

**BILD 92 A00 Business Communications in the Biological Sciences  
Fall 2020 Syllabus**

**Instructor:** Steve Briggs, [sbriggs@ucsd.edu](mailto:sbriggs@ucsd.edu)

**T.A.:** Melissa Hoon, [mhoon@ucsd.edu](mailto:mhoon@ucsd.edu)

**Class time:** Tuesdays 10-10:50 a.m.

**Grading system:** P/NP

**Course units:** 1 unit

**Office hours:** By appointment

### **Course Description**

This course is designed for undergraduate students in the Division of Biological Sciences who are pursuing a career in the life sciences industry, and are seeking to develop and strengthen their professional communications skills—written, verbal and nonverbal. Topics that will be covered include networking basics, building and maintaining a professional network, soft skills, writing professional communications, and developing interview and presentation skills. Students will develop key skills to thrive in and maximize their internship or job experience through learning from guest speakers who are life sciences professionals; simulating workplace scenarios and receiving feedback from life sciences professionals; participating in soft skills and self-awareness activities; and through a mock interview with an industry hiring manager as their final project.

### **Key Resources (# 1-3 are optional)**

1. *Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When Stakes are High* by Al Switzler, Joseph Grenny, and Ron McMillan (second edition, 2012); available on Amazon.
2. *Emotional Intelligence* by Travis Bradberry and Jean Greaves (2009); available on Amazon.
3. StrengthsFinder assessment (optional); [gallup.com](http://gallup.com); use [ucsd.edu](mailto:ucsd.edu) email address for discount (total cost ~\$11).
4. Handshake for job and internship postings, and professional development events and programs; [ucsd.joinhandshake.com](http://ucsd.joinhandshake.com).
5. LinkedIn for job and internship postings, networking, and professional development events.

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

On completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. Feel confident in their written, verbal and nonverbal professional communication skills that can be used in professional settings.
2. Understand what it takes to be a competitive candidate in their chosen field for an internship or job, including skills in leadership, collaboration, vulnerability, seeking help, self-awareness, written and verbal communication, giving and receiving feedback, and more.
3. Develop and maintain professional relationships and find mentors, including industry professionals and UC San Diego alumni, to provide guidance on their professional endeavors, or serve as references on job applications or as connections to learn about job and internship opportunities.
4. Understand what is needed to develop a competitive resume and cover letter, and consistently add to a resume to evolve their competitiveness as their experience evolves.

5. Confidently execute critical soft skills, including collaboration, public speaking, nonverbal communication, written communication, listening and problem-solving.
6. Know their top five soft skills (and StrengthsFinder strengths, if they elect to take the assessment) and how they can best apply them in an internship or job.

### Assignments and Grading

***All assignments, unless noted otherwise, are due at 11:59 p.m. the first Sunday after they are assigned.***

Date	Class Topics	Assignments	Points	Due
<b>Week 1</b> 10/6/20	Introduction, syllabus review, resume.	Resume (first draft)	10	10/11/20
<b>Week 2</b> 10/13/20	Resume review and cover letter.	Resume (second draft) and cover letter (first draft)	20	10/18/20
<b>Week 3</b> 10/20/20	LinkedIn	Craft your informational interview outreach message to LinkedIn connections or potential/future connections and submit a written elevator pitch that you will present in Week 3's class. Create/update your LinkedIn account, according to the guidelines given in class.	10	10/25/20
<b>Week 4</b> 10/27/20	Soft Skills, Part 1	You and your partner must <b>choose one scenario below to write about AND one to present to me via Zoom.</b>	30	Written: 11/1/20  Present: Week of 11/9/20

		<p><b><u>Written Assignment</u></b></p> <p>For the scenario you choose to write about, work on writing it together. Both of you must submit the exact same copy when answering the scenario questions (below). Follow these guidelines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Approximately 500 words</li><li>• Be sure to answer all questions thoroughly that are asked in the scenario prompt</li><li>• Each of you will separately submit an additional file where you will reflect in 250-500 words on what it was like to work with your partner. Be sure to answer these questions:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ What was it like to collaborate with your partner? Were there any challenges? If so, what were they and how did you both work through</li></ul></li></ul>		
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		<p>them? What went well? Give examples.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What soft skills did you notice your partner has? Give examples of when they showcased these skills. What soft skills do you think they can work on? Give examples of why you think they need to work on these skills.</li> <li>○ What soft skills did you use during this assignment? Give examples.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Zoom Presentation</u></b></p> <p>For the scenario you choose to present to me, one of you must email me by April 30 at <a href="mailto:mhoon@ucsd.edu">mhoon@ucsd.edu</a> (cc your partner) with five times between the hours of 8 a.m.-5 p.m. that work for both of you during the week of May 11 to present your scenario via</p>		
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		<p>Zoom to me. I will let you know what time works for me and will send you both a Zoom link.</p> <p>Follow these guidelines when you both give the presentation to me:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Make eye contact with me</li> <li>● Speak clearly, try to eliminate "filler" words such as "um" and "like"</li> <li>● Use strong, confident body language</li> <li>● Don't be too serious; try to come off as approachable</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Scenario #1</u></b></p> <p>Imagine that you and your partner are getting ready to present results you've been working on with a team at work for the last six months to the VP of the company. You all had equal roles in the research and had decided you'd each have equal parts in presenting your research. However, someone on your team (not you or your partner) unexpectedly</p>		
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		<p>dominated the presentation, making it look like they did all the work in your team's research. In fact, at the end of the presentation, the VP only directed her questions to this person, ignoring the rest of your team.</p> <p><b>How would you and your partner respond after the presentation to the person who dominated it? Is there anyone at work who you would both talk to about this? If so, who and what would you say?</b></p> <p><b><u>Scenario #2</u></b></p> <p>You and your partner have been working on a project with your team at work for several weeks without making much progress. You and your partner are entry-level employees and feel you have an idea that will push the project forward. One day, you and your partner were in the project leader's office and casually mention your idea to the project leader (who is not your boss). He</p>		
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		<p>shuts down your idea, telling you both that it would require too many resources and that your idea is not how things are traditionally done within the company. But you've done your research and know this would not require more resources than your company can afford.</p> <p><b>How would you and your partner respond to your team leader who shuts down your idea? What would you say? Would you talk with anyone else about it? If so, who? Would you present your idea again and if so, how would you present it this time?</b></p>		
<b>Week 5</b> 11/3/20	Class attendance is optional due to Election Day. This will be an office hours class where you can check in and ask Melissa questions.	Resolving a Professional Scenario Using Soft Skills (partner project)		
<b>Week 6</b> 11/10/20	Maintaining professional relationships.	Send LinkedIn messages and informational interview.		
<b>Week 7</b> 11/17/20	Soft Skills, Part 2	Soft Skills Reflection	15	11/8/20

<b>Week 8</b> 11/24/20	Writing professional emails.	Professional emails.	15 / 25	11/15/20
<b>Week 9</b> 12/1/20	Mock interview class discussion.	Partner Project: Practice Mock Interview and Informational Interview	25 / 30	11/22/20
<b>Week 10</b> 12/8/20	Class discussion on what it was like to practice the mock interview with your partner and general mock interview prep for the final.	Mock Interview	50	Week of 12/14/20
<b>FINALS WEEK</b> 12/15/20	No class.	Mock Interview		
<b>Class and Discussion Participation</b>	You will receive 10 points per discussion thread you participate in on Canvas.		70	The first Sunday at 11:59 p.m. after the thread is posted
<b>Extra Credit</b>	You will receive up to 5 points for each presenter/industry professional who you send a thank you note via LinkedIn.		5-15	12/15/20
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>300</b>

*Final grades will be determined using the scale below.*

**You must attend class to pass this course.**

>210 points = Passing (P) Grade

<210 points = No Pass (NP) Grade

### **Late Assignments**

If you turn in an assignment late, you have the opportunity to receive a maximum of half credit. If you must turn in an assignment late for any reason, it is your responsibility to contact Melissa Hoon, the

facilitator of this course, who will consider whether or not she will give you the option to make up your missing points by adding a component to the original assignment.

### **Course Policy on Absences and Missed Assignments**

If you absolutely cannot be in class when scheduled, it is your responsibility to contact the instructor at least one week prior to the scheduled class with valid documentation for missing the class. It will then be determined by the instructor if a make-up assignment will be permitted. The instructor will determine what the assignment will be. If you miss a scheduled class due to a university-scheduled event, you must provide documentation from a university faculty or staff member (e.g., written documentation on university letterhead signed by the faculty/staff member) one week prior to the class. Failure to provide documentation prior to the class will result in a zero. If you miss a scheduled class due to a personal event, valid documentation must be provided (e.g., written documentation from a doctor/parent, jury duty summons) one week prior to class. If a class is missed for any other reason, it is your responsibility to contact the instructor within 24 hours of the missed class or a grade of zero will be given for the class and assignment missed.

### **Expectations and Class Rules**

- Timely attendance to all classes
- Respectful attitude towards peers, guest speakers and instructors (no speaking while others are speaking)
- Electronic devices turned off or set to silent mode
- Complete all assignments on time
- Honest use of sources and citation of sources, including citation of notes from classmates and Internet searches

### **Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this course, please make arrangements to meet with the instructor as soon as possible. Please request that the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD) send you an Authorization for Accommodation (AFA) letter verifying your disability. You will receive the appropriate accommodations from the day that you provide the course instructor with the AFA letter. Course accommodations cannot be applied retroactively (e.g., after an examination).

### **Academic Integrity**

All work submitted in this course must be your own and produced exclusively for this course. The use of sources (ideas, quotations, paraphrases) must be properly acknowledged and documented. If in doubt, you are encouraged to review guidelines for the proper use of sources, as well as UC San Diego's policy on plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct. It is your responsibility to know what constitutes academic misconduct at UC San Diego. UC San Diego's definition of academic misconduct can be found here at <http://academicintegrity.ucsd.edu/excel-integrity/define-cheating/index.html> and the official university policy on the Integrity of Scholarship can be found at <http://academicintegrity.ucsd.edu/process/policy.html>. If you suspect another student of academic misconduct, you are strongly encouraged to report it.

Turnitin.com software may be used in this course to detect plagiarism. Students agree that by taking this course that all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the terms of use agreement posted on the Turnitin.com site. Your papers will be submitted in such a way that no identifying information about you is included. You may request that your papers not be submitted to Turnitin.com. However, if you make this request you will be required to provide documentation to substantiate that the papers are your original work and do not include plagiarized material.

### Course Outline Summary

Date	Class Topics	Assignments
<b>Week 1</b> 10/6/20	Introduction, syllabus review, and how to build an effective resume and cover letter.  Join live Zoom: <a href="https://ucsd.zoom.us/j/94723872912">https://ucsd.zoom.us/j/94723872912</a>	Resume and Cover Letter—first draft
<b>Week 2</b> 10/13/20	Making professional connections.	LinkedIn message and elevator pitch.
<b>Week 3</b> 10/20/20	LinkedIn	Create/update your LinkedIn account
<b>Week 4</b> 10/27/20	Soft Skills, Part 1	Resolving a Professional Scenario Using Soft Skills (written portion and partner project)
<b>Week 5</b> 11/3/20	Class attendance is optional due to Election Day. This will be an office hours class where you can check in and ask Melissa questions.	Resolving a Professional Scenario Using Soft Skills (partner project)
<b>Week 6</b> 11/10/20	Maintaining professional relationships.	Send LinkedIn messages and informational interview.
<b>Week 7</b> 11/17/20	Soft Skills, Part 2	Soft Skills Reflection
<b>Week 8</b>	Writing professional emails.	Professional emails.

11/24/20		
<b>Week 9</b> 12/1/20	Mock interview class discussion.	Partner Project: Practice Mock Interview and Informational Interview
<b>Week 10</b> 12/8/20	Class discussion on what it was like to practice the mock interview with your partner and general mock interview prep for the final.	Mock Interview
<b>FINALS WEEK</b> 12/15/20	No class.	Mock Interview