Also, all cell phones, smart or otherwise, must remain turned off during class. It is rude to the instructor and distracting to other students to be surfing, emailing, texting, instant messaging, tweeting, snap-chatting, etc. during class. If you use electronic devices or social media during class, you will get a zero that day for participation.

MGMT 3033W Grading Standards

- A Assignment would distinguish you as a top performer in the professional world. Work is professional in every way.
- B Assignment would reflect well on you and your company. However, some revision would have to be done to your work before it would be allowed to represent the company.
- C Assignment completed and fulfilled the requirements. However, in a business environment this work would not represent you or your company well without major revision and polish.
- D/F You turned in the assignment; however, your work would have to be completely redone before allowed to represent the company. You missed the point of the assignment or turned in the assignment late.
- No Credit Assignment not turned in.

Carlson School of Management Course Grading Policy

In 2005, the results of a comprehensive study of grading in the Carlson School were presented to the faculty. In response to the conclusions of the study, the Carlson School faculty developed and approved the following grading policy:

Grades are an integral part of the educational process. They are one form of feedback concerning academic performance. The Carlson School is resolute that the differences in course achievement

are reflected in the differences in course grades. Grades are based on a combination of exams, terms papers, class participation, case analyses, and other assignments

Following are the expected final grade distributions for BSB courses, by course level:

1. *2000 level courses*: Target median grade is 2.7 +/- .2 (or about a B-)
2. **3000 level courses: Target median grade is 3.0 +/- .2 (or about a B)**
3. *4000 level courses*: Target median grade is 3.3 +/- .2 (or about a B+)
4. *Honors courses at all levels*: Target median grade is 3.7 +/- .2 (or about an A-)

Since the Carlson School grading policy now dictates that all 3000 level core courses end with a maximum “B” median grade for the class, please know upfront that most students in the class will receive a “B,” and some will receive a “C” or lower as their final grades. Please remember that an “A” is not the default grade. An “A” represents exceptional work, a “B” is an “above average” grade and not easily earned, and a “C” means you have met the assignment’s criteria. Before asking your instructor to explain why you did not receive an “A” on any given assignment, you should be able to explain how it exceeds the course expectations in every way, outshines the work of your peers in the class, and would distinguish you as a top performer in the business world. Please direct any questions/comments about the CSOM grading policy to your program office.

Grading Percentages

Although the course median will impact this table to some degree, **in general** the following percentages usually equal the following letter grades (note: this table is not a guarantee; it is a general guideline):

A	100 – 93%
A-:	92 – 90%
B+:	89 – 87%
B:	86 – 83%
B-:	82 – 80%
C+:	79 – 77%
C:	76 – 73%
C-:	72 – 70%
D+:	69 – 67%
D:	66 – 63%
D-:	62 – 60%

Grade Disputes

If you wish to dispute the grade assigned to any coursework, you must do so IN WRITING within 48 hours after the work has been returned. You must include a specific rationale for why the work deserves a higher grade. “I think I deserve a better grade” is NOT a rationale. You will need to explain how your work has exceeded the requirements of the assignments and demonstrated advanced insights and creativity well beyond that of the rest of the class.

Incompletes are Not an Option

If you do not complete an assignment, you will not receive any credit for that assignment and, of course, your course grade will be severely affected. If there are *extraordinary* extenuating circumstances, consult with me immediately. Do not wait until the end of the semester to let me know about serious conflicts with deadlines or coursework.

Writing and Speaking Baselines

You should carefully proofread all final papers. They should be free from significant grammatical/mechanical errors and reflect extensive revision and editing on your part. Although the content of your papers is always my primary concern, a paper with frequent errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, etc., will not meet the basic requirements of the assignment and generally will receive a C or a D.

Similarly, you should carefully prepare and rehearse your speeches. Do not **read or memorize** them. Deliver all speeches extemporaneously—conversationally and professionally. If you attempt to read your speech to us, or if the speech sounds memorized, you will not have met the minimum requirements for the assignment, and you will receive a C or a D.

I will explain all assignments carefully in class. They are also thoroughly explained in your course packet. You always have the option to come to office hours or email me if you have questions. If you are not 100% sure you know what to do on a given assignment, please ask. *Understanding is your responsibility*. Any assignments that are incorrectly done will receive a very low grade or no points.

Late Work

A part of differentiating top performers in the class is students’ ability to follow instructions and meet deadlines. All assignments are due at the *beginning* of class on the day that they are due. If you know you will miss class when a paper is due, turn it in ahead of time or it

will not be accepted. Absolutely **no late final papers will be accepted unless they have been pre-approved** by me at least 24 hours in advance. Note: pre-approved late assignments will be returned significantly later than assignments turned in on time, but there is no other penalty if you have negotiated a new deadline in advance.

Attendance Policy

Your attendance will affect your grade in this class—both directly and indirectly.

Because this is a communications course, active participation in class is vital. If you are not here, you cannot participate. Your absence will negatively affect both your performance and other class members' performances as well. Therefore, ***your attendance is required.***

You are allowed one missed classes without a direct negative effect on your grade. If you're absent two times, your grade will be lowered one-half letter grade (A to A-, for example). If you're absent three times, your grade will be lowered one full letter grade (A to B for example). If you miss four or more class sessions, you will automatically fail the course. (Four classes is over one quarter of the course!) Note: I do not differentiate between excused and unexcused absences. The only exception: University-sanctioned varsity sports games are excused absences and do not count according to official University policy. Interviews and other extra-curricular activities do not count as excused. Plan accordingly. If you know in advance that you will be missing several classes this semester due to interviews or other activities, please consider taking the course a different semester.

Please pick a "study partner" to share class information with. If absent, please contact that person to find out what you missed. Do not email me for the work you missed when you were not in class. You are responsible for missed handouts, lecture notes, changes in deadlines or assignments that are announced, etc. during any class that you miss. You cannot make up in-class participation assignments.

Habitual tardiness will negatively affect your grade. Also, it's rude. Therefore, please come on time. There is no excuse for frequently coming late. It is very distracting to me and other members of the class, it's disadvantageous to you since you may miss important directions, assignments, etc., and it often causes problems when groups for assignments are formed at the beginning of class. If you have a conflict that will cause frequent tardiness, you should consider taking the class at another time during the year. If you come late more than 3 times during the semester, your tardies will count as an absence. If you are more than 15 minutes late, it will count as an absence.

Odds and Ends

- Bring your course packet to every class. We use it every day! Without it, you will be unprepared.
- Do not expect to use class time to print or photocopy your assignments. Remember that your assignments are late if they're not turned in at the *beginning* of class.
- You are responsible for saving EVERYTHING until the semester is over. Keep all drafts, final graded assignments, speech critiques, etc. Never turn in anything without first saving a copy of it.
- **IMPORTANT:** Please be sure to include your **full name on all your assignments**. Your teachers have been telling you this since kindergarten, but you'd be surprised! On peer evaluations, please always refer to each other by your full names.
- Unless otherwise directed, all work done outside of class should be word-processed in 12-point font with 1-inch margins.
- As in the real world, there are several things that are simply considered "poor form," such as showing up late, distracting others, coming unprepared, forgetting course materials, not participating, failing to contribute to team projects, web surfing or checking email and texts during class, using unreadably ugly fonts like Wingdings, etc. This lack of professionalism brings down your participation/short assignment grade at the end of the semester.
- Please let me know early in the semester if you have any special circumstances I should know about (e.g., you're a school athlete; you have hearing difficulties). What should I know that would help me to better teach you? I will be happy to work with you to adapt the course to your needs whenever possible. Finally, once again, please come to see me or email me if you have questions, problems, or concerns with the class. I want you to do well!

Some helpful resources for improving professional communication

Online sources:

- <http://writingthatworks.carlsonschool.umn.edu/>: A useful resource developed here by the director of 3033W. This site has many resources you can use to improve your business communication skills
- http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/resdoc5e/RES5e_ch06_s1-003.html: Bedford's guide to a variety of citation rules and styles

- http://managementhelp.org/commskls/cmm_writ.htm: All-purpose info on many elements of business communication
- <http://www.wsu.edu/~brians/errors/errors.html>: Common errors in English usage
- <http://www.ceoexpress.com/default.asp>: A portal to all kinds of business news and communication (scroll down to Office Tools & Travel > Speech & Writing)
- <http://www.presentationzen.com/presentationzen>: Garr Reynolds' site on professional presentations and graphics
- http://www.edwardtufte.com/bboard/q-and-a?topic_id=1: Edward Tufte's blog and forum

Print sources:

- *The Chicago Manual of Style*
- A dictionary (particularly Oxford or Merriam-Webster)
- *Garner's Modern American Usage*
- Klinkenborg, *Several Short Sentences about Writing*
- Kohl, *The Global English Style Guide*
- Lanham, *Revising Business Prose*
- Reynolds, *Presentation Zen*
- Tufte, *The Cognitive Style of Powerpoint* and other works
- Zinsser, *On Writing Well*

Academic Integrity/Cheating

Academic integrity is essential to a positive teaching and learning environment. All students enrolled in University courses are expected to complete coursework responsibilities with fairness and honesty. Failure to do so by seeking unfair advantage over others or misrepresenting someone else's work as your own, can result in disciplinary action. Except for group projects, all work must be your own. Cheating of any kind—copying, plagiarism or submitting work that you did not do—is a serious violation of academic honesty and will result in a failing grade. You will also be reported to your Carlson department and to the University for further disciplinary action. The University's policy on scholastic dishonesty states:

“You are expected to do your own academic work and cite sources as necessary. Failing to do so is scholastic dishonesty. Scholastic dishonesty means plagiarizing; cheating on assignments or examinations; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work; taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission; submitting false or incomplete records of academic achievement; acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement; altering, forging, or misusing a University academic record; or fabricating or

falsifying data, research procedures, or data analysis.” (Student Conduct Code: http://regents.umn.edu/sites/default/files/policies/Student_Conduct_Code.pdf)

If it is determined that a student has cheated, he or she may be given an F or an N for the course, and may face additional sanctions from the University. For additional information, please see: <http://policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/INSTRUCTORRESP.html>.

Student Writing Support

Writing tutors are available at 15 Nicholson Hall and satellite locations varying by semester. Contact the Writing Center for hours or appointments at: (612.625.1893) or <http://writing.umn.edu/sws>.

Student Writing Support offers face-to-face consulting for *all* University of Minnesota students working on any writing project. Consulting is available by appointment in Nicholson Hall and walk-in at satellites around campus. Two non-native speaker specialists are on staff. In addition, SWS offers a number of web-based resources on avoiding plagiarism, documenting sources, and planning and completing a writing project.

Personal Issues

As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce your ability to participate in daily activities. University of Minnesota services are available to assist you with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing. You can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via <http://www.mentalhealth.umn.edu/>.

Students with Disabilities:

All course material is available in alternative formats upon request. Please contact me if you need a different version of any of the course materials.

It is University policy to provide, on a flexible and individualized basis, reasonable accommodations to students who have disabilities that may affect their ability to participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. If this pertains to you, please contact me early in the semester to discuss your individual needs for accommodations.

Paratransit Services

A specialized curb-to-curb, on-campus transport service provided free of charge to persons with either temporary or permanent physical disabilities.

- The van operates year round (except official University holidays), Tuesday – Friday, 7:30 am – 5:45 pm.
- Call **612-624-8338**.
- Rides may be scheduled up to 2 weeks in advance.
- Rides are scheduled to allow sufficient time for the shuttle to reach the destination. The first daily ride is 7:30 am and the last is 5:45 pm.

Additional University Policies to be Aware of

Student Conduct Code

- The University seeks an environment that promotes academic achievement and integrity, that is protective of free inquiry, and that serves the educational mission of the University. Similarly, the University seeks a community that is free from violence, threats, and intimidation; that is respectful of the rights, opportunities, and welfare of students, faculty, staff, and guests of the University; and that does not threaten the physical or mental health or safety of members of the University community.
- As a student at the University, you are expected adhere to the following Board of Regents Policy: *Student Conduct Code*. To review the Student Conduct Code, please visit http://regents.umn.edu/sites/default/files/policies/Student_Conduct_Code.pdf.
- Note that the conduct code specifically addresses disruptive classroom conduct, which means “engaging in behavior that substantially or repeatedly interrupts either the instructor's ability to teach or student learning. The classroom extends to any setting where a student is engaged in work toward academic credit or satisfaction of program-based requirements or related activities.”

Academic Freedom and Responsibility

- Academic freedom is a cornerstone of the University. Within the scope and content of the course as defined by the instructor, it includes the freedom to discuss relevant matters in the classroom. Along with this freedom comes responsibility. Students are encouraged to develop the capacity for critical judgment and to engage in a sustained and independent search for truth. Students are free to take reasoned exception to the views offered in any course of study and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion, but they are responsible for learning the content of any course of study for which they are enrolled.

- Reports of concerns about academic freedom are taken seriously, and there are individuals and offices available for help. Contact the instructor, the department chair, your adviser, the associate dean of the college, etc. if you have any concerns.

Sexual Harassment

“Sexual harassment” means unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and/or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or academic performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or academic environment in any University activity or program. Such behavior is not acceptable in the University setting. For additional information, please consult the Board of Regents policy:

https://regents.umn.edu/sites/regents.umn.edu/files/policies/Sexual_Harassment_Sexual_Assault_Stalking_Relationship_Violence.pdf

Equity, Diversity, Equal Opportunity, and Affirmative Action:

The University will provide equal access to and opportunity in its programs and facilities, without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, age, marital status, disability, public assistance status, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. For more information, please read the Board of Regents policy:

http://regents.umn.edu/sites/default/files/policies/Equity_Diversity_EO_AA.pdf.

Appropriate Student Use of Class Notes and Course Materials:

Taking notes is a means of recording information but more importantly of personally absorbing and integrating the educational experience. However, broadly disseminating class notes beyond the classroom community or accepting compensation for taking and distributing classroom notes undermines instructor interests in their intellectual work product while not substantially furthering instructor and student interests in effective learning. Such actions violate shared norms and standards of the academic community. For additional information—you guessed it!—please read the Board of Regents policy:

<http://policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/CLASSNOTESSTUDENTS.html>.