



**Sam Houston State University**  
**College of Science and Engineering Technology**  
**Department of Agricultural Sciences**



**COURSE SYLLABUS**  
**ACOM 3360.01**  
**Communication Skills for Agriculturists**  
**3 Hours**  
**Fall 2017**

**LOCATION**

Room 340, Pirkle Engineering Technology Center

**SCHEDULE**

12:30 – 2:00 p.m., Tuesdays & Thursdays

**INSTRUCTOR**

Dr. Dwayne Pavelock  
Room 440L, Pirkle Engineering Technology Center  
Phone: 294-1186  
E-Mail: agr\_dxp@shsu.edu  
Office Hours: Open Door Policy or By Appointment

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course is designed to provide an overview of information systems, principles and procedures used in communicating agricultural news and information in agricultural professions. Emphasis is placed on effective written and oral communications means in professional and media environments in addition to public relations efforts in the fields of agricultural education and agribusiness. *Pre-Requisite:* ENGL 1302

*Overview:* Most information will be disseminated through lecture, but group discussion will be required in addition to related individual and group activities that foster a greater understanding of the material. Exams will include short answer and essay questions. Projects will require written, video, and/or computer composition and oral presentation.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Analyze successful work habits necessary to work with diverse groups;
2. Examine characteristics of successful workers related to productivity, teamwork and ethical practices;
3. Describe writing as a primary form of communication;
4. Apply elements of effective writing;
5. Distinguish between writing styles;

6. Demonstrate the ability to write business letters and news stories;
7. Explain communications for broadcast media purposes;
8. Prepare communications for public relations purposes;
9. Demonstrate effective oral communications skills;
10. Develop a professional computer-generated presentation; and
11. Summarize proper usage and etiquette regarding electronic communication, especially e-mail and social media for personal and professional purposes.

### **TEXTS**

Pavelock, D. (2017). *Course materials packet for ACOM 3360*. Available from Eagle Graphics.

### **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Students are expected to attend all class meetings. Classes will begin promptly at the designated time. Frequent late arrivals and/or early departures will affect the student's Attendance, Participation and Professionalism grade. If an emergency or other justifiable reason prevents a student from attending class, the instructor should be notified as soon as possible. However, an absence will still be assessed regardless of the reason. Each absence after the 3<sup>rd</sup> absence, and each late arrival and/or early departure will result in deductions from the student's overall points as follows:

Absence (per occurrence, after 3 <sup>rd</sup> absence)	Minus 14 points
Late Arrival or Early Departure (per occurrence)	Minus 4 points

### **ASSIGNMENTS & EXAMS**

Students will be expected to complete the requirements listed below.

1. Two (2) examinations and a final examination, which will be comprehensive. Exams will include both short answer and essay questions. Missed and make-up exams are subject to being administered in an all-essay format.
2. Four (4) writing assignments, which will include an introductory assessment, professional letters, and a public relations article.
3. One (1) informative or persuasive speech on an agricultural topic.
4. One (1) PowerPoint project with oral presentation on an agricultural topic.
5. Daily applied activities, homework and quizzes related to the current or previous day's topic(s).
6. Punctual and regular attendance, involvement in class discussions and activities, and participation in out-of-class activities.

The course is writing-enhanced. Assignments shall be typed, double-spaced, and follow APA guidelines unless specified otherwise. Assignments shall be mechanically correct in spelling, grammar, etc.

**GRADING PLAN**

The following are the point values of each course requirement:

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Maximum Point Value</u>
Examination #1	100 points
Examination #2	100 points
Final Examination	150 points
Writing Assignments (1 @ 25 points; 3 @ 25 points each)	100 points
Speech	100 points
PowerPoint Project with Oral Presentation	100 points
Daily activities, homework, quizzes, etc.	50 points
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<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>700 points</b>
★ Unauthorized use of cell phone/electronic device (per occurrence)	-10 points

The following ranges of scores will be used to calculate the final grade:

700 – 637 pts. = A	(91%)
636 – 567 pts. = B	(81%)
566 – 497 pts. = C	(71%)
496 – 420 pts. = D	(60%)
Below 420 pts. = F	

**Late assignments will be assessed a 33% penalty for each calendar day they are late, regardless of the reason.** Assignments are considered late if they are not turned in at the start of class on the due date. Assignments may be submitted early, e-mailed, faxed, turned in by a classmate, or by other arrangements. If a student is absent on the day an assignment is done in class, it shall be due at the beginning of the next scheduled class day. **It is the student's responsibility to check with the instructor regarding possible missed assignments.** **Make-up exams for students with pre-approved absences are subject to being administered in an all- essay format.**

**ACADEMIC DISHONESTY**

All students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. The University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including, but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work which is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials.

**CLASSROOM RULES OF CONDUCT**

Professionalism is a major element in this course. Students will refrain from behavior in the classroom that intentionally or unintentionally disrupts the learning process and, thus, impedes the mission of the university. **Cell phones/electronic devices must be turned off before class begins. Each unauthorized occurrence of using a cell phone/electronic device during class will result in a 10-point grade deduction from the student's overall points.** Students are prohibited from eating in class, using tobacco products, making offensive remarks, reading newspapers or other materials not related to the course, using a computer for purposes not related to the course, sleeping, talking at inappropriate times, wearing inappropriate

clothing, or engaging in any other form of distraction. Hats and caps shall not be worn in the classroom. Inappropriate behavior in the classroom shall result in a directive to leave class. Students who are especially disruptive also may be reported to the Dean of Students for disciplinary action in accordance with university policy.

### **CELL PHONE/ELECTRONIC DEVICES POLICY**

**The use by students of electronic devices that perform the function of a telephone or text messenger during class-time is prohibited.** Arrangements for handling potential emergency situations may be granted at the discretion of the instructor. Failure to comply with the instructor's policy could result in expulsion from the classroom, or with multiple offenses, failure of the course.

Any use of a telephone or text messenger or any device that performs these functions during a test period is prohibited. These devices shall not be present during a test or should be stored securely in such a way that they cannot be seen or used by the student. Even the visible presence of such a device during the test period will result in a zero for that test. Use of these devices during a test is considered de facto evidence of cheating and could result in a charge of academic dishonesty (see student code of conduct).

### **VISITORS IN THE CLASSROOM**

Unannounced visitors to class must present a current, official SHSU identification card to be permitted in the classroom. They must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance. If a visitor is not a registered student, it is the instructor's discretion whether or not the visitor will be allowed to remain in the classroom.

### **STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance should register with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Lee Drain Annex (telephone 936-294-3512, TDD 936-294-3786, and e-mail [disability@shsu.edu](mailto:disability@shsu.edu)). They should then make arrangements with their individual instructors so that appropriate strategies can be considered and helpful procedures can be developed to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired.

SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If you have a disability that may affect adversely your work in this class, then I encourage you to register with the SHSU Services for Students with Disabilities and to talk with me about how I can best help you. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. NOTE: No accommodation can be made until you register with the Services for Students with Disabilities. For a complete listing of the university policy, see: <http://www.shsu.edu/dept/academic-affairs/documents/aps/students/811006.pdf>

**RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS**

An institution of higher education shall excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence. A student who plans to miss a class or required activity to observe a religious holy day should inform the instructor of all such days in writing not later than the 15<sup>th</sup> calendar day after the first day of the semester.

**TENTATIVE SCHEDULE**

THU	08/24	Course Introduction and Requirements ✓ <b>Writing Assignment #1 (Assessment) – due 08/31</b>
TUE	08/29	Elements of Good Writing
THU	08/31	Written Communications for Business and Professional Purposes ✓ <b>Writing Assignment #2 (Business Letter) – due 09/07</b>
TUE	09/05	Assessment of Business and Professional Letters
THU	09/07	Written Communication for Career Purposes ✓ <b>Writing Assignment #3 (Application Letter) – due 09/14</b>
TUE	09/12	Assessment of Letters of Application
THU	09/14	Public Relations Efforts ✓ <b>Writing Assignment #4 (Press Release) – due 09/21</b>
TUE	09/19	Assessment of Press Releases
THU	09/21	Informative Speaking
TUE	09/26	Persuasive Speaking ✓ <b>Assign Speech Project – due 10/10</b>
THU	09/28	Effective Oral Communication Skills ✓ <i>End of information for Examination #1</i>
TUE	10/03	<b>Examination #1</b> ✓ <i>Individual Assistance for Speech Project after exam</i>
THU	10/05	Speech Introductions – Capturing the Audience’s Attention
TUE	10/10	<b>Speech Projects Due</b> ✓ <b>Informative or Persuasive Speech Presentations (1-10)</b> ✓ <b><u>ALL</u> speech outlines due</b>

THU	10/12	<b>Speech Projects (cont.)</b> ✓ <b>Informative or Persuasive Speech Presentations (11-21)</b>
TUE	10/17	Using Computers to Enhance Professional Presentations ✓ <b>Assign PowerPoint Project – due 11/16</b>
THU	10/19	Planning and Creating a Professional Computer Presentation
TUE	10/24	Characteristics of Successful Workers
THU	10/26	Communication Characteristics of a Successful Worker Non-Verbal Communication
TUE	10/31	Non-Verbal Communication (cont.) Ethics, Etiquette, and Professionalism in Communication
THU	11/02	Ethics, Etiquette, and Professionalism in Communication (cont.)
TUE	11/07	Understanding Group Dynamics ✓ <i>End of information for Examination #2</i>
THU	11/09	<b>Examination #2</b>
TUE	11/14	<i>Individual Assistance for PowerPoint Project</i>
THU	11/16	<b>PowerPoint Project Due</b> ✓ <b>PowerPoint Presentations – 1, 2, 3, 4, 5</b> ✓ <b><u>ALL</u> PowerPoint Presentations due by e-mail</b>
TUE	11/21	<b>PowerPoint Presentations (cont.) – 6, 7, 8, 9, 10</b>
THU	11/23	<b><i>No Class – Thanksgiving Holiday</i></b>
THU	11/28	<b>PowerPoint Presentations (cont.) – 11, 12, 13, 14, 15</b>
TUE	11/30	<b>PowerPoint Presentations (cont.) – 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21</b> ✓ <i>Review for Final Examination</i>
<b>Tuesday, December 5</b>		<b>Final Examination 1:00-3:00 p.m.</b>