



Bus 2020 Business Communication

**Alliant International University**  
**Mexico City campus**

**Spring, 2012 First Session (Jan 26, 2012 to May 20, 2012)**

**Class Times: M-W 1-2:30pm.**

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**Grading: Letter**

**Units: 3**

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### **Alliant's Mission Statement**

Alliant International University prepares students for professional careers of service and leadership, and promotes the discovery and application of knowledge to improve the lives of people in diverse cultures and communities around the world.

Alliant is committed to excellence in four areas:

1. Education for Professional Practice

Alliant's educational programs are designed to give students the knowledge, skills and ethical values they need to serve and lead effectively in a variety of professional settings. Alliant graduates are expected to achieve mastery of a body of knowledge and be able to apply that knowledge in professional practice in order to achieve desired and beneficial outcomes.

2. Scholarship

Scholarship in the Alliant context includes the discovery of new knowledge; the discovery of new applications of knowledge to solve practical problems; the integration of knowledge in new ways; and innovation in teaching knowledge and professional competencies.

3. Multicultural and International Competence



Alliant is an inclusive institution committed to serving diverse populations around the world by preparing professionals to work effectively across cultural and national boundaries; by increasing the number of professionals working in underserved areas; and by understanding and responding to the needs of diverse communities.

4. Community Engagement

Alliant's faculty, students, alumni and staff are dedicated to making a positive difference in the world through professional education and practice. We measure the success of our university in part by the impact we have, both directly and indirectly, on the welfare of individuals, families, organizations and communities.

See also below, “Appendix: Alliant Mission, Values, Professional Practices and Competencies”

**ALLIANT INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY—MEXICO CITY  
SPRING SEMESTER 2012**

**Jan. 17 -20 Tuesday – Friday**

**New student orientation/Attendance is mandatory for new students**

**Jan. 23 Monday**

**Instruction begins for Spring Semester [full-term (16-week) and Session 1 (8-week) courses]**

**Feb. 6 Monday**

**Add/Drop Deadline for Spring Semester full-term courses. Last day to add or drop a full-term course without late fee. Last day to drop a full-term course for 100% refund**

**Monday, February 6-- Constitution Day Holiday—NO CLASSES**

**Feb. 17 Friday**

**Last day to withdraw from Spring Semester Session 1 courses in good standing**

**Mar. 8 Thursday**

***Annual Student Leadership Conference***

**Mar. 16 Friday**

**Last day to withdraw from Spring Semester full-term courses in good standing**

**Mar. 18 Sunday**

**Last day of Spring Session 1 courses**

**Mar. 19 Monday**

**Instruction begins for Spring Semester Session 2 (8-week) courses**



**Monday, March 19-- Benito Juárez Holiday—NO CLASSES**

**Mar. 30 Friday**

**Spring Semester Session 1 grades due to Registrar's Office**

**Apr. 2 – 8 Monday – Sunday**

**Spring Break. Classes do not meet**

**Apr. 20 Friday**

**Last day to withdraw from Spring Semester Session 2 courses in good standing.**

**Spring Semester Session 1 grades available on-line.**

**Apr. 23 Monday**

**Registration for Summer Term and Fall Semester begins**

**Tuesday MAY 1—HOLIDAY—NO CLASSES**

**May 7 Monday**

**Last day to register for Summer Term without paying a late fee**

**May 13 Sunday**

**Last day of Spring Semester full-term courses**

**Tuesday MAY 15—HOLIDAY—MEXICO CAMPUS CLOSED**

**May 14-20 Monday – Sunday**

**Final Examinations; make up classes (in case of holidays, etc.); semester-end activities**

**May 20 Sunday**

**Last day of Spring Semester Session 2 courses**

**May 25 Friday**

**Spring Semester full-term grades due to Registrar's Office**

**June 1 Friday**

**Spring Semester Session 2 grades due to Registrar's Office**

**June 8 Friday**

**Spring Semester grades available on-line**

**COMMENCEMENT CEREMONIES--TBA**

**I. Rationale:**



This course is intended to provide students with a comprehensive view of communication, its scope and the importance of its role in business. It is also intended to help students think strategically and critically about the communication process, and assist them in improving their written, oral, and aural skills within a business context. The course will introduce students to a set of business communication guidelines, offer opportunities for students to make use of them, and provide feedback designed to help improve their skills. That is, the course will adopt a predominantly workshop approach, and so students will be required to actively participate in class discussion, and other communication activities.

This course is designed to introduce students to the fundamental principles of effective business communication in a global environment. It will emphasize written communications such as standard and persuasive business letters, memorandums and informational as well as analytical reports, along with proposals, resumes and other employment-related documents. The course addresses the skills necessary for developing, planning, organizing, outlining and editing various business documents. The problem solving approach is used to focus on proper grammar, punctuation, vocabulary and tone as well as the use of computer technology and software in the development of effective oral and written business communication skills. *Prerequisite: Introduction to Business*

This course is part of a program that recognizes that the growing economic interdependence between nations has created an acute awareness of the need for international course offerings. The program addresses this growing worldwide demand for graduates with greater managerial capability in transnational business and economics.

## **II. Course Description, Purpose, Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment**

### **Course Objectives**

Being able to communicate effectively is one of the hallmarks of a well-educated individual, and is a key success factor for business professionals regardless of their field. Bus 2020 is designed to help you:

- Effectively employ communication strategies
- Use professional skills routinely required in the workplace, such as conflict resolution
- Understand, and rise to the challenge of, cross-cultural communication
- Write clearly, concisely, and purposefully in a range of business situations
- Prepare and give competent formal presentations
- Provide and receive feedback on communications
- Communicate successfully in both one to one and small group settings

- Acquire interpersonal skills that contribute to the development of productive and fulfilling personal, social, and professional relationships

**The following grading scale will be used for this course:**

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Per cent</b>
A	100 – 95%
A-	94% – 90%
B+	89% – 87%
B	86% – 84%
B-	83% – 80%
C+	79% – 77%
C	76% – 74%
C-	73% – 70%
D+	69% – 67%
D	66% – 64%
D-	63% – 60%
F	Less than 60%

**Principal Rubrics:**

1. Class Participation: Preparation, presentation, and participation in the class should demonstrate your capacity to successfully demonstrate the

identified outcomes. Class questions will focus on your preparation and participation, which will be evaluated on the basis of five criteria:

<b>Class Participation Rubric</b>	Clear Evidence	Minimal Evidence points	No Evidence
Preparation, Familiarity & Reflection on reading	Student exhibits substantial familiarity with the reading	Student demonstrates a basic familiarity with the reading.	Student demonstrates a lack of preparation and familiarity with the reading.
Understanding of Readings	Student has a clear understanding of the reading.	Student has minimal understanding of the reading.	Student lacks a basic understanding of the reading.
Contribution to Others Learning	Student contributes to the learning of others.	Student makes minimal contribution to the learning of others.	Student failed to contribute to the learning of others.
Clarity & Originality of Contribution	Student's contribution is clear and original.	Student's contribution is minimal.	Student contribution lacks clarity and originality.

2. Presentations (incl. power point: Objectives for this type of presentation include

1. Quality of oral presentation,
2. Focused, relevant research presented in a student-friendly manner,
3. Defense of one's analysis,
4. Response to questions,
5. Prompting relevant dialogue on important issues.

3. Research Paper Scoring Rubric:

<b>Grading Criteria: Format</b>	Excellent	Proficient	Poor



Grammar & Punctuation	The paper has no major grammatical and punctuation errors and very few minor errors. Any minor errors do not interfere with the understanding of the paper.	The paper has a few major errors and multiple minor errors, but almost all sentences are clear and understandable.	The paper has so many basic grammar errors that the paper cannot be readily understood.
Style of paper	Presentation style assured real learning by reader and engaged the reader.	Presentation style was adequate to advance reader learning.	Style of paper was confusing to reader. (0 points)
Presentation of research and design to class	Presentation was engaging for classmates.	Presentation was interesting but lacked clarity and explanation	Presentation lacked clarity and was not engaging of fellow students in the class
Adherence to APA style	Paper demonstrated full adherence to APA style.	Paper demonstrated partial adherence to APA style.	Paper failed to utilize APA style.

<b>Grading Criteria:</b>			
<b>Content</b>			
Organization	Writing is clear, logical, and very organized around a developed thesis.	Writing has minimal organization and a basic thesis statement.	The paper is unclear with no organization.
Support	Every important point is clearly supported by strong evidence.	The use of evidence is minimal, but it does support the thesis.	The paper does not attempt to support a thesis.
Analysis	Analysis shows a strong relationship between evidence and thesis.	Analysis of the evidence stretches its meaning in an attempt to support the thesis.	The paper does not attempt to explain how the content relates to the thesis.

#### 4. Final Examination Rubrics:

<b>Short Questions</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>Superior-Exceeds Expectations</b>	<b>Proficient-Meets Expectations</b>	<b>Poor-Below Expectations</b>
Student uses relevant concepts to answer the question		Student uses multiple relevant concepts to respond to the question, beyond those mentioned in the question itself.	Student uses the concepts that are specifically mentioned in the question.	Student does not use all the concepts that are specifically mentioned in the question.
Student exhibits understanding of the concepts/information		Student clearly and completely exhibits knowledge of the relevant concepts. (10 points)	Student exhibits basic knowledge of the relevant concepts used in the response. (5 points)	Student clearly lacks a basic understanding of the relevant concepts. (0 points)
The response is well-written.		The response is highly readable.	The response is basically understandable.	Response is not understandable.
<b>Essay Question</b>		<b>Superior-Exceeds Expectations</b>	<b>Proficient-Meets Expectations</b>	<b>Poor-Below Expectations</b>
Student uses relevant concepts to answer the question		Student uses multiple relevant concepts to respond to the question, beyond those mentioned in the question itself.	Student uses the concepts that are specifically mentioned in the question.	Student does not use all the concepts that are specifically mentioned in the question.
Student exhibits understanding of the concepts/information		Student clearly and completely exhibits knowledge of the relevant concepts.	Student exhibits basic knowledge of the relevant concepts use in the response	Student clearly lacks a basic understanding of the relevant concepts.
The response is well-written.		The response is highly readable.	The response is basically understandable and consists of at least 3 full paragraphs. (2 points)	Response is not very comprehensive/

### III. Assigned Readings

- Mary Ellen Guffrey, *Business Communication: Process and Product*. (South-Western College Pub.)( **ISBN-10:** 0538466251; **ISBN-13:** 978-0538466257).
  - Additional lectures by
  - Lehman Communication Foundations, CENGAGE BCOMM
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### COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION

#### 1. Class Assignment and Participation (Discussion) (20%)

A statement may be made that students must participate in all interactive aspects of the course if interaction is part of the course design. For example, students must communicate with other students in the chat room, students are expected to communicate with the instructor as a learning resource, students must check the course bulletin board frequently for announcements, and students must actively participate in threaded discussion events. Because learning about culture requires active engagement and participation of students, we will use both experiential learning and case analyses. The experiential learning (discussions, videos, exercises) requires that students be actively involved in the learning.

A reiteration and emphasis of certain rules and course expectations. For example, participation is required, expected to communicate with other students in team projects, learn how to navigate in the learning management system, keep abreast of course announcements, use the student email address as opposed to a personal email address, address technical problems immediately, and observe course netiquette at all times.

#### 2. Case Analyses (two cases 10%, 5% each)

There are several cases being used in this course. At least two students will be assigned to prepare a 3-page written analysis of the case and will help facilitate the case discussion each week via the discussion board (forum). Where possible, the student should collect background information on the country or company. The analysis should not be only a summary of what happened in the case, but should be an analysis according to the following:

- What is going on in the case? What has happened or is happening? (no more than a paragraph or two)
- What is the problem? Can you diagnose what needs to be addressed (i.e., what has gone wrong, what needs to be solved, or what opportunity is available?)
- What has caused the problem or what is the basis for the opportunity? Can you analyze the factors that have contributed to the situation at hand?
- What can be done to fix the problem or pursue the opportunity? Can you think of what actions can be taken to help the situation?
- Test your ideas against the content of the case. How does the case material support your ideas?

### **3. Analysis of organizational Culture (10%)**

The purpose of this assignment is for the student to develop mindfulness and self-reflection about his or her own culture, because this is a prerequisite for learning about the culture of others. The written report should be no more than 5 pages. The report should:

- Locate the culture on the dimensions and characteristics that we have discussed in class and discuss the implications
- Include identification of the culture's key values accompanied by meaningful *behavioral* examples
- Discuss those cultural dimensions that seem to be most taken for granted and those which seem to be contested
- Identify a country where the culture appears to be most different from one's own and discuss how one might frame the contrasting culture in way that would improve the likelihood of getting along
- Include a bibliography with at least two sources regarding the culture of your home country.

### **4. Communications manager interview (10%)**

Interview a communications employee or manager in any given organization and understand what are the key issues in internal communications they perceive and build a report

- What advice would the interviewee give to others who are facing communication problems to ensure success?

#### **5. Group Project: Business Communications Manual (30%)**

Groups of about 4-5 students will work together. Each group should assume that they are a team of consultants working for an American firm . The idea is to build an internal communications manual

#### **6. Final Exam (20%)**

There will be a final exam that will cover major concepts in the course. The formats for the exam are short and comprehensive essay questions The final exam will account for 20% of your final course grade.

### **IV. Policies and Procedures:**

#### ***Behavioral Expectations/Attendance***

1. Policies Related To Class Attendance, Lateness, Missed Exams or Assignments  
The University expects regular class attendance by all students. Each student is responsible for all academic work missed during absences. When an absence is necessary, students should contact the instructor as courtesy and to check for assignments. See the University Catalog for the complete policy on attendance.

Attendance criteria for this class are:

Punctuality: Please be on time!

Attendance: More than four unexcused absences will lower course grade one level.

2. Information on Participation/types of participation required by the course  
Readings and participation are the central elements in the course. The assignments provide details for class discussions, small and large work groups; and will vary on each assigned material prior to class. The amount and quality of participation in activities and discussions will be reflected in the students' final grades.

3. Instructor Assumptions

It is the student's responsibility to identify and complete any work missed in the course. All written work is due at the beginning of class on the assigned dates. Late papers will be accepted only at the professor's discretion and will be penalized. Grades will be determined on the basis of these course requirements as follows;

You are always welcome to discuss this course and other academic issues with me during my office hours. I will also be happy to make an appointment for another time if you cannot see me during office hours. Don't hesitate to ask if you have any questions or problems.

4. Responsibility to Keep Copies

Remember – it is good practice to keep copies of ALL major assignments/papers you turn in. On rare occasions, work may be lost because of computer failure or other mishaps.

5. Respectful Speech and Actions

Alliant International University, by mission and practice, is committed to fair and respectful consideration of all members of our community, and the greater communities surrounding us. All members of the University must treat one another as they would wish to be treated themselves, with dignity and concern.

As an institution of higher education, Alliant International University has the obligation to combat racism, sexism, and other forms of bias and to provide an equal educational opportunity. Professional codes of ethics (e.g., from the APA for psychology students) and the Academic Code shall be the guiding principles in dealing with speech or actions that, when considered objectively, are abusive and insulting.

6. Academic Code of Conduct and Ethics

The University is committed to principles of scholastic honesty. Its members are expected to abide by ethical standards both in their conduct and in their exercise of responsibility towards other members of the community. Each student's conduct is expected to be in accordance with the standards of the University. ***The complete Academic Code, which covers acts of misconduct including assistance during examination, fabrication of data, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, and assisting other students in acts of misconduct, among others, may be found in the University Catalog.*** The University reserves the right to use plagiarism detection software.

***Policy Regarding Plagiarism***

*Plagiarism is t citing, quoting, or paraphrasing the works of others without proper textual and bibliographic citations. It is the responsibility of students to understand the rules of proper use of the intellectual production of others, and the forms of proper citation in academic works. For example, students must not copy and paste written sources from the internet, and present these sources as their own work. Plagiarism constitutes a violation of university ethics rules.*

*Documented cases of plagiarism will have the following consequences. In the first instances the student may fail the written assignment that was plagiarized or the course, at the discretion of the class instructor. In the first instance of plagiarism the Program Director will create a file with a copy of the plagiarized work. In the second instance the student may be called before the Student Evaluation and Review Committee (SERC) that may consider suspension from the university for one semester. In the third instance the student may be called before the Student Evaluation and Review Committee (SERC) that may consider dismissal from the university.*

*If the student has any questions regarding the use of citations in papers or plagiarism, please ask the instructor or the Program Director.*

7. Disability Accommodations Request

If you need disability-related accommodations in this class, please see me privately. All accommodations must be requested in a timely manner (at least 2 weeks ahead of time) with a letter of support for Alliant's Office of Disability Services. If you have questions about accommodations, please contact the Office of Disability Services.

8. Policy on Course Requirements During Religious Holidays

Alliant International University does not officially observe any religious holidays. However, in keeping with the institution's commitment to issues of cultural diversity as well as humanitarian considerations, faculty are encouraged to appreciate students' religious observances by not penalizing them when they are absent from classes on holy days. Alliant International University faculty will be sensitive to these matters. Students should be similarly respectful of faculty members' right to observe religious days.

9. Resources for Obtaining Tutoring or Other Student Support Services

Tutors are available to help students with course-based or exam-based needs. Contact the Director of Student Support Services for information on obtaining tutoring – or other student support services – on your campus.

10. Problem Solving Resources

If problems arise with faculty, other students, staff, or student support services, students should use the University Problem Solving Procedures located on the web at



[http://www.alliant.edu/academic/studentproblemsolving/Student\\_Grievance\\_Policy.pdf](http://www.alliant.edu/academic/studentproblemsolving/Student_Grievance_Policy.pdf) or contact the University Ombudsperson at [jlewis@alliant.edu](mailto:jlewis@alliant.edu).

## V. Course Outline

Subject for the week nr.

1. Establishing a Framework for Business Communication.
2. Focusing on Interpersonal and Group Communication.
3. Planning Spoken and Written Messages.
4. Preparing Spoken and Written Messages.
5. Communicating Electronically.
6. Delivering Good- and Neutral-News Messages.
7. Delivering Bad-News Messages.
8. Delivering Persuasive Messages.
9. Understanding the Report Process and Research Methods.
10. Managing Data and Using Graphics.
11. Organizing and Preparing Reports and Proposals.
12. Designing and Delivering Business Presentations.
13. Preparing Résumés and Application Messages.
14. Interviewing for a Job and Preparing Employment.
2. 15. Final Exam

### **Reminder that Syllabus is Subject to Change**

The preceding is the general structure and content of the course. Students should remember that the exact content and schedule of the syllabus is subject to change without prior notice to meet student, faculty, or other needs. We may spend more time on some topics as needed, and conversely, may move more quickly over other topics.



## Appendix: Alliant Mission, Values, Professional Practices and Competencies

### A. Alliant Mission

**Description:** Alliant's mission is:

Alliant International University prepares students for professional careers of service and leadership, and promotes the discovery and application of knowledge to improve the lives of people in diverse cultures and communities around the world.

**Purpose:** The purpose of this anchor is to ensure that the Program fits within the University and School mission and vision.

### B. Alliant Core Values

**Description:** The Alliant Core Values are Integrity, Intellectual Advancement, Diversity, Social Responsibility, Innovation, Stewardship, Partnership and Collaboration.

**Purpose:** The purpose of this anchor is to ensure that Alliant's Programs are planning and operating in accordance with Alliant's Core Values.

### C. Alliant Professional Practice University Components of Excellence from the Mission

**Description:** The four components of a professional practice university explained in Alliant's mission are:

- Education for Professional Practice
- Scholarship
- Multicultural and International Competence
- Community Engagement

**Purpose:** The purpose of this anchor is to ensure that the 4 components of Alliant as a professional practice university are incorporated into the Programs.

### D. Professional Practice Competencies

**Description:** The Alliant Professional Practice Competencies (A-IMPACT) are:

- A discipline-specific body of knowledge and research/scholarship
- Insight into the context of practice
- Multicultural/International competence
- Professional literacies
- Application of knowledge and research in new ways
- Conduct, judgment, dispositions and ethics
- Team-based and multidisciplinary approaches

**Purpose:** The purpose of this anchor is to ensure that the competencies are part of all Alliant's Programs (at an appropriate level) and thus become a hallmark of an Alliant Program.