Business Communication – BUSI 2304 (Previously BCM 247)  
Fall 2020 Course Syllabus

Course Title: Business Communication  
Number/Section: BUSI 2304-504

Instructor: Dr. Ashley Hall  
Email: Brightspace email (hallaa@sfasu.edu only if Brightspace is unavailable)  
Phone: (936) 280-0926 (Answered during office hours. If I don’t answer, send an email.)  
Office: McGee Business Building, Room 229J  
Department: Business Communication and Legal Studies

Online Office Hours via Zoom:  
Monday 9 a.m. – 12 p.m.
Tuesday 7:30 – 10:30 a.m.
Wednesday 8 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Other times by appointment – Email me at least 48 hours in advance to schedule a virtual appointment via Zoom. The Zoom links for office hours are posted under Content – Course Information in Brightspace.

Dr. Hall’s Fall 2020 Class Schedule:  
F2: BUSI 2304 and BUSI 3330 online

Class meeting time & place: This is a fully online course that meets virtually in the second half of the semester. Brightspace is the learning management system. Technical support is available at 936-468-1919. All electronic communication from the instructor will be through Brightspace, and it is the student’s responsibility to check it regularly for instructions and emails. This is not a self-paced course. There are deadlines for every assignment.

Time Commitment: For this three-credit hour online course in the condensed half semester format, you should plan to spend about 18 actual hours per week working on the course. During the course of the semester, you will engage in the study of business communication theories through reading chapters in the textbook and completing Brightspace lessons. This will be validated through quizzes and exams. Written deliverables include a combination of common business-communication artifacts produced in either an individual or team setting. Course coverage will also
typically include employment communication, team building skills, and oral presentation techniques. Activities linked to textual study, the research/drafting/revision phases of preparing written documents, and the development of oral presentations will average about 18 hours of work per week. Some weeks you may find yourself spending more than 18 hours.

Course Description
BUSI 2304 Business Communication – Application of business communication principles through creation of effective business documents and oral presentations. Includes study and application of team communication and use of technology to facilitate the communication process. Prerequisites: six hours with a C grade or better from English 1301, 1302, or 1303.

NOTE: The course prefix and number has changed. In Fall 2020, all courses at SFA have changed from a three letter prefix and three digit number to a four letter prefix and four digit number. This course was previously called BCM 247 and is now BUSI 2304. Please check to be sure you have not already taken the course with the previous number. This is your responsibility to check.

Program Learning Outcomes
Program learning outcomes define the knowledge, skills, and abilities students are expected to demonstrate upon completion of an academic program. These learning outcomes are regularly assessed to determine student learning and to evaluate overall program effectiveness. You may access the program learning outcomes for your major and particular courses in the Curriculum Management Handbook at http://www.sfasu.edu/academics/colleges/business/welcome/faculty-resources

1. The student will demonstrate effective oral and written communication skills by (1) composing a professional quality business document, and (2) preparing and delivering a professional presentation on a business topic. (Written Communication, Oral Communication)

2. The student will demonstrate knowledge of fundamental information technology tools and concepts. (Technology)

3. The student will exhibit an understanding of ethics and social responsibility. (Ethics)

4. The student will apply critical thinking skills by solving problems requiring quantitative and/or qualitative analysis. (Critical Thinking)
5. The student will demonstrate multicultural and diversity understanding.  
   (Diversity)

6. The student will demonstrate an understanding of teamwork as it occurs in  
   business situations. (Teamwork)

7. The student will effectively apply knowledge and skills in the functional areas  
   of business. (Business Knowledge)

8. The student will demonstrate career readiness through completion of a  
   structured field-based work internship experience. (Career Readiness)

General Education Core Curriculum Objectives/Outcomes

1. **Critical Thinking.** Students will be instructed in and will apply critical thinking  
   skills to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, analysis, evaluation, and  
   synthesis of information.

2. **Communication Skills.** Students will be instructed in and will apply  
   communication skills to include development, interpretation and expression  
   of ideas through written, oral, and visual communication.

3. **Teamwork.** Students will be instructed in and will apply, practice, and  
   demonstrate Teamwork to include the ability to consider different points of  
   view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal.

4. **Personal Responsibility.** Students will be instructed in and will apply, practice,  
   and demonstrate Personal Responsibility to include the ability to connect  
   choices, actions, and consequences of ethical decision-making.

Student Learning Outcomes

In general, SLOs in a course that support the PLOs are specific and include the  
exact knowledge, skill or behavior taught in the course that supports the more  
global PLOs. For additional information on meaningful and measurable learning  
outcomes see the assessment resource page [http://www.sfasu.edu/assessment/index.asp](http://www.sfasu.edu/assessment/index.asp) Upon successful completion of this course, the student should be able to:

1. Apply critical thinking to business communication strategies and principles to  
   prepare effective communication for diverse business situations. **Critical  
   thinking.**

2. Effectively develop, interpret, and express ideas through written, oral, aural,  
   and visual communication. **Communication.**

3. Identify different points of view and work effectively in a team setting.  
   **Teamwork.**

4. Participate as a team member in activities that utilize collaborative work skills.  
   **Teamwork.**
5. Identify issues relating to ethical, legal, cultural, and global situations affecting business communication that will result in ethical decision making. 
   Personal Responsibility.

6. Utilize analytical and problem solving skills appropriate to business communication when creating business documents. Critical Thinking.

7. Select appropriate organizational formats and channels used in developing and presenting business messages. Communication.


9. Communicate via electronic mail, Internet, and other technologies. Communication.


**Required Text and Materials**

BCOM10
Business Communication, Edition: 10
Authors: Lehman & Dufrene
ISBN: 9780357026588

Optional supplemental resource: MindTap. Do not follow the directions in your bundled software on how to access MindTap. I will provide you with a link in Brightspace.

You will need reliable access to the Internet to complete this online course. You will need to visit Brightspace, SFA’s learning management system, at d2l.sfasu.edu regularly to keep up with assignments, contact the instructor, and receive information for your success in the course. All electronic communication from the instructor will be through Brightspace, and it is your responsibility to check it daily (Monday – Friday) for instructions and emails.

**Important:** Brightspace email is internal, meaning that messages cannot be sent or received from outside Brightspace. Do NOT try to email someone by typing in their @sfasu.edu or @jacks.sfasu.edu email address. It will not work and you may or may not receive an error message/send failure notice. Use the address book to email your instructor/classmates within Brightspace.

All written assignments must be typed and submitted as a .doc or .docx files for grading (Microsoft Word). You will also need software to read PowerPoint slides, as
well as create them for presentations. As a student, you have access to Office 365 through your mySFA account. For additional information, please visit http://www.sfasu.edu/mysfa/o365/student/productivity-apps/

A webcam will be needed in order to complete presentations.

**Course Requirements:** This course will require writing assignments that will include: a bad news message, a persuasive message, and research-based writing. Coverage will also include employment communication and virtual team building. Two oral presentations will be included in the course. Three examinations will be administered (including a required final exam).

**Course Methodologies:** The following methods may be used in the course:
- Online discussions
- Research-based writing
- Online oral presentations
- Online homework assignments
- Online exams and quizzes
- Computer creation and editing of documents
- Online group work (virtual teams)

**Course Calendar:** The Tentative Schedule appears at the end of this syllabus. Students will be notified of any scheduling changes via Brightspace course announcements. Unless otherwise noted, assignments are due by 11:59 p.m. on Tuesdays. All course deadlines are listed in Central Time.

**Final Exam:** Available in Brightspace from Monday, December 7, until 11:59 p.m. on Tuesday, December 8, 2020.

**Attendance Policy:** This is an online course. There are, however, specific deadlines. Students are expected to login to the course at least once per day during the week (Monday – Friday) and be a contributing member to the class. Feel free to work ahead so that you are not scrambling to submit work at the last minute. **It is your responsibility to look at the assignment and ask questions prior to the day the work is due.** If you wait to ask questions, you may or may not receive a response before the deadline.

**Grading Policy:** All grades will be posted in Brightspace. There will be a total of 1,000 points possible in the course.
Written Messages: 25.5% 255 points
Exams: 30% 300 points
Research Based Assignments: 17.5% 175 points
Presentations: 12.5% 125 points
Quizzes and Other Assignments: 14.5% 145 points

Grading Scale
A: 90 – 100% of points 900 – 1000 points
B: 80 – 89% of points 800 – 899 points
C: 70 – 79% of points 700 – 799 points
D: 60 – 69% of points 600 – 699 points
F: 59% or less of points 599 or fewer points

Grades can be accessed through Brightspace. You should check your posted grades often and email Dr. Hall with any questions. **You must check your grades prior to final exam week** and **email your instructor with any questions.** Unless you email prior to this time, you indicate that you are in agreement with the grades posted. This means you need to check for **ERRORS** (for example, a missing grade for an assignment that you think you completed on time). This does **NOT** mean asking for assignments to be accepted late or for extra credit opportunities to make up for missed deadlines.

**Written Messages:** This is a writing intensive course. You will be expected to write a variety of types of messages including memos, letters, and electronic correspondence.

**Exams:** The course grade includes three exams based on information presented in the textbook and the lecture. These exams may consist of true/false, multiple choice, matching, and short answer questions. Exams will be given via Brightspace.

**Research Based Assignments:** As part of the research portion of the class, students will learn how to conduct primary and secondary research and effectively communicate this information to the audience. Students will also learn how to document their sources using APA.

**Presentations:** Students will learn how to communicate orally. Two presentations will be completed during the semester and Zoom will be used to record the presentations.
**Quizzes and Other Assignments:** Quizzes will be administered in Brightspace. All homework assignments with instructions and due dates will be posted in Brightspace as well. Given the availability of several sections of material at a time, it is your responsibility to plan ahead and meet the posted deadlines. In modules with discussion board assignments, there are separate deadlines for initial posts and replies. If two other initial posts are not submitted to the small group discussion board by the initial post deadline, you will not be penalized for not replying to two classmates.

**Late Pass:** You are allowed one late individual assignment (not an exam) during the semester. If you would like to use your late pass on a missed assignment, you must send Dr. Hall an email via Brightspace with the subject line “Using My Late Pass” within 24 hours of the missed deadline. If approved, this will grant you a 48 hour extension on the assignment without a grade penalty. Other than this one late assignment, late work will NOT be accepted without a documented excuse. Once your late pass is used, it’s used. You cannot later decide you’d like to use the late pass on an assignment worth more points. Use it wisely. If you don’t use your late pass, 10 bonus points will be awarded at the end of the semester.

**Technology Requirements:** It is your responsibility to acquire a consistent, stable, dependable computer and Internet connection with which to complete the assignments for the course by the deadlines indicated on the Course Schedule. It is not the responsibility of the instructor to provide additional time for assignments or exams or an alternative means of completing the course due to technological issues on your part. Plan ahead!

**Communication:** The primary contact method will be by email through Brightspace. You should check your email for this class regularly. I make every attempt to respond to students in a reasonable amount of time. My policy is to answer emails within 48 hours except during university holidays. You can usually expect to receive a response within 24 hours; however, please remember that I am not on call 24 hours a day. When you send an email, if you would like a reply, please ask a specific question. If you send me a message that does not ask a question, I will not respond as I will conclude it was for informational purposes only, not for soliciting a response. If you wait until shortly before assignments are due to address questions to me on the assignment, you may or may not get an answer before the deadline arrives.

**Teams:** Students will be assigned to teams in the course. Teams will have three to five members depending on class enrollment. Your involvement in the team is important and not optional. Team members will participate in team activities for a
grade. The official channel of team communication will be the team discussion board on Brightspace. It is your responsibility to keep in touch with your team about team assignments. A team member who is not performing effectively in the team may be fired from the team in consultation with the instructor. The team member may be fired by the team or by the instructor. The primary causes for firing include invisibility (no one has communicated with or heard from the person) or nonperformance (person does not do his/her work in a timely manner). The technology channels (such as the Brightspace discussion boards) will be examined to see what contributions the team member has made to the team. A fired team member will not receive credit for group assignments and may not complete group work individually.

**Professional Courtesy:** This class will be conducted in a professional manner. This means 1) submit work on time – no excuses, 2) avoid profanity and/or offensive language in your communication, and 3) participate fully and courteously with your team members. In regards to courtesy to others in the class and on your team, do not send harassing emails, texts, or messages using offensive language. Such communication may result in a reduction of the sender’s grade. Students should show respect to the instructor and other students and refrain from any behavior that may distract others.

“Joke” assignments, using inappropriate or questionable content for oral presentations or written assignments, may result in no credit for that assignment. If you have questions about what is professional, please contact me before submitting the assignment.

**Submission Policy:** All written assignments will be typed and submitted as a .doc or .docx files for grading. Handwritten documents or documents of different file types will not be accepted. Assignments submitted in Pages, Microsoft Works, WordPerfect, or as PDF, graphics, or zipped files will not be accepted. Your grade on those assignments will be a zero.

Do not make the mistake of submitting a file with the file extension .lnk or a file with the document name beginning with a $ replacing the first letter of the file name. Look at the file name you have uploaded. If it has either of these problems you need to delete the file you have uploaded and upload again. The .lnk usually occurs when you have placed a link to a file on your desktop and uploaded from there. The $ in front of the file name usually means you have the file open and instead of choosing the file, you have chosen the temporary file. In either case, the file will not open when submitted meaning I will have nothing to grade and you will receive a zero.
All writing assignments will be graded on both content and mechanics. Your work is a representation of you, and soon to be of the company for which you will be working. You need to avoid spelling, punctuation, and grammar errors in your writing in order to project a professional skill level. Therefore, these aspects will be included along with the content when determining your grade on each assignment.

**Make-up Policy:** Since all of the work is available online, not many excuses will be accepted. If you are on school business, arrangements should be made **before** the missed deadline.

A grade of zero (0) will be assigned for missed work, except in the following situations: Serious illness verified by a doctor’s note with a statement of inability to submit work online, personal or family emergency (documented appropriately), or official school business (with documentation from the appropriate campus representative). The student must provide documentation for the excused absence.

Missed quizzes or exams will only be excused and allowed to be made up for university-excused absences or for extreme emergencies that justify missing it. What constitutes an extreme emergency is within the discretion of the instructor. **Note that I am not very lenient with this policy due to the fact that the quiz/exam windows are quite long.** Thus, if you have any expectation that you have some medical or other issue that might conflict with a quiz or exam, make sure you take the quiz/exam early in the time window and do not wait until the last minute. In case of an extreme emergency that prevents you from taking a quiz/exam, contact me before the scheduled quiz/exam if at all possible. If it is not possible, contact me as soon as possible after the emergency is resolved. Failure to do so may result in a grade of zero. Please see your General Bulletin for a further explanation of excused absences. Makeup exams for non-excused absences will be determined at the sole discretion of the instructor.

**Cheating and Plagiarism:** An assignment where plagiarism exists will receive a zero. See the SFA website for the university policy on cheating and plagiarism. All incidents will be reported to the Dean of the College of Business.
Academic Integrity: Unless designated a group assignment, all work is to be individual work and collaboration with other students or individuals is not allowed. Collaborating with others on the quizzes or exams is considered cheating and a violation of SFA’s academic dishonesty policy, which will result in appropriate consequences.

All work submitted in this course must be completed by you, this semester, for this section of the course. You cannot “recycle” any work from other courses you have taken (here or elsewhere) or any previous time you may have attempted this course. If it is discovered that you have turned in any part of an individual or team assignment from a previous semester/course, you will receive a zero (0) for the assignment. Assignments will be subject to TurnItIn verification when submitted to the Brightspace dropbox.

Student Academic Dishonesty (University Policy 4.1)

Abiding by university policy on academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students.

Definition of Academic Dishonesty
Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes, but is not limited to (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials on any assignment or exam; (2) falsifying or inventing of any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were one’s own. Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one’s own work when is at least partly the work of another person; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from the Internet or another source; and/or (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one’s paper without giving the author credit. Penalties may include, but are not limited to reprimand, no credit for the assignment or exam, re-submission of the work, make-up exam, failure of the course, or expulsion from the university. Please read the complete policy at http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/student_academic_dishonesty.pdf

Withheld Grades – Course Grades (University Policy 5.5)
At the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic unit head, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F, except as allowed through policy
related to active military service. If students register for the same course in future semesters, the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average. Please refer to the complete policy at [http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/course-grades.pdf](http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/course-grades.pdf)

**Students with Disabilities**
To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Room 325 in the Human Services Building, 468-3004/468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to [http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/](http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/).

**Student Conduct (University Policy 10.4)**
Classroom behavior should not interfere with the instructor's ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to learn from the instructional program (see the full Student Conduct Code at [http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/studentconduct-code.pdf](http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/studentconduct-code.pdf).) Unacceptable or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Students who disrupt the learning environment may be asked to leave class and may be subject to judicial, academic, or other penalties. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including electronic, classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The instructor shall have full discretion over what behavior is appropriate/ inappropriate in the classroom. Students who do not attend class regularly or who perform poorly on class projects/exams may be referred to the iCare Early Alert Program. This program provides students with recommendations for resources or other assistance that is available to help SFA students succeed.

**General Education Core Curriculum**
The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board has identified six core learning objectives: Critical Thinking Skills, Communication Skills, Empirical and Quantitative Skills, Teamwork, Personal Responsibility, and Social Responsibility. SFA is committed to the improvement of its general education core curriculum by regular assessment of student performance on these six objectives. The chart below indicates the core objectives addressed by BUSI 2304.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Objectives</th>
<th>Definitions</th>
<th>Course Assignment Title</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication Skills</td>
<td>To include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral, and visual communication.</td>
<td>Research Report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Thinking Skills</td>
<td>To include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information.</td>
<td>Research Report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Responsibility</td>
<td>To include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities.</td>
<td>Ethics Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teamwork</td>
<td>To include the ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal.</td>
<td>Team Research Report and Presentation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This syllabus represents a “best” plan for the course; but, as with most plans, it is subject to change. Any necessary changes in this syllabus will be announced via Brightspace.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Deadline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1      | • Course Information module in Brightspace  
• Chapter 1 – Establishing a Framework for Business Communication¹  
• Chapter 3 – Planning and Decision Making  
• Chapter 4 – Preparing Written Messages  
• Brightspace Materials | • Syllabus quiz  
• Elevator pitch video  
• Student information form  
• Register TeamMATE account  
• Select a semester project topic  
• Quiz: Ch 1, 3, and 4  
• Ethics discussion* | 10/20 |
| 2      | • Chapter 6 – Delivering Good- and Neutral-News Messages  
• Chapter 7 – Delivering Bad-News Messages  
• Letters and Memos  
• Brightspace Materials | • Chapter 6 quiz  
• Bad news letter  
• Discussion*  
• Team plan | 10/27 |
| 3      | • Chapter 5 – Communicating Electronically  
• Chapter 8 – Delivering Persuasive Messages  
• Brightspace Materials | • Midterm exam  
• Persuasive letter  
• Team and peer assessments in TeamMATE | 11/3 |

¹ Personal responsibility objective

* Initial post due by 11:59 p.m. **Initial post due by 11:59 p.m. Monday. Two replies due by 11:59 p.m. Tuesday.

** Initial post due by 11:59 p.m. Thursday. Two replies due by 11:59 p.m. on Friday.
|   | Chapter 9 – Understanding the Report Process and Research Methods  
|   | Chapter 11 – Organizing and Preparing Reports and Proposals\(^2\)  
|   | APA  
|   | Brightspace Materials | \(\cdot\) APA exam  
|   | \(\cdot\) Research assignment  
|   | \(\cdot\) Quiz: Ch. 9 and 11 | 11/10
| 5 | Chapter 10 – Managing Data and Using Graphics  
|   | Chapter 12 – Designing and Delivering Business Presentations\(^3\)  
|   | Brightspace Materials | \(\cdot\) Team research report  
|   | \(\cdot\) Quiz: Ch. 10  
|   | \(\cdot\) Team and peer assessments in TeamMATE | 11/17
| 6 | Chapter 2 – Focusing on Interpersonal and Group Communication  
|   | Chapter 13 – Preparing Resumes and Application Messages  
|   | Brightspace Materials | \(\cdot\) Self-evaluation memo  
|   | \(\cdot\) Team presentation: Zoom recording link and PowerPoint | 12/1
| 7 | Chapter 14 – Interviewing for a Job and Preparing Employment Messages  
|   | Brightspace Materials | \(\cdot\) Peer reviews of 2 other presentations  
|   | \(\cdot\) Discussion**  
|   | \(\cdot\) Team and peer assessments in TeamMATE | 12/4
| 8 |  | \(\cdot\) Final Exam | Available 12/7 – 12/8

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\(^2\) Written Communication and Critical Thinking objectives  
\(^3\) Oral Communication and Teamwork objectives

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