



**Carleton**  
**University**

**Sprett**  
School of Business

## **Business Communications - BUSI 5906**

Instructor: Rebecca Hickey, MBA – [rebeccahickey@cunet.carleton.ca](mailto:rebeccahickey@cunet.carleton.ca)

Course dates: October 4 and 5, 2024 - 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Location: In person

### **Description from the Graduate Calendar**

BUSI 5906 [0.25 credit] - Special Topics

At the discretion of the School, a course dealing with selected topics of interest to students in the MBA program. Topics will vary from year to year, and will be announced in advance of the registration period. Prerequisite(s): permission of the School.

### **Course description**

Study of the principles of strong business communication, including audience analysis and structuring messages. Application of techniques, strategies and principles to strengthen proficiency in written and oral communications essential to today's business environment.

### **Course learning objectives**

- Prepare and deliver effective oral communications. Apply non-verbal communication strategies and adopt an audience-centric approach in business presentations.
- Plan, produce and edit written business communications, applying strategies to ensure ideas are expressed clearly, concisely and persuasively.
- Critically assess and evaluate the communications approaches of self and others.

### **Readings and required material**

The following text is recommended for reference, and is available through the Carleton Bookstore:

- Thill, John, et al. *Excellence in Business Communication, Canadian Edition*. 6th ed., Pearson Canada, 2020.

Readings and required simulation will be made available through MacOdrum Library Ares reserves.

## Assessment and grading

Course deliverables	Weight	Due Date	Notes
Pre-class reflection	20%	October 2, 10 pm	Individual
Group presentation	20%	October 4-5	Groups of 6 - assigned groups
Crisis communications simulation	20%	October 5	Individual
Final paper	40%	October 13, 10 pm	

### **Pre-class reflection - 20%**

After completing the assigned readings below, students are asked to complete a reflection paper of no more than 800 words. This paper should include (a) your assessment of the importance of communications for business leaders, (b) examples of business leaders or organizations who you consider to be strong communicators, (c) a self-reflection on your strengths and weaknesses in communications, and (d) your personal development goals relating to communications. The reflection should draw upon the assigned readings below, as well as your professional experience. To be submitted on Brightspace by October 2 at 10 p.m.

- Birchard, Bill. "The Science of Strong Business Writing." *Harvard Business Review*, Harvard Business Review, 2021.5
- Coombs, W. Timothy. "The Value of Communication during a Crisis: Insights from Strategic Communication Research." *Business Horizons*, vol. 58, no. 2, 2015, pp. 141–48, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2014.10.003>.
- Gallo, Carmine. "How Great Leaders Communicate: Four Strategies to Motivate and Inspire Your Team." *Harvard Business Review Digital Articles*, Nov. 2022, pp. 1–7. EBSCOhost, [search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=160476088&site=ehost-live](https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=160476088&site=ehost-live).

### **Group presentation - 20%**

Working in assigned groups of six, each group will be given a brief case study to analyze. Presentations should include (a) an overview of the organization and the crisis faced, (b) an analysis of the communications response, and (c) a recommendation of specific strategies to improve the organization's crisis communications. Presentations may not exceed 20 minutes. Students should have a working draft of their presentation prepared before class convenes on October 4. Class time will be used for groups to adjust and practice delivery. Presenters will be assessed on presentation content, as well as their oral communication proficiency.

- Groups and cases to be posted in Brightspace.

***Crisis communications simulation - 20%***

This individual assignment will be completed during class time. Students will complete the LiveCase Simulation: Plymouth Corp - Crisis Management. In this web-based simulation, students will react and respond to an emerging crisis in real-time. Students will determine communications strategies and prepare written business communications. The simulation culminates with students role-playing a simulated live television interview. Students will be assessed on (a) the effectiveness of their written and oral communications, and (b) their abilities to integrate strategies discussed throughout the course in their work.

- Details on the simulation to be posted in Brightspace

***Final paper – Persuasive business report - 40%***

Students will analyze the following case and produce a written report of no more than 2,000 words. Writing from the perspective of co-founder Mayank Dhanuka, students will prepare a business report to company investors that outlines the company's growth plans for the following year. Students will be assessed on (a) their persuasive writing, and (b) their integration of best practices discussed for written communications. The final paper must be submitted on Brightspace no later than October 13 at 10 p.m.

- Lamba, Paramjit and Neera Jain. *Origo Commodities: An Agonizing Decision*. Case Study. Ivey Publishing, 2023.

**Late assignments:** To ensure fairness for all students, penalties will be applied to late assignments: Failure to submit an assignment on time will result in an initial penalty of five (5) percentage points, followed by an additional (2) percentage points per day thereafter. For example, an assignment that would normally merit a grade of 80% would receive a grade of 75% if submitted after the deadline on the due date, 73% if submitted the following day, and so on. Requests for extension will be considered in cases of illness, family emergency, or other exceptional circumstances.

**Drop Course Policy:** The deadline for academic withdrawal follows the dates prescribed by Carleton University: <https://calendar.carleton.ca/academicyear/>

Contribution to [learning goals of the MBA](#):

	Not covered	Introduced	Taught but not assessed	Taught and assessed
<b>MB1 Leadership and Collaboration</b> Graduates will be equipped for leadership and effective collaboration			x	
<b>MB2 Communication</b> Graduates will be effective communicators.				x
<b>MB3 Critical Thinking and Problem Solving</b> Graduates will be skilled in critical thinking and problem solving.				x
<b>MB4 Functional Knowledge</b> Graduates will have knowledge that is relevant to business and be able to apply that knowledge to address business issues, opportunities, and risks.			x	
<b>MB5 Global Awareness</b> Graduates will have an appreciation of the global environment of business.		x		
<b>MB6 Ethics and Responsible Management</b> Graduates will apply ethical considerations and principles of responsible management in business decision-making.			x	

## COURSE SCHEDULE

	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Activities and assignments</b>	<b>Due date</b>
1.	Pre-class reflection	Pre-class readings available in Ares Pre-class reflection paper	October 2 at 10 p.m.
2.	Business communication foundations	Lecture and discussion	
3.	Oral communication	Lecture and discussion Group presentation	Oct 4-5
4.	Written communications	Lecture and discussion	
5.	Media relations and crisis communications	Lecture and discussion Simulation	To be completed in class – Oct 5
6.	Persuasive communications	Lecture and discussion Final paper	October 13, 10 pm

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### Course Sharing Websites

Materials created for this course (including presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the author(s). They are intended for personal use and may not be reproduced or redistributed without prior written consent of the author(s).

### Group Work

The Spratt School of Business encourages group assignments. They provide you with opportunities to develop and enhance interpersonal, communication, leadership, followership and other group skills. Group assignments are also an effective way to learn integrative skills for putting together a complex task. Your professor may assign one or more group tasks, assignments, or projects in this course. Before embarking on a specific problem as a group, it is your responsibility to ensure that the problem is meant to be a group assignment and not an individual one.

## Letter Grades

In accordance with the Carleton University Undergraduate Calendar (p. 34), the letter grades assigned in this course will have the following percentage equivalents:

A+ = 90-100	B+ = 77-79	C+ = 67-69	D+ = 57-59	F = Below 50
A = 85-89	B = 73-76	C = 63-66	D = 53-56	
A - = 80-84	B - = 70-72	C - = 60-62	D - = 50-52	

Grades entered by Registrar:

WDN = Withdrawn from the course

DEF = Deferred Academic

## Regulations

University rules regarding registration, withdrawal, appealing marks, and most anything else you might need to know can be found on the university's website, here:

<https://calendar.carleton.ca/grad/gradregulations/>

## Requests for Academic Accommodation

Carleton is committed to providing academic accessibility for all individuals. You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. The accommodation request processes, including information about the *Academic Consideration Policy for Students in Medical and Other Extenuating Circumstances*, are outlined on the Academic Accommodations website ([students.carleton.ca/course-outline](https://students.carleton.ca/course-outline)).

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request, the processes are as follows:

- **Pregnancy:** Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details, visit the Equity Services website: <https://carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/StudentGuide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf>
- **Religious Obligations:** Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details, visit the Equity Services website: <https://carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/StudentGuide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf>
- **Students with Disabilities:** If you have a documented disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) at 613-520-6608 or [pmc@carleton.ca](mailto:pmc@carleton.ca) for a formal evaluation or

contact your PMC coordinator to send your instructor your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term. You must also contact the PMC no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with your instructor as soon as possible to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. <https://carleton.ca/pmc/>

- **Survivors of Sexual Violence:** As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and its survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit: <https://carleton.ca/sexual-violence-support/>
- **Student Activities:** Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, to both the individual student and the university, that result from participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation will be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. <https://carleton.ca/senate/wp-content/uploads/Accommodation-for-Student-Activities-1.pdf>

For more information on academic accommodation, please contact the departmental administrator or visit: <https://students.carleton.ca/course-outline/>

**Academic Integrity:** Violations of academic integrity—presenting another's ideas, arguments, words or images as your own, using unauthorized material, misrepresentation, fabricating or misrepresenting research data, unauthorized co-operation or collaboration or completing work for another student—are a serious academic offence, weaken the quality of the degree, and will not be tolerated. Penalties may include; a grade of Failure on the submitted work and/or course; academic probation; a refusal of permission to continue or to register in a specific degree program; suspension from full-time studies; suspension from all studies at Carleton; expulsion from Carleton, amongst others. Students are expected to familiarize themselves with and follow the Carleton University Student Academic Integrity Policy which is available, along with resources for compliance at: <https://carleton.ca/registrar/academic-integrity/>

**Centre for Student Academic Support:** The Centre for Student Academic Support (CSAS) is a centralized collection of learning support services designed to help students achieve their goals and improve their learning both inside and outside the classroom. CSAS offers academic assistance with course content, academic writing and skills development. Visit CSAS on the 4th floor of MacOdrum Library or online at: <https://carleton.ca/csas/>

#### **Other Important Information:**

- Students must always retain a hard copy of all work that is submitted.
- All final grades are subject to the Dean's approval.
- For us to respond to your emails, we need to see your full name, CU ID, and the email must be written from your valid CARLETON address. Therefore, in order to respond to your inquiries, please send all email from your Carleton cmail account. If you do not have or have yet to activate this account, you can do so by visiting <https://carleton.ca/its/get-started/new-students-2/>