

Presentation Skills Development Mathematics in Finance Master's Program

Fall 2000

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Office Hours: Thursdays
1:30-2:15; 4:30-5:15
(by appointment only)

The goal of this course is to increase your communication effectiveness in business and professional situations. The course is designed to provide you with experience, practice, and guidance in developing the following communication activities:

- ⊙ To identify, define, and practice the basic concepts of business and professional communication, including written, spoken, and non-verbal communication
- ⊙ To appropriately adapt your communication behavior to the demands of particular situations, and to learn how to develop successful communication strategies
- ⊙ To develop and maintain self-confidence while communicating

Required materials:

1. Each student must purchase one videotape (VHS, 1/2") for taping and reviewing all oral presentations. Label the tape with your name on the face and the spine and bring it to classes ready to record when oral presentations are scheduled. Unfortunately, we cannot devote any class time to rewinding or fast-forwarding videotapes.
2. Guide to Managerial Communication: Effective Business Writing and Speaking, fifth edition, Mary Munter (Prentice Hall, 2000).

All of the articles marked RP (for "Reading Packet") will be handed out in class.

Web Resources

For additional help, there are a number of available resources on the Worldwide Web. Particularly helpful are:

- **Purdue Online Writing Lab:** <http://www.owl.english.purdue.edu>
- **English Grammar Links for ESL students:** <http://www.gl.umbc.edu/~kpokoy1/grammar1.htm>
- **Paradigm Online Writing Assistant :** <http://www.powa.org>.
- **Elements of Style online:** <http://www.bartleby.com>
- **Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute Online Writing Center:**
<http://www.rpi.edu/web/writingcenter/online.html>

Schedule of Sessions

Date	Topic	Required Preparation
Session 1 September 14	Communication Strategy A simple communication model. To write or not to write? Defining and distinguishing business communication. Getting started: the writing process. The communication objective.. Analyzing your audience and environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver 3–minute “benchmark” presentation as described on p. 4 • Read Munter, Chapters I–IV
Session 2 September 21 (appointments scheduled at 1 st class)	Finding Your Personal Style	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual appointments for video review and evaluation with Professor Fleisher. (20 minute meetings)
Session 3 September 28	The Message: Structure Making a strong start. Arranging ideas. Making analysis convincing. Elements of persuasion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit first written assignment described on page 5. (Three copies, please.) • Read Persuasive Speaking, Persuasion, What Do You Mean I Can’t Write? (handouts) • Read Structuring a Written Document (RP) • Read Munter, pp. 85–90
Session 4 October 6	Readability and Effect Making the tone right. Writing coherently and clearly. Giving feedback. Group review and discussion of colleagues’ writing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Munter, pp. 59–83

Session 5
October 13

Creating Visual Appeal

Formatting essentials. Components of various business documents. Visual aids in written and oral presentation.

- Read Munter, Chapter VI
- Read Using Visual Aids and all articles under “Graphic Display of Information” heading (RP)
- Submit critique of colleague’s report. Assignment on page 6.

Date	Topic	Required Preparation
<p>Session 6 October 19</p>	<p>Non-Verbal Components of Effective Business Presentation Basic delivery skills. The hierarchy of non-verbals. Tips and techniques for improving your eye contact, voice, gestures, stance and movement. Overcoming nervousness.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Munter, Chapters V and pp. 144–157. • Read Now That We Have Your Complete Attention (handout) • Read A Note on Oral Presentations (HBR) • Read Presentation Checklist, Organizing the Presentation, Strategies for Overcoming Nervousness (RP) • Submit revision of written assignment. Revise based on colleagues' input and learning.
<p>Session 7 October 26</p>	<p>Conducting Q&A Sessions Informative Presentation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Munter, pp. 91–94 • Read Banana Peels, The Question Process (handouts) • Deliver 5–minute informative presentation using at least one visual aid. See page 6 for more detail. • Submit Talk to Inform template or reasonable facsimile (handout)
<p>Session 8 November 2</p>	<p>Persuasive Presentation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver 8–minute informative presentation including 3 minutes of Q&A and using visual aids. See page 6 for more detail.

Assignments

Benchmark Speaking Assignment: Personal Anecdote

Deliver at Session 1

Time: 3 minutes

Please prepare a 3–minute narrative oral presentation that communicates something interesting and unique about your experience as a Mathematics in Finance Master’s candidate. The purpose of this assignment is to help you to become familiar with yourself as a presenter. In particular, we will focus on delivery skills and your natural communication style. You will be taped but not graded. **Please sign up for an appointment to review your videotape with the professor.**

You may choose to speak about:

- Why you are seeking a Master’s in Mathematics in Finance
- Why you chose your project
- What career you aspire to after earning your Mathematics in Finance degree

In choosing your topic your most important consideration will be your interaction with your audience. What will your classmates find interesting? What is likely to bore them to tears? (Go with the former.)

Also consider the time limit. It is impossible to discuss the details of your project methodology in just three minutes. Yet, there may be some aspect of your work that your peers could relate to or find interesting/funny/scary/valuable/astonishing that could be well presented in three minutes. **YOU WILL BE STOPPED AT THE THREE–MINUTE MARK!**

Finally, bear in mind your role in your presentation. What is your personal style? Do you feel comfortable in front of a group? Are you particularly enthusiastic about something? Knowledgeable about something?

In preparing this presentation, think about an opening and closing line so that you can start and end speaking comfortably...and gain the attention of your peer audience. **DO NOT BEGIN WITH: “Today, I am going to talk about XYZ.”** Plan what you are going to say so you will be able to speak without notes. Rehearse out loud at least twice, preferably in front of a mirror, and check the time carefully.

Be sure to bring your labeled videotape so that you can review your presentation.

Writing Assignment: My Internship Experience
Submit at Session 3. Please turn in three copies.

Write a short report (3–10 pages) on your internship experience.

Your primary and immediate **audience** is your senior advisor at Courant. Secondly, it may be circulated among other faculty members, administrators of the program, executives of companies who have employed or are considering employing interns or graduates from this program. It will also be read by your peers and might be made available to future enrollees to show them their prospects or help them evaluate an internship.

Your report should include a description of your responsibilities and interactions, an assessment of knowledge or experience gained, an evaluation of the applicability of this experience to your project development, your professional experience and your career aspirations. You may also discuss how you decided to pursue this internship; what you observed about the corporate culture or the industry that was new, useful or revealing; what feedback you received about your performance and abilities.

Writing Assignment: Colleague Critique
Submit at Session 5.

Prepare 2 copies: one will be given to the author of the report you reviewed

Read your classmate's internship report and provide **written** feedback either as a colleague or as the primary audience for the memo.

Decide whether or not this report would be useful to all the audiences that would read it. Is it comprehensive? Clear? Coherent? Is there an effective opening statement? A strong, summarizing conclusion? If recommendations are advanced, are they well-supported and feasible? Is the report readable? Are transitions used effectively? Do the thoughts flow? Is there a clear message?

Edit the memo on all levels. If you wish to mark up your copy to correct grammar, punctuation and spelling or to suggest different word choices or structure, please do. However, you must copy your edited version and turn it in **with** your critique of the thinking behind the writing.

The objective of this assignment is to have you practice critiquing a colleague. Your sensitivity to the author's ego and the effort you put into evaluating his or her thinking and writing will contribute to your grade as will your own writing skills in structuring and wording your critique. You may want to refer to the Fielden article, "What Do Mean I Can't Write," and the memo checklist handed out in class in your analysis.

Informative Presentation: Project Related

Deliver at Session 7

Time: 5 minutes

Visual Aids: as necessary

Audience: class (peers). If we need some background to understand the context in which you are speaking, please e-mail, FAX or distribute it to us at least three days before you present.

Choose one of these options:

- 1. You are speaking to an audience who needs to know something vital about your business experience. You are informing them about something significant or interesting from your business background that you think will benefit them.**
- 2. You are describing an aspect of your project that is useful to your audience. This can be a technique or a method you have used, a technological change that is integral to your project development, or a new approach that you have developed or researched.**

Complimentary Task: Complete the Talk to Inform template that will be handed out. Turn in your template OR a complete outline OR your preparatory notes with storyboard (if using visual aids) after you speak. My objective: seeing what you use to prepare your informative presentation; forcing you to consider structure, main points and timing before you speak.

Persuasive Speaking: Project-Related

Deliver at Session 8

Time: 8-minutes including 3 minutes conducting Q&A session

Visual Aids: Use at least one

Audience: Superiors and peers as specified by presenter

Scenario: Speaker defined. You may provide one or two paragraphs of situation analysis or background to prepare your classmates to play audience roles. We cannot use class time for audience set-up.

Set up a role-play that involves convincing a group of superiors or peers (or a mixed rank audience) to fund, initiate or use some aspect of the project you are developing. Or, convince an audience that your work will add value to its efforts. Or, defend your choice of project.

Define the audience role and your role as speaker. Approach us as if we were fairly knowledgeable; **do not bore us with background**. Fill it in as you address relevant issues. Part of this assignment is to see how you can define the situation and play it as if it were real.

To define the role-play, you need to determine the following:

When should the meeting take place? What is the environment?

Who should be in the audience? Who has the power to effect your recommendation?

Consider your objective. What do you want the audience to do as a result of your presentation?
Remember to ask for the action and define the next step.

If you wish, you may hand out a brief role description and situation analysis to the class before you speak. This should be no longer than half a page and designed so that the audience can quickly grasp their role and know what yours is and where they are.