Australian School of Business
School of Organisation and Management

COMM5001
Business Communication, Ethics and Practice

Course Outline
Semester One, 2010
1. Teaching Team

Lecturer-in-Charge: Dr. Suzanne Chan-Serafin  
Telephone: 9385 7636  
Email: s.chan-serafin@unsw.edu.au  
Consultation: Wednesday 17:00 – 18:00 ASB 521/511

Lecturer: Dr. Lu Wang  
Telephone: 9385 6886  
Email: nick.wang@unsw.edu.au  
Consultation: Wednesday 15:30 - 16:30 ASB 540

Teaching Team  
(Emails/Consultations): Julia Erdmann (erdmann.julia@unsw.edu.au; Tues 16:30 – 17:30; ASB 521)  
Noa Erez-Rein (noa@unsw.edu.au; Wed 14 - 15; ASB521)  
Senia Kalfa (s.kalfa@unsw.edu.au; Tues 11 - 12; ASB521)  
Andrea North-Samardzic (andreans@unsw.edu.au; Tues 11-12; ASB525)  
Coral Reynolds (creynolds@evanspeck.com; Wed 17 - 18; CLB2)  
Zhien-Mey Teoh (mey@unsw.edu.au; Tues 15:30 – 16:30; ASB521)

Communication with teaching team
If you require advice about the course, consult your facilitator or the relevant topic lecturer first. Where necessary, they will consult with the Lecturer-in-Charge.

You can either meet with teaching team members during their respective consultation times or write them emails using your UNSW e-mail address. You are expected to use e-mail responsibly and respectfully. Please also check your UNSW account frequently as you may receive emails regarding the course throughout the semester.

2. Course Details

Lecture times and locations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lecture</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A5779</td>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>11:00 – 12:30</td>
<td>Webster A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B5780</td>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>18:00 – 19:30</td>
<td>Macauley (Quad 1027)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C5781</td>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>11:00 – 12:30</td>
<td>Law G04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

▶ For workshop times and locations, see course website:  
Blackboard (BB), http://lms-blackboard.telt.unsw.edu.au/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp

▶ Attend the week’s lecture before you attend the workshop.

▶ Workshops begin in Week 2 and end in Week 12

Summary of Course (6 Unit of Credit)
This course addresses learning, communication, and ethical reasoning skills that impact academic and professional performance. A major component of the course is devoted to communication, teamwork and conflict management skills and the capacity to apply them, including in cross-cultural contexts. Specific attention is paid to ethical frameworks and the opportunity for informed self-reflection in applying ethical perspectives in a business context.
3. Course Aims and Learning Outcomes

Course aims
The aim of the course is to foster the development of the communication, ethical reasoning, and people skills essential for professional business practice. The course combines theory and practice with the aim of encouraging active learning and greater reflection on your professional experience and expectations. The course also aims to help you improve your academic performance in the MCom by developing your learning skills, interpersonal communication competence, and cross-cultural sensitivity. Through improving these skills, you will enjoy your learning more and develop a broad and enduring range of personal and professional networks.

COMM5001’s relationship to other courses
This is a core course to be completed in the first semester of your MCom study. Knowledge and skills developed in this course are fundamental to other MCom courses. You should find your learning in the areas of teamwork, intercultural communication and negotiation especially useful for the Project Management module of COMM5004. The study of Ethics in relation to both local and international business contexts in COMM5001 is also relevant to other disciplinary areas in the MCOM, such as Professional Ethics, IT Ethics, Corporate Social Responsibility in Finance, Accounting and Marketing, as well as Ethical Relativism in International Business.

Student learning outcomes and ASB Graduate Attributes
On successful completion of this course, you will be able to:
1. Understand your own academic, professional, and learning expectations, as well as those of the university and employers;
2. Critically analyse communication processes and identify techniques to improve the effectiveness of these processes;
3. Communicate more effectively interpersonally, in teams, and cross-culturally, whether in academic or business settings;
4. Understand the main conflict management and negotiation strategies;
5. Apply different ethical frameworks to analyse business dilemmas;
6. Identify the various stakeholders in organisations and evaluate potential conflicts between people’s multiple roles; and,
7. Appreciate the interconnections between ethics, leadership, and professional practice.

The ASB Graduate Attributes were developed in 2008 in consultation with industry, staff, alumni and students. Their relationship to learning outcomes is presented below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Australian School of Business Graduate Attributes</th>
<th>Related learning outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) Critical thinking and problem solving</td>
<td>2, 5, 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Communication</td>
<td>2, 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) Teamwork and Leadership</td>
<td>3, 4, 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) Social and global perspectives</td>
<td>3, 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5) In-depth engagement with relevant disciplinary knowledge</td>
<td>2, 3, 4, 5, 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(6) Professional skills</td>
<td>1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Learning and Teaching Activities

Our approach to learning and teaching
In COMM5001, we take an active, adult-learning approach that stresses interactive teaching and learning. In order to succeed in this course, you must be an active participant in your own learning process. Learning in a class setting is a collective responsibility that requires you to read, reflect, listen, question, reformulate, and critique. This course is designed to foster such collaborative learning. In order for the lectures and workshops to be optimally productive, everyone will have to commit to doing the outside work; to bringing engaging ideas, questions, and issues for class discussion; to coming to class on time thoroughly prepared, mentally present, and fully involved throughout the class. If you have suggestions for making our time more engaging, the lecturers and facilitators expect you to make them. Your active participation will be one way to show that you are meeting the objectives of the course. “I’m shy” or “I’m not comfortable speaking in class” are not good excuses. This is the place to work on getting past these old ways of viewing yourself and to develop positive skills that help you to see your own potential.

The role of lectures
The lectures build from the Course Reader, which includes readings for each topic to set out the main ideas and theories for the course. Lectures are interactive. We expect you to come to and be prepared for each lecture. This means you should have completed weekly written assignments and readings and be ready with questions, comments, and suggestions.

This is a reading intensive class. You will need to allocate approximately three hours per week for basic reading.

The slides for the following week’s lecture will be posted on BlackBoard (BB) each Monday (e.g., Week 4 lecture slides will be available to you on Monday in Week 4).

The role of workshops
The weekly workshops provide you with an interactive environment in which to enhance your learning and your enjoyment of the course. The workshops are safe and supportive environment where you can freely and respectfully share your ideas. Each week’s workshop is linked to that week’s reading material and lecture.

The workshops will include a variety of practical and experiential-learning exercises, which encourage you to explore theoretical concepts, communication skills development, and ethical reasoning. The workshops also provide you with opportunities to improve more generic interpersonal skills through interacting in diverse groups, forging learning networks, learning about other cultures, and learning to value opinions different to your own.

To prepare for the lectures and workshops, each week you must:
- complete weekly readings
- submit weekly written assignments posted on BB (submit a copy in both BB and Turnitin.com)
- complete out-of-class activities, where relevant
- download the weekly lecture slides from BB
Student responsibilities and conduct
Students are expected to be familiar with and adhere to university policies in relation to class attendance and general conduct and behaviour, including maintaining a safe, respectful environment; and to understand their obligations in relation to workload, assessment and keeping informed.


5. Assessments

Formal requirements
In order to pass this course, you must:
• achieve a composite mark of at least 50; and,
• submit all assessment tasks listed below.

Assessment details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Length</th>
<th>Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i) Weekly Written Assignments</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>250 words x 10 weeks</td>
<td>Weeks 2 to 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii) Team Project</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>3000 words</td>
<td>Weeks 5 and 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii) Final Examination</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>2 hours</td>
<td>Jun 11 to 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv) Overall Participation</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Continuous</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

► Word limits flexible within +/- 10% of prescribed limit. Deviations are subject to penalties.
► Team project word limit may be revised only in cases where team does not comprise three members.

i) Weekly Written Assignments (15 marks total)

The weekly written assignments consist of 1 or 2 questions related to the content of reading material in the course reader each week. The purpose of this assessment is to actively involve you with the course content. This assessment enables you to understand, learn, and reflect on course content and in turn, to connect it to your personal experiences, thoughts, and feelings. Numerous studies have shown that by completing these brief “low-stakes” writing exercises, students will contribute and grasp more from discussions during class time. Moreover, these short written assignments allow you to practice communicating your thoughts on paper, which will ultimately help you improve your writing skills for the team project and final exam.

Deliverables
After reading the course reader, you will answer the question(s) posted in the ‘Weekly Written Assignments’ tab on BB each week beginning Week 2 and ending Week 11 (i.e., 10 weekly assignments). Each week’s assignment will be made available every Tuesday at 2pm and will be due at 11am the following Tuesday. You will need to type your answer(s) in the submission box in each week’s Written Assignment tab, AS WELL AS, submit your answer in a word document to turnitin.com. Our teaching team will randomly select and mark 3 of your 10 written assignments.
Contributions should be at approximately 250 of your BEST words (as opposed to your FIRST words) and must address the question(s) assigned for that week. Your answers should refer to readings for that week but the best answers are those that show integration with previously weeks’ contents. You can write in an informal manner for reflective type questions. In your assignments, please make it clear that you have read the assigned material and demonstrate an engagement with their main ideas.

Marking Criteria
1) 4 marks for engagement with the topic and assigned readings. Please demonstrate you have read the Course Reader. You must show interaction and understanding of the readings and the topic. Show that you know the key takeaways. Please cite the articles/chapters to which you are referring (you do not need to provide a reference section). Be critical of the readings, where relevant. Note that purely opinion pieces without discussion of substantive content do not constitute satisfactory completion of this assignment. More marks will be given to those who are able to bring together readings and concepts covered in the previous weeks.
2) 1 mark for clarity of expression (proper grammar, spelling, etc.)

Each of the 3 randomly marked assignment is worth 5 marks. Feedback via BB for the first assignment will be given during Week 5 and feedback for the last 2 assignments will be provided by Week 12.

Student learning outcomes and ASB Graduate Attributes assessed
Relevant Learning Outcomes (see section 3): 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
Relevant Graduate Attributes (see section 3): 1, 2, 5

ii) Team project (40 marks total)

In this project, you will consider the communication and ethical issues pertinent to a case (available on BB in Week 3). The aims of the project are for you to 1) apply concepts in the course to a real-world example and 2) practice and improve your teamwork and communication skills. Please use the various skills and ideas from the course, including active listening, self-reflection, effective teamwork and conflict resolution. In all, this project will help you enhance your skills in project management, team dynamics, research, communication and ethical analysis, and report writing.

Our assessment of the project will include: 1) team contract (and any updated versions) which facilitates effective team functioning (2 marks); 2) team member evaluations which allow students to rate the performance and contributions of their team members (3 marks); and, 3) research-based report writing which combines academic and consulting genres (35 marks)

Deliverables
You will form teams of 3 to 4 students (wherever workshop numbers allow). All team members must be in the same workshop and from diverse backgrounds. With your facilitator's help, you should finalise membership of teams by the end of Week 3.

The case and accompanying questions will be available on BB for download beginning Week 3. Topic questions will be assigned in Week 4 workshop.

Our experience is that teamwork is mostly a very positive experience, particularly where teams have sufficient time and communication possibilities. You will have most of the semester to work together on this.
Your team will work together on planning, analysing, developing, writing up, and editing your project report. You will also be jointly responsible for allocating relevant tasks including research, logistical and organisational duties. All team members should have a similar level of involvement in the research process and in the organization and writing of team reports.

At your Week 5 workshop, your team will provide your facilitator with a **team contract** in which you clearly specify: 1) your team’s objectives; 2) team member roles and responsibilities; 3) ground rules (norms of behaviour); 4) communication protocol; and, 5) time-line/planning document. As evidence of your agreement to these elements, each team member will sign that contract. This contract should be approximately 2 – 3 pages. More information about the team contract will be provided in Week 4 Lecture.

Your facilitator will review each team contract and return with comments regarding ways to improve contract specifications and inequitable task allocations, if any. Subsequently, if your team changes any part of the contract, you must provide your facilitator with an updated (and signed) version. Each team member will sign the final team report as evidence that you agree that the team has carried out the project as agreed in the contract.

The teaching team expects each student to fulfil their team commitments. In cases where this does not occur, the remaining team members may allocate lower marks (i.e., less than 3 marks) for the non-contributing team member. These **team member evaluations** are anonymous and you will rate the performance and contributions of all other team members (not your own performance). The mark that you receive will be the average of the other team members’ evaluations of you. Please see the ‘Team Members Evaluations’ module in the “Team Project” tab on BB for further details.

In the very rare cases where there are severe problems with teamwork, then aggrieved team members should see their facilitator immediately. Where this is, for any reason, difficult, you should contact the Lecturer-in-Charge. The teaching team will attempt to help you find a solution to these problems. **Please seek to resolve these issues early.**

**Please Note:** When submitting your team project report, you will also need to separately submit a paragraph outlining your thoughts on the team process itself. What was your team like in terms of working together to achieve a common goal? What were the strengths of your team? Did any problems arise? How did you resolve them? What did you learn from this exercise (e.g., in sharing tasks, decision-making, team communication, conflict resolution)? Submit this section individually. The team project report will NOT be marked if any member fails to submit this component.

Your team will present its final analysis in the form of a **3000 word written report** (for a team of 3). The word limit excludes the executive summary and reference list that you need to provide. You may also include appendices (excluded from the word limit).

More project details will be provided on BB and during Week 4 Lecture and Workshop.

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**Full academic referencing is required. See ‘Harvard Referencing Guide’ on BB**

**Marking criteria**

1) Quality of analysis, depth of reflection
2) Links to theory and course literature
3) Relevance to question
4) Consistent, clear and well-supported argument
5) Structure, written expression, length and presentation
Student learning outcomes and ASB Graduate Attributes assessed
Relevant Learning Outcomes (see section 3): 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
Relevant Graduate Attributes (see section 3): 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

iii) Final examination (30 marks)

You will sit a 2 hour open-book examination during the formal Examination Period. The exam will consist of brief essay-style questions (you will have some internal choice) that give you the opportunity to integrate key concepts and issues raised in class.

You will be able to bring paper-based material into the exam, but no electronic devices or CDs will be allowed.

Our aim for the exam is to encourage you to review your course material and to do so in ways that are analytical, evaluative, reflective and problem-solving. The exam will ask you to think creatively about how you could apply concepts from the course to particular situations (e.g., business cases, your own experiences) and to bring together concepts from different topics. More details will be provided during Week 12 classes.

Student learning outcomes and ASB Graduate Attributes assessed
Relevant Learning Outcomes (see section 3): 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
Relevant Graduate Attributes (see section 3): 1, 2, 4, 5

iv) Overall Participation (15 marks total)

To further the objectives of this course, your lecturers and facilitators will assign you a mark that reflects their assessments of the level of your informed contribution to the lectures (4 marks) and workshops (11 marks) over the course of the semester. Student participation is thus highly valued and rewarded. Simply attending lectures and workshops regularly is a necessary criterion but, without getting actively involved in the class exercises, it is of little value either to you or your classmates and will gain very few participation marks. The lecturers and facilitators will ask you to place your name tents in front of you during the lectures and workshops so that they can give you proper credit for your participation. You will be asked to engage in in-class and out-of-class activities so as to help you reflect on and discuss course concepts. The lecture participation marks will be based on these activities. Blatant rudeness, uncivil language, or other types of antisocial behaviour will result in an automatic 0 mark.

In order to participate in an informed way, it is essential that you have read at least the basic reading for that week (and when necessary complete weekly written assignments and out-of-class exercises) and that you are ready to reflect on it in class. You should note down issues that you do not understand and raise them during class time.

Marking criteria
1) Regular willingness to answer questions in class
2) Regularly raising stimulating questions in class
3) Active involvement in in-class group work
4) Active involvement in case discussions (e.g., link readings and out-of-class activities to discussions)
5) Positive attitude
6) Level of attendance
Student learning outcomes and ASB Graduate Attributes assessed
Relevant Learning Outcomes (see section 3): 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
Relevant Graduate Attributes (see section 3): 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

Assignment submission procedure

1. Attach the School cover sheet found on BB for the team project. At the time of your workshop, submit a hardcopy of your team project to your facilitator and an additional copy in word document to www.turnitin.com (link will be provided on BB).
2. Every Tuesday 11am, submit your weekly written assignments on BB and an additional copy in word document to www.turnitin.com
3. Do not submit assignments by e-mail, fax, or by slipping under office doors.

Late submission
A penalty of 10% per day of the marks available for that assignment will apply for work received after the due date.

Extensions will only be granted on medical or compassionate grounds under extreme circumstances by the Lecturer-in-Charge. Requests for extensions must be made in writing to the Lecturer-in-Charge prior to the due date. Medical certificates or other evidence supporting your claim must be attached.

6. Academic Honesty and Plagiarism
The University regards plagiarism as a form of academic misconduct, and has very strict rules regarding plagiarism. For UNSW policies, penalties and information to help you avoid plagiarism see: http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au/plagiarism/index.html as well as the guidelines in the online ELISE tutorial for all new UNSW students: http://info.library.unsw.edu.au/skills/tutorials/InfoSkills/index.html

For information on how to acknowledge your sources and reference correctly, see: http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au/onlib/ref.html


7. Course Resources

Prescribed readings
The prescribed readings for this course are contained in the Course Reader. You can buy a hardcopy or CD version of it from the UNSW Bookshop.

The COMM5001 Course Reader contains:

1 Note that if you buy the CD version of the Course Readers you will need to print hard copies of any sections you wish to take into the exam. Electronic devices such as laptops will not be permitted.
1. ‘Introductory Themes’ for each weekly topic. We have written these for you to use as a starting point. They include questions, short exercises and suggestions for further reading.

2. ‘Required Reading’ for each weekly topic. These include relevant articles that build on the ‘Introductory Themes’, and complement the lectures and workshops.

Together, the Course Reader and Lectures form the basic knowledge base for the course. You will need to read more widely for particular assessment items.

BlackBoard
Class announcements, slides, and relevant materials will be posted on BB (http://lms-blackboard.telt.unsw.edu.au/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp). Please check this website regularly for important updates/information for the course.

8. Continuous Course Evaluation and Development

Each year, we seek feedback from students and other stakeholders about the courses we offer in the ASB. The introduction of COMM5001 in 2005 was itself the fruit of a sustained process of Faculty-wide evaluation.

Our teaching team uses your feedback to guide our continued review and redesigning of the course. This continuous improvement process can affect the structure, content, resources, delivery or assessment of the course. Thus, the COMM5001 course you are doing this semester reflects changes we have made in responses to feedback from students and the teaching team last year. For example, we have reduced the number of assessments, as these were areas of student concern that we felt justified modifications. Hence, please provide detailed constructive feedback at the end of the semester.

9. Additional student resources and support

The University and the ASB provide a wide range of support services for students, including:

ASB Education Development Unit (EDU)
Academic writing and study skills support specifically for ASB students. Services include workshops, online and printed resources, and individual consultations. EDU Office: Room GO7, Ground Floor, ASB Building (opposite Student Centre); Ph: 9385 5584; Email: edu@unsw.edu.au

Library training and search support services: http://info.library.unsw.edu.au

Student Equity & Disabilities Unit
Students who require advice regarding equity and diversity issues, or have a disability that requires some adjustment in their teaching or learning environment are encouraged to discuss their study needs with the Lecturer-in-Charge or the Equity Officer (http://www.studentequity.unsw.edu.au/). Early notification is essential to enable any necessary adjustments to be made. Office: G/F, John Goodsell Building (phone 9385 4734).
### 10. Course schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week beginning</th>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feb 22</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Orientation Week (no class)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Managers and professionals as learners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Intra- and Interpersonal Communication I (^\text{a}) (Workshops begin)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Interpersonal Communication II: Non-verbal communication, listening and feedback (^\text{a})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 22</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Communication and Conflict in Teams (^\text{a})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 29</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Business and Organisational Communication (^\text{ab})</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Mid-semester break:** Apr 2 to Apr 11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week beginning</th>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apr 12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Inter-cultural Communication (^\text{a})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 19</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Why Ethics? (^\text{a})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 26</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Frameworks for Ethical Thinking (^\text{a})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Managing Multiple Roles and Multiple Stakeholders (^\text{a})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Professional Practice, Leadership and Influencing Skills (^\text{a})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 17</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Conflict Management Techniques and Negotiation Skills (^\text{ac})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 24</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Conclusion and Course Review (Final workshops this week)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^\text{a}\)** Weekly Written Assignments on BB are due 11am every Tuesday

\(^\text{b}\)** First Draft of Team Contract due in workshops this week

\(^\text{c}\)** Team Project due in workshops this week

**Study period:** Jun 5 to Jun 10

**Examination:** Jun 11 to Jun 28

UNSW Calendar: [https://my.unsw.edu.au/student/resources/AcademicCalendar.html](https://my.unsw.edu.au/student/resources/AcademicCalendar.html)

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**WELCOME TO UNSW AND ENJOY YOUR STUDIES THIS SEMESTER!**