

**SCOM 358: Business and Professional Communication**  
**Spring 2019**  
**Dr. Timothy C. Ball**  
**James Madison University**

**TEXTBOOK:**

There is no textbook required for this class. All required readings can be found on the Canvas website.

**COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

1. To increase your awareness, knowledge, and understanding of communication in the business and professional world.
2. To help you understand current career information as it relates to the business and professional world.
3. To develop work life skills, including how to write cover letters and résumés, interview effectively, and business etiquette.
4. To assist you in public life by helping you create and deliver effective professional business presentations.

**LOC #4: Create Messages Appropriate to the Audience, Purpose, and Context**

- Locate and use information relevant to the goals, audiences, purposes and contexts
- Select creative and appropriate modalities and technologies to accomplish communicative goals
- Adapt messages to the diverse needs of individuals, groups and contexts
- Present messages in multiple communication modalities and contexts
- Adjust messages while in the process of communicating
- Critically reflect on one's own messages after the communication event

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

**1. Résumé and Cover Letter Assignment.** Find the description for an internship you would like to have or for a first job after you graduate from college. Once you have found the internship/job description, you will create a hybrid résumé. The résumé you create should address the skills and experiences called for in the internship or job description that you selected.

In addition to creating a functional/chronological hybrid résumé, you will also need to write a cover letter that will accompany it. The cover letter should be persuasive and specific to the internship or job description that you selected. This assignment is worth 15% of your final grade.

**2. Revised Résumé and Cover Letter Assignment.** After receiving feedback on your résumé and cover letter, submit a revised résumé and cover letter. In addition, please submit a two-

paragraph explanation of the changes you made to both documents and why you believe those changes make each document more effective. This assignment is worth 10% of your final grade.

**3. Electronic Portfolio Assignment.** Create an online portfolio that demonstrates the skills and accomplishments that you have acquired while at college. The portfolio will include: a copy of your résumé, cover letter, references, work samples (literature review, PowerPoint presentations, research papers, handouts, brochures, internship/directed project examples), awards, certificates, transcripts, etc. This assignment is worth 15% of your final grade.

**4. Deep Reading Assignment.** In order for you to understand the content covered in the readings you will find on Canvas, you will read and discuss them in class. The discussions of the articles will occur in small groups and each person in that group will play a particular role for that week. These roles will rotate every week so that each group member will play each role several times over the course of the semester. This assignment is worth 15% of your final grade.

**5. Business/Professional Communication Concept Presentation.** For this presentation you will work with one other person in this class. You will begin by selecting a topic that relates to business and professional situations. You will need to select a topic and date early in the semester and give a detailed professional presentation to the class. The presentation will be set up like a mini-training session—at least two activities that relate to the topic should be included.

The presentation should last a minimum of 15 minutes and a maximum of 30 minutes. The articles that you use as source material should be from current newspapers (online or other) or trade journals that focus the world of work. This assignment is worth 10% of your final grade.

**5. Elevator Speech Assignment.** Everyone gets this question in a job interview, “Tell me about yourself.” It is essential to be able to answer this question and to answer it well. For this assignment, you will create variations of this speech:

1. A 2-minute speech including some form of multi-media
2. A 30-second version of the above speech without multi-media

Much like the “elevator speech” popular in the 1990s, you should prepare for short networking opportunities by crafting a solid personal commercial about you and your abilities. This is an important skill to have and to hone. This assignment is worth 10% of your final grade.

**6. InterviewStream and Reflection Assignment.** Set up and attend a practice interview. In order to earn credit for this assignment, you must record 10 separate interview. After recording all 10 interviews, select the best one and submit it to me via InterviewStream ([jmu.interviewstream.com](http://jmu.interviewstream.com)). Failure to complete all 10 interviews will result in a 5 point reduction of your class participation grade.

Once you have completed the practice interviews, reflect on this experience by answering the following questions:

1. Why are you selecting this particular interview as an example of your best interview?

2. Describe one or two things that you did well in this interview.
3. If you could redo this interview, what would you do differently?
4. What did you learn about interviewing that you did not know before? Explain your answer.

This assignment is worth 15% of your final grade.

**7. “Can You Afford this Job?” Assignment.** Find an entry-level position in your field and in a city that you would like to live. Use Monster.com or some other comparable website to find the average salary for that entry-level position in that city. Download that information on salaries and submit it with the budget worksheet. This assignment is worth 5% of your final grade.

**TENTATIVE SCHEDULE:**

<b>Week</b>	<b>Topics/Activities</b>	<b>Readings</b>	<b>Assignments</b>
1	Introductions; overview of course and assignments; finding the job or internship	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. “Finding a job without experience...”</li> <li>2. “How to conduct an effective job search”</li> <li>3. “Choose the right work environment for you”</li> <li>4. “The extreme job search”</li> <li>5. “Making the right choice”</li> </ol>	Download syllabus; discuss job/internship articles in class
2	Finding the job: Interviewing for information; ways to describe yourself	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. “How to explore careers”</li> <li>2. “How to rock the informational interview”</li> <li>3. “Top 8 sites for researching”</li> <li>4. “Talking with others about their jobs”</li> <li>5. “Interview to obtain information”</li> <li>6. “Informational interviewing”</li> <li>7. “Six common interview questions”</li> <li>8. “Real life interviewing blunders”</li> <li>9. “Best interview questions”</li> </ol>	Discuss interviewing for information articles in class; discuss job search interview questions in class; job or internship description due

		10. "Commonly asked interview questions" 11. "How to interview effectively" 12. "Survival tips for group interviews"	
--	--	--	--

3	Written communication: Résumés	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. “Fun ways to beef up your résumé”</li> <li>2. “Résumé padding”</li> <li>3. “7 résumé tips”</li> <li>4. “Résumé bloopers”</li> <li>5. “Designing your résumé”</li> <li>6. “Type font matters” (listen or read)</li> <li>7. “Résumé examples”</li> <li>8. “Notes on a résumé”</li> <li>9. “Notes on a functional/hybrid résumé”</li> </ol>	Discuss résumé articles in class; think/pair/share résumés in class
4	Written communication: Cover letters and portfolios	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. “Cover letters/application letters”</li> <li>2. “Five things that are wrong with your cover letter”</li> <li>3. “Thank you letters”</li> <li>4. “Cover letter examples” (in Canvas)</li> </ol>	Discuss cover letters and portfolios in class
5	Presentations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Giving great speeches</li> <li>2. The elevator speech is your Swiss Army knife</li> <li>3. Preparing your elevator speech</li> <li>4. Captivate your audience...</li> <li>5. Tell me about yourself doesn't mean tell it all</li> <li>6. Tips for group presentations</li> </ol>	Discuss presentation articles in class; prepare presentations in class
6	Benefits (guest speaker JMU benefits administrator); concept presentation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. “Knowing your benefits”</li> <li>2. “Understanding company benefits”</li> <li>3. “Factors to consider”</li> </ol>	Discuss benefits in class; concept presentation due

7	Negotiating the deal; the professional life; elevator speeches	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. "Effectively Negotiating Salary Packages"</li> <li>2. "Factors to Consider in Evaluating a..."</li> <li>3. "Top 8 sites"</li> <li>4. "Making the right choice"</li> <li>5. "The extreme job search"</li> <li>6. "Negotiating salary"</li> <li>7. "How to conduct an effective job search"</li> <li>8. "Quirkiest cultural practices..."</li> </ol>	Hybrid résumé due; discuss negotiating articles in class; elevator speeches due
8	Concept presentation; diversity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. "Managing workplace diversity"</li> <li>2. "Corporate America learns..."</li> <li>3. "U.S. Latinos embody the word diversity"</li> <li>4. "Know your rights"</li> <li>5. "I had no power"</li> </ol>	Concept presentations due
9	Spring break	Classes do not meet	
10	Dining etiquette	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. "Bad etiquette can leave a bad taste"</li> <li>2. "Best food choices"</li> <li>3. "29 rules of etiquette for your next workplace luncheon"</li> <li>4. "Dining etiquette in the workplace"</li> <li>5. "Happy hour etiquette"</li> </ol>	Cover letter due; discuss dining etiquette articles in class

11	Mentoring; 30-second elevator speeches; concept presentation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. "It's who you know"</li> <li>2. "How to develop opportunities through networking"</li> <li>3. "How to meet and talk with anyone"</li> <li>4. "Using LinkedIn"</li> <li>5. "Networking for people who hate networking"</li> <li>6. "Why in-person socializing is a mandatory to-do item"</li> <li>7. "Modern mentor in millennial workplace"</li> </ol>	Discuss mentoring articles in class; 30-second elevator speeches due; concept presentation due
12	Meeting etiquette; concept presentations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. "Making meetings work"</li> <li>2. "How loud is too loud?"</li> <li>3. "Ten new etiquette..."</li> <li>4. "Where you should be sitting..."</li> <li>5. "How to choose the best seat..."</li> </ol>	Discuss meeting etiquette articles in class; concept presentations due
13	Intergenerational communication; concept presentations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. "Managing millennials"</li> <li>2. "Strategies for the intergenerational workforce"</li> <li>3. "Forget millennials and boomers. Gen X will save the workplace"</li> <li>4. "What is Generation Z and what does it mean?"</li> <li>5. "Why baby boomers and millennials..."</li> <li>6. "Millennials in the workplace: A communication perspective"</li> </ol>	Discuss intergenerational communication articles in class; concept presentations due

14	Dress for success; concept presentations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. "The business dress code"</li> <li>2. "Business casual"</li> <li>3. "How to dress for your next job interview"</li> <li>4. "6 worst things to wear..."</li> </ol>	Discuss dress for success articles in class; concept presentations due
15	Relationships at work; concept presentations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. "How to deal with a boss who yells"</li> <li>2. "My boss wants to befriend me"</li> <li>3. "Ten habits that bosses love"</li> <li>4. "How to deal with an office jerk"</li> <li>5. "Office romance..."</li> <li>6. "How to apologize at work..."</li> <li>7. "Ten ways to lose friends and..."</li> <li>8. "8 ways toxic people poison"</li> </ol>	InterviewStream reflection assignment due; discuss relationships at work articles; concept presentations due; Deep Reading Assignment Portfolio due
16			Revised résumés and cover letters due; Electronic portfolios due; budget assignment due