

THE UNIVERSITY OF
NEW SOUTH WALES



**Australian School of Business
School of Organisation and Management**

COMM5001
**Business Communication,
Ethics and Practice**

**Course Outline
Semester Two, 2010**

1. Teaching Team

Lecturer-in-Charge: Dr. Lu (Nick) Wang
 Telephone: 9385 6886
 Email: nick.wang@unsw.edu.au
 Consultation: Tue. 16:00-17:00 ASB 540

Lecturer: Dr. Suzanne Chan-Serafin
 Telephone: 9385 7636
 Email: s.chan-serafin@unsw.edu.au
 Consultation: Tue 16:00-17:00 ASB 509

Teaching Team

(Emails/Consultations): Hionia (Nia) Achele (nia.achele@hotmail.com; Wed 11-12; ASB502)
 Dr. Louise Fitzgerald (l.fitzgerald@unsw.edu.au; Wed 17 -18; ASB G08 at the EDU)
 Coral Reynolds (creynolds@evanspeck.com; Tue 17-18; ASB521)
 Yuan Seah (yuan.seah@unsw.edu.au; Tue 17-18; ASB502)
 Albert Ryan Arayata (rye.arayata@gmail.com; Tue 17-18; ASB502)

Communication with teaching team

If you require advice about the course, consult with your workshop facilitator or the relevant topic Lecturer first before contacting the Lecturer-in-Charge.

You can either meet with teaching team members during their consultation times or by appointment. You are expected to use your UNSW e-mail account for all course-related communication. Please check your UNSW email account regularly for course-related announcements.

2. Course Details

Lecture times and locations

Lecture	Day	Time	Location
C5403	Tuesday	12:00 – 13:30	Macauley (Quad 1027)
A5401	Tuesday	18:00 – 19:30	New South Global Theater

- ▶ For workshop times and locations, see course website:
Blackboard (BB), <http://lms-blackboard.telt.unsw.edu.au/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp>
- ▶ Attend each week's lecture *before* attending that week's workshop.
- ▶ *The first workshop begins in Week 2 and the last workshop ends 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. These skills will help you enjoy learning 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:

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

See http://wwwdocs.fce.unsw.edu.au/fce/EDU/asb_graduate_attributes.pdf for details of each attribute.

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, please let the teaching team know. 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 valid excuses for not contributing to class discussion.

The role of lectures

The lectures build from and extend the Course Reader, which includes a discussion of key theoretical concepts and additional relevant readings for each topic. This is a ***reading intensive class***. You will need to allocate approximately three hours per week for reading class-related materials.

Full lecture attendance is expected in this course. You are expected to attend all lectures. Less than 80% attendance will automatically fail you. In addition, you are expected to complete weekly written assignments and readings before coming to the lecture and to actively engage in class discussion during the lecture. The powerpoint slides for each week’s lecture will be available on BlackBoard (BB) by **Monday** each week. It is helpful to print out and bring each week’s lecture slides to class.

The role of workshops

The weekly workshops provide you with a more personal and interactive environment that complements your experience in a big lecture. The workshops are a safe and supportive environment where you can freely and respectfully share your ideas and ask questions about course-related materials. 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 interpersonal skills through working in diverse groups, forging learning networks, learning about other cultures, and learning to value diverse opinions and perspectives.

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 when available**
- **download 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.

Information and policies on these topics can be found in the 'A-Z Student Guide': <https://my.unsw.edu.au/student/atoz/ABC.html>. See, especially, information on 'Attendance and Absence', 'Academic Misconduct', 'Assessment Information', 'Examinations', 'Special Consideration', 'Student Responsibilities', and 'Workload'.

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

Assessment	Weight	Length	Due
i) Weekly Written Assignments	15%	250 words x 10 weeks	Weeks 2 to 11
ii) Team Project	40%	3000 words	Weeks 5 and 11
iii) Final Examination	30%	2 hours	Oct. 29-Nov.16
iv) Overall Participation	15%	N/A	Continuous

▶ 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 each week's reading. The purpose of this assessment is to help you become more engaged during the lecture. In particular, this assessment helps you prepare each week's course material by applying abstract concepts to your own experience. Numerous studies have shown that these brief "low-stakes" writing exercises increase students' understanding of abstract ideas and stimulate class discussion. In addition, these short written assignments help you practice and hence improve 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** (10 weekly assignments). You will be answering questions regarding topics *in advance* of the lectures. Each week's assignment will be made available to you every Tuesday at 11am and will be **due at 11am the following Tuesday**.

Your response 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 response should also demonstrate an adequate understanding of each week's reading.

To submit your weekly written assignment each week, you need to save your response in a word document and upload the word document on both BB (in each week's *Written Assignment* tab) and turnitin.com.

3 of the 10 weekly written assignments will be randomly selected and marked.

Marking Criteria

- 1) 4 marks for effectively answering the assigned questions. For example, your response needs to demonstrate you have read the Course Reader by showing some level of understanding of the key concepts for that week. Please **provide citation** (you do not need to have a reference list) if you are to refer to a specific article in your response. It is okay to be critical of the readings, where relevant. Higher mark will be given to those who are able to integrate previous weeks' concepts with current reading in their response.
- 2) 1 mark for clarity of expression (proper grammar, spelling, etc.)

Each of the 3 randomly marked assignments 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)

The project will help you enhance your skills in project management, team dynamics, research, communication and ethical analysis, and report writing. 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.

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 of Week 3. Topic questions will be assigned in Week 4 workshop.

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 organisation and writing of team reports. Our experience is that teamwork is mostly a very positive experience, particularly where teams allow sufficient time to work on their project.

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 research and consulting skills (35 marks)

Deliverables

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 the team 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, if necessary, regarding ways to improve contract specifications and inequitable task allocations. Subsequently, if your team changes any part of the contract, you must provide your facilitator with an updated (and signed) version of the contract. 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. At the end of the team project, each member is given the opportunity to evaluate their team member's performance in the team (out of 3 points). Specifically, you will rate the performance and contributions of all other team members in your team (you do not rate your own performance). If a team member does not perform satisfactorily, you may give that team member a lower evaluation mark (i.e., 1 or 2 marks out of 3). The final team evaluation mark for an individual is the average of the other team members' evaluations of that individual. These **team member evaluations** are anonymous. Please see the '*Team Members Evaluations*' module in the "*Team Project*" tab on BB for further details. When problems with teamwork cannot be effectively resolved within a team, facilitator should be notified as soon as possible. If you need the assistance of the lecturer-in-charge with team-related conflict, please seek assistance earlier rather than later.

In Week 11, your team will submit 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 the references (which should be part of the written report). 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.

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 take a 2 hour open-book examination during the formal Examination Period. The exam will consist of brief essay-style questions that give you the opportunity to integrate key concepts and issues covered in the class.

You will be able to bring paper-based material into the exam, but no electronic or digital devices 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., a business case) and to integrate concepts from different topics. More details will be provided during Week 12 lecture and workshop.

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. Blatant rudeness, uncivil language, or other types of antisocial behaviour in lecture and workshop will result in an automatic 0 participation mark.

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 and team members evaluations 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>

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

For the ASB Harvard Referencing Guide, see: http://wwwdocs.fce.unsw.edu.au/fce/EDU/harvard_ref_guide.pdf

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 Bookshop¹.

The *COMM5001 Course Reader* contains:

1. 'Introductory Themes' for each weekly topic – background information about key concepts.
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

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.

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 this was an area of student concern that we felt justified to modify. 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

Week beginning	Week	Topic
Jul 12	0	Orientation Week (no class)
Jul 19	1	Managers and professionals as learners
Jul 26	2	Intra- and Interpersonal Communication I ^a (Workshops begin)
Aug 2	3	Interpersonal Communication II: Non-verbal communication, listening and feedback ^a
Aug 9	4	Communication and Conflict in Teams ^a
Aug 16	5	Business and Organisational Communication ^{ab}
Aug 23	6	Inter-cultural Communication ^a
Aug 30	7	Why Ethics? ^a
Mid Semester Break Sep 4 to Sep 12		
Sep 13	8	Frameworks for Ethical Thinking ^a
Sep 20	9	Managing Multiple Roles and Multiple Stakeholders ^a
Sep 27	10	Professional Practice, Leadership and Influencing Skills ^a
Oct 4	11	Conflict Management Techniques and Negotiation Skills ^{ac}
Oct 11	12	Conclusion and Course Review (Final workshops this week)

^a **Weekly Written Assignments on BB are due 11am every Tuesday**

^b **First Draft of Team Contract due in workshops this week**

^c **Team Project due in workshops this week**

Study period: Oct 23 to Oct 28

Examination: Oct 29 to Nov 16

UNSW Calendar: <https://my.unsw.edu.au/student/resources/AcademicCalendar.html>

WELCOME TO UNSW AND ENJOY YOUR STUDIES THIS SEMESTER!