

## OBJECTIVES

The *Business Communication* course is intended to train students to communicate persuasively and effectively in business settings. To accomplish this, you will need to learn and practise how to deliver the message of your written or oral work **clearly, appropriately** and **persuasively** in order to achieve **effective** business communication.

## CONTENT

The course covers the following topics:

- *The nature of business communication.* For you to gain a general critical understanding of communication as a complex phenomenon, especially the role of audience, power and culture in it.
- *Meeting skills.* For you to participate in meetings more effectively and productively.
- *Letter writing.* For you to produce successful letters, memos or emails in any given situation, paying attention to the writer's objectives, the reader's needs, the reader-writer relationship and the cultural context, in order to deliver your message effectively.
- *Report writing.* For you to understand the fundamentals of the report writing process and develop the critical thinking skills necessary to produce convincing written reports that are characterised by clearly stated aims and research problems, a sound and an interesting discussion of data, logical conclusions and feasible recommendations.
- *Intercultural and interpersonal communication skills.* For you to become aware of important factors at play when communicating across cultures, especially on interpersonal levels and resolving conflicts, for improved or smoother communication with audiences of diverse backgrounds in global business environments.
- *Oral presentation skills.* For you to become more effective confident speakers through the effective delivery of your message.
- *Listening skills.* For you to be able to listen genuinely to other people's concerns and argument, and identify and clarify their main point or argument in a conversation or discussion.

- *Networking skills.* For you to develop awareness of some important strategies in establishing and expanding your network of contacts in business, especially by drawing on similar skills above like listening, critical thinking, and intercultural and interpersonal communication.

Note that these topics, while presented separately here, are in practice inseparable from each other, and will thus be learned simultaneously in certain lessons and activities in the course.

What binds all the topics together is the main goal of this course: to learn how to deliver your messages in different business forms and channels **effectively** – that is, **clearly, appropriately, and persuasively**. To accomplish this, two questions are critical:

- *what* is your message, and
- *how* will you deliver it?

## **A**SSessment

Evaluation is **100% continual assessment**. The marks will be derived as follows:

<b>Tasks</b>	<b>Breakdown of marks</b>	<b>Due dates</b>
Mini Lecture	10 marks	Wks 3 - 5
Report	15 marks	Wk 6
Letter Writing (Test)	15 marks	Wk 8
Formal Oral Presentations (FOP)	20 marks	Wks 10 - 11
Formal Individual Presentation (Test)	20 marks	Wk 13
Oral Interaction, feedback	10 marks 10 marks (Test on week 13)	Whole semester, inc. oral feedback in Wk 5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100 marks</b>	

**IMPORTANT:** The dates for submission of assignments are firm deadlines and you are expected to keep to them. Late submissions will either be rejected or suffer a penalty.

There are two tests: letter writing and formal individual presentation that form part of the overall grade together with the tasks and oral interaction. These tests will be explained in class.

## ORAL INTERACTION


Your oral interaction assessment will essentially be determined by how well you *demonstrate consistently the various skills learned in the course through active and constructive class discussions and group work*. This includes consistent demonstration of the following skills throughout the semester:

- Clarity and persuasiveness of your messages during class discussions
- Effective and constructive feedback on your peers' work, including individual feedback on Formal Oral Presentations
- Use of appropriate tone when providing criticism
- Good listening skills during class discussions and tutorial exercises, including receptiveness to others' feedback

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The key term is *consistency* – while demonstration of the skills above is important, you must be able to demonstrate them consistently throughout the semester. This means keeping a good attendance and coming for every tutorial session suitably prepared.

## STRUCTURE

The course is conducted through tutorials, which are structured to actively engage you in the learning process so as to ensure the internalization of the principles and strategies introduced as well as to encourage independent learning. The tutorial sessions include mini lectures, group discussions, presentations, critical incidents, case studies, self and peer feedback, and conferencing. The course uses social media tools to supplement the interaction, instruction, teaching and learning. These tools include facebook (befriend “Biz Comm” ) and twitter.

The number of modular credits for the course is 4. The total number of face to face contact hours is 48, spread over 12 weeks, divided into two 2-hour tutorials each week. Students can engage in the social media tools supported in this course for further interaction, instruction and learning. Each tutorial group will comprise approximately 18 students.

## TEACHING STYLE

Tutors may vary in the manner by which they teach the topics in the course. While this is expected, all tutors work towards accomplishing **the same objectives** for each lesson or activity.

To achieve fairness and parity of marking across all classes, all tutors use **the same assessment rubrics** and have undergone training to use them through norming exercises.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

Wk No.	Wk Beginning	TOPIC/ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION		Remarks
		Session 1 (S1)	Session 2 (S2)	
1	16 Jan (Mon)	Introduction to course aims	Intercultural Communication (ICC) + exercises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>S1: Course objectives, schedule, assessment, Consultancy Project, facebook and grouping.</li> </ul>
2	23 Jan*	<i>Chinese New Year holidays (CNY)</i>	Interpersonal Communication (IPC) + exercises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Due to CNY holidays, there is no S1 but course will run into 13<sup>th</sup> week.</li> </ul>
3	30 Jan	Introduction to making presentations	<b>Mini Lecture (ML) 1</b> Report Writing: Planning Formulating the PPQ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>S2: Report writing scenario to be distributed</li> <li>Videotaping of ML</li> </ul>
4	6 Feb	<b>Mini Lecture 2</b> Report Writing: Organizing and Outlining	<b>Mini Lecture 3</b> Report Writing: Drafting the Report Correct Languages of Report Writing (#1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue with Report Writing process</li> <li>Videotaping of ML</li> </ul>
5	13 Feb	<b>Mini Lecture 4</b> Report Writing: Drafting the Report Other topics (#2-6), and the Executive Summary	Feedback on ML & Oral Interaction. Report Writing process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>S2: Provide feedback on Oral Interaction</li> <li>S2: Revise/Finalize the PPQ and the outline of the findings section</li> </ul>
<b>RECESS (20 Feb to 26 Feb 2011)</b>				
6	27 Feb	Report Writing Consultation	Letter Writing: How to write	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>S2: Deadline of IVLE <b>submission of reports</b>, plus one hard copy for tutor</li> </ul>
7	5 Mar	Letter Writing: Group letter practice	Feedback on Group Letter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>S1: Group letter to be completed and feedback to be given in S2</li> </ul>
8	12 Mar	<b>Letter Writing: Individual Test</b>	Feedback on Report Writing and Introduction to Formal Oral Presentation (FOP)	

9	19 Mar	FOP rehearsal and feedback session	FOP rehearsal and feedback session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feedback for Letter Test can commence this week</li> </ul>
10	26 Mar	<b>FOP</b> Team 4	<b>FOP</b> Team 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Videotaping of presentations</li> </ul>
11	2 Apr*	<b>FOP</b> Team 2	<b>FOP</b> Team 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Videotaping of presentations</li> </ul>
12	9 Apr	Formal Individual Presentation (FIP) briefing	No class due to test the following week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• S1: overall feedback for FOP</li> <li>• Videotaping of presentations</li> </ul>
13	16 Apr	<b>FIP: Test (Oral Presentation and Oral Interaction)</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading Week</li> <li>• S1: Make up class for week 2</li> </ul>

\*Holidays: Chinese New Year (23 & 24 Jan, Mon & Tues); Good Friday (6 Apr, Fri);

## **R**ECOMMENDED TEXTS

The following texts are recommended – not required – for your use on the course:

- Bovee, C.L. and Thill, J.V. 2008. *Business Communication Today*. 8th edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall International Inc. (Call No.: HF5718 Bov 2008)
- Locker, K.O. 2008. *Business and Administrative Communication*. 7<sup>th</sup> edition. Boston, Mass.: Irwin/McGraw-Hill. (Call No.: HF5718 Loc 2008)

## **C**COURSE WEBSITE

More information on the course, notes on topics covered in the course, and accompanying PowerPoint slides as well as additional learning resources can be found on the Business Communication website that is accessible through the IVLE or by accessing the following URL:

<http://courses.nus.edu.sg/course/elcttr/ES2002/index.htm>

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