



Bellarmino University

Course Syllabus 2008-2009

W. Fielding Rubel School of Business

MBA 712: Business Communications

(Spring Semester 2009 / Section X / 1 credit hour)

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Office Location: 012-H Horrigan Hall
Office Hours: 5:00 – 6:00 p.m. on Thursdays,
and by appointment

All sessions meet in Coster's Private Dining Room – PDR Room 125 (unless notified otherwise)
Fridays (5:30~7:00 p.m. – during and after dinner)

Course pre-requisites: none
Course co-requisites: MBA 701, 703, and 704

Catalog Description: This course focuses on developing and refining critical skills for global managers. Sessions occur over a private dinner with faculty and/or invited speakers. This one-credit hour course is part of a three course sequence; MBA 712 focuses on effective communications.

Course Learning Outcomes:

1. Students will gain a fuller understanding of the communications process as a whole as well as how to improve their individual skills in listening, writing, and public speaking.
2. Students will develop more reflective thinking through discussion of current topics related to communications, accounting, economics, and organizational behavior among others.

Course Methodology: The outcomes stated above will be achieved primarily through discussion pedagogy:

- **Discussion:** The discussion and sharing of knowledge, experiences, opinions and ideas sharpens analytical skills, improves judgment, and enhances conceptual skills. Assigned readings will be covered to varying degrees. In some instances the basic concepts and theories will be addressed in detail while in others additional examples, applications, and extensions of the material will be presented or solicited. Whatever the degree or amount of lecture, students will be actively involved.

Earned excellence.



The best business schools
in the world.

The mission of the W. Fielding Rubel School of Business is to provide student-centered, quality education in the Catholic liberal arts tradition at the undergraduate and master's levels. The Rubel School is enriched by the diverse intellectual perspectives inherent in the overall mission of Bellarmine University.

Curriculum Content:

- Global themes , locations, and cultures
- Capacity to adapt and innovate.
- Capacity to apply knowledge.
- Capacity to lead.
- The required skills of management.
- Domestic and global economic environments.
- Statistical data analysis and management science
- Creation of value.
- Financial theories, analysis, reporting and markets.
- Ethical and legal responsibilities in organizations and society
- Information technologies.
- Group and individual dynamics in organizations.
- Reflective thinking skills.
- Basic computer skills.
- Analytic skills.
- Communication skills.
- Team building

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- © General Knowledge and Skill Areas
 - x Learning Experiences in Management Specific Knowledge Areas
- Note: Areas noted above are subject to change as the MBA curriculum evolves.

Required Reading Materials: (Harvard Business School Publishing – unless otherwise noted)

- Cotner Medical (case by M. Luthy)
- Leveraging the Power of Nonverbal Communication, #C0404C.
- Listening to People, #57507.
- What Do You Mean I Can't Write?, #64305.
- *Guide to Managerial Communications: Effective Business Writing and Speaking*, Eighth Edition by Mary Munter, Prentice Hall Series in Advanced Communications, 2009 (Pearson), ISBN: 13-978-0-13-242426-4

Required Reading Materials – Handouts: (the following materials will be distributed in class)

- Dine Like a Diplomat
- Learning to Listen, 2nd edition
- Neurolinguistic Communications
- Presentation Skills Profile

Grading Elements / Assessment:

(Percentages)

(Points)

Letter Grade	G.P.A Equivalent	Lower Limit	Upper Limit	Lower Limit	Upper Limit
A	4.00	93.0%	100.0%	930	1,000
A-	3.67	90.0%	92.9%	900	929
B+	3.33	87.0%	89.9%	870	899
B	3.00	83.0%	86.9%	830	869
B-	2.67	80.0%	82.9%	800	829
C	2.00	73.0%	79.9%	730	799
F	0.00	00.0%	72.9%	0	729

There are 1,000 points possible in this course. To receive a grade of “A” a student will need to earn at least 930 points, a “B” will require at least 830 points, and a “C” will require 730 points. In the MBA program grades of “D” are not given. A student who earns fewer than 730 points will not pass the course.

Points are assigned as follows:

Graded Component	Type	Course Learning Outcome	Due Date	Max. Points
• Professionalism	Individual	#1, #2	Ongoing	1,000 pts.

Note to Students: Professors typically approach graduate courses differently than undergraduate ones. This can result in an initial culture shock for those MBA students using their undergraduate experience as a benchmark. In graduate study more emphasis is placed on students drawing connections among discussions and experiences in class, with teammates, and from assigned reading materials – with less oversight. As a result, on some occasions articles or other readings assigned for a class session will not be directly discussed. Instead, class time may be spent extending and/or drawing tangential information into the discussions. It doesn’t mean that the assigned readings are unimportant rather, it places more responsibility for considering the information and integrating it with existing knowledge into your hands (with help from the professor and other students).

Academic Honesty Policy: Bellarmine University is an academic community. It exists for the sake of the advancement of knowledge; the pursuit of truth; the intellectual, ethical, and social development of students; and the general well being of society. All members of our community have an obligation to themselves, to their peers and to the institution to uphold the integrity of Bellarmine University. In the area of academic honesty, this means that one’s work should be one’s own and that the instructor’s evaluation should be based on the student’s own efforts and understanding. When the standards of academic honesty are breached, mutual trust is undermined, the ideals of personal responsibility and autonomy are violated, teaching and learning are severely compromised, and other goals of the academic community cannot be realized.

I strongly endorse and will follow the academic honesty policy as published in Bellarmine’s Catalog 2007-2009 and in the 2008-2009 Student Handbook; both documents are available online via the student portal on the University’s intranet. Students and faculty must be fully aware of what constitutes academic dishonesty; claims of ignorance cannot be used to justify or rationalize dishonest acts. Academic dishonesty can take a number of forms, including but not limited to cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, aiding and abetting, multiple

submissions, obtaining unfair advantage, and unauthorized access to academic or administrative systems or information. Definitions of each of these forms of academic dishonesty are provided in the Academic Honesty section of the most recent edition of the Student Handbook. The University follows the policies outlined below for detected acts of academic dishonesty:

- 1.) Initial sanctions for instances of academic dishonesty may be imposed by the instructor of the appropriate dean. The choice of penalty ranges from a minimum penalty of failing the assignment or test to failing the course itself.
- 2.) Following initial sanctions, all cases of academic dishonesty will be reported by faculty to the Sr. VP Academic Affairs of the University, who has the authority to determine a more stringent penalty for the reported act of academic dishonesty, depending, in part, on the student's previous record of academic dishonesty. The student will be required to have a conference with the dean of his/her school, or the dean's designee.
- 3.) On the second offense during the course of a student's academic career at Bellarmine University, as a minimum additional penalty, the SVPAA will immediately suspend the student for the semester in which the most recent offense took place.
- 4.) On the third offense, the SVPAA will immediately dismiss the student from the University.

All detected instances of academic dishonesty will be reported to the SVPAA, and sanctions will be imposed as dictated by the policy. It is generally assumed that graduate students fully understand what constitutes Academic Dishonesty. Thus, no leniency of penalty will be applied in cases involving graduate students, and the harshest penalty (dismissal from the University) may be imposed upon report of the first offense, if deemed appropriate by the SVPAA.

Bellarmino University Non-Discrimination Policy: Bellarmine University admits qualified students of any age, sex, sexual orientation, race, color, religion, and national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of age, sex, sexual orientation, race, disability, color, religion, or national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school administered programs. Bellarmine University is an Affirmative Action-Equal Opportunity employer.

Disability Services: Students with disabilities who require accommodations (academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids or services) for this course must contact the Disability Services Coordinator. Please do not request accommodations directly from the professor. The Disability Services Coordinator is located in the Counseling Center (4th floor, 2120 Building), phone 452-8480.

Attendance Policy: All students are expected to attend all classes. If you are unable to attend a class session due to a valid reason (as evaluated by the instructor), e-mail them ahead of time, as soon as you are aware that you will be unable to attend a class. In order to be excused, an absence must be arranged with the instructor prior to the absence. Absences that cannot be arranged beforehand due to emergencies must be cleared up at the earliest possible opportunity. For any session you miss, you will need to submit (ahead of time if possible, within one week otherwise) a 2-3 page, single-spaced memo discussing the articles and/or other assigned readings for the class and their application to your life, work, etc.. The intent is not for you to produce a summary or "rehashing" of the material but *rather to promote introspection on its relevance and connection to your own life (work and possibly non-work)*.

Extra Credit Policy: There are no extra credit assignments or opportunities available in connection with this course. You should invest your time and energies in the activities and project outlined in this syllabus.

Classroom Privacy Policy: Despite the current day reality of You Tube, cell phone cameras, and MP3 devices, I want to preserve the unique and real-time nature of the classroom experience as well as the privacy of all concerned. Please refrain from any audio or video recording of lectures or discussions without prior arrangement.

Course Grade Notification: At the conclusion of the term grades are reported to the Registrar’s Office. Grades can then be accessed through your *myBellarmine* webpage. If you need to know your course grade earlier due to deadlines associated with their employer’s tuition reimbursement policies contact the instructor as soon as you know this will be an issue. A letter on Bellarmine University letterhead or e-mail from the instructor can be drafted and reported in an expedited time frame.

Severe Weather Policy: Refer to the current student handbook for details regarding changes in schedule due to bad weather. Faculty will arrange class schedules to meet course objectives in the event classes will be cancelled. If Bellarmine’s classes are cancelled (or delayed) due to bad weather, it will be noted on the university webpage and on the telephone weather line (452-8000, option #6). Students are encouraged to sign up through their myBellarmine website for automatic emergency notification to their cell phone.

Tentative Schedule of Activities and Assignments: The calendar shown beginning on the next page is tentative. Topics, reading assignments, in-class activities, and deadline dates may change as the term progresses although every effort will be made to adhere to what is listed. Any changes will be announced in class and sent via e-mail to your Bellarmine student e-mail account.

Academic Calendar:	January 18, 2010	Martin Luther King Day (University closed)
	March 1 – March 7, 2010	Spring Break
	March 10, 2010	Last day to withdraw from a course with a "W"
	April 1 – April 4, 2010	Easter Break
	April 23 – April 29, 2010	Finals Week

Orientation to Executive MBA program and MBA 712

(Session #1 of 6)

Day / Date	Pre-Class Readings
Friday February 13th	<p>Course syllabus</p> <p>Presentation Skills Profile</p> <p>Since we will always strive to integrate assigned readings and our discussions with current events, students should get into the habit (if they are not already) of reading one or more of the following for information related to our course theme of business communications: <i>Fortune</i>, <i>Forbes</i>, <i>Time</i>, <i>Newsweek</i>, <i>Business Week</i>, CNN.com, the Economist, Ad Age.</p>

Session Learning Outcome(s) - By the end of the session, students should be able to:

- integrate the responsibilities and activities of the course with their other commitments.
- discuss the communications process and inherent biases that may distort intended communications.
- better prepare and deliver professional presentations.

Case Studies: Cotner Medical

(Session #2 of 6)

Day / Date	Pre-Class Readings
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Friday February 27th	Cotner Medical case
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Session Learning Outcome(s) - By the end of the session, students should be able to:

- better balance quantitative and qualitative issues in case studies.

Neurolinguistic Communications

(Session #3 of 6)

Day / Date	Pre-Class Readings
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Friday March 13th	Guide to Managerial Communications Neurolinguistic Communications assessment (distributed in class)
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Session Learning Outcome(s) - By the end of the session, students should be able to:

- recognize one's communication preference – and those of others
- communicate more effectively with others who have different communication preferences

Developing Active Listening Skills

(Session #4 of 6)

Day / Date	Pre-Class Readings
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Friday March 27th	Listening to People, #57507. Leveraging the Power of Nonverbal Communication, #C0404C Learning to Listen assessment (distributed in class)
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Session Learning Outcome(s) - By the end of the session, students should be able to:

- assess their listening effectiveness across three dimensions.
- discuss how visible and invisible aspects of listening affect interaction.
- create an action plan that puts new skills into immediate action.

Communicating in Writing

(Session #5 of 6)

Day / Date

Pre-Class Readings

**Friday
April 3rd**

What Do You Mean I Can't Write, #64305.

Session Learning Outcome(s) - By the end of the session, students should be able to:

- more effectively communicate via e-mail messages and formal reports.

Executive Dining and Corporate Etiquette

(Session #6 of 6)

Day / Date

Pre-Class Readings

**Friday
April 24th**

Dine Like a Diplomat.

Session Learning Outcome(s) - By the end of the session, students should be able to:

- participate in a more formal dining occasion with ease.
- articulate facets of the executive MBA program that have gone well this term as well as make recommendations for improvements.

Professionalism: Student Professional Behavior and Etiquette in the MBA Program

Due Date: Ongoing

Possible Points: 1,000

Project Type: Individual

A positive and participative learning environment is crucial to your educational experience. The goals of our MBA program include developing your willingness and ability to contribute to discussions by expressing and defending your position on a variety of topics. For some, this may involve overcoming a sense of shyness. For others, it will involve the willingness to take risks and leave your “comfort zone”. While there are many informal situations in which people have neither the desire nor the right to prescribe how others ought to behave, the classroom is unique, and requires the establishment of a culture that respects the learning process and every individual in it.

Professionalism is a significant factor in determining your overall grade in this course. The evaluation of professionalism starts with the proposition that if a student attends scheduled sessions, comes to class prepared, participates actively and frequently, makes meaningful comments that contributes to their classmates’ education, interacts professionally with faculty and classmates, hands in all required work on time, participates in the teaching evaluation process, and observes class guidelines, their score will be assessed as “average” or at a numerical level of roughly 85%. Adjustments either up or down from this starting point are at the discretion of the professor – to recognize superior effort and performance or acknowledge deficiencies in the student’s approach to their responsibilities.

Given the many hours you spend preparing for class discussions, reading articles and text material, analyzing case studies, and working on individual and group projects, as well as the significant financial commitment you (and/or your organization) are making to undertake graduate study, each individual is responsible for creating and maintaining this professional environment. For these reasons, the following guidelines/expectations are provided.

Your *physical presence* in the classroom is a prerequisite for active participation. Students that come late or are not prepared to begin when class starts disrupt the class. Please make every effort to arrange your schedule so that you arrive early enough to take care of any personal or non-class related activities and are ready when class begins. Breaks are worked into class sessions at reasonable intervals. Please wait until a break is called before leaving the classroom (emergencies or special needs notwithstanding). For breaks and other breakout activities, return at the time specified by the instructor.

Your *mental presence* as well as physical presence is necessary for everyone to get the most out of the classroom experience. Our MBA classes are interactive forums. Your activities, both positive and negative, have an effect on the class. Please focus your attention and energies on our class exclusively when the class is in session.

Given the numerous and varied experiences you will have during your program of study, both in and out of the classroom, as well as practice and growing familiarity with various teaching formats, the faculty’s expectation regarding the depth and sophistication of your contributions will rise as you progress through the program.

Observing these guidelines is the minimum expectation of the faculty. While the specific audience for this message constitutes a small percentage of all students, everyone benefits from a clear statement of expectations. Practicing professionalism will make you more productive and will lead to the achievement of

your individual and group goals. You will also find that the attitude of professionalism you develop here will benefit your larger life at work and your personal life.

Further Reading

No single course can acquaint you with the wealth of literature available on most topics. For those who wish to continue their investigation of areas raised in this course on their own, beginning below is a sampling of readings you may find valuable.

Listening Skills:

- *Effective Listening Skills* by Art James
- *Listening: The Forgotten Skill : A Self-Teaching Guide* by Madelyn Burley-Allen
- *The Lost Art of Listening: How Learning to Listen Can Improve Relationships* by Michael Nichols
- *Effective Listening And Feedback – Improving How You Listen* by Editors of BrownHerron

Corporate Etiquette and International Protocol:

- *Business Class: Etiquette Essentials for Success at Work*, by Jacqueline Whitmore
- *Choosing Civility: The Twenty-five Rules of Considerate Conduct* by P. M. Forni
- *Power Etiquette: What You Don't Know Can Kill Your Career* by Dana May Casperson

Writing Skills:

- *Get to the Point! Painless Advice for Writing Memos, Letters and E-mails Your Colleagues and Clients Will Understand* by Elizabeth Danziger
- *Business Grammar, Style & Usage: The Most Used Desk Reference for Articulate and Polished Business Writing and Speaking by Executives Worldwide* by Alicia Abell
- *The Encyclopedia of Business Letters, Fax Memos, and E-Mail* by Robert W. Bly

About the Instructor:

Dr. Michael Luthy is Professor of Marketing in the Department of Business Administration. He has received several national teaching awards for innovation and creativity in the classroom, is a Fulbright Scholar alumnus, and is widely published in marketing and related business journals. Numerous case studies, articles, and other writings have been published in national and regional conference proceedings, textbooks, pedagogical volumes, and newspapers.

Dr. Luthy earned his Ph.D. and bachelor's degrees in business administration from the University of Illinois and an MBA from the University of Iowa. He taught at Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa for six years before joining the Bellarmine faculty in 1998. His work experience includes positions in professional sales, bank examination with the U.S. Treasury Department and in marketing and finance for Oscar Mayer Foods Corporation. Dr. Luthy's teaching interests include marketing management and strategy, services marketing, and small business entrepreneurship. His research includes global and cross-cultural marketing issues as well as business and entrepreneurial education.

In addition to his academic activities, Dr. Luthy consults with organizations and conducts training in marketing and executive business skills. He also serves on the editorial review boards of the *Journal of Marketing Education* and the *Academy of Marketing Studies Journal*.