“Human communication is not just a transfer of information like two fax machines connected with a wire; it is a series of alternating displays of behavior by sensitive, scheming, second-guessing, social animals.” (Steven Pinker)

So let’s be smart about it.

Together we’ll explore the difference between the face value of words and the pragmatic effects of communication. We’ll identify practical elements of style and organization in routine message channels and content so that you move confidently from common practice to best practice in communicating with others at work—and so that you can get tasks done while nurturing relationships in the process.

General information

MBA 5235-01
Fall Quarter 2019
Mondays 6 to 8:40 p.m.
Pigott 306

Contacting the instructor:
Bryan Ruppert, Ph.D.
Pigott 400
Tel. (206) 296-2827
Email ruppertb@seattleu.edu

Drop-in hours (no appointment needed):
Mondays and Wednesdays from 1:30 to 2:30 p.m., as well as 20 minutes after each MBA 5235 class.

I will check my email regularly. You can email me at any time, but you may not receive a response outside business hours. Generally, emails received before 3 p.m. will receive a response before the close of business, and emails received after 3 p.m. will receive a response on the following business day. Please be sure to correspond with me by using your SU email account for a more reliable response rate. Email from private accounts often lands in the junk folder (and isn’t found for months), and messages within Canvas are rarely seen since my preparation of the site is complete by the first day of class.

Textbook and materials

We have no required book. If any of the topics of the course interest you and you would like to explore them further, drop by the office to learn about additional materials.
Description and learning outcomes

This course has two aims: (1) to distinguish between face-value language, on the one hand, and the effects of messages, on the other, and (2) to move from common practice to best practice in the crafting of routine messages to get tasks done while nurturing relationships.

On successful completion of this course (that is, achieving a passing grade), you will have
- attended all three sessions
- created a portfolio of routine business messages appropriate to your professional context that exhibit best practice and explain why they do so

Assignment and grading

You’ll have only one assignment for this one-credit class, and it will be in the form of a portfolio where you choose writing and analysis tasks from a list. Please see the Canvas site for details.

Attending class is the best way to understand the material. We have no book and no course pack, and the only notes from class you’re guaranteed are the ones you take for yourself. As such, a full grade for the portfolio is earned by attending all three sessions. One absence will cap the portfolio grade at 85 percent. A second absence will cap it at 70 percent. Each hour (or part of an hour) of lateness will reduce the maximum that can be earned on the portfolio by 5 percentage points. Each day (or part of a day) the portfolio is late will reduce the maximum that can be earned on the portfolio by 10 percentage points. Deductions can add up, but my expectation is that these will be extremely rare, and most of you will never have to refer to this paragraph again.

Your final letter grade will be based on your percentage. These will be translated as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>GPA</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>93-100%</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Superior</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90-92%</td>
<td>A-</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87-89%</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83-86%</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-82%</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77-79%</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>2.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73-76%</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-72%</td>
<td>C-</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67-69%</td>
<td>D+</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63-66%</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Fail</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-62%</td>
<td>D-</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.70</td>
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<tr>
<td>0-59%</td>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.00</td>
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</table>

Special notes

You’ll be encouraged to participate actively in discussions based on any assigned readings and podcasts and on related points raised by your peers and me. Active participation means visible,
vocal, and reflective engagement in the individual and collective learning process. Take opportunities to develop your collegial and leadership communication skills by addressing questions and comments to fellow students in group discussion and encouraging others to participate.

Taking notes by hand—or being resourceful in obtaining notes when absent—is an important skill in professional life. As education research clearly shows that active memory increases when distractions are minimized, laptops aren’t allowed and cell phones must be turned off except by prior agreement. So that you feel more comfortable participating in class discussions and asking questions, no individuals may record class unless they have prior permission from me. Continued screen use after a reminder of classroom norms suggests a lack of participation and will result in the marking of an absence, and this will affect the final grade. This helps us maintain a distraction-free environment where we’re present for each other.

This is a family-friendly class. If you’re the primary caregiver for someone, a relative or close friend of someone who’s critically ill in hospital, or an expectant birth partner, please let me know.

Title IX

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX) prohibits discrimination based on sex in educational programs or activities that receive federal financial assistance. This prohibition includes sexual misconduct, which encompasses sexual harassment and sexual violence. Seattle University remains committed to providing a safe and equitable learning, living, and working environment. Seattle University offers emergency, medical, and other support resources, as well as assistance with safety and support measures, to community members who have experienced or been impacted by sexual misconduct.

Seattle University requires all faculty and staff to notify the University’s Title IX Coordinator if they become aware of any incident of sexual misconduct experienced by a student.

For more information, please visit https://www.seattleu.edu/equity/. If you have any questions or concerns, you may also directly contact the Title IX Coordinator in the Office of Institutional Equity (email: oie@seattleu.edu; phone: 206-296-2824).

Disabilities

If you have or think you may have a disability (including an “invisible disability” such as a learning disability, a chronic health problem, or a mental health condition) that interferes with your performance as a student in this class, you are encouraged to arrange special support services and/or accommodations through Disabilities Services (tel. 206-296-5740).

If you qualify for classroom or testing accommodations, please consider following the advice of Disabilities Services by making an appointment with me early in the course so that we can discuss a plan for your success in the course and for your professional formation.
Religious accommodations

It is the policy of Seattle University to reasonably accommodate students who, due to the observance of religious holidays, expect to be absent or endure a significant hardship during certain days of their academic course or program. Please see Policy on Religious Accommodations for Students at https://www.seattleu.edu/media/policies/Policy-onReligious-Accommodations-for-Students---FINAL.PDF. A form for requesting a reasonable accommodation can be found at https://www.seattleu.edu/media/policies/Religious-Accommodation-Request-Form-FINAL.pdf.

Syllabus changes

To achieve course aims and learning outcomes, I may reasonably shift the sequence of class sessions, material covered, or assignment due dates. To protect the academic integrity of your degree, or in the event of a disruptive University shutdown (for example, due to weather or disease), I may further petition the director of the MBA or the associate dean of Albers to change the number and/or weighting of assignments.
### Course calendar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>TOPICS</th>
<th>DUE:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mon., Sep. 30</td>
<td>A case for business linguistics? Purpose, audience, and organization</td>
<td>Portfolio (no class): Please submit your portfolio to main reception in Albers (third floor) by 6 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Speech act theory and communication at work</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon., Oct. 7</td>
<td>The psychology of email or “Putting the shovel down” Q&amp;A on portfolio assignment (Due Oct. 28)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon., Oct. 14</td>
<td>Routine content: goodwill, requests, claims, adjustments, and replies</td>
<td></td>
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