COMM 1320.001 –Business & Professional Communication
**Fall 2023**
Course Syllabus

Professor:	**Joseph Velasco, Ph.D.**
Office Hours:	In-office: TTh: 2-5pm; Virtual Office: MW: 2-4
Office Location:	LH 307; Online Classroom via Blackboard Collaborate
Telephone:	432-837-8370
Email Address:	jvelasco@sulross.edu
Class Schedule:	11-11:50am, MWF
Classroom Location:	MAB 302
Required Text:	Quintanilla, K. M., & Wahl, S. T. (2019). Business and professional communication: Keys for workplace excellence 4th ed.). London: Sage.
Required Equipment & Software:	Internet connection; computer with webcam & microphone; Microsoft Word, Microsoft PowerPoint (available free to SRSU students via **Office 365**)

Introduction

My name is Dr. Joseph Velasco (most students call me Dr. V), and I am happy to be on this professional journey with you. Corporate employers demand effective communication and presentation skills. As a future professional, you will not only be expected to be a confident speaker, but also to organize and prepare clear, concise, and interesting written documents and presentations. Further, you will be expected to work well with others, handle challenging situations including conflict, asking for a raise, interviewing (others), participating (and leading) meetings, and more.

This course is designed to help you develop in many ways to genuinely increase your chances of selecting the right career for you, getting hired, thriving in the workplace, and effectively managing your work-life balance. Developing your self-awareness and increasing your professionalism are vital. Further, this course is designed to develop communication skills within multiple interpersonal business contexts. This course is taught from a communication perspective that is firmly rooted in research yet is balanced by practical experience.
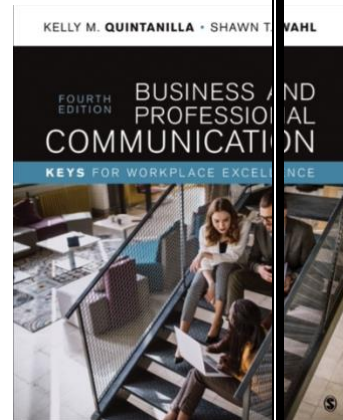
Section I. Student Learning Outcomes

This course is designed to meet one or more of the student learning outcomes applied to all Communication majors:

SLO 1: Students will be able to analyze communication content for argument, including identification of major elements, such as claim, warrants, and data.

SLO 2: Students will be able to effectively construct messages appropriate to audience, purpose, and context; including electronic media technologies.

SLO 3: Students will be able to apply Communication theories, perspectives, principles, and concepts to the analysis of communication situations.

Section II. Course Learning Objectives

The general objectives for this course are to *enhance your competence and knowledge of business and professional communication*. As a student, your learning objectives are to:

Course Learning Objectives	*How Evaluated…*
CLO 1: Identify and overcome common obstacles in group meetings	Class discussions, Quizzes
CLO 2: Write several types of professional written communication	Resume, Cover-letter
CLO 3: Compose and perform a professional persuasive speech using technology	Persuasive Presentation, Speech Outline
CLO 4: Interview for a job	Quizzes, Mock Interview
CLO 5: Develop self-awareness	Personality Assessments, Mock Interview, Cover-letter, Resume

2023-2024 Core Assessment (Critical Thinking & Communication):
In addition to other outcomes listed here, as required by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), I will promote and assess the following in this class:

Critical Thinking. Students will develop critical thinking skills to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information.

Communication. Students will develop communication skills to include effective development, interpretation, and expression of ideas through written, oral, and visual communication.

Section III. Marketable Skills

This course offers you the opportunity to develop the following skills:
- Informative and Persuasive Speaking
- Audience-centered Writing
- Critical Analysis
- Research
- Effective Message Construction Using Technology

Section IV. Course Requirements, Assignments, and Grading

Assignment	**Points Possible**	**Grade Description** (*Points*)
Quizzes (5)	250	
Job Announcement	50	A = 895-1000
Résumé	100	B = 795-894
Cover Letter	100	C = 695-794
Mock Interview	100	D = 595-694
Persuasive Presentation	300	F = < 595
Persuasive Presentation Outline	100	
Total	1000	

Quizzes. In this course **reading is necessary**. As with most courses, learning is greatly enhanced when students internalize the material. Five quizzes will assess your understanding of course concepts. Each quiz will have ten questions worth five points each. You may be quizzed on reading and lecture material.

Job Announcement. This assignment requires you to find an actual job or internship announcement. It may be part of an active search, or it may be an older archived copy. The idea is to find a likely target employer while you are at SRSU or just beyond graduation. This announcement will guide three assignments: the resume, cover letter, and the mock interview.

Résumé & Cover Letter. For these assignments, you will use the job announcement (referenced above) and create a résumé and cover letter as if you are applying for this position. Submit a copy of the job announcement along with these assignments. You are allowed multiple submissions throughout the course to encourage revision. The latest revision replaces the previous grade. In this way, I can track your learning, encourage a process approach to writing, and you can end up with your best work. It's rigorous for me as a professor, but your learning is worth it. Please respect my time by offering your best work.

Mock Interview. For this assignment, you will find a job announcement that is ideal for you presently or possibly in the future. You will use this announcement to prepare to interview for this position. I expect you to prepare responses to a list of typical interview questions. The questions I will ask you will be posted in advance on Blackboard. Your prepared responses will be typed and submitted on the day that you are interviewed in front of the class. Although you will have responses typed-out, you will not be able to interview with this material in front of you. You will be graded on how well you handle the live interview.

Persuasive Presentation. The Persuasive Presentation asks you and possibly a partner to use your persuasive and creative skills to sell an idea or a product. Through brainstorming and other creative strategies, you and your partner will develop a marketing proposal to pitch to the class. The persuasive power and creativity of your proposal is key. To that end, you will develop a compelling and unique pitch and convince us in your 10–15-minute presentation that it is the best choice. You and your partner receive the same grade on this assignment, worth a total of 300 points. If you choose to work alone, your presentation must be 5-10 minutes in length. Each presentation must verbally cite a <u>minimum of four credible sources</u>.

Section V. Policies

Basic Class Expectations: It is expected that you spend at least a few hours each week to complete the course readings and assignments. Since this class has online resources, I expect that you have reliable internet service and that you check your university email at least once a day. It is also recommended that you set up course notifications in Blackboard to receive alerts (e.g., email, text, etc.) when I post announcements, grades, or other course-related items. See instructions in Blackboard.

*(Online) Classroom Demeanor***:** Communication issues tend to be emotionally charged. It is highly unlikely in a class this size that everyone will share your personal values, beliefs, and opinions. Believe it or not, this is a good thing! The presentation of varying perspectives will help all of us to learn. This can be accomplished if ideas, beliefs, and opinions are presented in a respectful way. I will be expecting all students to follow basic ground rules for our interactions whether they are face-to-face or virtual. We will discuss and establish these ground rules in class.

Academic Integrity. Students in this class are expected to demonstrate scholarly behavior and academic honesty in the use of intellectual property. Students should submit work that is their own and avoid the temptation to engage in behaviors that violate academic integrity, such as turning in work as original that was used in whole or part for another course and/or professor; turning in another person's work as one's own; copying from professional works or internet sites without citation; collaborating on a course assignment, examination, or quiz when collaboration is forbidden. Students should also avoid using open AI sources unless permission is expressly given for an assignment or course. Violations of academic

integrity can result in failing assignments, failing a class, and/or more serious university consequences. These behaviors also erode the value of college degrees and higher education overall.

Late Work: All assignments for the entire course will be posted and available as soon as the course is open. It is expected that all assignments are completed by the stated deadlines. Please plan your time carefully. If something does come up, prompt and clear communication will facilitate my response which may (or may not) include an accommodation.

Classroom Climate of Respect. Importantly, this class will foster free expression, critical investigation, and the open discussion of ideas. This means that all of us must help create and sustain an atmosphere of tolerance, civility, and respect for the viewpoints of others. Similarly, we must all learn how to probe, oppose and disagree without resorting to tactics of intimidation, harassment, or personal attack. No one is entitled to harass, belittle, or discriminate against another on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity, age, gender, national origin, or sexual preference. Still, we will not be silenced by the difficulty of fruitfully discussing politically sensitive issues.

Section VI. Notes on University Programs and Policies

ADA. SRSU Disability Services. Sul Ross State University (SRSU) is committed to equal access in compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act of 1973. It is SRSU policy to provide reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request each semester for each class. Students seeking accessibility/accommodations services must contact Mary Schwartze Grisham, SRSU's Accessibility Services Coordinator at 432-837-8203 ("please leave a message and we'll get back to you as soon as we can during working hours"). The office is located on the first floor of Ferguson Hall (Suite 112), and their mailing address is P.O. Box C-122, Sul Ross State University, Alpine, Texas, 79832. **Please note that instructors are not permitted to provide classroom accommodations to a student until the appropriate verification has been received.**

SRSU Distance Education Statement. Students enrolled in distance education courses have equal access to the university's academic support services, such as library resources, online databases, and instructional technology support. For more information about accessing these resources, visit the SRSU website. Students should correspond using Sul Ross email accounts and submit online assignments through Blackboard, which requires secure login. Students enrolled in distance education courses at Sul Ross are expected to adhere to all policies pertaining to academic honesty and appropriate student conduct, as described in the student handbook. Students in web-based courses must maintain appropriate equipment and software, according to the needs and requirements of the course, as outlined on the SRSU website. Directions for filing a student complaint are located in the student handbook.
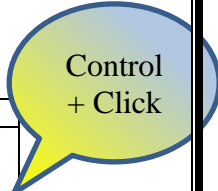
Technical Support. SRSU 24/7 Blackboard Technical Support: Toll Free: 888.837.6055. Email: blackboardsupport@sulross.edu

SRSU Library Services. The Sul Ross Library offers FREE resources and services to the entire SRSU community. Access and borrow books, articles, and more by visiting the library's website, library.sulross.edu. Off-campus access requires your LoboID and password. Check out materials using your photo ID. Librarians are a tremendous resource for your coursework and can be reached in person, by email (srsulibrary@sulross.edu), or phone (432-837-8123). New for Fall 2023: Mike Fernandez, SRSU Librarian, is based in Eagle Pass (Building D-129) to offer specialized library services to students, faculty, and staff. Utilize free services such as InterLibrary Loan (ILL) and ScanIt to get materials delivered to you at home or via email.

Counseling. Sul Ross has partnered with TimelyCare where all SR students will have access to nine free counseling sessions. You can learn more about this 24/7/356 support by visiting Timelycare/SRSU. The SR Counseling and Accessibility Services office will continue to offer in-person counseling in Ferguson Hall room 112 (Alpine campus), and telehealth Zoom sessions for remote students and RGC students.

Calendar

Week	Date	Topic	Reading	Due or To Do:
One	Aug 28 Aug 30 Sept 1	Course Introduction Excellence at Work *Personality Assessments – No Class*	Chapter 1	https://www.sulross.edu/student-life/career-services/assessments/
Two	Sept 4 Sept 6 Sept 8	*Labor Day Holiday – No Class* Verbal and Nonverbal Communication Online Quiz	Chapter 2 N/A	**Quiz 1**
Three	Sept 11 Sept 13 Sept 15	Listening & Interview Qs More on Interviewing *Scripting Interview Responses*	Chapter 3	Job Announcement
Four	Sept 18 Sept 20 Sept 22	Interviews & Résumés Research & Professional Writing *Online Quiz*	Chapter 4 Chapter 9	Résumé & Cover Letter **Quiz 2**
Five	Sept 25 Sept 27 Sept 29	Interview Peer Evaluation Interviews Peer Evaluation *Out of Class Interview Prep*	N/A N/A N/A	
Six	Oct 2 Oct 4 Oct 6	Interviews Interviews Interviews		
Seven	Oct 9 Oct 11 Oct 13	Diversity in the Workplace Work Relationships Online Quiz	Chapter 5 Chapter 6	**Quiz 3**
Eight	Oct 16 Oct 18 Oct 20	Groups, Teams, & Meetings *Team Meetings* *Team Meetings*	Chapter 7	
Nine	Oct 23 Oct 25 Oct 27	Hiring & Interviewing Others *Team Meetings* *Team Meetings*	Chapter 10	
Ten	Oct 30 Nov 1 Nov 3	Informing & Persuading Professional Persuasion Online Quiz	Chapter 11	**Quiz 4**
Eleven	Nov 6 Nov 8 Nov 10	Designing a Speech Professional Delivery *Team Meetings*	Chapter 12 Chapter 13	
Twelve	Nov 13 Nov 15 Nov 17	Technology & Professionalism Finding Balance *Team Meetings*	Chapter 8 Chapter 14	
Thirteen	Nov 20 Nov 22 Nov 24	Duo Speech Presentations *Thanksgiving Holiday – No Class!* *Thanksgiving Holiday – No Class*		
Fourteen	Nov 27 Nov 29 Dec 1	Duo Speech Presentations Duo Speech Presentations Duo Speech Presentations		**Quiz 5**
Fifteen	Dec 4 Dec 6 Dec 7	Duo Speech Presentations Duo Speech Presentations DEAD DAY		
Sixteen	Dec 12 Dec 15	Final Exam @ 10:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. Commencement		**Remaining Duo Speeches**