



COMM 210: Strategic Business Communication

Term: Fall 2026

Credits: 3.0

Meeting Times & Location: Multiple sections. Your section's days, time, room, and instructor are listed in AlkimiHub and on your Canvas course page.

Modality: In-Person

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Instructor Information

- **Course Coordinator:** Dr. Audrey Kessler (Associate Teaching Professor of Business Communication)
- **Section Instructors:** Listed for each section in AlkimiHub. Your section instructor's office hours and office are posted in your Canvas course page.
- **Email:** akessler@university.alkimi.ai
- **Office:** Tidewell Hall 326
- **Coordinator Office Hours:**
 - Wednesday & Friday: 3:00–4:30 p.m. (In person, Tidewell Hall 326)
 - Thursday: 11:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m. (Virtual via Zoom; link posted in Canvas)
 - Also available by appointment.

Course Description

Audience analysis, professional correspondence, executive summaries, data-driven reports, persuasive presentations, and team communication for business settings, with individual coaching on writing and speaking. COMM 210 prepares future business leaders to communicate complex managerial, financial, and strategic information clearly and persuasively across modern organizational channels. Students practice crafting concise executive correspondence, synthesizing quantitative data into decision-oriented analytical reports, and delivering professional oral presentations with confidence. Through structured peer workshops and personalized coaching, the course develops strategic audience adaptation, ethical business messaging, crisis communication skills, and collaborative team communication habits essential in corporate workplaces.

Prerequisites

ENGL 101.

Measurable Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of COMM 210, students will be able to:

1. **Analyze Audiences and Business Contexts:** Evaluate organizational audiences, purposes, and cultural contexts to select appropriate communication channels and strategic rhetorical framing.
2. **Compose Executive Business Documents:** Write clear, concise memos, letters, executive summaries, and formal analytical reports adhering to professional business formatting and ethical standards.

3. **Visualize Quantitative Business Data:** Transform complex business data into intuitive, accurate charts, graphs, and tables integrated smoothly into written and oral deliverables.
4. **Deliver Persuasive Oral Presentations:** Design professional slide decks and deliver compelling, extemporaneous business presentations both individually and in collaborative teams.
5. **Manage Team Communication and Crisis Scenarios:** Facilitate productive peer coaching, manage interpersonal team dynamics, and formulate strategic communication responses to organizational crises.

Required Course Materials & Approximate Costs

1. **Courtland L. Bovee and John V. Thill. *Business Communication Today*. 15th ed., Pearson, 2021.** Approx. \$45 digital rental, \$90 print purchase.
2. **Alkimi Business Communication Style Guide and Case Packet.** Free digital access provided on Canvas.
3. **Total estimated cost:** \$45 to \$90.

Generative AI Policy (AI Level 2: AI Permitted with Disclosure for Specified Tasks)

In accordance with Alkimi University Academic Policies (Student Handbook §5.8), COMM 210 operates under **AI Level 2**.

- **What is permitted:** You may use generative AI tools to brainstorm audience personas, outline presentation slide structures, and check grammar or readability on early drafts of written assignments.
- **What is prohibited:** You may not submit AI-generated text as your own writing, generate executive summaries or report bodies using AI, or use AI tools to generate presentation speaking scripts.
- **Disclosure:** All submitted reports and presentations must include a formal AI statement specifying any AI tools consulted during planning or editing, or explicitly certifying that no AI tools were used.

Grading Components and Weights

- **Professional Correspondence Suite:** 15% (Due Friday, September 18 at 11:59 p.m.)
- **Executive Summary & Analytical Business Report:** 20% (Due Friday, October 23 at 11:59 p.m.)
- **Individual Persuasive Presentation:** 15% (In class during week 11 (week of November 2))
- **Team Strategic Communication Briefing:** 15% (In class during week 14 (week of November 23))
- **Communication Workshops & Peer Coaching:** 15% (Weekly writing drills, slide critiques, and active participation in workshop coaching sessions)
- **Strategic Business Communication Final Portfolio:** 20% (Due Monday, December 14, 2026 at 11:59 p.m.)

Grading Scale (Alkimi University Standard)

- **A:** 93–100% | **A-:** 90–92%
- **B+:** 87–89% | **B:** 83–86% | **B-:** 80–82%
- **C+:** 77–79% | **C:** 73–76% | **C-:** 70–72%
- **D+:** 67–69% | **D:** 60–66% | **F:** Below 60%
- **Extra credit:** No individual extra credit assignments are offered in COMM 210. Students achieve success through dedicated participation in peer review workshops and iterative revision.

Course Schedule (Fall 2026)

All sections follow this common weekly schedule. Section meeting days vary, so dates are shown by week; your section instructor posts exact class dates in Canvas.

Week	Dates	Topics & Readings	Assignments & Deadlines
Week 1	Aug 26–Aug 28	Strategic Foundations and Audience Analysis: Foundations of business communication; audience analysis, sender-receiver	<i>First day of classes: Wed Aug 26.</i>

Week	Dates	Topics & Readings	Assignments & Deadlines
		models, professional credibility, and ethical communication standards. <i>Reading: Bovee & Thill, Ch. 1–2</i>	
Week 2	Aug 31–Sep 4	The Business Writing Process and Direct vs. Indirect Framing: Three-step writing process: planning, writing, and completing; direct vs. indirect organizational strategies for routine, persuasive, and negative messages. <i>Reading: Bovee & Thill, Ch. 3–5</i>	<i>Wed Sep 2: Add/section change deadline.</i>
Week 3	Sep 8–Sep 11	Routine Correspondence and Workplace Messaging: Crafting concise professional emails, memos, and workplace messages; etiquette in digital collaboration tools and professional tone. <i>Reading: Bovee & Thill, Ch. 6</i>	<i>Mon Sep 7: Labor Day (no classes). Wed Sep 9: Census date (last day to drop without a W).</i>
Week 4	Sep 14–Sep 18	Delivering Negative News and Persuasive Requests: Strategies for delivering negative news; buffers, clear explanations, and constructive closing; Correspondence Suite due Friday. <i>Reading: Bovee & Thill, Ch. 7–8</i>	Professional Correspondence Suite due Fri Sep 18 at 11:59 p.m.
Week 5	Sep 21–Sep 25	Visual Communication and Data Visualization: Visual design principles for business documents; selecting charts, tables, and infographics to communicate financial and operational data. <i>Reading: Bovee & Thill, Ch. 9</i>	—
Week 6	Sep 28–Oct 2	Business Research and Source Synthesis: Conducting secondary business research; evaluating credible corporate and market sources; synthesizing findings and ethical documentation. <i>Reading: Bovee & Thill, Ch. 10</i>	—
Week 7	Oct 5–Oct 9	Analytical Reports and Proposal Architecture: Structuring formal business proposals and analytical reports; defining problem statements, criteria, alternatives, and recommendations. <i>Reading: Bovee & Thill, Ch. 11–12</i>	—
Week 8	Oct 14–Oct 16	Executive Summaries and Report Drafting (Fall Break Week): Drafting executive summaries, introduction sections, and conclusions; maintaining reader engagement and clarity (Fall Break week). <i>Reading: Bovee & Thill, Ch. 13</i>	<i>Oct 12–Oct 13: Fall break (no classes). Fri Oct 16: Midterm grades due.</i>
Week 9	Oct 19–Oct 23	Report Polish, Peer Coaching, and Analytical Report Submission: Revision strategies, editing for conciseness, eliminating jargon, and peer editing workshops; Executive Summary & Analytical Report due Friday. <i>Reading: Bovee & Thill, Ch. 14</i>	Executive Summary & Analytical Business Report due Fri Oct 23 at 11:59 p.m.
Week 10	Oct 26–Oct 30	Designing Executive Business Presentations: Principles of executive presentations; storyboard construction, visual slide design, slide decks vs. reading decks, and storytelling with data. <i>Reading: Bovee & Thill, Ch. 15</i>	—
Week 11	Nov 2–Nov 6	Public Speaking Mechanics and Individual Presentations: Vocal variety, pacing, nonverbal presence, handling audience Q&A; delivering individual persuasive presentations in class. <i>Reading: Bovee & Thill, Ch. 16</i>	<i>Fri Nov 6: Last day to withdraw (W) or elect Pass/No Pass.</i> Individual Persuasive Presentation (in class this week).
Week 12	Nov 9–Nov 13	Team Communication and Collaborative Workflows: Small group communication dynamics, collaborative document authoring, constructive conflict management, and division of presentation roles. <i>Reading: Style Guide and selected readings</i>	—
Week 13	Nov 16–Nov 20	Crisis Communication and Stakeholder Engagement: Crisis communication principles; stakeholder mapping, holding statements, press releases, and reputation management during organizational disruption. <i>Reading: Case Packet, Crisis Studies</i>	—
Week 14	Nov 23–Nov 24	Team Presentations and Executive Briefings (Thanksgiving Week): Team presentation rehearsals, peer coaching, and	<i>Nov 25–Nov 27: Thanksgiving break (no classes). Team</i>

Week	Dates	Topics & Readings	Assignments & Deadlines
		formal delivery of collaborative crisis briefings in class (Thanksgiving week). <i>Reading: Case Packet, Briefing Guide</i>	Strategic Communication Briefing (in class this week).
Week 15	Nov 30–Dec 4	Cross-Cultural Communication and Global Workplaces: Cross-cultural business communication, global negotiation etiquette, high-context vs. low-context cultures, and inclusive communication. <i>Reading: Bovee & Thill, Ch. 17</i>	—
Week 16	Dec 7–Dec 9	Communication Portfolio Synthesis and Review: Portfolio curation, reflective assessment of professional communication growth, career-readiness communication strategies, and final synthesis. <i>Reading: Portfolio Guidelines on Canvas</i>	<i>Wed Dec 9: Last day of classes. Thu Dec 10: Reading Day.</i>
Finals	Dec 14	Strategic Business Communication Final Portfolio due Monday, December 14, 2026 at 11:59 p.m.	No final examination.

Course Policies

Attendance Policy

Because COMM 210 relies heavily on interactive workshops, speaking simulations, and collaborative peer coaching, regular attendance is mandatory. You are permitted two unexcused absences without penalty; additional unexcused absences reduce your final grade by one third of a letter grade. Missing more than five class sessions will result in failure of the course. Students who miss the first two class meetings without notifying the instructor may be dropped. Students may miss class for religious observance without penalty if they notify the instructor in writing within the first two weeks of the semester (by Wednesday, September 9, 2026). Absences for university-sponsored activities (athletics, performances, conferences) are excused with a letter from the sponsoring office at least one week in advance.

Late Work Policy

Major written deliverables and presentation slide decks lose 10% for each calendar day they are late and cannot be submitted more than three days past the deadline. In-class presentations cannot be rescheduled except in cases of documented illness or university-approved emergencies.

Final Exam Policy

COMM 210 has no final examination. The strategic business communication final portfolio takes its place. Nothing is due on Reading Day (Thursday, December 10, 2026).

Academic Integrity

Alkimi University is an academic community devoted to rigorous scholarship, open intellectual inquiry, and uncompromising ethical conduct. All students are subject to the regulations of the Alkimi University Academic Integrity Policy. Academic dishonesty—including plagiarism, cheating on examinations, unauthorized collaboration, fabrication of empirical data, and unauthorized submission of academic work generated by artificial intelligence—undermines the integrity of the university and carries severe disciplinary sanctions. Sanctions range from a failing grade on an assignment or exam to an administrative course failure recorded as an 'XF' on the official transcript, academic suspension, or expulsion. Suspected violations are formally investigated and resolved through the Office of Academic Integrity in accordance with Faculty Handbook §6. For detailed information, consult the Office of Academic Integrity, Lovell Hall 315, (555) 555-0163, integrity@university.alkimi.ai.

Accessibility Services

Alkimi University is committed to providing equitable educational access and reasonable accommodations for all students with documented disabilities, including physical, sensory, psychological, learning, and chronic health conditions. Students requesting academic accommodations must formally register with the

Office of Accessibility Services, Harlan Hall 204, (555) 555-0155, access@university.alkimi.ai. Once approved, students will receive an official Faculty Accommodation Letter detailing approved accommodations. Students should present this letter to the instructor as early in the semester as possible, and at least one week prior to any exam or assignment requiring accommodation. Accommodations cannot be applied retroactively.

Student Wellness and Mental Health

Your physical health, psychological well-being, and mental health are essential to your academic success. If you experience heightened stress, anxiety, depressive symptoms, personal trauma, or academic burnout, free, confidential counseling and medical care are available through the Hollis Health & Counseling Center, located in the Hollis Center. Routine appointments are available Monday–Friday 8:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m. and Saturday 10:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m. during the semester by calling (555) 555-0190 or emailing health@university.alkimi.ai. Urgent, 24/7 crisis psychological counseling is accessible immediately at (555) 555-0199.

Campus Student Support Services

- **Academic Advising Center:** Lovell Hall 101 | (555) 555-0158 | advising@university.alkimi.ai
- **Writing Center:** Whitcombe Library 3rd Floor | Free consultations on papers, reports, and research projects at any stage.
- **Whitcombe Library:** Whitcombe Library, Main Floor | (555) 555-0170 | askalibrarian@university.alkimi.ai
- **Hollis Health & Counseling Center:** Hollis Center | (555) 555-0190 | 24/7 Counseling Line: (555) 555-0199 | health@university.alkimi.ai
- **The Writing Center:** Whitcombe Library 3rd Floor | Consultations for report drafting, executive summary structure, and professional writing polish.