

# COURSE SYLLABUS

**COURSE TITLE:** POFT 2312-151 Business Correspondence & Communication -- Online

**SEMESTER/YEAR:** Spring 2020, January 13-May 4  
FINAL – Monday, May 4 – available all day from 12:30 AM to 11:59 PM

**INSTRUCTOR:** Pat Dennis

**OFFICE LOCATION:** Lubbock Center, Room 120F

**OFFICE HOURS:**

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	ROOM
1–4 PM	By Appointment	1-4 PM	By Appointment	10 AM-12 PM	Lubbock Center Room 120F
				Other Times by Appointment	

**OFFICE PHONE:** 806-716-4638

**E-MAIL ADDRESS:** [pdennis@southplainscollege.edu](mailto:pdennis@southplainscollege.edu)

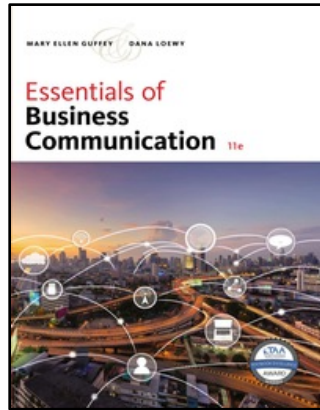
***A student who enrolls in this class who may need classroom accommodations is strongly encouraged to schedule an intake interview with the special services department before enrolling in this class or prior to the add/drop date for this semester.***

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** This course provides skill development in practical applications which emphasize the improvement of writing skills necessary for effective business communications.

**COURSE GOALS:** After successfully completing this course, the student should be able to apply appropriate communications theory in the writing of business letters, memos, e-mails, texts, and other business

documents. Each student should also be more at ease and knowledgeable about the job-hunting process after he/she watches online mock interviews and hears lectures from various experts in the personnel field.

## TEXT



**ISBN: 9781337736350 (Bundle: Essentials of Business Communication, 11<sup>th</sup> Edition, Loose-leaf Version + MindTap, 1 term (6 months) Printed Access Card OR**

**Rather than purchase your course materials like you do for most classes, I highly recommend you purchase a Cengage Unlimited subscription. With a Cengage Unlimited subscription, you will have access to ALL Cengage eBooks and digital learning products – over 22,000 total – for only \$119.99 (extended subscriptions also available). One Cengage Unlimited subscription can be used across ALL courses this semester where Cengage products are assigned. So, if you are taking another course this semester that is using Cengage products, you will be able to access those course materials for no additional cost. You can purchase your Cengage Unlimited subscription in the South Plains College Bookstore and at [cengage.com](http://cengage.com) after registering for your course in Blackboard.**

**Print: You'll be eligible to upgrade to a print rental for the cost of \$7.99 when you activate CNOWV2 and subscribe to Cengage Unlimited. Shipping will be free for your print rental which includes the cost of shipping back to us. For print you can keep, purchase a loose-leaf version of the textbook at a discount through Cengage Unlimited. Loose-leaf shipping is free when purchased with Cengage Unlimited.**

**2**

**Pricing: Cengage Unlimited is \$119.99 for a 4-month subscription, \$179.99 for a**

**12-month subscription or \$239.99 for a 24-month subscription. Students receiving Financial Aid can purchase a Cengage Unlimited subscription from the South Plains College bookstore.**

**Bonus: When your Cengage Unlimited subscription ends, you can keep up to six eBooks in a digital locker and access them for one year.**

**Extra Help: [cengage.com/start-strong](https://cengage.com/start-strong)**

**As a reminder, you should NOT purchase BOTH individual course materials AND a Cengage Unlimited subscription. For this course, a Cengage Unlimited subscription is your best value!**

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Even though this is an online class, students still have to access the course on a regular basis. The Blackboard software used to manage this online course tracks student logins, tracking when and where the student has been in the course. Accessing this course on a regular basis is extremely important in order to meet the objectives of this course. You will feel more at ease with the materials if you stay in touch with what is going on. You will need to check your SPC e-mail or forward it to another e-mail of your choice. You can do this by clicking the following

link: [https://myspc.southplainscollege.edu/ICS/Students/Information\\_Technology/Email.jnz](https://myspc.southplainscollege.edu/ICS/Students/Information_Technology/Email.jnz)

***Minimum log in for the course is at least three (3) days per week. However, I recommend checking in once a day if possible for announcements. I can see how many times you log in!***

**Always go to BB first and use the MindTap link to access your assignments. The recommended browser is FireFox.**

## WITHDRAWAL POLICY

It is the student's responsibility to verify administrative drops for excessive absences through MySPC using his or her student online account. If it is determined that a student is awarded financial aid for a class or classes in which the student never attended or participated, the financial aid award will be adjusted in accordance with the classes in which the student did attend/participate and the student will owe any balance resulting from the adjustment.

If for any reason the student is unable to complete the course requirements, it is the student's responsibility to initiate their own withdrawal by the 1st drop date for the semester. An administrative drop by the instructor in this course will, in most cases, result in the student receiving an "F" (not an "X"). **The last day to drop a class is April 23, 2020. Discuss this with your instructor before dropping.**

## ASSIGNMENT POLICY

**MindTap** will be used for most assignments. Reading of each chapter is critical if you want to do well on MindTap . You can set homework reminders on your electronic devices for deadlines. Assignments will open on Monday morning and will be due on Sunday nights at 11:59 PM. MindTap assignments should be done in the order they are presented. Your work may be done at any time from home or by using a SPC computer lab. You can't wait until Sunday to do your work. It MUST be spread throughout the week. **NOTE: Not all of your grades will be in MindTap; your final grade will always be shown in Blackboard. After you finish your MindTap assignments, make sure they flow over to Blackboard. Sometimes this takes a few days.**

## EXAMINATION POLICY

**Eleven chapter exams and three unit exams will be taken online. NO make-up exams are given. ALL students MUST take the final unit exam which counts as the final.**

## GRADING POLICY

COURSE CATEGORIES	%
Chapter Quizzes (unlimited attempts—highest score recorded)	5%
Aplia Homework(three attempts—highest score recorded)	15%
Writing Workshops (five attempts—highest score recorded)	10%
Video Activities (one submission allowed)	15%
Writing Assignments (one submission allowed)	25%
Chapter Exams (one attempt)	15%
Unit Exams (one attempt)	15%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

**NOTE: Final grades will be based on the following grading scale:**

90-100	A
80-89	B
70-79	C
60-69	D
59 AND BELOW	F

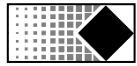
### Communication with instructor

1. Log in at least **three (3)** times a week (minimum). I recommend daily logins.
2. Check for announcements/mail in Blackboard—this is your responsibility. If you don't check in frequently, you may miss important information regarding your schedule, work, or grades.
3. Start work early in each week. Don't wait until the due date to start your work. When you do, something always happens like an illness or an unexpected problem. Remember, no time extensions can be given.
4. Communication with your instructor can be by phone (806-716-4638), by messaging through the Blackboard tools menu, or by SPC e-mail ([pdennis@southplainscollege.edu](mailto:pdennis@southplainscollege.edu)). Sending your message to this email address is the quickest way to get a response. **Always identify yourself with your full name as well as the course name and number in the subject line when contacting me. I have many students!**
5. You will need to check your SPC e-mail or forward it to another e-mail of your

choice. You can do this by clicking the following link:

[https://myspc.southplainscollege.edu/ICS/Students/Information\\_Technology/Email.jnz](https://myspc.southplainscollege.edu/ICS/Students/Information_Technology/Email.jnz)

## **COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES (C1,3,5,6,7,8,9,11,13,14,15,18,19)**



### **Course Learning Outcomes**

During a course using *Essentials of Business Communication*, you will:

- Demonstrate polished grammar, punctuation, and usage skills necessary to create, proofread, and edit typical written business messages and oral presentations.
- Prepare clear, concise, and well-organized e-mails, memos, letters, and reports.
- Implement problem-solving and critical-thinking skills in preparing business messages and presentations.
- Demonstrate professionalism while developing effective listening, nonverbal, meeting, team, and cross-cultural skills.
- Gain hands-on experience in the use of digital tools for researching, reporting, composing, and interacting on the job.
- Create customized, professional résumés, cover letters, and other employment messages.
- Demonstrate superior interviewing techniques when applying for employment.

# COURSE OUTLINE

## **WEEK 1 & 2 – Chapter 1 – *SUCCEEDING IN THE SOCIAL AND MOBILE WORKPLACE***

*MindTap Activities Due Sunday, January 26, 2020 @ 11:59 PM*

**Objectives: After studying this chapter you should be able to:**

1. Describe how strong communication skills will improve your career outlook, strengthen your credibility, and help you succeed in today's competitive digital-age marketplace.
2. Confront barriers to effective listening, and start building your listening skills.
3. Explain the features of nonverbal communication, and recognize the importance of improving your nonverbal communication skills.
4. Name five common dimensions of culture, and understand how culture influences communication and the use of social media and communication technology.
5. Discuss strategies that help communicators overcome negative cultural attitudes and prevent miscommunication in today's diverse, mobile, social-media-driven workplace.

## **WEEK 3 - CHAPTER 2: *PLANNING BUSINESS MESSAGES***

*MindTap Activities Due Sunday, February 2, 2020 @ 11:59 PM*

**Objectives: After studying this chapter you should be able to:**

1. Understand the five steps in the communication process.
2. Define the goals of business writing, summarize the 3-x-3 writing process, and explain how it guides a writer.
3. Analyze the purpose of a message, anticipate its audience, and select the best communication channel.
4. Employ expert writing techniques such as incorporating audience benefits, developing the "you" view, and using conversational but professional language.
5. Improve the tone and clarity of a message by using positive and courteous expression, bias-free language, plain words, and precise terms.

## **WEEK 4 – CHAPTER 3: *ORGANIZING AND DRAFTING BUSINESS MESSAGES***

*MindTap Activities Due Sunday, February 9, 2020 @ 11:59 PM*

**Objectives: After studying this chapter you should be able to:**

1. Conduct formal and informal research as you apply Phase 2 of the 3-x-3 writing process.
2. Organize information into strategic relationships.
3. Compose the first draft of a message using a variety of sentence types while avoiding sentence fragments, run-on sentences, and comma splices.
4. Emphasize important ideas, employ the active and passive voice strategically, build parallelism, and present dangling and misplaced modifiers.

5. Draft well-organized paragraphs that incorporate (a) topic sentences, (b) support sentences, and (c) transitional expressions to build coherence.

#### **WEEK 5 – CHAPTER 4: REVISING BUSINESS MESSAGES**

*MindTap Activities Due Sunday, February 16, 2020 @ 11:59 PM*

**Objectives: After studying this chapter you should be able to:**

1. Make business messages more concise by rejecting flabby expressions, long lead-ins, there is/are and it is/was fillers, redundancies, and empty words, as well as condensing for short social media posts.
2. Enhance clarity in business messages by keeping the ideas simple, dumping trite business phrases, cutting clichés, shunning slang and buzzwords, rescuing buried verbs, restraining exuberance, and choosing precise words.
3. Improve readability by applying effective document design including the strategic use of white space, margins, typefaces, fonts, numbered and bulleted lists, and headings.
4. Identify proofreading problem areas, and apply smart techniques to catch mistakes in both routine and complex documents.
5. Evaluate a message to judge its effectiveness.

#### **WEEK 5 – UNIT EXAM (Chapters 1-4)**

*Due Wednesday, February 19, 2020 @ 11:59 PM*

#### **WEEK 6 – CHAPTER 5: SHORT WORKPLACE MESSAGES AND DIGITAL MEDIA**

*MindTap Activities Due Sunday, February 23, 2020 @ 11:59 PM*

**Objectives: After studying this chapter you should be able to:**

1. Understand e-mail, memos, and the professional standards for their usage, structure, and format in the digital era workplace.
2. Explain workplace instant messaging and texting as well as their liabilities and best practices.
3. Identify professional applications of podcasts and wikis.
4. Describe how businesses use blogs to connect with internal and external audiences, and list best practices for professional blogging.
5. Define the advantages and risks of business uses of social media networks.



**WEEK 7 – CHAPTER 6: POSITIVE AND NEUTRAL MESSAGES**  
*MindTap Activities Due Sunday, March 1, 2020 @ 11:59 PM*

**Objectives: After studying this chapter you should be able to:**

1. Name the channels through which typical positive and neutral messages travel in the digital era—e-mails, memos, and business letters-- and explain how business letters should be formatted.
2. Compose direct messages that make requests, respond to inquiries online and offline, and deliver step-by-step instructions.
3. Prepare messages that make direct claims and voice complaints, including online posts.
4. Write adjustment messages that salvage customers' trust and promote further business.
5. Craft special messages that foster goodwill and convey kindness.

**WEEK 8 – CHAPTER 7: NEGATIVE MESSAGES**  
*MindTap Activities Due Sunday, March 8, 2020 @ 11:59 PM*

**Objectives: After studying this chapter you should be able to:**

1. Understand the strategies of business communicators in conveying negative news...
2. Compare the techniques and ethics of the direct and indirect strategies in communicating unfavorable news.
3. Explain the components of effective negative messages, including opening with a buffer, apologizing, showing empathy, presenting the reasons, cushioning the bad news, and closing pleasantly.
4. Apply effective techniques for refusing typical requests or claims, as well as for presenting bad news to customers in print or online.
5. Describe and apply effective techniques for delivering negative news within organizations.

**WEEK 9 – CHAPTER 8: PERSUASIVE MESSAGES**  
*MindTap Activities Due Sunday, March 15, 2020 @ 11:59 PM*

**Objectives: After studying this chapter you should be able to:**

1. Explain digital-age persuasion and identify time-proven persuasive techniques.
2. Craft persuasive messages that request actions.
3. Write compelling claims and deliver successful complaints.
4. Understand interpersonal persuasion at work, and compose persuasive messages within organizations.
5. Create effective and ethical direct-mail and e-mail sales messages.

**WEEK 9 – UNIT TEST—Chapters 5-8**  
*Due Wednesday, March 18, 2020 @ 11:59 PM*

## **WEEK 10—SPRING BREAK**

### **WEEK 11 – CHAPTER 11: PROFESSIONALISM AT WORK: BUSINESS ETIQUETTE, ETHICS, TEAMWORK, AND MEETINGS**

*MindTap Activities Due Sunday, March 29, 2020 @ 11:59 PM*

#### **Objectives: After studying this chapter you should be able to:**

1. Build your credibility and gain a competitive advantage by developing professionalism, an ethical mind-set, and business etiquette skills.
2. Use your voice as a communication tool, master face-to-face workplace interaction, foster positive relations on the job, and accept as well as provide constructive criticism gracefully.
3. Practice professional telephone skills and polish your voice mail etiquette.
4. Understand the importance of teamwork in the digital era workplace, and explain how you can contribute positively to team performance.
5. Discuss effective practices and technologies for planning and participating in productive face-to-face meetings and virtual meetings.

### **WEEKS 12 & 13 – CHAPTER 13: THE JOB SEARCH, RÉSUMÉS, AND COVER MESSAGES**

*MindTap Activities Due Sunday, April 12, 2020, @ 11:59 PM*

#### **Objectives: After studying this chapter you should be able to:**

1. Begin a job search by recognizing emerging trends and technologies, exploring your interests, evaluating your qualifications, and investigating career opportunities.
2. Apply savvy search strategies by analyzing how job seekers find their jobs and how they use digital tools to explore the open job market.
3. Expand your job-search strategies by using both traditional and digital tools in pursuing the hidden job market.
4. Organize your qualifications and information into effective résumé categories, and use that information to prepare a personalized LinkedIn profile.
5. Enhance your job search and résumé by taking advantage of digital tools.
6. Understand the value of cover messages and how to draft and submit a customized message to highlight your candidacy.

### **WEEKS 14 & 15--CHAPTER 14: INTERVIEWING AND FOLLOWING UP**

*MindTap Activities Due Sunday, April 26, @ 11:59 PM*

#### **Objectives: After studying this chapter you should be able to:**

1. Understand the purposes, sequence, and types of job interviews, including screening, one-on-one, panel, group, sequential, and video interviews.

2. Know what to do *before* an interview, including ensuring professional phone techniques, researching the target company, rehearsing success stories, cleaning up digital dirt, and fighting fear.
3. Explain what to do *during* an interview, including controlling nonverbal messages and answering typical interview questions.
4. Describe what to do *after* an interview, including thanking the interviewer, contacting references, and writing follow-up messages.
5. Prepare additional employment documents such as applications, rejection follow-up messages, acceptance messages, and resignation letters.

**WEEK 16 – FINAL (Unit Exam) – Chapters 11, 13, & 14**

**Due Monday, May 4—Open all day from 12:00 AM through 11:59 PM.**

## **CAMPUS GUIDELINES**

### **CHILDREN ON CAMPUS**

Many of the students attending classes at South Plains College are also parents who value the opportunity to participate in higher education. Sometimes students are faced with the decision of whether to remain at home with their children, bring children with them to class, or be absent from class. The following guidelines address concerns for the safety of children on campus and provide for an environment conducive to learning:

1. **Students are not allowed to bring children to class** and will be asked to leave in the interest of providing an environment conducive for **all** students enrolled in the class. Students are responsible for adherence to the attendance requirements set forth by the instructor in the course syllabus.
2. **Children may not be left unattended.** In order to provide for the safety of children on campus, parents or other guardians are responsible for supervising children while utilizing services or conducting business on campus.
3. **Disruptive children will not be allowed to interfere with college business.** Parents or other guardians are responsible for supervising and controlling the behavior of children they have brought on campus.

#### **SPC Standard Disability Statement**

Students with disabilities, including but not limited to physical, psychiatric, or learning disabilities, who wish to request accommodations in this class should notify the Disability Services Office early in the semester so that the appropriate arrangements may be made. In accordance with federal law, a student requesting accommodations must provide acceptable documentation of his/her disability to the Disability Services Office. For more information, call or visit the Disability Services Office at Levelland (Student Health & Wellness Office) 806-716-2577, Reese Center (Building 8) 806-716-4675, Lubbock Center 806-716-4675, or Plainview Center (Main Office) 806-716-4302 or 806-296-9611.

#### **Non-Discrimination Statement**

South Plains College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability or age in its programs and activities. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies: Vice President for Student Affairs, South Plains College -1401 College Avenue, Box 5, Levelland, TX 79336, 806-894-9611

### **TITLE IX PREGNANCY ACCOMMODATIONS STATEMENT**

If you are pregnant, or have given birth within six months, Under Title IX you have a right to reasonable accommodations to help continue your education. To activate accommodations you must submit a Title IX pregnancy accommodations request, along with specific medical documentation, to the Director of Health and Wellness. Once approved, notification will be sent to the student and instructors. It is the student's responsibility to work with the instructor to arrange accommodations. Contact Chris Straface, Director of Health and Wellness at 806-716-2362 or email [cstraface@southplainscollege.edu](mailto:cstraface@southplainscollege.edu) for assistance.

### **DIVERSITY STATEMENT**

In this class, the teacher will establish and support an environment that values and nurtures individual and group differences and encourages engagement and interaction. Understanding and respecting multiple experiences and perspectives will serve to challenge and stimulate all of us to learn about others, about the larger world, and about ourselves. By promoting diversity and intellectual exchange, we will not only mirror society as it is, but also model society as it should and can be.

### **GENERAL SAFETY ON CAMPUS**

South Plains College recognizes the importance of safety on campus. The protection of persons and property is a responsibility which we all share. Personal safety begins with the individual. The following guidelines are intended to assist you in protecting yourself and to encourage practices that contribute to a safe environment for our campus community.

- Never leave your personal property unsecured or unattended.
- Look around and be aware of your surroundings when you enter and exit a building.
- Whenever possible, avoid walking alone, particularly after dark. Walk to your vehicle with other class members or request that the Security Guard walk you to your car.
- When approaching your vehicle, keep your keys in your hand; look under your car and in the back seat and floorboard. Lock the doors as soon as you are inside your car.

### **FOOD AND DRINK IN CLASSROOMS**

It is the policy of South Plains College not to permit food or drink in the classrooms or laboratories.

**In case of emergency, contact the following numbers but DO NOT leave a voice mail message:  
894-9611, ext. 2338 - Levelland Campus 747-0576, ext. 4677 – Lubbock Center 885-3048, ext. 2923 - Reese Center (mobile  
893-5705)**