

Sam Houston State University

College of Science

Department of Agricultural Sciences

Course Syllabus
ACOM 3360-02
Communication Skills for Agriculturalists
3 Hours
Spring 2018

LOCATION

Online/Blackboard

SCHEDULE

January 17 – May 08

INSTRUCTOR

Jennifer Ann Scasta

Email: jascasta@shsu.edu

Office Hours: 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 this course, students should 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 communication for broadcast media purposes;
- 8) Prepare communications for public relations purposes;
- 9) Demonstrate effective oral communication skills;
- 10) Develop a professional, computer generated presentation;
- 11) Summarize proper usage and etiquette regarding electronic communication, especially email and social media for personal and professional purposes.

TEXT

There is no textbook for this course. All materials will be provided via Blackboard.

PARTICIPATION

Your participation in discussion posts is vital to your success of this course. Discussion posts will serve as your participation/attendance points. There is much to be learned from your fellow classmates, so I expect you to take the discussion posts serious and participate in each module's posts.

ASSIGNMENTS & EXAMS

Students will be expected to compete the requirements listed below.

- 1) Three examinations- two tests and a cumulative final. The final will be comprehensive. All exams could include multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. Missed and make-up exams are subject to being administered in an all-essay format. Exams will be proctored using ProctorFree.
- 2) Quizzes will be administered throughout the semester.
- 3) Four writing assignments: A resume/cover letter, blog post, press release, and research paper.
- 4) One oral presentation with PowerPoint slides on a current agricultural topic
- 5) Participation in class discussion boards

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

GRADING

<i>Assignment</i>	<i>Available Points</i>
Exam #1	100
Exam #2	100
Cumulative Final Exam	100
Writing Assignments (4 @ 100 pts)	400
Quizzes (10 @ 10 pts)	100
Oral Presentation + PowerPoint Slides	100
Participation (Discussion Board Posts)	100
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<i>Total Points:</i>	<i>1000</i>

GRADING SCALE

A= 900 – 1000 points
B= 800 – 899 points
C= 700 – 799 points
D= 600 – 699 points
F= Below 600 points

There will not be a curve in this course. Do not wait until the day grades are due and ask for extra points. If you are struggling with a concept or an assignment, please let me know so I can assist you.

LATE POLICY

Late assignments will be assessed a 25% penalty for each calendar day they are late, regardless of the reason.

Assignment due dates and times are clearly stated in Blackboard. Each assignment will be due at 11:59 pm on the assigned due date. Assignments MUST be submitted via Blackboard, do not email me assignments. If you have an issue with Blackboard, please let me know. If I cannot assist you, I will refer you to the Help Desk.

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.

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). 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/academicaffairs/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 15th calendar day after the first day of the semester.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

Instructor reserves the right to make changes and substitutions to the course outline and syllabus without prior notification

Wed	01/17	1- Course Instructions and Requirements Assignment(s): Discussion Board Post #1 (Due 01/22 at 11:59 pm) Quiz #1 (Due 01/22 at 11:59 pm)
Mon	01/22	2- Elements of Good Writing Assignment(s): Quiz #2 (Due 01/29 at 11:59 pm)
Mon	01/29	3- Written Communication for Business and Professional Purposes Assessment of Business and Professional Letters Assignment(s): Quiz #3 (Due 02/05 at 11:59 pm)
Mon	02/05	4-Written Communication for Career Purposes Assessment of Letters of Application Assignment(s): Writing Assignment #1 - Resume & Cover Letter (Due 02/12 at 11:59 pm)
Mon	02/12	5- Agricultural Advocacy- What is it? How do I do it? Assignment(s): Discussion Board Post #2 (Due at 02/19 at 11:59 pm) Quiz #4 (Due at 02/19 at 11:59 pm)
Mon	02/19	6- Real Life Agricultural Advocates & What They Do Assignment(s): Writing Assignment #2 - Agricultural Blog Post (Due 02/26 at 11:59 pm)
Mon	02/26	Exam #1 (Opens 02/26 at 8 am and closes 02/27 at 11:59 pm)
Mon	03/05	7- Public Relations Efforts Assignment(s): Discussion Board Post #3 (Due 03/19 at 11:59 pm) Quiz #5 (Due 03/19 at 11:59 pm)
Mon	03/12	SPRING BREAK
Mon	03/19	8- Assessment of Press Releases Assignment(s): Writing Assignment #3 - Press Release (Due 03/26 at 11:59 pm) Quiz #6 (Due 03/26 at 11:59 pm)
Mon	03/26	9- Ethics, Etiquette, and Professionalism in Communication Assignment(s): Assign Research Paper/Oral Presentation topic (due 04/02 at 11:59 pm) Quiz #7 (Due 04/02 at 11:59 pm)
Mon	04/02	10-Characteristics of Successful Workers Non-Verbal Communication Assignment(s): Discussion Board Post #4 Quiz #8 (Due 04/09 at 11:59 pm)

Mon	04/09	Exam #2 (Opens 04/09 at 8 am and closes 04/10 at 11:59 pm)
Mon	04/16	11-Effective Oral Presentation Skills Types of Speaking – Informative & Persuasive Assignment(s): Writing Assignment #4 - Research Paper (Due 04/23 at 11:59 pm)
Mon	04/23	12- Using Computers to Enhance PowerPoint Presentations Planning and Creating a Professional Computer Generated Presentation Assignment(s): Quiz #9 (Due 04/30 at 11:59 pm) Discussion Board Post #5
Mon	04/30	13- Understanding and Developing Presentation Skills Assignment(s): Oral Presentation & PowerPoint Slides (Due 05/07 at 11:59 pm) Quiz # 10 (Due 05/07 at 11:59 pm)
Mon	05/07	Cumulative Final Exam (Opens 05/07 at 8 am and closes 05/08 at 11:59 pm)