

MGMT 3660: Contemporary Business Writing and Presentation Skills

Welcome to MGMT 3660!

Professor: Professor Tammy van der Leest
Office: BLB 305
Email: tammy.vanderleest@unt.edu
Telephone: 940.565.2484
Office Hours: Tuesday, 10-11:00 am (<https://unt.zoom.us/j/83748102234>)
TA: Ruby Eason, RubyEason@my.unt.edu

My Teaching Philosophy

Quote to Inspire:

"The American college is not primarily to teach the forms of living, not primarily to give practice in the art of living, but rather to broaden and deepen...insight into life itself, to open up the riches of human experience, of literature, of nature, of art, of religion, of philosophy, of human relations, social, economic, political, to arouse an understanding and appreciation of these, so that life may be fuller and richer in content; in a word, the primary function of the American college is the arousing of interests."

— Alexander Meiklejohn

I believe in the art of a liberal education. We should be lifelong learners and well-rounded individuals. My goal is to encourage intellectual curiosity, critical thinking, and the ability to connect classroom learning to real-world applications.



Note: This course is presented in a hybrid format which consists of synchronous and asynchronous class time. We will meet **in person** on Wednesday's from 9:30 – 10:50 am. **Attendance is mandatory during synchronous sessions.** Active participation is essential to your success. Failure to follow the attendance policy may result in the removal from class.

Course Description

MGMT 3660 provides students with the knowledge and skills necessary for effective oral and written communication in domestic and international professional settings. Students will learn to communicate professionally by mastering how to write effective documents, deliver structured presentations, increase intercultural competencies, and develop employment communication.

The course is carefully designed to help you secure your dream job upon graduation. To achieve this goal, we will concentrate on the practical aspect of business communication and professional presence throughout the semester. In other words, we will focus on the *art of communication*! You will begin developing skills you can confidently apply in both your professional and personal life.

Course materials and instruction will be presented over 16 weeks which encompass the Spring 2026 semester. You will learn the course content through in-person lectures, course modules in Canvas, textbook reading assignments, and writing or speaking activities. You should expect to spend approximately five hours per week outside of class reviewing materials, working on Canvas assignments, and studying for quizzes.

Plan to do the following this semester:

- Attend, listen, and participate in class.
- Study or review class materials before class.
- Complete writing exercises, take quizzes, and submit assignments every week.
 - Submit assignments in Canvas.
- Check Canvas for class announcements, assignments, and postings several times a week.

💡 **Note:** *You may need to bring a laptop to class to complete several in-class assignments. You can borrow a laptop from the UNT library if you don't have one or don't want to bring one to campus.*

Course Objectives

This course will focus on the following:

Professional Communication

This course is designed to elevate students' professional presence by strengthening their abilities in written, oral, and visual communication. Students will:

- Examine and select appropriate communication channels by understanding the purposes, functions, and characteristics of digital and non-digital options, and by choosing the channel that best aligns with audience needs and communication goals.
- Produce effective professional written documents by applying the writing process, applying writing principles, and evaluating clarity, conciseness, correctness, organization, tone, and overall professionalism, while demonstrating an understanding of audience expectations and needs.
- Deliver effective professional presentations by applying the writing process and writing principles to develop content, demonstrating strong verbal and nonverbal communication skills, designing purposeful visual aids, and evaluating both content and delivery for clarity and impact.
- Collaborate with team members on virtual platforms to produce cohesive and professional group presentations.

Intercultural Communication

Students will examine how cultural dimensions and perceptual tendencies influence communication in global business environments. This includes:

- Identifying how cultural frameworks and perceptual tendencies affect written and oral communication across cultures.
- Describing intercultural verbal and nonverbal business etiquette and customs in key international markets.
- Determining effective techniques for improving verbal and nonverbal communication when interacting with diverse cultural audiences.
- Formulating written and oral messages that are appropriate for global and multicultural audiences.

Employment Communication

Students will evaluate the effectiveness of their current job application materials in relation to the expectations of the industries they intend to pursue. This includes:

- Applying knowledge of the writing process to assess and refine both the written and oral components of their professional documents.
- Applying writing principles to strengthen clarity, organization, tone, and professionalism in application materials.
- Analyzing the needs and expectations of potential employers, and considering how their qualifications, experiences, and professional goals align with those needs.
- Producing improved, audience-focused documents that demonstrate readiness for the job application process.



Course Materials

Recommended: Shwom, B. and Snyder, L. G. (2019). *Business communication: Polishing your professional presence* (4th ed.). New York, NY: Pearson.

Recommended: Runion, M. and Fenner, S. (2011). *Perfect phrases for office professionals*. McGraw-Hill.

Recommended: O'Quinn, K. (2006). *Perfect phrases for business letters*. McGraw-Hill.

Recommended: American Psychological Association. (2020). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association 2020: the official guide to APA style*. (7th ed.). American Psychological Association.



Teaching Methods

Class will consist of the use of lectures, PowerPoint presentations, discussions, videos, handouts, peer reviews, and practical exercises to reach the course objectives. Experiential applications of knowledge will be emphasized by devoting class time to speaking and writing workshops. Students will be responsible for not only understanding, but also demonstrating effective oral and written communication skills. *Active participation will be essential.* The grade you receive is the grade you earned!



Course Evaluation

Instructors will assess students' performance with the following methods of evaluation:

- Written Assignments
- Oral Assignments
- Practical Exercises
- Quizzes

Succeeding in MGMT 3660



Plan to Attend Every Class

Attending class is one of the most important steps you can take toward success in this course. Many concepts are learned through **discussions, activities, and collaboration**—activities and experiences you simply cannot make up later.



Punctuality Matters

Punctuality is an essential component of professional presence. Arriving on time is not simply a matter of following classroom rules. It reflects respect for your faculty member and for your classmates, whose learning is disrupted when others enter late. Consistent punctuality demonstrates courtesy, reliability, and an understanding that professionalism begins with the way we show up for one another.

- **🚫 No signing in for others — this is considered forgery and a violation of academic integrity.**
- Each tardy carries a 10-point penalty on that week's assignment or quiz.
- **Three tardies** (10+ minutes late) = one absence.
- Two instances of disruptive behavior also count as an absence.



Examples of Disruptive Behavior

- Using cell phones, earbuds, ear phones, laptops during class unless approved. This serves as the warning. Additional infractions will receive a five-point deduction per instance on that week's assignment or quiz.
- Leaving during class or stepping out without notice.
- Working on unrelated assignments.
- Leaving early without permission.
- Talking over others during discussions.

Note: Pop quizzes may be given at the start or end of class. Students who arrive late or leave early will **not** be able to make them up.

! Attendance Policy

- **Three unexcused absences** = must drop the course
- More than three absences after the W/WF deadline = grade of **F**
- Excused absences require **official documentation** in line with UNT Policy 06.039 (revised Feb. 2019)

☑ UNT-Approved Excused Absences Include:

- Religious holy day (including travel)
- Active military service (including travel)
- Official university functions
- Extended illness or other **documented extenuating circumstances** (does not include: “I don’t feel well” or “I have the flu / Covid.”)
- Pregnancy and parenting under Title IX
- University closures

✉ Requesting an Excused Absence

All requests **must go through the Dean of Students before the absence**. If approved, the Dean will issue a form authorizing the absence. *Final approval rests with the instructor.*

🎤 Presentation Days

Class activities and participation points cannot be made up if you are absent.

- Missing your assigned presentation = **minimum 50 percent deduction**
- Missing class during group presentations (even when not presenting) = **minus 20 points**

Important: Illness does not include the flu or COVID unless deemed an extenuating circumstance by the university (lengthy hospital stays). If you have a qualifying extenuating circumstance on a presentation day, an alternate assignment may be approved.

📌 Quote to Inspire:

"Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn."
— Benjamin Franklin

💡 Be an Active Learner

Success in this course depends on **active participation**—not just showing up. You will learn and retain more by engaging with the material, contributing to discussions, and applying what you’ve learned through presentations, activities, and assignments.

Participate & Engage

- Take notes, ask questions, and contribute to class discussions and participate in class workshops.
 - Complete all assignments on time and be ready to share ideas.
 - Seek clarification early if something is unclear.
-

Manage Your Time

- All due dates are listed in **Canvas** and in the **course schedule**.
 - Develop a reliable time management system—time missed cannot be recovered.
 - Assignments will not be accepted past the designated late turn-in time regardless of reason for being late.
-

Communicate Professionally

- Email me **only** from your UNT student email or through the Canvas Inbox.
 - Include your **class section** in all correspondence. Failure to do so will delay response time.
 - I respond to emails sent **Mon–Fri within 24 hours**; responses are not guaranteed on weekends or after 5 p.m.
 - Avoid using the Canvas *comments* section to ask questions. It is for assignment feedback only.
-

Office Hours & Support

- Office hours are your opportunity for clarification and support. Please use them.
 - If you cannot attend during scheduled times, request a meeting and suggest **two alternate dates/times**.
 - Students who seek help early generally perform better in the course.
-

Stay Updated

- Check **Canvas Announcements** regularly for updates, resources, and assignment feedback.
- Make it a habit to review announcements before class and ahead of major assignments.

Meeting Deadlines & Grades

Assignments should be submitted **before the 11:59 pm due date**. I understand that life happens, a **24-hour grace period** is allowed for assignments and quizzes with a **25 percent, point deduction**. Submissions made at **11:59 pm** are considered **late** and subject to this penalty. Please note: Canvas is a digital system. Claims of technical *glitches* at the last minute are not accepted as valid excuses.

Key Policy:

Grace Period: 24 hours after due date with a 25 percent deduction.

No Last-Minute Glitch Excuses.

Make-ups are granted **only** for **UNT-approved excused absences** with proper documentation (see UNT Policy 06-039). Common issues such as technical problems, minor illness, or personal inconveniences are **not** approved excuses. Assignments submitted after the grace period without documentation will receive a **zero**. All assignments must be submitted through **Canvas**. Emailed work will not be accepted.

Key Policy:

No Emailed Assignments Accepted. Canvas submissions only.

You are responsible for **checking your grades weekly**. If you wish to dispute a grade, you have **seven days** after it is posted to request a meeting (in person or on Zoom). Wait 24 hours before contacting me so you can review the rubric, feedback, and your own work. *Be prepared with specific examples to support your request.* Missing your scheduled meeting or contacting me after the seven-day window will forfeit your right to dispute.

Key Policy:

Grade Disputes: Must be requested within 7 days of grade posting.

Quote to Inspire:

"We now accept the fact that learning is a lifelong process of keeping abreast of change.
And the most pressing task is to teach people how to learn."

— Peter Drucker

Technology Issues

If you experience a technical difficulty, follow these steps immediately:

1. **Take a screenshot** of the error message.
2. **Contact the UNT IT Help Desk** right away and request a ticket number.
3. **Email me** the ticket number, your screenshot, and the official incident report from IT.

Key Policy:

Timely and clear documentation **before the assignment due date** is required to be considered for a make-up. You must manage your time so that any issues are addressed prior to the deadline.

Contacting me after an assignment is due will make you **ineligible** to make up the work—no exceptions.

UNT Help Desk Contact Information:

Sage Hall 330 | (940) 565-2324 | helpdesk@unt.edu

Special Note on LockDown Browser:

Most LockDown Browser issues stem from **improper setup or attempts to bypass the system**. The software's analytics flag suspicious activity, which I review in detail. If the recording indicates an attempt to circumvent the system, a grade of **zero** will be issued for that quiz or exam.

Assessing Your Work

Written and oral assignments, graded exercises, quizzes, and the departmental final together determine your final grade. Your grade will be calculated based on the **total points earned** during the semester. Remember, **the grade you receive is the grade you have earned** through your performance and effort.

Graded Components		
Major Assignment #1	Mock Debate	75 points
	Outline	25 points
Major Assignment #2	Group Presentation	75 points
	PowerPoint Presentation	25 points
Final	Interview	40 points
	Report	200 points
Practical Exercises	Graded Exercises	280 points
Quizzes	Quizzes	280 points
Total		1,000 points

Grading Scale	
A	900-1,000 points
B	800-899 points
C	700-799 points
D	600-699 points
F	0-599 points

Grading & Major Assignments

Grades in this course are based on **mastery of content** and not on extra credit or last-minute work. While occasional extra credit opportunities will be posted in Canvas, please note that I do **not** round final grades and I do **not** offer additional assignments at the end of the semester to boost grades. The grade you earn reflects the quality of your work *throughout* the semester.

You will be evaluated on a variety of assignments designed to strengthen your professional communication skills in writing, speaking, and research. Detailed instructions and grading rubrics will be posted in Canvas.

Major Assignments & Final Projects

Throughout the semester, you will complete four significant projects:

- **Mock Debate + Outline (Group Project)** – Engage in a debate on a business principle, supported by a well-structured outline.
- **Crisis Micro-Simulation (Group Project)** – Collaborate with your team to analyze and develop a persuasive pitch that addresses a workplace crisis scenario.
- **Country Comparison on Global Etiquette Zoom Video**
- **Generational Analysis Report + Interview (Final)** – Conduct a professional interview, perform research, and prepare a comprehensive report on your findings.

Key Point: All major assignments will be submitted through **Turnitin** for plagiarism and AI detection.

Additional Graded Work

- **Quizzes** – Quizzes will help you review and reinforce course concepts. Most will require **Respondus LockDown Browser**.
- **Graded Exercises** – Practical activities that strengthen your writing and communication skills, preparing you for the larger assignments and the business world.

I reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus and course schedule. All updates will be posted in Canvas.

Feedback & Turnaround Time: Quiz scores are typically posted immediately. Written assignments and presentations will receive feedback within seven days.

Presentation Delivery Requirement

Effective presentation skills are an essential component of professional communication. Students are expected to deliver their presentations directly to the audience, using well-prepared talking points rather than reading from a phone, handwritten notes, or a script.

*Note: Presentations that are read verbatim from a device or paper will receive a **50 percent deduction**, as this does not meet the standard of professional delivery expected in this course.*

MGMT 3660 Course Schedule

Unless otherwise noted, all graded exercises and assignments are due **before 11:59 pm** in Canvas.

	Date	Topics	Special Instructions	Assignments, Quizzes, and Exercises
Week 1	1/13	Lecture: Course Introduction, Syllabus, Canvas, Developing your Professional Presence, Business Etiquette, & the Elevator Pitch	Begin creating your Elevator Pitch In Class: Corporate Rewrite Challenge	• Quiz: Syllabus • Quiz: Etiquette & Professional Presence
Week 2	1/27	Lecture: Resume Writing & Quantified Bullet Points Deliver Elevator Pitch {Class Critique}	In Class: 6-Sentence Makeover	• Quiz: Punctuation • Exercise: Elevator Pitch • Exercise: Branding Statement
Week 3	1/27	Lecture: Exploring Interviewing Styles	In Class: Tone Transformation Lab	• Quiz: Interviewing Skills • Exercise: Industry Audit
Week 4	2/3	Lecture: Information Channels, Types of Communication, AI Ethics	In Class: Grammar Court	• Quiz: Capitalization & Numbers • Exercise: Thank You Email
Week 5	2/10	Lecture: The Art of Persuasion	In Class: Punctuation Mini Workshop	• Quiz: Writing Style Rules I • Exercise: Congratulatory Email
Week 6	2/17	Lab Week: Prepare for Mock Debate		• Quiz: In the Real World • Major Assignment: Outline Due

Week 7	2/24	Mock Debate {Class Critique}	In Class: Clarity Ladder	• Major Assignment: Mock Debate • Quiz: Writing Style Rules II • Exercise: Perfect Phrases Writing Scenario + Team Work
Week 8	3/3	Mock Debate {Class Critique}	In Class: Say This, Not That!	• Quiz: Writing Style Rules III • Exercise: Perfect Phrases Writing Scenario + Receiving Feedback
Week 9	3/10	Spring Break!		
Week 10	3/17	Lab Week		• Quiz: Writing Style Rules IV • Exercise: Article Critique
Week 11	3/24	Lecture: Presentation Skills & Slide Deck Best Practices	In Class: APA Lab	• Quiz: Group Presentation • Exercise: Writing Scenario - Unwrapped
Week 12	3/31	Lab Week: Prepare for Crisis Communication Micro-Simulation	Begin Working On Interview	• Quiz: Effective Slides • Assignment: PowerPoint Slides Due
Week 13	4/7	Group Presentation: Crisis Comm Micro-Sim Lecture: EQ		• Major Assignment: Group Presentation • Quiz: EQ • Exercise: X Post + Email
Week 14	4/14	Group Presentation: Crisis Comm Micro-Sim Lecture: Civil Discourse		• Major Assignment: Group Presentation • Quiz: Writing Style Rules V • Interview Due
Week 15	4/21	Guest Panel	Attendance is Mandatory	• Quiz: International Communications • Exercise: Country Comparison Zoom Video
Week 16	4/28	Lab Week Final		• Final: Begin working on Report
Week 17	5/5	Final		• Final: Report Due

UNT Course Policies

Use of AI

Unless specifically stated, the use of AI is not permitted in this class. UNT policy states the following:

Based on the Student Academic Integrity Policy (UNT Policy 6.003), any form of “unauthorized assistance” constitutes cheating. If the use of artificial intelligence is not authorized for the assignment in question, the violation is “cheating”.

Academic Integrity Policy

According to [UNT Policy 06.003 \(PDF\)](#), Student Academic Integrity, academic dishonesty occurs when students engage in behaviors including, cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, forgery, plagiarism, and sabotage. A finding of academic dishonesty may result in a range of academic penalties or sanctions ranging from admonition to expulsion from the University.

RCOB Syllabus Statement on Academic Honesty

The G. Brint Ryan College of Business takes academic honesty seriously. Ethics and integrity are important business values that are essential to building trust. The adherence to both professional and legal standards is of the utmost importance. Academic dishonesty destroys trust, damages the university’s reputation, and the value of the degree.

According to UNT Policy 06.003, Student Academic Integrity, academic dishonesty occurs when students engage in behaviors including, but not limited to cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, forgery, plagiarism, and sabotage. A finding of academic dishonesty may result in a range of academic penalties or sanctions from admonition (a warning) to expulsion from the University.

Some of the most common examples of academic integrity violations include plagiarism, cheating (to include the use of chat rooms, sharing of answers, answers written on laptops, unauthorized assistance on examinations, homework, research papers or case analyses), and use of ChatGPT or other AI systems. Your work must be entirely your own. When working on assignments, you should not discuss your work with others unless approved by the course instructor. Group assignments should only be discussed with members assigned to your group, and all group members may be held accountable in some way for known academic integrity violations in a group assignment.

Another example of academic dishonesty relates to improper attribution. When preparing your assignments, you must cite all outside sources in the manner requested by your instructor. Copying or using material from any source prepared by or previously submitted by others, at UNT or other institutions, or downloaded from the Internet, is plagiarism. Unless directed otherwise in an assignment, large scale “cutting and pasting” from other sources, even if properly footnoted, is not appropriate. You should synthesize this material in your own words and provide proper citations and references.

Your instructor will specify what materials, if any, may be used on the tests and exams.

Using materials other than those permitted, talking with other individuals during the exam, individuals exchanging information about an exam when one has taken the exam and the other has not, or copying or using material from another individual’s exam is academic dishonesty and will result in a meeting to discuss academic integrity violations and potentially issue sanctions mentioned above, and may result in ineligibility for academic scholarships. The use of online assistance, such as sites commonly used for finding homework solutions, group chat, cell phones, smart watches, and similar tools during exams is not allowed for any reason unless specifically stated. No portion of an exam may be copied or photographed without permission.

Students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the university’s status as an institution of higher education and a Tier 1 research institution. A student is responsible for responding to a request to discuss suspected academic dishonesty when issued by an instructor or other university official. If a student fails to respond after a proper attempt at notification has been made, the university may take appropriate academic actions in the absence of the student’s participation.

ADA Policy Statement

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking reasonable accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with a reasonable accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request reasonable accommodations at any time; however, ODA notices of reasonable accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of reasonable accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of reasonable accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information, refer to the [Office of Disability Access](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/office-disability-access) website (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/office-disability-access>). You may also contact ODA by phone at (940) 565-4323

Emergency Notification & Procedures

UNT utilizes the Eagle Alert system to quickly notify students with critical information in the event of an emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). In the event of a university closure, please refer to Canvas for contingency plans for covering course materials.

Acceptable Student Behavior

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom, and the instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The university's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including university and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. Visit UNT's [Code of Student Conduct](#) to learn more.

Rules of Engagement

Rules of engagement refer to the way students are expected to interact with each other and with their instructors. While the freedom to express yourself is a fundamental human right, any communication that uses cruel and derogatory language on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal or state law will not be tolerated.

Every student in this class should have the right to learn and engage within an environment of respect and courtesy from others. It is critical that each student hold themselves accountable for their own success. If you have read this far, you deserve a reward. Email me with the words easter egg in the subject line no later than end of day on twelve january and you will receive ten extra credit points. We will discuss our classroom's habits of engagement and I also encourage you to review UNT's student code of conduct so that we can all start with the same baseline civility understanding ([Code of Student Conduct](#)) (<https://policy.unt.edu/policy/07-012>).

*Remember, the focus of this class is **professionalism**.*

Revised 1/15/2026