

# MGT 590 Effective Business Writing

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## *Summer 2013 Syllabus*

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| <b>Course Description</b>                 | Tailored to meet the individual writing needs of management professionals, this course reviews and practices standard conventions in grammar and punctuation, and innovative stylistics using a highly interactive format. The course addresses both electronic (email) and traditional (letter, summary, report) managerial writing tasks with the goal of clearer, more concise business communication.  |
| <b>Credit Hours</b>                       | 1  |
| <b>Faculty Information</b>                | <i>Brian K. McCarthy, MBA</i><br><a href="mailto:brian.mccarthy@pdx.edu">brian.mccarthy@pdx.edu</a><br>Office Hours are by arrangement   |
| <b>General Course Meeting Information</b> | This course meets 7/1/2013 – 8/9/2013 and is offered completely online through Sakai (there are no face-to-face dates).  |
| <b>Required Texts &amp; Materials</b>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Text: The required text is <i>Guide to Managerial Communication (10<sup>th</sup> Ed.)</i>, by Mary Munter and Lynn Hamilton. It is available through Amazon.com and other online retailers. Please purchase the 10<sup>th</sup> edition. You may substitute the 9<sup>th</sup> edition if the 10<sup>th</sup> edition is not available.</li><li>• Case #1: Fletcher Electronics case study. I will post a copy in Sakai.</li><li>• Cover letter guidelines. I will post a copy in Sakai.</li></ul>   |
| <b>Course Outcomes</b>                    | <p>In this course, we focus on a crucial management skill: the ability to inform and persuade through writing. We will learn through reading, internalizing fundamental concepts, discussing writing challenges, and—most importantly—practicing our writing skills.</p> <p>Through active participation in this course, you will improve your ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Think strategically about business communications.</li><li>• Use grammar and punctuation correctly.</li><li>• Write emails, letters and reports with brevity, clarity and purpose.</li><li>• Create a professional PowerPoint presentation.</li></ul> |

**Attendance Requirements**

Attendance at the face-to-face sessions is required as is participation in the online component of the course. Students are expected to be present and participate in discussions in a professional and respectful manner. Failure to attend or participate in class may adversely affect your final grade. See the Gradebook for details.

**Grading Policy**

Grades are based on the following criteria:

|    |         |    |        |    |           |
|----|---------|----|--------|----|-----------|
| A  | 95-100% | B- | 80-82% | D+ | 67-69%    |
| A- | 90-94%  | C+ | 77-79% | D  | 63-66%    |
| B+ | 87-89%  | C  | 73-76% | D- | 60-62%    |
| B  | 83-86%  | C- | 70-72% | F  | Below 60% |

Grades will be based on scores from Forum posts and participation, two problem analyses, and participation in the in-person class meetings. The point breakdown is as follows:

|                   |                                      |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <i>25 points</i>  | <i>Class Participation</i>           |
| <i>25 points</i>  | <i>Fletcher Electronics Memo</i>     |
| <i>25 points</i>  | <i>Cover Letter</i>                  |
| <i>25 points</i>  | <i>Professional Development Plan</i> |
| <i>100 points</i> | <i>Total points possible</i>         |

Graduate credit will be granted for a class grade of C or better, however a class grade below B is cause for serious concern.

Grades are due to the Registrar’s Office one week after the end of the term. Students will find official grades posted in ISIS within two weeks of the completion of the term. If at this time you do not see your grades in ISIS, please contact the Division at 503-346-0375.

**Syllabus Changes & Retention**

This syllabus is not to be considered a contract between the student and the School of Medicine. It is recognized that changes may be made as the need arises. Students are responsible for keeping a copy of the course syllabus for their records. *HOWEVER PLEASE NOTE: the course outline posted on Sakai will have the most up to date information.*

**Expectations**

Our time together is short, so our online class sessions will be focused and fast-paced. Here is what you can expect in a typical week:

- Master the assigned reading.
- Internalize key concepts and ideas from the reading.
- Complete assignments.
- Improve and polish writing through peer review process.
- Actively participate in class discussions.

You will have many opportunities to contribute to our class discussions. I look forward to each of you enriching our class with comments, observations and questions.

You are required to participate each week in our discussions. These discussions will focus on questions raised by the readings, the case studies and real world situations. I will post questions each week to get our discussions started.

Here are the keys to successful class participation:

- Keep up with the assigned readings.
- Respond to the weekly questions posted by the instructor.
- Read all posts, and respond thoughtfully at least twice per week to the comments of your fellow students.
- Make your first discussion forum post by 11:55 PM, Wednesday. Please do not wait until the last minute to jump into the discussions!

Your class participation grade will be determined as follows:

- Quality of comments: 40%
- Quantity & timeliness of comments: 20%
- Reading and responding to posts of others: 20%
- Munter tools, vocabulary, and concepts used in posts: 20%

**Copyright Information**

Every reasonable effort has been made to protect the copyright requirements of materials used in this course. Class participants are warned not to copy, audio, or videotape in violation of copyright laws. Journal articles will be kept on reserve at the library or online for student access. Copyright law does allow for making one personal copy of each article from the original article. This limit also applies to electronic sources.

To comply with the fair use doctrine of the US copyright law, Sakai course sites close three weeks after grades are posted with the Registrar. Please be sure to download all course material you wish to keep before this time.

**Student Access**

Our program is committed to all students achieving their potential. If you have a disability or think you may have a disability (physical, learning, hearing, vision, psychological) which may need a reasonable accommodation please contact

Student Access at (503) 494-0082 or e-mail at [orchards@ohsu.edu](mailto:orchards@ohsu.edu) to discuss your needs.

You can also find more information [here](#). Because accommodations can take time to implement, it is important to have this discussion as soon as possible. All information regarding a student's disability is kept in accordance with relevant state and federal laws.

You may also visit [this website](#) to identify your Program Accommodation Liaison (PAL).

**Inclement  
Weather  
Policy**

When the weather forecaster is calling for ice or snow, call the OHSU Alert Line, 503 494-9021, for information regarding weather conditions that may affect operations at OHSU. If classes are canceled or delayed, residents and students who have patient care responsibilities must meet those obligations. See this [website](#) for details.

For more information specific to the Division, please visit our [website](#).

**Academic  
Honesty**

Course participants are expected to maintain academic honesty in their course work. Participants should refrain from seeking past published solutions to any assignments. Literature and resources (including Internet resources) employed in fulfilling assignments must be cited. More information can be found online [here](#).

In an effort to uphold the principles and practice of academic honesty, faculty members at OHSU may use originality checking systems such as *Turnitin* to compare a student's submitted work against multiple sources.

**Use of Sakai**

This course will have an online component, which can be accessed through Sakai, OHSU's online course management system. For any technical questions or if you need help logging in, please contact the Sakai Help Desk.

***Hours:***

Sakai Help Desk  
Mon – Fri, 8 am – 10 pm  
weekends 12 pm – 8 pm

***Contact Information:***

(Local) 503-494-7074  
(Toll-free) 877-972-5249  
email [sakai@ohsu.edu](mailto:sakai@ohsu.edu)

Please remember, Sakai course sites close three weeks after grades are posted with the Registrar. Please be sure to download all course material you wish to keep before this time.

## Course schedule

### Week 0: July 1st – 7th

What to do:

- Read the course syllabus.
- Read Munter, chapter 1.
- No video or online discussion this week—enjoy the 4<sup>th</sup>!

### Week 1: July 8<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup>

What to do:

- Watch the week one video: <http://www.screencast.com/t/5Nb1PGXpL>
- Read Munter, chapter 2 and appendices A, B, and C.
- Read the Fletcher Electronics case. (Posted on Sakai.) Think about the case using the framework in Munter, chapter 1:
  - Communicator strategy
  - Audience strategy
  - Message strategy
  - Channel choice strategy
  - Culture strategy
- Introduce yourself in the Sakai “Introductions” forum by Wednesday, 11:55 PM.
- Participate in the Sakai “Fletcher Electronics” discussion forum. Please make your first post no later than 11:55 PM on Wednesday.
- If you have time, get a head start on writing the first draft of your Fletcher Electronics one page memo. Please see the Week 2 section of the syllabus for details.

## Week 2: July 15<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup>

What to do:

- Watch the week two video: <http://www.screencast.com/t/bZ6RtosDui9>
- Read Munter, chapters 3 and 4.
- Participate in the Sakai Week 2 discussion forum.
- Write a one page (max) memo to VanDyke. Here is the scenario for the memo: You are a communications consultant hired by VanDyke at the beginning of the case, before he has communicated anything about the procurement process changes. VanDyke has asked you for a one-page memo that outlines the strategy he should use to achieve his objective. Fletcher memo details:
  - Your memo should be single-spaced (double-spaced between paragraphs), 12 point font, regular margins, no cover sheet. Be sure to address communicator strategy, audience, message, and channel choice. You do not need to specifically answer each question at the end of the case.
  - Even though the memo is just one page, please add section headings. Stay within the one-page limit (Times Roman, 12 point font, one inch margins.) This will force you to work hard at editing for brevity.
  - Please use this format at the beginning of your memo:

To: Bill VanDyke  
From: [Your name]  
Subject: [Clear description of what your memo is about]  
Date: [Date you finish writing the memo]
- Post your Fletcher memo in the Sakai week 2 peer review forum by 11:55 PM on Thursday.
- Participate in the Fletcher peer review exercise. Please plan to provide peer feedback no later than 11:55 PM on Sunday.

### **Week 3: July 22<sup>nd</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup>**

What to do:

- Watch the week three video: <http://www.screencast.com/t/3BSU9grv6>
- Watch the week three “bonus” video: <http://www.screencast.com/t/Ko20Ydxdz>
- Review Munter, chapters 3-4.
- Participate in the Sakai Week 3 discussion forum.
  
- Revise your Fletcher memo based on your peer feedback and the information in Munter, chapters 3-4. Tip: Keep your Fletcher memo open on your computer as you review Munter. When you come across something relevant to your writing, take a minute and apply it directly to your memo.
- Submit your revised Fletcher memo via Sakai Submission by 11:55 PM on Saturday.
- If you have time, get a head start on writing the first draft of your Cover Letter. Please see the Week 4 section of the syllabus for details.

## **Week 4: July 29<sup>th</sup> – August 4<sup>th</sup>**

What to do:

- Watch the week four video: <http://www.screencast.com/t/sD4haq1z>
- Review the cover letter guidelines posted on Sakai.
- Assignment: Write a cover letter for a job you are (or could be) interested in applying for.
  - Step 1: Find a real job listing that interests you. (Note: if your employer is paying for this course—please strongly consider using an internal listing!)
  - Step 2: Use the cover letter guide posted on Sakai to write a cover letter for that job.
  - Step 3: Submit your cover letter via Sakai Submission by 11:55 PM on Saturday.
- Read Munter, chapter 6.
- Participate in the weekly discussion forum.
- If you have time, get a head start on creating your professional writing growth plan in PowerPoint. See the Week 5 section of the syllabus for details.

## Week 5: August 5<sup>th</sup> – August 11<sup>th</sup>

What to do:

- Watch the week 5 video: <http://www.screencast.com/t/mIQRg95Z>
- Review Munter, chapter 6.
- Participate in the weekly discussion forum.
- Create a professional writing growth plan in PowerPoint. Even though you are not giving a presentation using these slides, please create your slides as if you will be presenting them to a group of your professional peers. In other words, your slides should be professional and polished. Use the guidelines in Munter, chapter 6. You will not receive peer feedback on this assignment. Please use the following outline:
  - Presentation title, your name. (1 slide.)
  - Topics to be covered. (1 slide.)
  - Assessment of your current business writing strengths and weaknesses. (As many slides as needed.)
  - Key lessons learned from Munter text and feedback from self, peers, and instructor. (As many slides as needed.)
  - Specific plan for improving your writing skills. Be as specific as possible about how you will continue to develop your business writing skills at work and in the MHS program. (As many slides as needed.)
  - Thank you & Q&A. (1 slide.)
- Submit your PowerPoint via Sakai Submission by 11:55 PM on Saturday.