

# Business Communications

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<b>Instructor:</b>	Michael Franks
<b>Class Location:</b>	Business Communications Room (BC 1)
<b>Class Time:</b>	Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday mornings
<b>Contact Information:</b>	<a href="mailto:mfranks@yearup.org">mfranks@yearup.org</a>
<b>Course Credits:</b>	Business Communications counts towards the following course credits at Harold Washington College: COOP EX 101 and INTDSY 101

## Course Description

“The difference between the right word and the almost right word is the difference between lightning and a lightning-bug” – Mark Twain

What are the ‘right words’ to be used in a professional setting? Why is it important to use these words? When is it appropriate to use a comma? Is it ‘ok’ to use slang in e-mails to my colleagues? During the course of the Business Communications (B.C.) class at Year Up Chicago we will explore these questions and many more in great detail in order to be better prepared for communicating in the various professional environments encountered on internships.

Stated broadly, we will cover critical reading, writing and speaking in Module I, developing a professional brand in Module II through Year Up’s Career Ready Toolkit, and examining the elements of project support in Module III. At the end of this course you will have a better appreciation for working in both group and individual settings, an ability to read and write more clearly/critically and taken a number of quizzes/exams in order to test your acquired competencies in grammar, reading and writing.

Business Communications is a college level course which will, at times, rely on lectures and demonstrations by the instructor. However, this course was designed and structured to place a premium on interpersonal professional interactions. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that you come to class each day prepared to participate and engage (professionally of course!) not only with the instructor but with your peers as well, take notes, ask pertinent questions and work hard. In sum, the most successful students in this course will be those who view it as if they were on their internship site and are practicing the rudiments of professional performance.

## Course Objectives

The basic objectives of the course are:

- To understand and apply Standard American English grammar conventions
- To improve sentence structure technical writing skills
- To develop strong critical thinking skills
- To learn how to work successfully in groups and listen well
- To develop strong professional verbal and nonverbal communication skills
- To improve public speaking and presentation skills
- To learn how to compose a resume, cover letter, and LinkedIn profile

- To learn how to write business emails and other professional documents
- To understand and apply the basics of project management

### **Course Materials**

- A subject notebook with folders or a three-ring binder, for taking notes and class handouts (can be purchased from Walmart, Target, Walgreens, CVS, etc.)
- Daily Planner
- Grammar Book provided by Year Up
- Handouts and assignment sheets (will be given out regularly during class)

### **Grading Policy**

Your grade for Business Communications will be based on the following:

Homework/BC Lab Assignments: 20%

Participation/Class Work: 10%

Tests and Quizzes: 30%

Projects/BC Lab Projects: 40%

**In order to receive a passing grade of C, you must come to class regularly, participate actively, complete all work on time, and perform at a level that demonstrates proficiency.**

The work we do in the course (which includes daily homework assignments and projects you will need to do in partnership with your classmates) is intended to prepare you for your internship, the professional world, and success in a college class. With that in mind, if you need additional assistance on any assignments or on how to study effectively, make sure to take advantage of tutoring and/or additional meetings with your instructor.

### **Assignment Format**

All written assignments (unless otherwise specified) must be formatted in the following manner (MLA formatting standards):

- Typed on white 8½” x 11” paper
- Times New Roman, Calibri, Garamond, 12-point font
- Standard MS Word default margins (1 - 1.25” on the left and right, 1” on the top and bottom)
- Double spaced (unless otherwise specified) – No extra spacing between paragraphs
- Name, class and section number (A or B), instructor, date and name of assignment typed on the upper left-hand side of the page

**EXAMPLE:**

John Doe  
 Business Communications, Class A  
 Michael Franks  
 April 4, 2014  
 Business Email Assignment

- Page numbered (if multiple pages, from page two on)
- Stapled in the upper left-hand corner

### **Late Assignment Policy**

**All assignments are due at the beginning of class, unless otherwise specified.** An assignment is considered late when it is submitted after the date or time it is due. Assignments are also considered late if they are submitted using the wrong format. Late assignments will be treated as follows:

- 1 day late = 15 point late assignment contract infraction.
- 2 days late = grade drops 1 letter grade + additional 15 late assignment point contract infraction.
- 3 days late = grade drops 2 letter grades + additional 15 point late assignment contract infraction.
- Assignments 4 or more days late will not be accepted.

In-class work can only be made up if you have notified your instructor of an absence ahead of time or if your absence is excused because of an emergency by your site leader.

**If you know you are going to be absent the day an assignment is due, you must either turn it in early or turn it in by 8:30 a.m. on the day that you return. If it is turned in after 8:30 a.m., it will be considered late (see above).**

### **Tutoring**

The Business Communications team is available to help support you during the L&D phase. You may schedule tutoring sessions with a member of the team if you need one-on-one support. Year Up's after school study group program, ACE, can provide additional support. If you need support outside of Year Up hours, the Harold Washington Learning Center and Writing Lab are open throughout the week. They are located at 30 E. Lake Street, Rm. 203-A, and they can be reached at 312-553-5751.

### **Academic Dishonesty**

**Plagiarism in any form will not be tolerated and may be grounds for discipline up to and including dismissal from the program.**

Plagiarism occurs when a student misrepresents the work of another as his or her own. Plagiarism may consist of using the ideas, sentences, paragraphs, or the whole text of another without appropriate acknowledgement, but it also includes employing or allowing another person to write or substantially alter work that a student then submits as his or her own.

In this class, we will use ideas from other writers in a variety of ways. You may explain the work of a great thinker, disagree with another writer or refer to authorities to support your point. In all cases you will need to give proper credit. Plagiarism is a very serious issue, so do not try to copy other people's work and pretend it is your own or have someone else write your essays for you and claim that you did the work. Usually students are tempted to get illegal "help" from the internet or other sources when they feel they are failing and there is nothing they can do about it. However, we are always willing to help you. If you feel overwhelmed, or that you don't understand something, please come talk to us and we'll be more than happy to help you.

You may be required to quote from a text from time to time throughout this course. If you do need to take words, phrases, or whole sentences from a published source (this includes internet sources

and printed materials), make sure you give credit to the original source. We will go over how to cite sources in class and if you ever have questions about citations, please do not hesitate to ask us.

### **BC Etiquette and Workplace Norms**

1. **Supplies:** It is expected that you are prepared for class each day and that you bring all the required materials to class: pens, a notebook, textbook (*Grammar & Punctuation Workbook*) and any assignments that are due. Once class has begun, you will not be allowed to access your locker. If you must access your locker after class has started or you do not have the required books for class, you will earn an infraction. If you lose your *Grammar & Punctuation Workbook*, you must notify your instructor immediately to replace the book. The replacement cost of the book, \$15, will be deducted from your stipend check.
2. **Meeting Space Etiquette:** The BC classroom will be treated like a corporate meeting space. Thus, all bags and purses should remain in lockers or on the floor next to you in order to ensure clean desk spaces for all meeting participants.
3. **Assignments:** All assignments are due at the start of BC class, unless otherwise specified. There will be no printing of assignments or emailing of assignments after class has begun.
4. **Respect:** It is expected that all students will respect one another and the instructor. There will be a plenty of class discussions where sensitive issues may be discussed. Students should always show respect towards the opinions of others, even if they may not necessarily agree with those opinions. Students are also expected to show respect when the instructor or another student is speaking.
5. **Remain Open-Minded:** We will be doing a variety of different activities during the course of BC. It is expected that you remain open-minded and willing to try new things.
6. **Food/Drink:** No food is allowed in BC class unless the instructor gives prior approval. Water is allowed in class as long as it is in a water bottle.
7. **Absences:** If you must miss class for any reason, it is your responsibility to contact another student and/or instructor to find out what you have missed and to make sure that your assignments are completed in a timely manner.
8. **Laptops:** Laptop use during class time is acceptable only with the instructor's permission. Personal laptops are permitted only with the permission of the instructor. Each student will be assigned to a laptop number. It is each student's responsibility to make sure their laptop is placed on the correct shelf and plugged in to charge at the end of each class session. Failure to do so is disrespectful to Year Up property and to other students and will result in a Core Values infraction.
9. **Class Duration:** It is expected that you remain in class for the duration of class time. Restrooms should be used during the breaks and at lunch time. Excessive restroom breaks during class are disruptive to fellow students.
10. **Group Work:** There will be plenty of opportunities to work within groups during BC class and on outside projects. It is expected that all team members contribute to group work.
11. **Contract:** The Year Up contract is always in effect during BC class and core values should be adhered to at all times.

### **Module I (Tentative schedule; all assignments are subject to change)** **Items in bold indicate larger projects**

## **Week 1 (3/3) – ORIENTATION WEEK/NO CLASSES**

### **Week 2 (3/10)**

#### **Business Communications Class**

- Grammar – Nouns/Pronouns
- Note-taking
- Listening Skills
- Critical Reading

#### **Business Communications Lab**

- Read and discuss Langston Hughes 'Let America Be America Again' and 'I, Too, Sing America'
- Assignment: What is your interpretation of Hughes' poem? Does this poem resonate with you? If so, how? Do you think Hughes' vision of a united America fighting for economic, racial and environment justice is possible? If so, how? If not, why?
- Assignment: write an original poem of your experience of injustice in the US, Chicago or local neighborhood etc.

### **Week 3 (3/17)**

#### **Business Communications Class**

- Grammar – Pronouns/Verbs
- Verbal Skills
- Introduction to Public Speaking
- **Introduction Speeches**

#### **Business Communications Lab**

- Poem presentations
- Grammar review nouns and pronouns

### **Week 4 (3/24)**

#### **Business Communications Class**

- Grammar – Prepositions
- Grammar – Intro. to Subjects and Objects
- Business Emails
- Thank You Messages & Networking Follow-Ups
- Plagiarism
- Introduction to Power Point
- Creative presentation techniques
- Begin working on Email Style Guides

#### **Business Communications Lab**

- Introduce weekly PEP (1<sup>st</sup> PEP assignment)
- Note taking and reading strategies
- Grammar review pronouns and verbs

### **Week 5 (3/31): No classes Mon. 3/31 – Fri. 4/4**

### **Week 6 (4/7)**

#### **Business Communications Class**

- Grammar – Intro to Adjectives and Adverbs
- Elevator pitches & networking
- **Elevator Pitch Competition**

- *Waiting for Superman* (documentary)
- **Mod I Exam**  
**Business Communications Lab**
- **Email Style Guide presentations**

**Week 7 (4/14) (Weeks 7-10 Career Readiness Toolkit)**

**Business Communications Class**

- Grammar –Adjectives and Adverbs, Direct Objects, Items in a series
- **Introduction to LinkedIn**
- Begin building LinkedIn profiles  
**Business Communications Lab**
- Review of Adjectives and Adverbs
- LinkedIn Project

## Module II

**Week 8 (4/21)**

**Business Communications Class**

- Grammar – Conjunctions/Interjections
- Introduction to Resumes
- **Resumes – First Draft**  
**Business Communications Lab**
- Intro. to customer service – why is it important?
- Customer service experience discussion
- Power statements/resume work

**Week 9 (5/28)**

**Business Communications Class**

- Grammar – Subject/Verb agreement
- Intro. to cover letters
- Cover Letters & Entry Level Job Descriptions  
**Business Communications Lab**
- Intro. to customer service research project
- Grammar – Subject/Verb agreement

**Week 10 (5/5)**

**Business Communications Class**

- Grammar – Subject/Verb agreement
- Resumes, cover letters and LinkedIn editing  
**Business Communications Lab**
- Grammar – Adjective and Adverbs
- Customer service research project presentation
- Resume/cover letter editing

**Week 11 (5/12)**

**Business Communications Class**

- Grammar – Phrases and Clauses

- Working in small groups
- Conducting critical research online
- **Intro. to Group Company Research Proj.** (Teams of 3 or 4)
- **Cover Letters – Final Drafts**  
**Business Communications Lab**
- Phrases and Clauses review
- Resume/cover letter editing
- Group company research project

**Week 12 (5/19)**

**Business Communications Class**

- Grammar – Phrases and Clauses
- Group Company Research Proj. Presentations
- Business Meetings and Minutes
- Mock Business Meetings
- Resume Editing

**Business Communications Lab**

- Continued resume editing
- LinkedIn profile editing

**Week 13 (5/27): No classes Mon. 5/26 – Fri. 5/30 (Memorial Day/Spring Break)**

**Business Communications Class**

- **Resumes – Final Drafts**

**Week 14 (6/2)**

**Business Communications Class**

- Grammar – Fragments and Run-On Sentences
- Difficult Business Messages
- Good/Bad News Messages
- **Module II Exam**

**Business Communications Lab**

- Grammar – Fragments and Run-on Sentences
- Module II customer service debrief/class discussion
- Customer service student interactive

## **Module III**

**Week 15 (6/9)**

**Business Communications Class**

- Grammar – Fragments and Run-On Sentences
- Introduction to Project Management

**Business Communications Lab**

- Elements of Project Support

**Week 16 (6/16)**

**Business Communications Class**

- Grammar – Sentence Construction
- Continued work on Project Management

- Proposals and Reports
- **Final Drafts of Resumes Due for IRA (?)**  
**Business Communications Lab**
- Elements of Project Support

**Week 17 (6/23)**

**Business Communications Class**

- Grammar – Commonly Confused Words
- Continued work on Project Management  
**Business Communications Lab**
- Elements of Project Support

**Week 18 (6/30): No classes Friday, 7/4 (Independence Day)**

**Business Communications Class**

- Grammar – Commonly Confused Words
- **Project Management Project Due**  
**Business Communications Lab**
- Elements of Project Support

**Week 19 (7/7)**

**Business Communications Class**

- Internship Communication
- Working With Different Generations  
**Business Communications Lab**
- Elements of Project Support

**Week 20 (7/14)**

**Business Communications Class**

- **Demonstrative Presentations –**
- Internship Readiness Scenarios  
**Business Communications Lab**
- Elements of Project Support

**Week 21 (7/21)**

- **Internship Boot Camp Week**