UC San Diego
BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

BILD 83 Business Communications (Soft Skills) in Biology
Spring 2024 Syllabus

Staff: Melissa Hoon (she/her/hers)
mhoon@ucsd.edu (Please call me Melissa)
Communication: During this quarter, please contact me (Melissa) with a Canvas message
Instructor of record: Dr. Joe Pogliano (he/him/his)

Class time: Tuesdays 9:00-9:50 a.m.
Location: Horizon Room, Career Center
Grading system: P/NP or letter grade
Course units: 1.0 unit
Office hours: By appointment (see below)
Modality: In person; attendance required

Course Description

This course is for undergraduate biology students of all grade levels and professional experience levels who are pursuing a career in the life sciences, medicine or healthcare industries, and are seeking to strengthen their interpersonal communications skills in the workplace. Topics that will be covered are outlined below and students will practice these skills through in-class group activities as well as homework assignments done individually and with a class partner. By the end of this course, students should have a thorough understanding of soft skills and how to effectively apply them in the workplace.

Course Topics

- General communication in the workplace
- Active listening
- Elevator pitch
- Teamwork and collaboration

- Conflict management
- Time management
- Work ethic
- Soft skills in healthcare professions
- Problem-solving
- Critical thinking

- Creativity
- Emotional intelligence
- Introspection for careers
- Adaptability
- Giving and receiving feedback
- Leadership

Course Philosophy and Environment

We'll work together to create an equitable and inclusive environment of mutual respect where we all feel comfortable to ask questions, challenge our understanding, and share

moments of confusion, reflection, and growth. If you feel that this is not the environment that has been established in this class, please let me know and adjustments will be made.

Office Hours and Support

I am here to support you any time throughout the quarter. I am happy to meet with you in person (scheduled or not scheduled) before or after class. I will arrive to class early and stay afterward. While I don't have regularly scheduled office hours, I encourage you to reach out to me to schedule a conversation for before or after class in person or any time via Zoom. I will respond to your messages as quickly as possible and almost always within 24 hours. This class is designed for all students to have the opportunity to succeed. If you feel this is not the case or if you encounter anything that you feel is preventing you from success in this class, please let me know. I welcome constructive feedback about this class and how the teaching style may or may not align with your learning style. Your feedback is deeply valued and has the power to lead to impactful adaptations.

Accommodations

If you need accommodations for this course due to a disability, please contact the Office for Students with Disabilities at osd@ucsd.edu for an Authorization for Accommodation letter. Please speak with me in the first week of class (or as soon as you join class) if you intend to apply for accommodations or have existing accommodations. For more information, visit disabilities.ucsd.edu.

Subject to Change Policy

Changes to this syllabus might be made during the quarter to enhance student learning. If changes are made, they will be reflected on the syllabus and Canvas.

Academic Integrity

This course is designed for your personal and professional growth. You won't benefit if others (including GenAI/ChatGPT) do your work in any way. All work submitted in this course must be your own and produced exclusively for this course. It is your responsibility to know what constitutes academic misconduct at UC San Diego. Please review UC San Diego's definition of academic misconduct and policy on the Integrity of Scholarship: academicintegrity.ucsd.edu. Use this link to report cheating if you become aware of it.

Course Policy on GenAI/ChatGPT

GenAI/Chat GPT is not allowed as a writing tool in this class. It is, however, allowed as a research tool. View more on UC San Diego's policy on ChatGPT here: academicintegrity.ucsd.edu/excel-integrity/ai-in-education.html

Letter of Recommendation Policy

I am open to writing letters of recommendation. Please email me at mhoon@ucsd.edu to make your request at least two weeks in advance and provide your resume, your qualities you'd like to be reflected in the letter, and a link to the program you're applying to or the job description. In order for me to write a letter of recommendation, I'll need to be able to write in depth about your academic, personal and professional qualities that I've observed. This means you'll need to consistently demonstrate these qualities in class and in interactions with me outside of class. While I am open to writing letters of recommendation, please know that it is usually best for students to have a letter of recommendation from a principal investigator (P.I.) or faculty member in the sciences, depending on what you need the recommendation for.

Technology Policy

Students are not permitted to use websites other than Canvas, unless instructed otherwise, during class or use mobile phones or other devices in class, except for in the case of an emergency.

Campus Policies

This class adheres to the campus policies and principles below. If you have an experience in this class that does not align with these policies and principles, please let me know.

- [UC San Diego Principles of Community](#)
- [UC San Diego Policy on Integrity of Scholarship](#)
- [Religious Accommodation](#)
- [Nondiscrimination and Harassment](#)
- [Student Accountability, Growth and Education (SAGE)](#) / Student conduct policies

Academic, Personal, and Career Development Resources

This list is intended to provide you with resources to support your sense of belonging in the UC San Diego community, as well as to support your academic, personal, and professional growth and success. If you're interested in learning about additional resources or ones that better support your needs and interests, please talk with me. You can also visit the UC San Diego Student Life website (https://ucsd.edu/student-life/index.html) or Student Academic Success website (https://ucsd.edu/academics/academic-success.html). If you feel that you, your needs, and your interests are not represented in the list below, please let me know so that I can include these resources.

1. Teaching and Learning Commons for writing and learning support.
2. Campus Community Centers: Places of belonging, where traditional notions of diversity are challenged, and where self-awareness is learned, leaders are developed, and open dialogue and expression are encouraged.
3. Biology Undergraduate and Masters Mentorship Program (BUMMP) for mentorship and a sense of belonging.
4. PATHS Scholars Program for academically talented students who demonstrate an interest in the advancement of historically underrepresented populations in the sciences and related fields who have been accepted into STEM-related undergraduate programs at UC San Diego.
5. UC San Diego School of Biological Sciences Co-Op Program website where Co-Op positions are posted. The duration of these positions is generally 6-12 months.
6. Biological Sciences Student Association (BSSA), a student organization that aims to provide students with the tools needed to develop professionally and form valuable connections with professors, peers, and industry professionals.
7. BioScholars, a student organization that connects students to resources of a large university and provides an intimate collegiate atmosphere where students work closely with peers and professors in small group settings, research labs, and activities.
8. Research labs at UC San Diego School of Medicine and research labs at UC San Diego School of Biological Sciences - you can write cold emails to principal investigators (PIs) expressing your interest in volunteering or working in their labs. You're welcome to ask me about writing cold emails, or you can look into resources online.
9. UC San Diego Career Center for professional development events and programs, and career coaching (schedule an appointment through Handshake).
10. Health Beat for events, resources, and advising for pre-med/pre-health students.

11. Students can take a CliftonStrengths Assessment and use their UC San Diego email address for a discount (total cost is approximately $11; $20 or $60 without discount).
12. Handshake for job and internship postings, career coaching, and career events.
13. LinkedIn for job and internship postings, networking, and career development events.
14. UC San Diego virtual background to use for virtual classes (not this one), academic and professional Zoom meetings, interviews, and general remote professional occasions.

Course Assessment

Your active participation, attendance and punctuality is crucial for your success in this course because the course is designed to facilitate your personal growth and professional development, which cannot be achieved without you sharing your thoughts and asking questions in class. Your grade consists of your attendance, participation, weekly assignments and a group presentation final.

A Typical Week In this Course

- Prior to attending class each week, review the guest speaker/s on LinkedIn and the topic and come prepared to class with questions to ask guest speakers. Please come up with new questions each week that are unique to the guest speaker and topic.
- You'll complete one assignment each week, which is typically an opportunity for you to apply what you learned in class that week, due Sunday by 11:59 p.m.
- This is the structure for classes:
    - Review of the previous week's assignment and instructions for this week's assignment
    - Presentation and Q&A/discussion on the scheduled career development topic, usually lead by a guest speaker/s
    - In-class activity (occasional) to give you the chance to practice what you're learning in class, sometimes with feedback from guest speakers and classmates

Late Assignment Policy

20% will be deducted for each day that an assignment is late. If a circumstance such as illness arises that prevents you from submitting an assignment on time, please send me a message on Canvas with an explanation and documentation of your circumstance and I will determine if you are eligible to submit the assignment late for up to full credit. I encourage

you to communicate with me about your circumstance, as I understand that life happens and I am here to support your success in this class.

Attendance Policy

This course is highly interactive and is designed for you to learn from guest speakers who work in the life sciences industry. You'll have the opportunity to connect with them in class and build your professional network. There will be in-class activities where you'll collaborate with classmates. Your success in this class therefore depends on your attendance and participation since discussions are in-person and are not recorded.

I understand that things come up and you might not be able to make it to every class. One unexcused absence is permitted per quarter. If you miss two or more classes due to unforeseen circumstances such as illness, please send me a message on Canvas with an explanation and documentation of your circumstance. I will determine if you are eligible for an excused absence or will give a makeup assignment. Just like with late assignments, I encourage you to communicate with me about circumstances that might prevent you from attending class or arriving to class on time. I am committed to working with you to gain an understanding of your situation, and will provide support and resources as needed.

Please come to class on time – this is an excellent opportunity for you to make a positive and professional first impression with guest speakers, as they typically begin promptly at 9:00 a.m. and many are hiring for internships and jobs.

Course Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites for this course.

Required Textbooks and Purchases

No textbooks or other purchases are required for this course.

Course Requirements

1. **Participate in class discussions.** Attendance and participation is 40% of your grade.

2. **Come to class with questions to ask guest speakers.** Prior to each class, look up the class topic and guest speaker/s on LinkedIn to come up with your questions. Please come up with new questions each week that are unique to the guest speaker and topic.

Recommendations

1. Write each guest speaker a thank you note via LinkedIn or via email (I will provide you with their LinkedIn or email address). You'll receive extra credit for this.
2. Wear business casual or business professional attire to class to "dress for success" to make a strong and positive first impression with guest speakers.

Course Outline and Assignments

Assignment	Weight	Points
Participation and attendance (20 points each class)	40%	200
Weekly assignments (20 points each)	40%	200
Final: In class group presentations	20%	100

Grading

Final grades will be determined using the scale below. You can select a letter grade or P/NP via Webreg. I will always do my best to grade your assignments within 24 hours of submission. Please review your grade for this class consistently throughout the quarter to ensure you have the grade you are aiming for. If you encounter circumstances that could prevent you from achieving academic success in this class, please talk with me.

A = 93-100%   C = 73-76.99%   ≥350 points = Pass (P)
A- = 90-92.99%   C- = 70-72.99%   <349.99 points = No Pass (NP)
B+ = 87-89.99%   D+ = 67-69.99%
B = 83-86.99%   D = 63-66.99%
B- = 80-82.99%   D- = 60-62.99%
C+ = 77-79.99%   F = <59.99%

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

Class	Discussion Topic	Assignment	Points	Due
Week 1 4/2/24	Syllabus review and soft skills overview	Soft skills reflection #1 Extra Credit: Career Fair attendance and reflection	20 +10	4/7/24
Week 2 4/9/24	Communication, active listening, elevator pitch	Elevator pitch with classmate	20	4/14/24
Week 3 4/16/24	Teamwork and conflict management with guest speakers from Bristol Myers Squibb (TBD)	Teamwork partner assignment Extra Credit: Thank you note to guest speakers	20 +5	4/21/24
Week 4 4/23/24	Time management and work ethic with alumni guest speakers (TBD)	Time management assignment Extra Credit: Thank you note to guest speakers	20 +5	4/28/24
Week 5 4/30/24	Health Beat and the importance of soft skills in healthcare professions with Ron Reyes and Mike Zucker	Soft skills in healthcare assignment Extra Credit: Thank you note to guest speakers Extra Credit: Attend BUMMP (Biology Undergraduate and Masters Mentorship Program) Annual Student Symposium (BASS) and submit reflection	20 +5 +10	5/5/24

Week 6 5/7/24	Problem-solving, critical thinking and creativity with guest speakers from Algenesis Materials (TBD)	Problem-solving assignment with partner Extra Credit: Thank you note to guest speakers	20 +5	5/12/24
Week 7 5/14/24	Emotional intelligence and the importance of introspection with guest speaker Dr. Blake Mobley	Introspection assignment Extra Credit: Thank you note to Dr. Blake Mobley	20 +5	5/19/24
Week 8 5/21/24	Adaptability and giving and receiving feedback with guest speakers from Element Biosciences	Adaptability and feedback assignment with partner Extra Credit: Thank you note to guest speakers	20 +5	5/26/24
Week 9 5/28/24	Leadership with guest speakers from Thermo Fisher Scientific (TBD)	Leadership assignment Extra Credit: Thank you note to guest speakers	20 +5	6/2/24
Week 10 6/4/24	In-class group presentations (final)	Soft skills reflection #2 In-class group presentations (final)	20 100	6/9/24 6/4/24
FINALS WEEK	No class / No assignment			
ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION	Attend each class, engage in class discussions, and ask guest speakers thoughtful questions (20 points per class)		200	
EXTRA CREDIT	Review assignments above for extra credit opportunities. To make up attendance points, you can do extra credit assignments. No additional makeup assignments will be given.			

Thank you for taking the time to review this syllabus! I am looking forward to getting to know each one of you, to having an enriching and dynamic quarter together, and to supporting you in your academic, personal, and professional growth. I encourage you to keep in touch with me after this course, as I would love to offer support as needed and learn about your career updates.

Kind regards,
Melissa Hoon