Business Communication and Professional Development, BCOM 3950, is designed to equip our students to enter a variety of organizational environments with both the communication skills and the personal career management strategies required to transition confidently and successfully from college to the professional workplace or to graduate or professional school. The course prepares students to advance their careers and to achieve a high level of performance as a professional. They will learn to

- Write and speak effectively in a variety of business situations, and
- Develop and apply a communication strategy to inform, persuade, and motivate others.

Students will learn to write business documents and deliver oral presentations that are professional and influential. Also, students will develop the materials necessary to market themselves successfully in a self-directed internship/job search and to manage their careers more effectively. Topics include interpersonal communication, nonverbal communication, interview skills, resume preparation, and the influence of culture, ethics, and technology.

A variety of learning methods contribute to the BCOM 3950 learning experience:

- Labs conducted by Career Services
- Lecture and discussion led by instructor
- Presentations recorded and critiqued by peers and instructor
- Textbook exercises for individual grammar, style, and mechanics review

Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to transition confidently and successfully from college into a professional workplace, graduate program, or professional school environment. Specific objectives include:

- Write concise business documents and deliver professional oral presentations.
- Communicate strategically in a variety of business situations.
- Demonstrate the communication skills necessary to successfully manage organizational dynamics and create their own personal career management strategy.
- Create and apply successful communication strategies to inform, persuade, and motivate others.
- Develop the materials necessary to successfully launch a self-directed internship and job search.
- Develop long-term personal career management strategies including an understanding of graduate and professional school options.
- Develop the written and oral communication skills necessary to prepare effectively for interviews and job opportunities.
• Improve presence and relationship skills by becoming knowledgeable and proficient in basic business etiquette.
• Use resources to research and compile data for oral presentations and written messages.
• Participate and contribute as a member of a team.

**Required Textbook and Online Resources**


**Required Equipment**

Students must have a Sony mini-DVD+RW. Please purchase the type shown in the picture. No other type will work with our classroom cameras.

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**Course Policies and Procedures**

**Incompletes:** No grades of "Incomplete" will be given in BCOM 3950.

**Attendance:** Class attendance is crucial for satisfactory completion of BCOM 3950. Arrive on time and stay for the entire class to get credit for class attendance. If you are absent for any reason, you must contact a peer to get information you missed in class. Emergencies do occur; however, you must contact your instructor immediately if an emergency occurs. You must produce written documentation of the emergency in order to be permitted to make up missed speaking or writing assignments.

Students are subject to a 10-point reduction in the final numerical course grade or withdrawal from the course if:

You miss a total of **two class sessions** for any reason in a class that meets once a week or **four class sessions** for any reason in a class that meets twice a week.

**Policy on Tardiness:** Students who arrive after class has started are considered tardy. Students who are late are encouraged to enter quietly and attend class so they do not compound the problem by missing important information, exercises and assignments.

**Excess tardies will add to your number of absences. One absence will accumulate for every three tardies in once-a-week classes or six tardies in twice-a-week classes.**

**Career Management Component:** Students are required to attend. Please refer to your Career Services Lab Syllabus for all policies, procedures and schedules regarding this mandatory part of the course.

**Classroom Etiquette:**
• Avoid late entrances/early exits. If you arrive late, enter quietly and take a seat near the door. Do not walk in front of a speaker.
• Turn off all communication devices to be sure they don’t interrupt class. Use cell phones in the hallway only. Laptop use is not permitted unless specified by your instructor.
• Remove hats and sunglasses.
• Do not eat food or chew gum in the classroom.

Preparation/Participation: Your instructor will not always review all the material in each chapter; instead, the class time will be used to apply concepts to reinforce your understanding. Read all assignments, be prepared to discuss questions at the end of each chapter, contribute to class discussions, participate with your group, and critique your own work and the work of your peers to increase your ability to communicate effectively.

Speaking Assignments: Oral presentations are to be delivered at the time and date scheduled or a penalty will be imposed (see Due Dates/Missed Assignment Penalty below). Dress for your oral presentations as if you were presenting to a business audience. Male students should wear a suit or slacks with a professional jacket, dress shirt, and tie. Female students should wear a suit, professional dress with a jacket, or separates (must include a jacket). All students should wear business shoes. Your instructor requires that presentations be recorded. You must bring a Sony +RW mini-DVD to class on the day you are scheduled to deliver your presentation.

Written Assignments: All written assignments should have the appearance of professional business documents; that is, neatly typed on 8½” x 11” letter-quality paper and printed in black ink on a professional-quality printer. Documents should be well designed with adequate margins (1” to 1.25”) and left-justified text. Remember to attach a completed Communication Strategy (C/S) Worksheet and a copy of the Grading Standards for Written Assignments. Save copies of all written assignments. Assignments of more than one page must be stapled or they will not be accepted.

Due Dates/Missed Assignment Penalty: Written assignments are due at the beginning of class on the date specified and oral presentations must be delivered at the time and date scheduled. The instructor will deduct 10 percent from your grade for missing a due date unless there is a documented emergency and you have contacted the instructor and made special arrangements to complete the assignment.

Assignment requirements:
• BCOM 3950 is not a grammar class; you must come to this course with spelling, diction, grammar, and mechanics under control. The class requires a command of the English language and word usage. If you have problems in any of these areas, you need to address them before entering the class. You must use a grammar book and dictionary to edit and proof your own work.
• You will not be allowed to make up missed graded/ungraded assignments unless you have an emergency (hospital visit, traffic court, jury duty, etc.), in which case, official documentation will be required as proof.
• You will not be given extra credit assignments under any circumstances.
• You may rewrite assignments for extra practice and instructor feedback (if previously arranged), but rewritten assignments cannot be submitted to earn a better grade or extra credit.
• No makeup tests will be given.

This class is required to fulfill the Junior Communication course requirement, and students must earn a minimum grade of C-. Prerequisites include 45 semester hours of college-level credit; a 2.5 GSU GPA; English 1101 and 1102; and Computing Skills Prerequisites 1, 6, and 7.

MyRobinson Skills
You are expected to be proficient in the use of MyRobinson. Specifically, you should be able to read, upload, and download files; read and send e-mail messages, read and post messages on discussion boards, and create wikis. A good place to start is the Beginner’s Guide to MyRobinson. You are also expected to check the section site daily for any changes, updates, and announcements. This can be done simply by signing up for “Alerts” (see Beginner’s Guide). You are responsible for accessing and downloading all files needed. MyRobinson Web 2.0 site is based on Windows and MS Office 2007. Knowledge of these applications is a prerequisite for any course offered by RCB. The University offers remedial courses in any of these applications.

**Note: Students are expected to sign up for alerts on the MyRobinson site’s calendar to automatically receive updates. This is the student’s responsibility. You will be held accountable for any changes posted. If you did not sign up for the alert, you will not receive notification!**

Instructions to sign-up for an alert for any library or list in MyRobinson (Calendar instructions are shown):
1) Click on “BCOM3950 Calendar – Sign up for Alerts” on the left-side of the page
2) Go to the ACTIONS menu and choose the lasts choice, “Alert Me.”
3) Click OK. You will now automatically receive an email and a direct link to any changes made to the calendar. You may sign-up for alerts to any area within MyRobinson; however, the Calendar alert is mandatory!

Instructions to upload your photo:
1) Upload your photo. Use a .jpg file only.
2) Fill in the “Name*” field with your name (.jpg is automatically added). Scroll down to the area below your photo.
3) In the “Description” field, put in one line of text that will serve as a caption. Be creative. Multiple uploads are allowed...but at least ONE is mandatory!
4) Click “OK” to save.
5) If you don’t have a .jpg photo, use your cell phone (or a classmate’s) to create one.

University Policy on Plagiarism

Any evidence of plagiarism (including partial sentences or slightly reworked sentences without quotation marks and a citation) will result in a grade of “F.” It is expected that all students will be fully informed about the rules of ethical writing and the definition of plagiarism. Grades for assignments that include information that clearly should have been cited and was not and/or sources that cannot be found using citations will earn an automatic “F.” PowerPoint presentations should also include sources for information. For more information on plagiarism, and to complete a tutorial, log onto: www.indiana.edu/~istd/

Plagiarism is presenting another person’s work as one’s own. Plagiarism includes any paraphrasing or summarizing or tweaking of the words of another person without acknowledgment in the text, as well as in the Works Cited or References section. Plagiarism frequently involves a failure to use quotation marks around paragraphs, sentences, or even a few words written or spoken by someone else.

The student is responsible for understanding the legitimate use of sources, the appropriate ways of acknowledging academic, scholarly or creative indebtedness, and the consequences of violating this responsibility.

For the entire university position on academic honesty, visit http://www2.gsu.edu/~wwwfhb/sec409.html.

University Policy on Disruptive Behavior

Disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. The GSU definition of disruptive student behavior is student behavior in a classroom or other learning environment (to include both on- and off-campus locations) that disrupts the educational process. Disruptive class behavior for this purpose is defined by the course
instructor. Such behavior includes, but is not limited to, verbal or physical threats, repeated obscenities; unreasonable interference with class discussion; making/receiving personal phone calls, text messages, e-mail messages, or pages during class; leaving and entering class frequently in the absence of notice to the course instructor of illness or other extenuating circumstance; and persisting in disruptive personal conversations with other class members.

For purposes of this policy, it may also be considered disruptive behavior for a student to exhibit threatening, intimidating, or other inappropriate behavior toward the course instructor or classmates outside of class. For a full statement, see [http://www.gsu.edu/~wwsen/minutes/2002-2003/disrupt.html](http://www.gsu.edu/~wwsen/minutes/2002-2003/disrupt.html)

### Grade Scale (Based on a Total of 100 Points)

Please note that no individual assignment or course grades will be rounded up.

- **A+ = 97 - 100**
- **A = 93 - 96**
- **A- = 90 - 92**
- **B+ = 87 - 89**
- **B = 83 - 86**
- **B- = 80 - 82**
- **C+ = 77 - 79**
- **C = 73 - 76**
- **C- = 70 - 72**
- **D = 60 - 69**
- **F = 59 or below**

### Important Dates

- **Aug. 23**................. Classes begin
- **Aug. 27**................. Last day to withdraw with a 100 percent refund.
- **Sept. 6**..................... Labor Day Holiday
- **Oct. 8**...................... Full semester midpoint/Last day to withdraw with a possible “W.”
  
  See [www.gsu.edu/es/withdrawals.html](http://www.gsu.edu/es/withdrawals.html) for full details on withdrawal policy.

- **Nov. 22 – 27**............ Thanksgiving Break
- **Dec. 6**..................... Classes end
- **Dec. 16**................... Grades must be submitted by 6 p.m.
- **Dec. 18**................... Grades available after 5 p.m.
# Schedule of Assignments

**BCOM 3950** includes mandatory labs. Please see the Career Management Lab Syllabus for full details. The lab you have been assigned is found on GoSolar next to the details on this class. We will adhere to this schedule as closely as possible. If changes are necessary, they will be announced in class and on Sharepoint.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>In-class discussion, lectures, activities</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Complete before the next class</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td><strong>Career Success begins with Communication Skills</strong></td>
<td>Read Chapters 1 and 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>Syllabus Review</td>
<td>Prepare 30-second Elevator Pitch</td>
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<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Class Introductions</td>
<td>Prepare draft of cover letter</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discuss 30-second Elevator Pitch and Cover Letter assignments</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communication Strategy</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 2</td>
<td><strong>30-second Elevator Pitch Due</strong></td>
<td>Finalize formal cover letter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>The Writing Process: Planning, Composing and Revising</td>
<td>Read Chapters 2, 3 and 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Peer review cover letter</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Cover Letter Due</strong></td>
<td>Read Chapters 8 and 14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 3</td>
<td>Persuasive letter</td>
<td>Prepare draft of persuasive letter</td>
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<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>Informational Interviews</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Listening skills</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Return graded cover letters and discuss Peer review persuasive letter</td>
<td>Finalize persuasive letter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 4</td>
<td>Peer review persuasive letter</td>
<td>Prepare outline for informative speech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>Discuss speech and short memo assignments Presentation Skills –preparation</td>
<td>Read Chapters 11 and 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Return graded persuasive letters and discuss</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Informative Speeches rehearsal</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 5</td>
<td><strong>Persuasive Letter Due</strong></td>
<td>Study for test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>Presentation Skills –delivery and practice tips; effective organization; visual aids</td>
<td>Continue to work on the informative speech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td><strong>Test One: Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, and 12</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 6</td>
<td>Return graded persuasive letters and discuss</td>
<td>Practice Presentation. Bring packet and mini DVD+RW to class.</td>
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<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>Informative Speeches rehearsal</td>
<td>Read Chapter 9</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>Read Chapter 10, pp. 253-276</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Prepare draft of the Memo Report</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week</td>
<td>Assignment</td>
<td>In-class discussion, lectures, activities</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Informative Speeches Due</strong></td>
<td><strong>View DVD. Write analysis memo; email to instructor. Continue work on the memo report. Read Chapter 5</strong></td>
<td><strong>Complete before the next class</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Informative Speeches Overflow</strong></td>
<td><strong>Thank-you letters Peer review short memos</strong></td>
<td><strong>Complete before the next class</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Test Two: Chapters 5, 6, 7, 8, 9</strong></td>
<td><strong>Prepare for the hot seat interview by focusing on the STAR method Memo Report due next week Work on team assignment</strong></td>
<td><strong>Complete before the next class</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Memo Report Due Hot Seat Interviews</strong></td>
<td><strong>Prepare persuasive speech outline and draft of visuals Work on team assignment</strong></td>
<td><strong>Complete before the next class</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Persuasive Speeches (in large classes, a few will be due this week)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Negative Messages – When and how to use a buffer Persuasive speeches rehearsal</strong></td>
<td><strong>Complete before the next class</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Persuasive Speeches due</strong></td>
<td><strong>Complete before the next class</strong></td>
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<td>In-class discussion, lectures, activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Complete before the next class</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Grade Allocation

You are graded on **four** types of performance in this class. The following table shows how your grade is compiled.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>20 percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Career Services</td>
<td>5 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written Assg.</td>
<td>40 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral Assg.</td>
<td>35 percent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Tests

1. There will be 40 multiple choice questions over Chapters 1–4 and 12.
2. There will be 40 multiple choice questions over Chapters 5–9.

#### Career Services Lab Grade:

Please see the attached Career Service Syllabus for a full description of the way this grade is earned.

#### 30-Second Elevator Pitch

Student’s elevator pitch based on accomplishments, major, work experience, skills and abilities.

#### Cover Letter

A formal letter in response to a job opening; use an effective, persuasive style and write it to the hiring manager at the company. The cover letter is graded and returned by BCOM instructors.

#### Persuasive Letter

Write a letter requesting an informational interview from a manager in your field. The interview must be completed by Week 8. If the first manager you identify refuses, be persistent until you accomplish an interview with someone in your field. Although face-to-face interviews are preferred, telephone interviews will be accepted but must be documented.

#### Informative Speech

Five-minute presentation informing class about one facet of effective business behavior. See attached sample topics. Your instructor may also require you to view your DVD after the speech and write a one-page analysis. Submit by
**Thank-You Letter**  
Write a thank-you letter to the employer who conducted your information interview.  

**Memo Report**  
Write a two-page memo, based on at least two credible sources, that informs your classmates about effective business behavior (using the topic chosen for your informative speech). A list is attached or you may submit the topic of your choice for approval by your instructor. One 2” x 3” graphic and a works cited page are required.

**Hot Seat Exercise** – a mock interview. Students will give a practice interview in class. We recommend that students use the Career Center’s STAR system for further practice.

**Team Exercise:** Conduct an in-class team meeting, with agenda, minutes, and full participation. The purpose of this meeting is to share two-minute reports about what you learned in your informational interviews. Your classmates are your audience. The class will be divided into teams of six to seven people for this meeting.

**Persuasive Presentation** - You are a corporate recruiter. It is your job to convince the best Georgia State graduates to seek employment with your company. Six minutes with slides.
BCOM 3950 Effective Business Behavior Topics

These topics will be researched for both the informative presentation and the memo report. It is possible for two students to research the same topic with the instructor’s approval. This approval is contingent on both students researching independently and not collaborating. If the students research different aspects of a topic, sometimes unique insights and information are brought by both.

1. Appropriate use of alcohol at work-related functions
2. Appropriate conversation at events such as work-related receptions and other social events
3. Professional uses of blogs in the workplace, with a focus on etiquette
4. Cubicle etiquette – How to conduct yourself professionally in cramped office settings
5. Appropriate ways to personalize one’s office space
6. Elevator etiquette
7. Giving and receiving gifts: When to, when not to (excludes thank-you letters)
8. How to disagree with your boss respectfully
9. How to set up and host a small corporate meeting
10. How to set up and host a successful working lunch meeting
11. How to handle sneezing, hiccupping, and other bodily functions in public
12. How to deal with religious, cultural, and political differences in the workplace
13. Important etiquette tips when dealing with people from (insert the country of your choice here)
14. Appropriate seating arrangements at dinners, conference tables, and other work-related group situations
15. Table manners (exclude table settings)
16. Expert use of traditional table settings
17. Telephone etiquette (include voice mail)
18. Cell phone etiquette (include cell phone voice mail)
19. Tips on when and how to write and send thank-you letters
20. The etiquette of texting
21. Appropriate and effective ways to make introductions at work and in social settings with a focus on gender, age and corporate status.
22. The smart way to work a room: networking tips at receptions, mixers and civic events:
23. Proper and professional ways to handle workplace romance
24. The do’s and don’ts of gift-giving across cultures (work with your instructor on setting limits to the topic’s scope)
25. How to give and receive praise
26. How to be an effective listener
27. How to leave a job gracefully (whether it’s your choice or not)
28. How to offer criticism
29. How to help colleagues in times of tragedy
30. How to resolve conflict constructively
31. Rules of the road: how to be a courteous traveler
32. Appropriate and professional social networking
33. You may submit your own idea related to workplace etiquette for approval by your instructor.