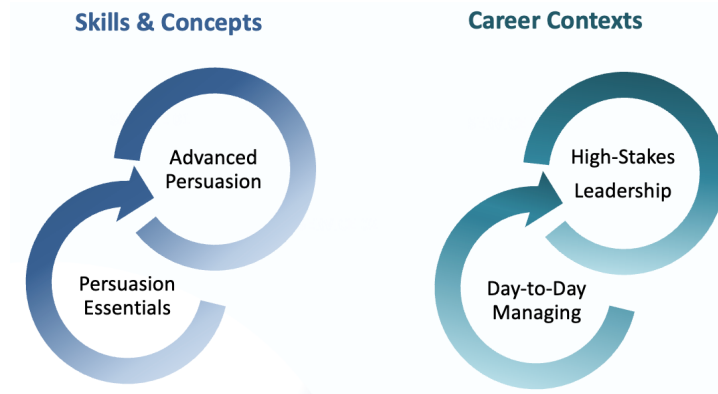


WHCP 6160X: Management Communication Syllabus 2024-2025

Course Description: This course focuses on how to clearly and concisely articulate, advocate for, and defend your views in various business settings. Students will learn strategies and frameworks for persuasively communicating in planned and impromptu situations. The course will include practice in both speaking and writing with course content, activities, and assignments integrating both modes throughout the course. Regardless of your skill level upon entry to the course, you will develop and demonstrate effective, business-oriented communication skills. Topics covered include structure and organization, advanced persuasive techniques, effective delivery, Q&A strategies, story and narrative, and team presentations. Students will also gain experience handling difficult questions through a simulated media interview. Throughout the course, you will receive individualized feedback from instructors and Wharton Communication Fellows (TAs).

The course progression reflects both a skills progression in terms of what we teach and a career progression in terms of how we ask you to think about applying what we teach:



In the first half of the course, you will learn the essentials of persuasion, gain confidence in presenting, and practice communicating your point-of-view in contexts in which you are managing both up and down. In the second half of the course, you will apply advanced persuasive strategies in case-based scenarios that represent more challenging, high-stakes contexts – ones in which leaders must communicate a clear and compelling organizational point-of-view to multiple stakeholder audiences.

Students will practice these skills through in-class exercises, discussions, and small-group labs.

Course Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Apply persuasive communication strategies in a variety of business contexts
- Tailor messages to diverse stakeholders using audience analysis
- Demonstrate delivery techniques that reinforce key messages and advance goals
- Organize and distill persuasive messages for clarity and concision
- Communicate effectively in unpredictable and high-stakes business situations ('think on their feet')

Assignments and Grading: Class location, due dates, and mode of submission may vary, so please read each assignment carefully.

Please note the following about the assignments:

- Final details for all assignments are on Canvas.
- Attendance at each session is very important. Tardiness and any unexcused absence(s) will have a negative impact on your grade. Note: a student with more than four absences (for any reason) cannot pass the course.
- **You must complete all graded assignments** in order to pass the course and do so on time to receive full credit.
- Class participation will be graded on attendance, punctuality, and timely completion of ungraded assignments (including, but not limited to, in-class presentations, signups, worksheets, and meeting with the TA).
- All assignments, including presentations, submitted more than one week late will receive zero points.
- Students are responsible for compliance with the [Ethics Matrix](#).
- Instructors and students agree to hold each other accountable to the standards set forth in the [Wharton Learning Agreement](#).

Role of the TA (Wharton Communication Fellow): We have a group of highly qualified TAs (Wharton Communication Fellows) who are here to give you additional assistance with your presentation preparation and delivery. They will also be responsible for leading small-group labs throughout the course. They are second-year MBA students who were selected based on their effectiveness in offering feedback during their own core experience. Wharton Communication Fellows are committed to helping you develop strong speaking skills. All students are required to meet with the TA before delivering their 4-minute persuasive presentation.

Absences & Make-up Work: Attendance is expected at every class. Any student who is unable to attend a given class session should contact their instructor and complete any make-up tasks and assignments as specified by their instructor. Note: Completing the make-up work does not count as class attendance.

Required Reading: All required readings can be accessed from the WHCP 6160X Canvas site. On the left side of the page, you'll find the Study.Net Materials link. Use that link to access all required readings unless otherwise noted. Readings are also listed in weekly overview pages in the Modules tab on Canvas.

Electronics & Note-taking Policy: All students are expected to be fully engaged with the instructor, class content, and one another throughout the entirety of the class. Use of mobile or electronic devices without instructor permission may result in the deduction of participation points.

AI-Assistance Policy: All work in WHCP courses (spoken and written) should be your own. Effective business communication is an essential skill that students must develop for themselves. As such, unless recommended by your instructor as part of an assignment, we strongly discourage the use of ChatGPT or similar tools to create your communication. You should note that work generated by these tools may include incorrect and plagiarized material. Students are accountable for ensuring the originality and accuracy of all assignments. Please refer to our Ethics Matrix for further information. If you include material generated by an AI program, it should be cited like any other reference material (with due consideration for the quality of the reference, which may be poor). Any plagiarism or other form of cheating will be dealt with severely under relevant Penn policies.

WHCP 6160X Course Outline

CLASS	FOCUS	ASSIGNMENTS	POINTS
1	Communication Essentials	Submit: Strengths/goals for growth	<i>Counts toward participation</i>
2	Persuasion Essentials, Structure and Delivery	Watch and Reflect: on your Class 1 presentation	<i>Counts toward participation</i>
3	Lab: Presenting an Audience-Centered Message	Complete: quiz on ‘Developing an Argument & Editing with AI’ Submit: quiz responses and ChatGPT thread	5
		Submit: audience analysis worksheet 3 days after Class 2 Deliver: 3-min presentation with Q&A	15
4	Advanced Persuasion: Framing & Metaphor	Submit: topic selection worksheet within 3 days of the conclusion of Class 4	<i>Counts toward participation</i>
5	Storytelling, Visualization & Rhetorical Devices	Sign Up: for a time slot to meet with your TA	-
6 & 7	Persuasive Presentations	Meet: with TA prior to delivering your presentation	<i>Counts toward participation</i>
		Deliver: 4-minute persuasive presentation	20
8	Lab: Improvising on a Planned Presentation	Submit: written rebuttal to a peer’s presentation	10
		Deliver: 2-minute summary of your persuasive presentation to upper management	<i>Counts toward participation</i>
		Sign Up: for a case, position, and business track within 2 days of Class 8	<i>Counts toward participation</i>
9	Storytelling & Narrative in Specialized Contexts	Complete: quiz on ‘Story Construction’	<i>All count toward participation</i>
		Deliver: 90 second story supporting your case position	
		Submit 1 Day After Class 9: Town Hall Worksheet	
10	Lab: Communicating with the Media	Submit 2 Days Before Class 10: Media Prep Worksheet	<i>Counts toward participation</i>
		Submit by Class 10: written message to assigned stakeholder	10
11	Communicating as a Team	Complete: quiz on ‘Presenting with Slides’	<i>Counts toward participation</i>
		Deliver: 6-minute team town hall presentation with Q&A and slides	15
12	Ethical Communication	Complete: readings	-
	End-of-Course Assessment	Complete: within one week of Class 12	10
ALL	Class Participation		15
		Total Points	100

Course Overview

(Full assignment details and due dates are posted on Canvas)

Class 1: Communication Essentials

- **By the end of this class, students will be able to:**
 - Articulate the differences between written and verbal communication
 - Prepare messages using an iterative communication process
 - Understand best practices for vocal, visual, and verbal delivery when presenting
- **Tasks & Work Due:**
 - **Read:**
 - Syllabus and Ethics Matrix
 - Policies in 'Welcome & Overview' module on Canvas
 - **Submit:** Strengths and Goals for Growth

Class 2: Persuasion Essentials, Structure, and Delivery

- **By the end of this class, students will be able to:**
 - Apply classic techniques of persuasion
 - Understand the role of macro- and micro-level structure in making persuasive arguments
 - Apply fundamental structural approaches to impromptu communication
- **Tasks & Work Due:**
 - **Read:**
 - *Guide to Managerial Communication*, pp. 10-14 (Munter)
 - Transcript of 2013 Malcom Gladwell Lecture on "Proof" at UPenn (Gladwell)
 - **Watch and Reflect:** on your Class 1 presentation
 - **Submit:** Audience Analysis Worksheet within 3 days of Class 2

Class 3 Lab: Presenting an Audience-Centered Message

- **By the end of this class, students will be able to:**
 - Analyze a specific audience and develop an organized message with their needs and concerns in mind
 - Use simple structures to answer questions effectively
 - Apply real-time feedback to peers
- **Tasks & Work Due:**
 - **Read:**
 - *Handling Nervousness*
 - *Using a Roadmap*
 - *Delivering Effective Peer feedback*
 - *Types of Questions*
 - **Complete** quiz and upload chat thread: 'Developing an Idea and Editing with AI'
 - **Prepare:** 3-minute persuasive presentation with 2 minutes of ungraded Q&A

Class 4: Advanced Persuasion – Framing & Metaphor

- **By the end of this class, students will be able to:**
 - Demonstrate the advanced persuasive technique of framing
 - Increase persuasive impact of messages through metaphor and vivid language
 - Apply strategies for being in-readiness for impromptu situations
- **Tasks & Work Due:**
 - **Read:**
 - "The Necessary Art of Persuasion," *HBR* (Conger)
 - "Explaining Apple's Fight with the FBI," *New York Times* (Isaac)
 - **Submit 3 Days After Class 4:** Class 6/7 persuasive presentation topic worksheet via Canvas

Class 5: Storytelling, Visualization & Rhetorical Devices

- **By the end of this class, students will be able to:**
 - Understand the core elements of story
 - Apply visualization and rhetorical devices to strengthen persuasive impact.
- **Tasks & Work Due:**
 - **Read:**
 - “Why Your Brain Loves Stories,” *HBR* (Zak)
 - “The Indispensable Power of Story,” *HBR* (Tjan)
 - Berkshire Hathaway: An Owner’s Manual (Buffett)

Class 6/7: Persuasive Presentations

- **By the end of this class, students will be able to:**
 - Advocate for a position using techniques of persuasion
 - Speak persuasively in a large-group context
- **Tasks & Work Due:**
 - **Read:**
 - *Framing Your Message* (American Management Association)
 - *How to Structure a Presentation*
 - **Meet:** with TA prior to delivering your presentation
 - **Prepare:** a 4-minute persuasive presentation advocating for the topic and position you submitted

Class 8 Lab: Improvising on a Planned Presentation

- **By the end of this class, students will be able to:**
 - Apply strategies for improvising on a planned presentation
 - Adapt on the fly when unexpected circumstances arise
- **Tasks & Work Due:**
 - **Read:** “How to Think on Your Feet Under Pressure,” *Inc.com* (DesMarais)
 - **Submit:** a written rebuttal to a peer’s presentation
 - **Prepare:** a 2-minute summary of your persuasive presentation for upper management
 - **Sign Up:** for a case, position, and business track within 2 days of Class 8

Class 9: Storytelling & Narrative in Specialized Contexts

- **By the end of this class, students will be able to:**
 - Practice team-based storytelling for a challenging context
 - Use a narrative structure to communicate your key message
- **Tasks & Work Due:**
 - **Read:** Your chosen case
 - **Complete:** quiz on ‘Story Construction’
 - **Deliver:** 90 second story that supports your position from the case (based on your selected track)
 - **Submit 1 Day After Class 9:** Your team’s completed town hall worksheet

Class 10 Lab: Communicating with the Media

- **By the end of this class, students will be able to:**
 - Apply techniques for staying on message
 - Handle tough Q&A in a media interview
 - Apply the CARE model as a tool for evaluating communications
- **Tasks & Work Due:**
 - **Submit 2 Days Before Class 10:** Team Media Prep Worksheet
 - **Read:**
 - *14 Tips for Acing Your First Publicity Interview* (Forbes Communication Council)
 - *Bezos Message to Shareholders*
 - *Zappos Message to Employees*
 - **Submit by Class 10:** written message to assigned stakeholder

Class 11: Communicating as a Team

- **By the end of this class, students will be able to:**
 - Work with others to develop a team presentation
 - Demonstrate effective techniques for delivering a team presentation
 - Demonstrate essential techniques of presenting with slides
- **Tasks & Work Due:**
 - **Read:**
 - *Guide for Giving a Group Presentation, excerpts* (Barnard)
 - *David Westin of ABC News Announcing Restructuring*
 - “Don’t Just Tell Employees Organizational Changes Are Coming – Explain Why,” *HBR* (Galbraith)
 - Netflix Memo to Employees: “Seeking Excellence”
 - **Complete:** quiz on ‘Presenting with Slides’
 - **Upload:** Your team’s slide by 8 PM the day before class
 - **Deliver as a team:** a 6-minute team town hall presentation with Q&A and slides

Class 12: Ethical Communication

- **By the end of this class, students will be able to:**
 - Explore guiding principles for ethical communication within the context of communicating strategic initiatives
 - Discuss case studies in ethical communication
 - Reflect on personal takeaways from the course
- **Tasks & Work Due:**
 - **Read:**
 - *Connecting with Audiences Through Inclusive Language*
 - *TBD: One case study reading [forthcoming]*
 - **Complete:** End-of-Course Assessment one week after Class 12