

Sample Syllabus - Business Communication
Using *Magnetic Communication* (Buxton) as the core text

Instructor

Name:

Email:

Office hours:

Course meeting

Day/Time:

Location / modality:

Course overview

This course is about speaking and writing with impact in our fast-paced, digital-first, increasingly AI-mediated working world. Throughout the semester, you will learn to build trust as a magnetic communicator through user-friendly frameworks, audience analysis techniques, and by honing your unique personal brand.

By the end of the term, students will leave with a portfolio of work they can reuse (and be proud to show): an executive summary, polished professional outreach, presentations, a LinkedIn/about draft, and an etiquette/credibility project that turns into a small media artifact.

Learning outcomes

Students who fully engage will be able to:

- Write clear, audience-tuned messages that move a reader to action.
- Deliver organized, confident presentations using a repeatable structure.
- Apply HOPES as a go-to framework across common business genres
- Use AI tools responsibly—without sounding generic, hollow, or fake.
- Communicate effectively in digital environments
- Lead teams effectively with a style that fits authentically
- Offer and receive feedback with grace
- Demonstrate etiquette and credibility practices that reduce friction and build trust.

Required materials

- **Buxton, A. Carly. *Magnetic Communication: Speaking and Writing with Professional Impact* (Bloomsbury Academic)**
- Access to a word processor and slides tool (Google Slides/PowerPoint).
- A way to record short videos (phone/laptop).

Major course components and grading

1) Individual Professional Launch Projects — 40%

- **Executive Summary (10%)** A polished, executive-facing summary of an article/report relevant to a professional audience.
- **Professional Touchpoint (15%)** Cold/warm outreach → meeting (or call) → follow-up thank-you. Submitted as a clean packet.
- **Etiquette Squares + Micro-Media Artifact (15%)**
A semester-long credibility/etiquette challenge, culminating in a short audio “mini-episode” (or equivalent artifact) + thumbnail.

2) Team Challenges — 30%

- **Team Presentation #1: Case Study Analysis (10%)** Informational presentation with a clear takeaway.
- **Team Presentation #2: Consulting Recommendations (10%)** A recommendation deck with an implementation plan.
- **Team Presentation #3: Business Pitch (10%)** A persuasive pitch recorded on video.

3) Authentic Participation, Reflection, & Responsibility — 30%

- **Participation & professionalism (15%)** Presence, contribution, and “acts like a colleague.”
- **Homework & practice (15%)** Short weekly work that makes the in-class time useful.

Professional standards and course policies

Presence

This course runs on attention. Devices are used only when required for an activity.

Attendance

Because the course meets once per week, missing class has a real cost. If absent, students must (1) contact the instructor, (2) complete any missed work within one week, and (3) complete a substitute contribution (reflection, office hour, or make-up task).

AI use policy (simple and enforceable)

AI is allowed—and expected—in certain phases (Architect and Judge—you'll learn what this means!)

- Not allowed: turning in AI-generated work as if it were original thinking
- Required: disclose AI use briefly (endnote or slide) when it meaningfully shaped the output

Late work

Late work may be accepted within a short grace window with a deduction. Final deliverables have firm deadlines.

Academic integrity

All work must be original or properly attributed.

Course schedule (15-week template)

(Adjust dates and insert campus-specific items as needed.)

Week 1 — Kickoff: why communication still matters

- In class: course frame, expectations, baseline self-intro speeches, “about me”
- Due: read full syllabus + prepare ~1-min self-intro speech

Week 2 — Credibility, audience, and HOPES foundations

- In class: reading check, HOPES breakdown, redo self-intro with audience + purpose
- Due: read *MC* Introduction, Chapter 1, and Chapter 2

Week 3 — Writing basics + editing practice + AI realities

- In class: style/clarity diagnostics, “bad writing triage,” AI pitfalls and responsible workflow
- Due: read *MC* Chapter 3 and Chapter 4, professional touchpoint planning worksheet

Week 4 — Audience analysis + public speaking fundamentals

- In class: empathy mapping, “comms wreck” analysis, speaking anxiety tools, Impromptu drafting
- Due: read *MC* Chapter 5

Week 5 — Presentation prep and delivery habits + GUEST SPEAKER (someone who gives presentations regularly for work, but prepares for them differently than you do as instructor)

- In class: Guest speaker, slide-to-script-to-bullets, rehearsal methods, Q&A readiness
- Due: submit Impromptu speech video on course site

Week 6 — Team Presentation #1: Case Study (informational)

- In class: presentations + peer evaluation
- Due: team slides + evals

Week 7 — Digital communication + cold email workshop

- In class: best practices synthesis, critique samples, draft outreach with empathy map + AI-as-editor

- Due: read *MC* Chapter 6, bring 2–3 cold email tips from a blog, podcast, or conversation with a working adult, submit homework reflection (advice to self after watching my Impromptu speech)

Week 8 — Feedback week / catch-up / 1:1s [DELETE FOR SHORTER SEMESTER]

- In class: midterm feedback moment; conferencing; course correction in case of weather-related cancellations
- Due: send professional touchpoint outreach (scheduled meeting target: within 2 weeks)

Week 9 — No class / break week [DELETE FOR SHORTER SEMESTER]

Week 10 — Consulting 101: how to give useful recommendations

- In class: consulting mindset, diagnosing problems, asking better questions, panel-style Q&A with working consultant
- Due: Read Turner, A N. “Consulting Is More than Giving Advice.” *Harvard Business Review*, 1982.

Week 11 — Data storytelling + visualization: insights that travel

- In class: junk charts activity, turning data into “so what / now what”
- Due: read *MC* Chapter 7, turn in **Executive Summary**

Week 12 — Leadership communication + running meetings

- In class: positive communication practices, meeting mechanics, difficult dynamics
- Due: read *MC* Chapter 8; read Antony Jay, "How to Run a Meeting" from *Harvard Business Review*, March 1979, submit async Loom meeting for your team on course site

Week 13 — Team Presentation #2: Consulting Recommendations

- In class: consulting presentations + peer evaluation
- Due: team slides + evals

Week 14 — Personal brand: LinkedIn + resume workshop

- In class: brand coherence, “about me” writing, tailoring materials to a role
- Due: **Professional Touchpoint packet**, read *MC* Chapter 9, watch your teammates' looms submitted in Week 12

Week 15 — Etiquette: credibility, comfort, and cultural awareness

- In class: etiquette factoid share-outs + applied activity (escape-room style or stations)
- Due: **Etiquette Squares podcast**, read *MC* Chapter 10 and Conclusion, read a hardcopy book about etiquette (ebook NOT ok!) and bring in 2-3 factoids that made you say "interesting!"

Finals week — Team Presentation #3: Business Pitch (recorded)

- Due: pitch video + team evals
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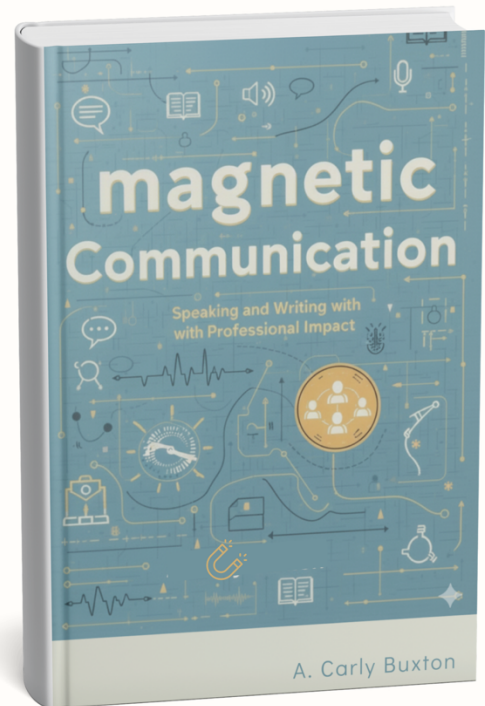
Optional: instructor notes for adapting this syllabus

- If you *don't* have a real client for consulting: use a simulated client packet (real company, fictional ask).
- If you want less “school” feel: move diagnostics/quizzes to optional self-checks and put more weight on rewrites.
- If you want less production: swap the podcast/audio artifact for a one-page “field guide” or annotated script.
- I'm happy to provide more details about the assignments I develop, the worksheets I use, and the in-class activities I've structured! Just email me at annecarlton@gmail.com.

Keep it Magnetic

This resource is free to use and share with attribution. It is drawn from the research and frameworks in *Magnetic Communication: Speaking and Writing with Professional Impact* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2026) by A. Carly Buxton, PhD.

carlybuxton.com/magnetic



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Workshops



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