BUS 303: Developing Your Professional Skills – Advanced Elements

Course Title: BUS 303: Developing Your Professional Skills – Advanced Elements
Class Dates/Times: Asynchronous Class (Sec. A01)
One synchronous session: Thursday, 6/4, 10 am – 11 am (optional but recommended)
Location: ONLINE

Faculty Information:
Instructor: Elaine Viccora
Virtual Office Hours: By appointment throughout the workweek. Email to schedule.
Email: eviccora@gmu.edu

Course Description
In this course, you continue to develop your professional skill set. Topics covered include understanding the modern work environment, business ethics and professional responsibilities, and professional judgment. You also continue to hone your professional writing and presentation skills, prepare for the job search process, and develop professional development plans. This is a required course in the undergraduate Business program.

Prerequisite Course: BUS 103 or its equivalent

Course Outcomes
1. Students will increase self-awareness by evaluating their interpersonal skills and the ability to influence the decision-making processes.
2. Students will evaluate various business trends, issues, and industries to inform their professional perspectives.
3. Students will research, analyze, and create information to assist with their career readiness.
4. Students will analyze and improve their ability to effectively organize and communicate ideas through oral and written expression.

Undergraduate Business Program Learning Goals
Goal 1: Our students will demonstrate an understanding of the social, global, ethical, and legal contexts of business and will be able to reflect on the role of the individual in business.
Goal 2: Our students will demonstrate an understanding of and the ability to apply knowledge of professional skills necessary for success in business including effective business writing.
Goal 3: Our students will demonstrate technical and analytic skills appropriate for success in business.
Goal 4: Our students will demonstrate an understanding of and the ability to apply knowledge of core business disciplines including accounting, finance, information systems, management, marketing, and operations management.
Goal 5: Our students will demonstrate knowledge and skills appropriate for specialization in their majors.
Goal 6: Our students will demonstrate an understanding of how research in the business disciplines contributes to knowledge and how such research is conducted.

Required Online Materials
There is no designated textbook for this course; instead, all readings are assigned by the instructor and provided through Blackboard. Please download required readings and assignments from our course webpage at http://courses.gmu.edu. The course relies on a combination of readings, online resources, and book chapters.

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**Major Assignments**
Due dates for the major assignments are posted in the (a) Syllabus/Weekly Schedule folder; (b) Weekly Lesson folders and (b) Major Assignment folders. All students should review the instructions and grading rubric for each assignment before beginning work.

Assignment 1: Informational Interview 20%
Assignment 2: Employment Package 20%
Assignment 3: Team Training Webinar 20%
Participation: Weekly Activities and Professional Communication/Interaction 40%

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**Important Notes:**
- Final grades are not rounded up.
- You must earn a C (73%) or higher to pass BUS 303.
- It is challenging to achieve a C or higher in this class if you (a) do not submit a major assignment and/or (b) are repeatedly late with your submissions.

**School of Business Standards of Behavior**
The mission of the School of Business at George Mason University is to create and deliver high-quality educational programs and research. Students, faculty, staff, and alumni who participate in these educational programs contribute to the well being of society. High-quality educational programs require an environment of trust and mutual respect, civility, free expression and inquiry, and a commitment to truth, excellence, and lifelong learning. Students, program participants, faculty, staff, and alumni accept these principles when they join the School of Business community. In doing so, they agree to abide by the following standards of behavior:

- Respect for the rights, differences, and dignity of others
- Honesty and integrity in dealing with all members of the community
- Accountability for personal behavior

Integrity is an essential ingredient of a successful learning community. Ethical standards of behavior help promote a safe and productive community environment and ensure every member the opportunity to pursue excellence. School of Business can and should be a living model of these behavioral standards.

To this end, community members have a personal responsibility to integrate these standards into every aspect of their experience at the School of Business. Through our personal commitment to these Community Standards of Behavior, we can create an environment in which all can achieve their full potential. If these Standards of BUS 303: Developing your Professional Skills – Advanced Elements
Behavior are violated, then students may be required to complete additional learning activities assigned by the instructor.

Standards of Behavior are even more important when participating in a virtual environment. Using an online medium to communicate is challenging due to the lack of visuals (can’t see nonverbals), sound (don’t hear tone), and/or context (don’t know another’s current circumstances/frame of mind).

Given those constraints, when communicating via text or email, it’s always best to give others the benefit of the doubt and not assume that they are being disrespectful or stubborn in their virtual communication. When/if problematic behaviors or miscommunications arise, avoid being reactive online; use emotional intelligence and professional communication skills to address the behavior.

Honor Code Statement
The Honor System and Code adopted by George Mason University is enforced for this class: https://oai.gmu.edu/mason-honor-code/. Plagiarism is a serious offense and is not be tolerated in the School of Business. In your work on all written assignments, keep in mind that you may not present as your own the words, the work, or the opinions of someone else without proper acknowledgement. You also may not borrow the sequence of ideas, the arrangement of material, or the pattern of thought of someone else without proper acknowledgement. In this course, you are expected to use APA-style citations and reference lists.

All students— including those who have taken BUS 303 previously -- must produce new, original work for this class. Honor Code violations include submitting a BUS 303 assignment which is based (in part or in whole) on work you completed for any another class.

Faculty are obligated, without exception, to submit any Honor Code violations or suspected violations to the Honor Committee. See the last page of this syllabus for information about Honor Code sanctions.

Participation
In an online environment, you participate in class by completing the weekly activities and communicating and interacting professionally with your classmates and instructor. To fully participate in each week’s activity and earn maximum points, you will need to review the Blackboard materials associated with that week’s content. There is one synchronous class session on Blackboard Ultra scheduled for Thursday, June 4th from 10 am – 11 am. This session is recommended, but not required, and a recording will be posted to the Week 1 folder. Your group also will be required to hold and record one synchronous virtual meeting for the team assignment. Group members should accommodate classmates who live in different time zones or have work schedules and other life commitments. During virtual sessions with your group, you are encouraged to use both video and audio in your communication, not just the chat feature.

Technology for the Class
As of summer 2020, School of Business Undergraduate Students must have access to a computing device that meets minimum standards, including video/audio streaming capability. Students are required to use a laptop or desktop for coursework; phones of any sort are not acceptable in place of a laptop. In addition, Blackboard is the learning platform for this online class. Students who use their phone to access Blackboard sometimes have difficulty using all of Blackboard’s functions. When that happens, students should access Blackboard via a laptop or desktop; if problems persist, students should contact ITS Support Center.

Students should use the word processing software available through Office ProPlus (which is for free for students at https://its.gmu.edu/service/microsoft-365-apps-for-enterprise/. Chrome or Firefox are the recommended browsers. Students need reliable access to the Internet to use Blackboard and be successful in the course.

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Timely Submissions
All assignments are due by 11:59 pm of their due date and are submitted electronically via Blackboard. *Late work is penalized, and the penalty increases as more time passes.* Students are encouraged to submit assignments at least ten minutes prior to the 11:59 pm deadline to avoid Wi-Fi or other technical problems that may delay Blackboard submissions and result in a late penalty. Blackboard is set-up to allow unlimited submission attempts and does not need to be “re-opened” for late submissions during the semester. *ALL course submissions must be turned in by the LAST-CHANCE Deadline of Sunday, 7/5/20 at 11:59 pm. There are no exceptions to this final due date.*

Formatting and Writing Guidelines
Please follow each assignment’s formatting guidelines and employ good business writing principles -- clear and concise writing with short paragraphs (generally 4 – 6 sentences), single-spacing, 12-point font, and correct spelling and grammar. Use APA-style to cite and reference all sources. Specific instructions for in-text citations and referencing are found in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 6th Edition or [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/).

Course Communication via Email
Email communication for this class is professional correspondence, and students should use proper grammar and tone, complete sentences, correct spelling and capitalization, salutation and closing, etc. We review this aspect of professional writing in class, and the correct format for professional emails is posted in course’s Blackboard menu under “Templates”. If I receive an unprofessional email, I return it to the student and ask the student to resubmit their question or request in a professional manner.

Generally, emails are responded to within a few hours during the workweek. University rules do not permit instructors to communicate with students through private email addresses, so use your Mason email address for all course communication. Student emails from non-GMU accounts are returned and will need to be resubmitted.

Team Assignments and Teamwork
BUS 303 has one major assignment that is team-based. You are given the opportunity to evaluate your own and your teammates’ contributions to the team project. For students who do not contribute sufficiently to their team’s efforts or behave/communicate in ways that hinder the team’s functioning, instructors have the discretion to reduce their grades accordingly.

When teams have difficulty completing a task, making decisions, or communicating, they are *not* penalized if they raise their concerns in a timely and professional manner; *in fact, team members who actively and professionally address team issues receive higher ratings.* A key component of this professional skills class is to learn how to effectively communicate and collaborate with colleagues. When/if there is problem within your team, please be proactive in your communication and review agreed-upon expectations and problem-solving strategies. As needed, the instructor is available to talk with individuals or the whole team to help problem-solve.

Religious Absences
If you will miss class for religious reasons, inform me and your teammates of the anticipated absence as soon as possible to develop a plan for missed work.

Notice of Mandatory Reporting
As a faculty member, I am designated as a “Responsible Employee,” and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason’s Title IX Coordinator per University Policy 1412. If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason’s confidential resources, such as Student Support and Advocacy Center (SSAC) at 703-380-1434 or Counseling and Psychology Services (CAPS) at 703-
993-2380. You may also seek assistance from Mason’s Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730 or emailing cde@gmu.edu.

Mason Resources

**Accessibility and Accommodations**
If you need academic accommodations for special needs, please contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 703-993-2474 and inform me of any special needs as soon as you have your paperwork. Note that accommodations are not retroactive. More information about ODS is available at http://www.gmu.edu/student/drc.

**Career Services**
School of Business Career Services is in Suite 042 in Enterprise Hall (lower level). Virtual appointments can be scheduled by calling 703-993-2140 or emailing mycareer@gmu.edu.

**Counseling Services**
George Mason University’s counseling and Psychological Services can help if you find yourself overwhelmed by life, want training in academic or life skills, or just need to talk to a professional counselor. For more information or to schedule a virtual appointment, please visit https://caps.gmu.edu/ or call 703-993-2380.

**The Writing Center**
The Writing Center provides peer-to-peer writing support. Writers at all levels benefit from sharing their work with a helpful and knowledgeable peer tutor or consultant. To schedule an online consultation, please visit http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/ or call 703-993-1200.
Honor Code Sanctions

Please review the Honor Code posted on the site for [Office of Academic Integrity](#). Infractions of the honor code in BUS 303 will be referred to the Office of Academic Integrity for adjudication. The sanctions below apply to any BUS 303 student.

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<th>Type of Violation</th>
<th>First Offense</th>
<th>Second Offense</th>
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<tr>
<td>Plagiarism</td>
<td>An F in the class; referral to Writing Center; and Academic Integrity Seminar completion</td>
<td>An F in the class; referral to the Writing Center; Academic Integrity Seminar completion; termination from the School of Business; and at least one semester suspension or expulsion</td>
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<td>Cheating</td>
<td>An F in the class; and Academic Integrity Seminar completion</td>
<td>An F in the class; Academic Integrity Seminar completion; termination from the School of Business; and at least one semester suspension or expulsion</td>
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<td>Lying (e.g., providing fraudulent excuse documents, falsifying data)</td>
<td>An F in the class; and Academic Integrity Seminar completion; and at least one semester suspension</td>
<td>An F in the class; Academic Integrity Seminar completion; termination from the School of Business; and at least one semester suspension or expulsion</td>
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<td>Egregious Violation (e.g., stealing an exam; submitting coursework from another class as original work across multiple courses; lying to an employer about academic performance, false identification or posing as another, in person or online)</td>
<td>An F in the class; Academic Integrity Seminar completion; termination from the School of Business; and at least one year suspension</td>
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Note: The Academic Integrity Seminar used by Office of Academic Integrity costs $100.