

**Communications in the Corporate Environment**  
MBA 500  
Winter Quarter 2009  
5:30 p.m. Mondays TC Nova Room

**Instructor Information and Office Hours**

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**Office Hours**

MWF: 9:00 – 9:50 a.m.      TTh: 11:00 – 11:50 a.m.  
MW: 1:00 – 3:00 p.m.      Other Times by Appointment

**Catalog Description**

**MBA 500 Communications in the Corporate Environment (3)** This course consists of the study and practice of effective business communication, with emphasis on writing, speaking and group communication. Topics include principles of verbal and nonverbal communication in the work place; writing memorandums, letters, reports and proposals; interviewing and oral presentation. Focus on persuasive communication for both internal and external business audiences.

**Rationale**

To succeed professionally and to advance in your career, you must be able to write and to speak effectively. MBA 500 will provide instruction and practice in technical and business writing, as well as practice in oral presentations using PowerPoint.

**Goals**

The primary objective of MBA 500 is to make you a more effective writer who is also an effective speaker. In achieving this objective, you will:

1. learn to use a variety of written formats;
2. learn to use a variety of written and oral communication styles for different purposes and audiences;
3. sharpen your research skills; and
4. sharpen your critical thinking skills.

### ADA Statement

Special Needs: If you have special needs as addressed by the Americans with Disabilities Act, please contact your instructor immediately. After proper documentation, reasonable efforts will be made to accommodate your special needs.

### Course Requirements

You are required to read the assigned material in the textbooks **prior** to class in order to understand the lectures, to ask questions, to discuss the readings, and to write competent reports. Please keep your reading and writing current.

### General Requirements

Please:

1. Bring your textbook and hardcopies of your work when you meet with me in my office or when you come to class to discuss the readings and to take notes.
2. Purchase a stiff-paper pocket folder to retain your work for future reference.
3. Disable your cell phone and other electronic gear, except for your laptop, and avoid texting and Web-surfing.
4. Avoid wearing headgear in this classroom.
5. Avoid eating and drinking in this classroom.

### Major Reports

You will write (1) memos, business letters, an article summary, a technical description, a Web site evaluation; (2) an applied technical publication; (3) a proposal, a questionnaire and progress report; (4) a feasibility report, a cover letter and résumé; and (5) two trade book reports, one of which will be on Cooper. These reports (**items 4-5**) will range 250 to 2500 words. The proposal, questionnaire, progress report, and feasibility report will focus on your career search. The feasibility report will include a cover letter and resume that will follow the format explained in my handout. The trade book report will include a five-minute PowerPoint presentation.

Please be prepared to submit them on time for in-office editing. All drafts of your reports must be word-processed in Times New Roman 12-point font using MLA Style (see Alred, Section 2). **Final drafts are due class time. Late papers earn a “0.”**

### **Peer and In-Office Editing**

A sample rubric is appended so you and your classmates can determine standards for the assignments. Standard proofreader's marks are in Alred, page 434. See also Alred, Sections 9, Style and Clarity; 10, Usage; 11, Grammar; and 12, Punctuation and Mechanics.

Refer to specific entries listed by topic and page number in the endpapers of Alred's handbook.

### **Portfolio**

Retain your drafts in a stiff-paper folder with pockets for future reference as necessary.

### **Examinations**

There will be no examinations per se because careers rise and fall on daily performance that includes technical and professional writing.

### **Attendance and Class Participation**

Weekly submission of your drafts is required.

### **Grading**

A good document must meet the requirements of the assignment; it must follow standard business format and conventional English standards. A sample holistic rubric is appended so you and your classmates can determine standards for the assignments.

Objective Percentages and Letter Grade Equivalencies:

19-20 = 95 - 100% ( A )	12-13 = 60 - 69% ( D )
17-18 = 85 - 94% ( B )	01-11 = 01 - 59% ( F )
14-16 = 70 - 84% ( C )	0 = Late; non-completed work

Letter Grade Point Equivalencies:

A+ = 5.5	B+ = 4.5	C+ = 3.5	D+ = 2.5	F+ = 1.5
A = 5	B = 4	C = 3	D = 2	F = 1
A- = 4.6	B- = 3.6	C- = 2.6	D- = 1.6	F- = 0.6
0 = Late; Non-completed Work				

Five Reports at 20% Each	<u>100%</u>
Final Grade	100%

## Plagiarism

Plagiarized work is unacceptable for a passing grade and earns 0 points. Instances of plagiarism are reported to the Chief Academic Officer. The first instance results in a failing grade on the writing assignment. A second instance results in a failing grade for the course and disciplinary action by the College, up to expulsion.

## Required and Recommended Texts

Alred, Gerald J., Charles T. Brusaw, and Walter E. Oliu. *The Business Writer's Companion*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. Boston: Bedford, 2008.

Bureau of Labor Statistics Staff. *Occupational Outlook Handbook*. US Dept. of Labor. Washington: GPO, Updated Annually. Available: <http://www.bls.gov/ocohome.htm>.

Cooper, Violet M. *How to Find Those Hidden Jobs*. Salem, OR: Dimi, 1995.

A collegiate dictionary such as *The American Heritage Dictionary* is highly recommended.

## Tentative Schedule

All assignments will be from Alred, *OOH* (online and at Murrell Library), Cooper on reserve at Murrell Library), and my résumé/cover letter handouts. This schedule may be altered to meet the students' or professor's needs.

**NOTE ALSO: Choose one of the trade books listed in the bibliography at the end of this syllabus—OTHER THAN COOPER—to read. Write an abstract on it. The Cooper abstract is due during Week 4. The trade book abstract and PowerPoint are due Week 6. It might be to your advantage to purchase and share Cooper, especially if you work fulltime and are not on campus.**

### Week 1

#### Jan 12

M: Introduction. You will find models, explanations, and instructions for your assignments in Alred. For example, page numbers for the following assignment—to write a memo—can be found in the **index**, under **memos** (Alred 420). Unless otherwise noted, you can locate the pages for your assignment models and instructions in Alred's index. In some instances, we will discuss the best model for your assignment. The key words to your assignments are **boldfaced**. Using the index is faster than using the table of contents.

Alred, "Five Steps to Successful Writing," xv-xxii. Note and use checklist, pages xxiii-xxx, throughout this course.

**No class Monday, January 19, is Martin Luther King Day. For January 26:**

Write a **memo** addressed to me that indicates what your proposed career will be and how you plan to investigate it.

Begin your career search in *OOH* and **begin reading Cooper**.

List fifty people in your network that you know, along with their addresses, e-mail, phone numbers, and employment. Do not include more than three Missouri Valley College students or alumni.

**Week 2****Jan 26**

M: Memos and network list due class time.

Research your proposed career in *OOH*.

**For February 2:**

Write a two-page **investigative report** that compares, evaluates, and makes recommendations for Bass Pro Shops Outdoors Online and Reeds Sporting Goods: Family Outdoor Outfitters.

**Create an online account so you can read on-line versions of *The Kansas City Star*, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *USA Today*. Read the business and technology columns regularly so we can share information about how the economy affects corporations, careers, and businesses that interest you.**

Read one of Diane Stafford's columns in the *Kansas City Star*, write a one-page **abstract (see also, research and MLA documentation)** of her points. Its last paragraph will evaluate how her points affect you and your proposed career.

Compile survey questions for your proposed career **questionnaire**. Write **instructions** and a **cover letter (see also, letters)** that targets some of your network contacts as respondents to your questionnaire.

**Week 3****Feb 2**

M: Article abstract, instructions, cover letter, and questionnaire due class time.

I assume that you know how to create a PowerPoint presentation. If you do not, ask someone in your network to show you how. Your PowerPoint **presentation** will discuss your proposed career and your likelihood of entering it.

**For February 9:**

Write a set of **instructions** for someone you are training to take over some aspect of your job. Limit the routine steps or stages to 10.

**Week 4**

M:

**Feb 9**

Instructions due class time.

**For February 16:**

Write a **proposal** regarding your career path, based on your findings in OOH and **Cooper**.

Write a two-page **abstract (see also, research and MLA documentation)** of Cooper's book, which includes a one-paragraph conclusion that evaluates how her book affects you and your proposed career.

Attach a third page that is a graph (line, bar, pie, or picture) **of your choosing that illustrates employment trends and salaries.**

Write a **good-news letter** and a **bad-news letter (see correspondence)** that indicates why your career proposal is or is not feasible.

Mail your questionnaire with an SASE to your targeted respondents.

**Week 5**

M:

**Feb 16**

Cooper abstract, graph, good news and bad news letters, and proposal due class time.

**For February 23:**

Write a **complaint letter** to a company of your choosing and write an **adjustment letter** to that complaint, as if you were working for the company you chose.

**For March 2:**

Select one of the trade books other than Cooper, read it, write a two-page **abstract (see also, research and MLA documentation)** of it. Then, prepare a three-minute PowerPoint presentation on your trade book that includes a graph. **Sixteen word-processed lines in Courier New font is approximately one minute in length, so calculate accordingly.**

**Week 6**

M:

**Feb 23**

Two-page book abstract, PowerPoint, and progress report of your career search due class time.

**For March 9:**

**Design** a one-page **web posting with hyperlinks** that highlights your major department. Apply your **investigative report** findings regarding Bass Pro Shops Outdoors Online and Reeds Sporting Goods: Family Outdoor Outfitters.

**Week 7**

M:

**Mar 2**

Trade book abstract and PowerPoint due class time.

**Gruber, résumé and cover letter handout.**

**For March 9:**

Write a list of skills you think you can take from career to career from **my worksheet and handouts**.

**For March 23:**

Begin assembling material for your five- to ten-page career **feasibility report** and **executive summary**.

**Week 8**

M:

**Mar 9**

Web posting with hyperlinks and list of transferable skills due class time.

**For March 16:**

Develop your and cover letter from **my worksheet and handouts**.

Look for a classified advertisement that lists an employment opportunity for your proposed career and tailor your résumé and cover letter for that particular position.

**Week 9**

M:

**Mar 16**

Résumé and cover letter workshop.

**Week 10**

M:

**Mar 23**

Completed résumé and cover letter, five- to ten-page career **feasibility report** and **executive summary**. due class time.  
Stress interviews and appropriate attire.

**Final Assignment:**

Have a successful, enjoyable career!

## Bibliography

### Rhetorics and Handbooks:

Alred, Gerald J., Charles T. Brusaw, and Walter E. Oliu. *The Business Writer's Handbook*. 9<sup>th</sup> ed. Boston: Bedford, 2009.

---. *Handbook of Technical Writing*. 9<sup>th</sup> ed. Boston: Bedford, 2009.

Corbett, Edward P. J., and Robert J. Connors. *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student*. New York: Oxford, 1999.

Elbow, Peter. *Writing with Power*. New York: Oxford, 1998.

Shaughnessy, Mina. *Errors and Expectations*. New York: Oxford, 1977.

Strunk, William, Jr., E. B. White, and Roger Angell. *The Elements of Style*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Boston: Allyn, 2000.

### Periodicals:

*Barron's Magazine*.

*Business Week*. Also <<http://www.businessweek.com>>.

*Forbes*. Also <<http://www.forbes.com>>.

*Fortune*. Also <<http://money.cnn.com/magazines/fortune>>.

*Inc.* Also <<http://www.inc.com>>.

*The Kansas City Star*. Also <<http://www.kcstar.com>>.

*Money*. Also <<http://money.cnn.com>>.

*The New York Times*. Also <<http://www.nytimes.com>>.

*TechNews.com*. Also <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/technology>>.

*U.S.A. Today*. Also <<http://www.usatoday.com>>.

*U.S. News and World Report*. Also <<http://www.usnews.com/usnews/home.htm>>.

*The Wall Street Journal*. Also <<http://online.wsj.com/public/us>>.

*The Washington Post*. Also <<http://www.washingtonpost.com>>.

**Bibliography (Continued):****Reference Books:**

*American Heritage Dictionary*. 4<sup>th</sup> and subsequent eds. Boston: Houghton, 2002.

Bureau of Labor Statistics Staff. *Occupational Outlook Handbook*. US Dept. of Labor. Washington: GPO, Updated Annually. Available: <http://www.bls.gov/ocohome.htm>.

*Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 10<sup>th</sup> and subsequent eds. Springfield, MA: Merriam, 1998.

*Random House Webster's Dictionary*. 2<sup>nd</sup> and subsequent eds. New York: Random, 1997.

*Roget's International Thesaurus*. 5<sup>th</sup> and subsequent eds. Ed. Robert L. Chapman. New York: Harper, 1993.

Stevens, Mark A., ed. *Merriam-Webster's Manual for Writers and Editors*. Springfield, MA: Merriam, 1998.

*Webster's New World Dictionary*. 4<sup>th</sup> and subsequent college eds. New York: Wiley, 2000.

**Trade Books:**

Blanchard, Kenneth, and Spencer Johnson. *One Minute Manager*. New York: Morrow, 1986.

Bossidy, Larry, Ram Charan, Charles Burck. *Execution: The Discipline of Getting Things Done*. New York: Crown, 2002.

Brereton, John C., and Margaret A. Mansfield. *Writing on the Job*. New York: Norton, 1997.

Bronson, Po. *What Should I Do with My Life?* New York: Random, 2002.

Buckingham, Marcus, and Curt Coffman. *First, Break All the Rules: What the World's Greatest Managers Do Differently*. New York: Simon, 1999.

Collins, Jim. *Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap ...and Others Don't*. New York: HarperCollins, 2001.

Cooper, Violet M. *How to Find Those Hidden Jobs*. Salem, OR: Dimi, 1995.

**Trade Books (Continued):**

- Covey, Stephen R. *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*. New York: Simon, 1990.
- Diamond, Jared. *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed*. New York: Viking, 2004.
- Frank, Milo O. *How to Get Your Point Across in 30 Seconds—or Less*. New York: Simon, 1986.
- Gerstner, Louis V., Jr. *Who Says Elephants Can't Dance? Inside IBM's Historic Turnaround*. New York: Harper Business, 2002.
- Goleman, Daniel. *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More than I.Q.* New York: Bantam, 1997.
- Halberstam, David. *The Next Century*. New York: Morrow, 1991.
- Gay, Ben, III. *The Closers*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Placerville, CA: Hampton, 1988.
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- . *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Make a Big Difference*. Boston: Little, Brown, 2002.
- Goleman, Daniel. *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More than I.Q.* New York: Bantam, 1997.
- Iacocca, Lee, with William Novak. *Iacocca: An Autobiography*. New York: Bantam, 1984.
- Johnson, Spencer, and Larry Wilson. *One Minute Sales Person*. New York: Avon, 1991.
- , and Kenneth H. Blanchard. *Who Moved My Cheese? An Amazing Way to Deal with Change in Your Work and Your Life*. New York: Putnam, 1998.
- Lancaster, Lynne C., David Stillman, and Harvey MacKay. *When Generations Collide: Who They Are. Why They Clash. How to Solve the Generational Puzzle at Work*. New York: HarperCollins, 2002.
- Lencioni, Patrick M. *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2002.
- Levitt, Steven D. and Stephen J. Duben. *Freakonomics: A Rogue Economist Explores the Hidden Side of Everything*. New York: Morrow, 2005.
- Mackay, Harvey. *Beware the Naked Man Who Offers You His Shirt*. New York: Morrow, 1990.

**Trade Books (Continued):**

---. *Dig Your Well before You're Thirsty*. New York: Doubleday, 1997.

---. *Sharkproof*. New York: Harper, 1993.

---. *Swim with the Sharks Without Being Eaten Alive*. New York: Morrow, 1988.

---. *Pushing the Envelope All the Way to the Top*. New York: Ballantine, 1999.

Molloy, John T. *John T. Molloy's New Dress for Success*. New York: Warner, 1988.

---. *New Women's Dress for Success*. New York: Warner, 1996.

Miller, Robert B., Stephen E. Heiman, with Tad Tuleja. *Strategic Selling*. New York: Warner, 1985.

Morris, Tom. *If Aristotle Ran General Motors: The New Soul of Business*. New York: Holt, 1997.

Murphy, Emmett C. *Leadership IQ*. New York: Wiley, 1998.

---. *The New Murphy's Law: 10 Unconventional Rules for Making Everything Go Right in Your Life and Work*. Maynard, MA [?]: Chandler, 1998.

Packard, Vance. *The Hidden Persuaders*. New York: Pocket, 1957.

---. *The Status Seekers*. New York: Pocket, 1961.

---. *The Waste Makers*. New York: Pocket, 1963.

Peters, Thomas J., and Robert H. Waterman, Jr. *In Search of Excellence*. New York: Warner, 1982.

---. *Liberation Management*. New York: Knopf, 1992.

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Post, Peggy. *Emily Post's Etiquette*. 16th ed. New York: Harper, 1997.

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**Trade Books (Continued):**

Sheehy, Gail. *Passages: Predictable Crises of Adult Life*. New York: Bantam, 1977.

Surowiecki, James. *The Wisdom of Crowds: Why the Many Are Smarter Than the Few and How Collective Wisdom Shapes Business, Economies, Societies and Nations*. New York: Doubleday, 2004.

Thompson, Melvin R. *Why Should I Hire You?* New York: Harcourt, 1975.

Underwood, Jim. *More Than a Pink Cadillac: Mary Kay, Inc.'s Nine Leadership Keys to Success*. New York: McGraw, 2002.

Wendleton, Kate. *Through the Brick Wall*. New York: Villard, 1992.

Yate, Martin John. *Knock 'em Dead: With Great Answers to Tough Interview Questions*. Holbrook, MA: Adams, 1996.

**Rubric for Holistic Assessment**

- A =
1. Superior lead or angle; clear thesis statement; unique insight into topic; powerful conclusion that ties elements together.
  2. Paragraphs developed fully enough to lead, inform and entertain the reader with significant details and analysis.
  3. Excellent transitions.
  4. Well-written sentences with structural variety.
  5. Exact word choice that brings topic to life by showing, not telling.
  6. No, or virtually no, major, spelling, grammar, punctuation, or format errors.
- B =
1. Strong lead or angle; insight into topic not necessarily fresh; satisfying conclusion.
  2. Paragraphs well-developed enough to lead and inform reader with some interesting details or appropriate analysis.
  3. Good transitions.
  4. Well-written sentences with some structural variety.
  5. Good word choice that captures topic, but tends more to tell, not show.
  6. Few spelling, grammar, punctuation, or format errors.
- C =
1. Trite lead or angle; general treatment of topic; average insight; clichéd or otherwise weak conclusion.
  2. Paragraphs developed adequately to contain major point, but with few details or superficial analysis.
  3. Awkward transitions or loose continuity.
  4. Syntactically correct sentences, with little variety or wordy constructions.
  5. General descriptions or imprecise word choice.
  6. Some spelling, grammar, punctuation, or format error.
- D =
1. Weak lead or angle; poorly defined or treated topic; vague conclusion that makes no point or suggests new topic.
  2. Disjointed or misplaced paragraphs with little informative detail or appropriate analysis.
  3. Few transitions or poor continuity.
  4. Barely functional sentence structure.
  5. Inappropriate or incorrect word choice.
  7. Several spelling, grammar, punctuation, or format errors.
- F =
1. Poor lead or angle; no clear focus on topic; no conclusion; does not fulfill assignment.
  2. Undeveloped paragraphs with no informative detail or appropriate analysis.
  3. Missing transition or no continuity.
  4. Incoherent or unrelated sentences.
  1. Inadequate word choice.
  2. Many spelling, grammar, punctuation, or format errors.
- 0 = Late work or plagiarism.