



## **Course Syllabus**

### **POFT 2312 – Business Correspondence & Communication**

**Catalog Description:** Development of writing and presentation skills to produce effective business communications.

**Prerequisites:** ENGL 1301 or POFT 1301; POFT 1329 or instructor approval

**Semester Credit Hours:** 3

**Lecture Hours per Week:** 3

**Lab Hours per Week:** 0

**Contact Hours per Semester:** 48

**State Approval Code:** 5205010000

**Class section meeting time:**

**Instructional Goals and Purposes:** The purpose of this course is to teach students the principles of effective business communication and to apply those principles in analyzing business situations and determining and creating appropriate business communications.

#### **Learning Outcomes:**

1. Create effective business documents.
2. Evaluate business documents.
3. Apply ethical communication practices.

#### **Specific Course Objectives (includes SCANS):**

After studying the material presented in the text and online, the student should be able to complete all behavioral/learning objectives listed below with a minimum competency of 70% on assignments and exams.

- 1. Review and refine communications skills.**
  - a. Review basic grammar, punctuation, capitalization, number usage, spelling, and word division. (1a-i, 1a-ii, 1a-iv, 1a-v, 1b-v)
  - b. Evaluate listening skills and learn and apply effective listening techniques. (1a-i, 1b-v, 1c-iv)
  - c. Discuss and apply effective oral communication skills (i.e., telephoning, teleconferencing, informal and formal talk). (1a-ii, 1a-iv, 1a-v, 1c-iv)
  - d. Apply effective writing style in business situations. (1b-i, 1b-ii, 1b-vi)
  - e. Discuss and use electronic means of communication. (1a-i, 1a-ii, 2c-iv)
  - f. Observe and evaluate nonverbal language. (1a-i, 1a-ii, 1b-vi)
- 2. Learn and apply effective written communication techniques.**
  - a. Choose language, style, and format appropriate to message's purpose and audience. (1b-i, 1b-ii, 1b-vi)
  - b. Apply the six C's (courtesy, conciseness, completeness, correctness, concreteness, and clarity) in business communications. (1b-vi)
  - c. Effectively proofread work for mailability and effectiveness. (1a-i, 1b-vi, 1c-i, 1c-iv)

- d. Type letters and memos in acceptable formats. (1b-ii, 2c-iv)
  - e. Compose various types of business letters and simple interoffice memorandums, including a short memo report. (1a-ii)
  - f. Complete tests over principles of business communications. (1a-i, 1a-ii, 1b-ii, 1b-iii)
- 3. Determine and use proper psychological approach in writing situations.**
- a. Use direct approach for good and neutral news messages. (1a-ii, 1b-i, 1b-ii, 1b-iii, 1b-iv, 1bv, 1b-vi, 1c-i, 2c-i, 2c-iii, 2c-iv)
  - b. Use indirect approach for negative news messages. (1a-ii, 1b-i, 1b-ii, 1b-iii, 1b-iv, 1b-v, 1bvi, 1c-i, 2c-i, 2c-iii, 2c-iv)
  - c. Use persuasive approach for unusual, non-routine requests and sales messages. (1a-ii, 1bi, 1b-ii, 1b-iii, 1b-iv, 1b-v, 1b-vi, 1c-i, 2c-i, 2c-iii, 2c-iv)
- 4. Complete employment communications.**
- a. Evaluate personal skills and qualities. (1a-i, 1b-v, 1c-i, 1c-iv)
  - b. Research specific jobs to determine requirements, working conditions, pay, etc. (1a-i)
  - c. Design and prepare a data sheet (résumé). (1a-ii, 2c-i, 2c-ii, 2c-iii, 2c-iv)
  - d. Prepare a letter of application. (1a-ii, 2c-i, 2c-ii, 2c-iii, 2c-iv)
  - e. Discuss and complete an employment application. (1a-i, 1a-ii, 2c-i, 2c-ii)
  - f. Discuss and plan interviewing techniques and attend mock interviews (responses to interview questions, legality of questions, dress, grooming, etc.). (1a-i, 1a-ii, 1a-iv, 1a-v, 2bi)
- 5. Explore the world of work.**
- a. Research job readiness and on-the-job expectations and/or summarize main points of special presentations related to job readiness and on-the-job expectations. (i.e., personal hygiene, appropriate dress, personality traits, confidentiality, work attitudes, and work skills) (1a-i, 1a-ii, 1a-iv, 1b-i, 1b-ii, 1b-iii, 1b-vi, 1c-i, 2c-i, 2c-ii, 2c-iii, 2c-iv)
  - b. Research time and stress management and/or summarize main points of special presentations related to time and stress management. (1a-i, 1a-ii, 1a-iv, 1b-i, 1b-ii, 1b-iii, 1b-vi, 1c-i, 2c-i, 2c-ii, 2c-iii, 2c-iv)
  - c. Research ergonomics and/or summarize main points of special presentations related to ergonomics. (1a-i, 1a-ii, 1a-iv, 1b-i, 1b-ii, 1b-iii, 1b-vi, 1c-i, 2c-i, 2c-ii, 2c-iii, 2c-iv)
  - d. If assigned, assist a current worker in actual on-the-job work performance and evaluate the training session. (1c-i, 1c-iii, 1c-iv)
  - e. Study, discuss, and research the meaning of and importance of human relations in the workplace. (1a-i, 1a-ii, 1a-iv, 1b-i, 1b-ii, 1b-iii, 1b-vi, 1c-i, 2c-i, 2c-ii, 2c-iii, 2c-iv)

**Course Content:**

Students in all sections of Business Correspondence & Communication will be required to do the following:

1. Students will submit assignments, including quizzes, throughout the semester based on the course content presented in that assignment.
2. Students will participate in online discussions and group projects as assigned.
3. Students will compile a career notebook by collecting class handouts, summarizing research, videos, and speaker presentations, gathering and providing job information, preparing a personal résumé and application letter, providing a sample job application blank, and by providing other items as may be assigned.
4. Students will be required to attend a limited number of sessions to hear speakers or to participate in group activities.
5. Students will complete online exams, including the final exam, testing their knowledge of business communication principles and practices.

**Methods of Instruction/Course Format/Delivery:**

Students in both the traditional class and in the Internet class will have access to this course via Canvas. Students in the traditional class will meet regularly for lecture over the material. Students in the Internet class will only be required to meet on the main campus for presentations by speakers or for group activities. Resources provided through Canvas include

- A calendar displaying due dates for assignments and testing
- Online assignments
- Learning aids, including handouts, examples, slide presentations, and tutorials
- Email (totally contained within Canvas)

All assignments will be submitted through Canvas. After the assignment has been graded, the student will be able to view his or her grade by returning to the assignment and clicking the View Scores button or by clicking the Grades link in the left banner.

Exams will consist of online exams and hands-on applications; students will be able to view the solutions to online testing; however, students will not be able to view the answers to the applications online. They will be able, however, to see their grades in My Grades and drop by the office to review their exams. Additionally, students will receive an e-mail report of their performance on the applications portion of the exam. Generally, work will be graded and posted within two days following the deadline.

Students in both the traditional and Internet classes should use the Email within Canvas to communicate with the instructor. If unable to contact the instructor using email in Canvas or in case of an emergency, external email may be used. Replies are generally within 24 hours or less (excluding weekends and holidays); accordingly, if no reply is received, the student should re-send the message since a delivery failure could have occurred.

**Major Assignments/Assessments:**

The following items will be assigned and assessed during the semester and used to calculate the student's final grade.

**DAILY GRADES**

Some assignments will require completion of selected exercises at the ends of chapters or units or of attachments included with the assignment page. Most assignments will also include a chapter quiz. Always check the Assignments link to determine specific requirements. This work, other than online quizzes, will be submitted as an attachment through the assignment page. The assignment will be graded and returned on the same assignment page. Homework is due as assigned and 10 points will be deducted for each day work is late—with a maximum of two days allowed for late submissions. **Caution: Passing off another's work as your own or allowing anyone to pass off your own work as his or her own is not tolerated. Stiff penalties apply, including exclusion from the class with a grade of "F" assigned for the semester! Be sure all work you submit is YOUR OWN!**

**COMPOSITIONS**

The main objective of this course is to develop effective communications skills. Written compositions assigned throughout the semester will be averaged to determine your score in this category. This will also include the Leadership Workshop assignment and the Mock Interviews.

**CAREER NOTEBOOK**

During the second half of the semester, a career notebook will be assembled that consists of handouts, research information, summaries of topics or events, and job applications communications. This career notebook is developed as the semester progresses and is intended to provide a very useful reference for the student in the actual process of applying for a job and for being successful in the workplace.

## **TESTS**

With the exception of the final exam, tests may include both applications and online testing. Online testing requires responses to short-answer questions; applications may require the student to proofread and edit documents or to answer discussion questions using computer software. Tests will be administered online in Canvas using Proctorio which provides a video/audio recording of your testing experience for the instructor. You will take the exams at home using the webcam on your computer; if you do not have a webcam, you may take the exams at one of the Panola College testing centers in Carthage, Center, or Marshall. If you are unable to take a test when it is scheduled, you must reschedule the test with the instructor PRIOR to the testing date. An excused absence and makeup test may be granted for sudden illness or unforeseen circumstances.

### **Course Grade:**

The grading scale for this course is as follows:

- |                           |            |
|---------------------------|------------|
| 1. <b>Daily Grades</b>    | <b>15%</b> |
| 2. <b>Tests</b>           | <b>30%</b> |
| 3. <b>Compositions</b>    | <b>35%</b> |
| 4. <b>Career Notebook</b> | <b>20%</b> |

Assignment, quiz, and exam grades, including a mid-semester and final grade, will be posted to Grades in Canvas.

### **Texts, Materials, and Supplies:**

- *Business Communication for Success* - ISBN: 978-1-946135-05-6; textbook is available within the course and online free of charge at <https://open.lib.umn.edu/businesscommunication/>

### **Required Readings:**

- Chapters 1-3, 9, 11, 14, 17

### **Recommended Readings:**

- None

### **Other:**

- Courses conducted via video conferencing may be recorded and shared for instructional purposes by the instructor.
- For current texts and materials, use the following link to access bookstore listings: <https://www.panolacollegestore.com>
- For testing services, use the following link: <https://www.panola.edu/student-services/student-support/academic-testing-center>
- If any student in this class has special classroom or testing needs because of a physical learning or emotional condition, please contact the ADA Student Coordinator in Support Services located in the Charles C. Matthews Student Center or go to <https://www.panola.edu/student-services/student-support/disability-support-services> for more information.
- Withdrawing from a course is the student's responsibility. Students who do not attend class and who do not withdraw will receive the grade earned for the course.
- Student Handbook, *The Pathfinder*: <https://www.panola.edu/> (located at the bottom under students)

## SCANS CRITERIA

### 1) **Foundation skills are defined in three areas: basic skills, thinking skills, and personal qualities.**

- a) **Basic Skills:** A worker must read, write, perform arithmetic and mathematical operations, listen, and speak effectively. These skills include:
  - i) Reading: locate, understand, and interpret written information in prose and in documents such as manuals, graphs, and schedules.
  - ii) Writing: communicate thoughts, ideas, information, and messages in writing, and create documents such as letters, directions, manuals, reports, graphs, and flow charts.
  - iii) Arithmetic and Mathematical Operations: perform basic computations and approach practical problems by choosing appropriately from a variety of mathematical techniques.
  - iv) Listening: receive, attend to, interpret, and respond to verbal messages and other cues.
  - v) Speaking: Organize ideas and communicate orally.
- b) **Thinking Skills:** A worker must think creatively, make decisions, solve problems, visualize, know how to learn, and reason effectively. These skills include:
  - i) Creative Thinking: generate new ideas.
  - ii) Decision Making: specify goals and constraints, generate alternatives, consider risks, and evaluate and choose the best alternative.
  - iii) Problem Solving: recognize problems and devise and implement plan of action.
  - iv) Visualize ("Seeing Things in the Mind's Eye"): organize and process symbols, pictures, graphs, objects, and other information.
  - v) Knowing How to Learn: use efficient learning techniques to acquire and apply new knowledge and skills.
  - vi) Reasoning: discover a rule or principle underlying the relationship between two or more objects and apply it when solving a problem.
- c) **Personal Qualities:** A worker must display responsibility, self-esteem, sociability, selfmanagement, integrity, and honesty.
  - i) Responsibility: exert a high level of effort and persevere toward goal attainment.
  - ii) Self-Esteem: believe in one's own self-worth and maintain a positive view of oneself.
  - iii) Sociability: demonstrate understanding, friendliness, adaptability, empathy, and politeness in group settings.
  - iv) Self-Management: assess oneself accurately, set personal goals, monitor progress, and exhibit self-control.
  - v) Integrity and Honesty: choose ethical courses of action.

### 2) **Workplace competencies are defined in five areas: resources, interpersonal skills, information, systems, and technology.**

- a) **Resources:** A worker must identify, organize, plan, and allocate resources effectively.
  - i) Time: select goal-relevant activities, rank them, allocate time, and prepare and follow schedules.
  - ii) Money: Use or prepare budgets, make forecasts, keep records, and make adjustments to meet objectives.
  - iii) Material and Facilities: Acquire, store, allocate, and use materials or space efficiently. Examples: construct a decision time line chart; use computer software to plan a project; prepare a budget; conduct a cost/benefits analysis; design an RFP process; write a job description; develop a staffing plan.
- b) **Interpersonal Skills:** A worker must work with others effectively.
  - i) Participate as a Member of a Team: contribute to group effort.

- ii) Teach Others New Skills. iii) Serve Clients/Customers: work to satisfy customer's expectations. iv) Exercise Leadership: communicate ideas to justify position, persuade and convince others, responsibly challenge existing procedures and policies.
  - v) Negotiate: work toward agreements involving exchange of resources, resolve divergent interests.
  - vi) Work with Diversity: work well with men and women from diverse backgrounds. Examples: collaborate with a group member to solve a problem; work through a group conflict situation, train a colleague; deal with a dissatisfied customer in person; select and use appropriate leadership styles; use effective delegation techniques; conduct an individual or team negotiation; demonstrate an understanding of how people from different cultural backgrounds might behave in various situations.
- c) **Information:** A worker must be able to acquire and use information.
- i) Acquire and Evaluate Information. ii) Organize and Maintain Information. iii) Interpret and Communicate Information. iv) Use Computers to Process Information.
- Examples: research and collect data from various sources; develop a form to collect data; develop an inventory record-keeping system; produce a report using graphics; make an oral presentation using various media; use on-line computer data bases to research a report; use a computer spreadsheet to develop a budget.
- d) **Systems:** A worker must understand complex interrelationships.
- i) Understand Systems: know how social, organizational, and technological systems work and operate effectively with them.
  - ii) Monitor and Correct Performance: distinguish trends, predict impacts on system operations, diagnose deviations in systems' performance and correct malfunctions.
  - iii) Improve or Design Systems: suggest modifications to existing systems and develop new or alternative systems to improve performance.
- Examples: draw and interpret an organizational chart; develop a monitoring process; choose a situation needing improvement, break it down, examine it, propose an improvement, and implement it.
- e) **Technology:** A worker must be able to work with a variety of technologies.
- i) Select Technology: choose procedures, tools or equipment including computers and related technologies.
  - ii) Apply Technologies to Task: understand overall intent and proper procedures for setup and operation of equipment.
  - iii) Maintain and Troubleshoot Equipment: Prevent, identify, or solve problems with equipment, including computers and other technologies.
- Examples: read equipment descriptions and technical specifications to select equipment to meet needs; set up and assemble appropriate equipment from instructions; read and follow directions for troubleshooting and repairing equipment.