

BADM 190W: Analysis of Business Issues^{1,2}

SEMESTER: Spring 2009

INSTRUCTOR: Janet L. Nixdorff, Ph.D.
Department of Management
Funger 315

nixdorff@gwu.edu
Phone: (202) 994-7375

Office Hours: Mondays, 11-1 p.m., or by appointment

*****Please turn off all electronic equipment (cell phones, laptops, etc.) at the beginning of each class. They are disruptive to others.*****

Course Description: This course will introduce students to common language and analytic techniques necessary to operate effectively in today's business environment. Through case analysis, students will be introduced to business concepts and information resources. Students will be required to produce a variety of presentations and documents commonly used in business. Documents will range from memoranda to executive reports. This sophomore-level course will focus on developing critical thinking skills required for accurate problem definition in business situations.

Required Texts (3): (1) *Asking the Right Questions*, 8th edition, by Browne & Kelley, Pearson/Prentice Hall, ISBN: 0-13-220304-9
(2) *Effective Business Writing*, 2nd edition, by Piotrowski, Collins
(3) *The Elements of Style*, Strunk & White (a classic, widely available; ~\$8)

Recommended (1): (1) *Business Week* (You can opt for electronic delivery)

Other readings and cases will be available on Blackboard.

Learning Objectives:

A student who successfully completes this course will have demonstrated the ability to:

- a) Distinguish problems from symptoms in a business setting
- b) Communicate information effectively and efficiently
- c) Determine the appropriate form and tone for communication in various business settings
- d) Use general business terms appropriately
- e) Use data from appropriate business information resources for a given issue
- f) Construct effective arguments given a set of facts
- g) Understand the different ways to communicate with a variety of audiences and stakeholders
- h) Revise messages and documents to best address intended audiences
- i) Give and receive objective, constructive feedback to and from peers and superiors
- j) Respond appropriately to feedback

Specific elements of business communications we will consider include:

- a) Writing effective memoranda
- b) Articulating analysis and arguments
- c) Giving feedback
- d) Receiving and responding to feedback
- e) Writing concise and informative executive summaries
- f) Preparing presentations appropriate for a variety of different audiences

In concert with the values of the George Washington School of Business, this course will highlight the following themes within the context of current business issues:

¹ In addition to registering for BADM 190W, students must also register for a discussion section.

² Only students who have successfully completed UW 20 prior to enrollment in BADM 190W are eligible to receive WID credit for this course. Other students may take the course for credit towards graduation as applicable in various degree plans.

- **Integrity** – demanding transparency, accountability, and ethical behavior
- **Leadership** – encouraging problem solving, commitment, and entrepreneurship
- **Scholarship** – emphasizing discovery, learning, and innovation
- **Service** – responding to the needs of students, academic professions, and the community
- **Relationships** – fostering communication, collaboration, and collegiality

Date	Type	Topic ³	Notes/Assignments Due	Deliverables Due ⁴
Monday, 1/12	Large Group	Course Intro and Themes; Complaints; Grading; Email Complaints		
Wednesday, 1/14	Breakout	Academic Integrity; Corporate Social Responsibility; Questions on Email Complaints		Email response to complaint due to breakout leader by 1/16 (Counts as a weekly response)
Monday, 1/19	Large Group	Holiday		NO CLASS
Wednesday, 1/21	Breakout	Your Group Project; Reading Discussion; Grading; Paper I assigned	Reading posted on Blackboard; Be prepared to discuss	Weekly response due; bring hard copy to breakout today
Monday, 1/26	Large Group	Asking the Right Questions; Issues and Conclusions	Read Chapters 1 & 2 in Brown & Kelley (BK)	
Wednesday, 1/28	Breakout	Service Project Questions; Reading Discussion	Discussion on Rhetoric (using Friedman's article)	Weekly response due; bring hard copy to breakout today; Draft of Paper I due 1/30
Monday, 2/2	Large Group	Reasons; Current News	Read Chapter 3 in BK	
Wednesday, 2/4	Breakout	Causes for Bad Writing (+ Common Grammar Mistakes); Reading Discussion		Weekly response to reading; bring hard copy to breakout today; Memo requesting approval of group service project due to breakout leader 2/6
Monday, 2/9	Large Group	Ambiguity; Citations and Reference Pages	Read Chapter 4 in BK	
Wednesday, 2/11	Breakout	Article Discussion; Editing; Paper II assigned		Weekly response to reading; bring hard copy to breakout today; Company request for Company Analysis due 2/13 to Professor Nixdorff (optional); Final Paper I due 2/13
Monday, 2/16	Large Group	Holiday		NO CLASS
Wednesday, 2/18	Breakout	Article Discussion; What is a Company Analysis?		Weekly response to reading; bring hard copy to breakout today;
Monday, 2/23	Large Group	Value Conflicts & Assumptions; Current News	Read Chapter 5 in BK Read	
Wednesday, 2/25	Breakout	Article Discussion; Giving & Receiving Feedback		Company Assignments confirmed; Draft of Paper II due 11:59 p.m., 2/27
Monday, 3/2	Large Group	Assumptions & Fallacies;	Chapters 6 & 7 in BK	

³ We will be using current news stories to reinforce the topic for the week. The specific stories will be assigned on the main Blackboard (BB) site.

⁴ All deliverables should be submitted to your Breakout Section leader. You are responsible for the timely submission of your deliverables to your Breakout Section Leader.

	Group	Current News			
Wednesday, 3/4	Breakout	Article Discussion			Weekly response due, bring hard copy to breakout today. Peer Review of Paper II due 3/6
Monday, 3/9	Large Group	Evidence; Current News		Read Chapters 8 & 9 in BK	
Wednesday, 3/11	Breakout	Article Discussion; Service Project Checkpoint			Weekly response due; bring hard copy to breakout today. Final Draft of Paper II due 3/13
Monday, 3/16	Large Group	Spring Break			NO CLASS
Wednesday, 3/18	Breakout	Spring Break			NO CLASS
Monday, 3/23	Large Group	Causal or Not; Current News		Read Chapter 10 in BK	Service Project Checklist to Breakout Leader on 3/23
Wednesday, 3/25	Breakout	Article Discussion; Company Analysis Checkpoint			Weekly response due; bring hard copy to breakout today;
Monday, 3/30	Large Group	How to Lie with Statistics; Current News		Read Chapters 11 & 12 in BK	
Wednesday, 4/1	Breakout	Individual Presentations (Extra Credit)			Draft of Company Analysis due 4/3
Monday, 4/6	Large Group	Omissions? Current News		Read Chapter 13 in BK	
Wednesday, 4/8	Breakout	Service Project Checkpoint			Peer Review of Company Analysis due 4/10
Monday, 4/13	Large Group	Reasonable Conclusions; Current News		Read Chapter 14 in BK	
Wednesday, 4/15	Breakout	Presentation Workshop			Final Company Analysis due 4/17
Monday, 4/20	Large Group	How to Analyze a Case; Final Exam Review		Case Assigned	Service Project presentation due to breakout leader by 6 p.m. on Tuesday, 4/21
Wednesday, 4/22	Breakout	Service Project Practice Sessions			Individual Memo on Grp Svc Project due 4/24;
Monday, 4/27	Large Group	Case Analysis			Weekly response due; bring hard copy to Lecture today; Service Project Presentations on main Bb site by 6:00 p.m. on Monday, 4/27
Wednesday, 4/29	Large Group	Service Project Presentations (Designated Monday)		Review of each presentation	Service Project Presentations; Presentation Evaluations and Team Assessments due
5/11	Large Group	Final Exam (Date Tentative)			

Assignments⁵:

I. Papers

I: *Topic to be Identified*

Draft due: by 11:59 p.m. on Friday, January 30, 2009

You will receive instructor feedback on Friday, February 6, 2009.

Final Version due: by 11:59 p.m. on Friday, February 13, 2009

II: *Topics to be Identified* (Two *different* topics: make sure you know which one is yours. You do **not** select which one you use; your breakout leader will assign a specific one to you.)

Draft due: by 11:59 p.m. on Friday, February 27, 2009

Peer Reviews due: by 11:59 p.m. on Friday, March 6, 2009

Final Version due: by 11:59 p.m. on Friday, March 13, 2009

II. Company Analysis

Company will be assigned by Prof. Nixdorff by Wednesday, February 25, 2009.

(You may make requests before February 13 to Prof. Nixdorff; however, these are not necessarily guaranteed.)

First Draft due: by 11:59 p.m. on Friday, April 3, 2009.

Peer Reviews due: by 11:59 p.m. on Friday, April 10, 2009.

Final Version due: by 11:59 p.m. on Friday, April 17, 2009.

III. Service Project Presentation (Breakout Section Project)

Proposal Memo due: by 11:59 p.m. on Friday, February 6, 2009.

Service Project Checklist due: by 11:59 p.m. on Monday, March 23, 2009.

Draft Presentation due: NLT 6:00 p.m., Tuesday, April 21, 2009.

Individual Memo on Group Service Project due by 11:59 p.m., on Friday, April 24, 2009

Final Presentation on main BB site by 6:00 p.m., Monday, April 27, 2009.

Presentation given on Wednesday, April 29 (Designated Monday) (in class)

Presentation Evaluations & Individual Team Assessment due Wednesday, April 29, 2009

IV. Weekly Response to Readings

Each week, Prof. Nixdorff will post readings and questions on Blackboard. You are responsible for preparing a written response to bring to your breakout section each Wednesday. **These are due at the beginning of your breakout section each week.** (They should be submitted as typewritten hard copies.)

V. Final Exam

The time and date are set by the Registrar.

⁵ All assignments are to be submitted via Blackboard for your breakout section except as noted.

Assessment:

- I. Papers (25%)***
Paper I: Draft and Final (10%)
Paper II: Draft, Peer Review, Final (15%)
- II. Company Analysis (25%)***
Draft, Peer Review, Final
- III. Service Project Presentation (15%)**
Group: Proposal Memo, Draft Presentation, Presentation (10%)
Individual: Review of All Presentations, Team Assessment, Checklist, Individual Memo (5%)
- IV. Weekly Responses to Readings (10%)**
Weekly responses to assigned readings – due at the *beginning* of each breakout section
- V. Class Participation (10%)**
Assessed by Prof. Nixdorff using weekly responses and attendance in the large lecture section (5%), and by your Breakout Leader based upon your meaningful contributions to class and attendance on Wednesdays (5%)
- VI. Final Exam (15%)**
Comprehensive; some objective; some essay questions

* Grades are recorded only for the final version of a revised assignment. However, final grades will be reduced by 5 points for each draft that was not submitted on time *or is not a significant draft*. See p. 9 for further information on grading.

The faculty grading your papers and leading the large group and breakout sections meet regularly to ensure consistency in grading and content.

If you want additional feedback on any of your papers, please make an appointment to see your Breakout Leader or Professor Nixdorff. We are happy to work with you.

FAQs*

What is this course, and how will it help me progress in my academic program and my career?

Analysis of Business Issues is a writing-intensive business class. In this class, we will introduce you to the mechanics behind different forms of communication in business settings; furthermore, we will expose you to a variety of business concepts. We do *not* expect you to develop a thorough understanding of the business concepts solely from this class; however, this introduction will prepare you to gain a better understanding as you delve more deeply into the functional areas of business in future courses, and writing is a good way to reinforce what you are learning. Written communications, such as proposals, memos, e-mails and analytical reports, and presentations to groups, including the Board of Directors, potential investors, employees, and other stakeholders, are the lifeblood of a business. A firm simply cannot survive if its employees cannot communicate internally as well as externally.

What is the Service Project?

One of the core values of GWSB is **service**, which involves responding to the needs of students, academic professions, and the community. Each breakout section will be divided into groups and will be responsible for completing group service projects this semester to demonstrate our commitment to serving others. Your project should include each member of your group and should provide tangible benefits when implemented. Each group will present information about its project during our last class meeting, at which time we will present two awards: one for the best service project, and one for the best presentation.

What is a story analysis?

An analysis may involve examining a situation, determining the underlying issues, developing alternatives to address those issues, and recommending one, or a set, of the alternatives as the "best" course of action. Since this course is designed for sophomores, we realize that you will not have taken many (if any) of your core classes in the functional business areas; therefore, we do not expect you to develop or recommend alternatives. We will, however, expect you to hone your analysis skills. By the end of the semester, you should be able to separate the symptoms of an organizational issue from the underlying causes and the facts from the opinions; you should be able to identify faulty logic and different viewpoints. Throughout the rest of your undergraduate career – and during your professional career – the ability to distinguish among these will serve you well.

What does "first draft" mean?

Writing is a process, not a one-time "event." The perception that one's first draft of anything represents his best work is simply wrong. The notion that "I thought about it a lot before I wrote it down, so this really isn't a 'first draft'" is also misguided. In this class, we will encourage (by the brute force of academic assignments ☺) you to become engaged in the writing process. For most of your major work, you will submit drafts which will be subject to review with opportunities for revision.

What is a company analysis?

If writing is the lifeblood of a firm to keep information and ideas flowing throughout the company, then information represents the essential nutrients. Information is the result of research. Firms perform research to examine their competitors and their customers; firms conduct research to examine future possibilities. We want to introduce you to the type of research you will be doing in future classes as well as in your business career. For your company analysis, you will present key unbiased information about a firm of your choosing.

What is peer review?

In business, your success depends greatly upon the success of those with whom you work. As a manager, you will be judged by the performance of those you manage. Providing effective feedback is essential to help your colleagues and subordinates continue to improve. In practice, this is called peer review. Peer review is not always "nice;" sometimes there are deficiencies that must be addressed to help the one being reviewed improve. If a paper you are reviewing has problems, you need to detail those to the author. Part of your success in this class depends on your ability to help others succeed.

What is Safe Assign?

Plagiarism is when you use someone else's thoughts or words in your writing and do not give them credit for it. Since this is a writing course, we take plagiarism very seriously. You must use proper citations and a reference page for all of your written assignments. Some of your written assignments will be posted to Blackboard and will be subject to Safe Assign, a program that checks for plagiarism. The penalty for plagiarism can be as extreme as being

* If you have other questions, please ask your breakout leader or Prof. Nixdorff: nixdorff@gwu.edu.

reported to university officials, or as minor as receiving a "0" for the assignment. If you have questions about proper citations, please contact your breakout leader or Professor Nixdorff.

What is the grading scale for this course?

Final grades will be based on the following:

100 – 95 points	=	A
90 - 94 points	=	A-
87 – 89 points	=	B+
84 – 86 points	=	B
80 – 83 points	=	B-
77 – 79 points	=	C+
74 – 76 points	=	C
70 - 73 points	=	C-
67 – 69 points	=	D+
64 - 66 points	=	D
60 - 63 points	=	D-
Less than 60 points	=	see instructor

(Note: Grades are not determined on a "curve." That means everyone could conceivably earn the same grade, be it an "A" or another one.)

FURTHER INFORMATION ON PLAGIARISM:

The writing-intensive aspect of this course is designed to teach you to write and research responsibly and ethically. To learn strategies for researching, compiling, and presenting your writing, you must complete all stages of the work yourself. Taking the words of others, or presenting the ideas of others, as your own not only prohibits you from learning the skills of academic research, it also violates the University's Code of Academic Integrity. The University defines academic dishonesty as "cheating of any kind, including misrepresenting one's own work, taking credit for the work of others without crediting them and without appropriate authorization, and the fabrication of information."

CODE OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

You should be familiar with the GWU Code of Academic Integrity. A copy of the code is available in the GWU Bulletin You can find more information about GW's Code of Academic Integrity at <http://www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity/code.htm/>. The minimum penalty for such offenses, whether on a rough or final draft, is to fail the assignment; the more common penalty is to fail the course. Commitment to academic honesty is crucial; therefore, cheating, fabrication, and plagiarism are strictly forbidden.

THE WRITING CENTER:

The Writing Center (Rome 550 | 202-994-3765, <http://www.gwu.edu/~gwriter/>) is a free service for GW students who seek help with their writing. The goal of the Writing Center is to help clients sharpen their ideas, work toward a focus, or organize the arguments they already have. While tutors will not edit papers, they will engage students in a cooperative learning environment throughout all stages of the writing process. Appointments are scheduled on the hour and on a walk-in basis.

Hours: Monday-Thursday: 9 am -8 pm, Friday: 9 am -2 pm, Sunday: 7 pm -10 pm

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION:

Attendance is **mandatory** for both the lecture and the breakout sessions each week. Although we may not take attendance formally, we will know if you are present because you will be turning in assignments or writing exercises at each. Papers and assignments are due the date stated on the syllabus and by your instructors. We will not accept late papers. Therefore, if you are not in attendance, your paper due during breakout sessions will not be accepted, unless you have made arrangements with your professor ahead of class.

However, we also realize that "life happens." If, for some reason, you are not able to come to a breakout session, you must alert your breakout leader via email by 6:00 p.m. the Tuesday before class. At the discretion of your

breakout leader, your paper may or may not be accepted; however, you will receive a “-” for participation for the date of class (see below). If you don’t let your breakout leader know of your expected absence, your paper due that date will not be accepted, and you will receive a “-” for participation.

Participation is also a requirement of this course. If you are not participating, you are not giving others the benefit of your experience. We all learn from each other. Your breakout leader will further explain the participation grading system, and please see the Syllabus, p. 5.

DISABILITY:

Any student who feels he or she may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss his or her specific needs. In addition, I encourage you to contact Disability Support Services (Marvin Center #242, Tel: 202.994.8250, URL: <http://gwired.gwu.edu/dss/>) to coordinate reasonable accommodations for all of your courses at GWU.

ASSESSMENT:

Writing is an essential academic skill as well as an important thinking and learning tool. Learning to write well—which means not simply producing technically correct prose, but crafting writing that is imaginative, persuasive, and informed as to the expectations of its audience—is a lengthy process that requires learning about, practicing, and eventually being able to manipulate successfully a complex array of skills. In this class, we will work on both the mechanics of your writing as well as content organization and development. We will fortify your understanding of correct sentence structure, grammar, and punctuation. We will also practice techniques for greater clarity and style in your writing. As a college level writing course, your papers will be expected to go beyond merely summarizing what you have read and include your own original ideas, syntheses, and reflections. Moreover, your papers will be required to follow APA or MLA style conventions in integrating and citing sources. Our standards and criteria for evaluating your writing in this class will be based on your ability to demonstrate your understanding and application of all of these elements.

In grading your papers, we will use the “Skeletal Scale for Evaluating Papers” developed by the Indiana University Campus Writing Program <http://www.iub.edu/~cwp/assgn/skelscale.shtml>. A copy of the scale is provided below.

Modified Skeletal Scale for Evaluating Papers

<p>A</p>	<p>A paper that receives an A is excellent in thought, organization, and style. The A paper uses a sound organizational strategy, with clearly developed paragraphs proceeding from a unified main topic. The ideas in the paper are engaging and show illuminating insights. Assertions are supported by evidence (which is not necessarily in the form of quotations) and expand on the thoughts and ideas presented in the case or article. There are very few distracting errors in style, diction, or mechanics.</p>
<p>B</p>	<p>A B paper is still quite good, but it is weaker than an A paper in some areas. It may have good ideas that are marred by some problems of organization and style. Alternatively, it may be well-organized and well-written but offer fewer or less valuable insights than an A paper.</p>
<p>C</p>	<p>This is the grade given to a paper that is clearly acceptable, but not exceptional. A C paper will show a competent understanding of the assigned topic, but its insights usually do not go beyond the obvious points that most papers make. A C may also be assigned to an inconsistent paper that shows some excellent insights but fails to tie ideas into a unified whole.</p>
<p>D</p>	<p>A D paper can have some virtues—either occasionally good ideas marred by unclear writing or clear writing conveying superficial ideas that show a lack of engagement with the work being studied.</p>

F	A paper will receive an F either because it is poorly written throughout or because its ideas show no insight into the work being studied, or the paper is completely unacceptable--obviously written in haste without thought or effort.
----------	--

NOTE: This scale does not reflect pluses or minuses, such as the differences between a B-, B, and B+. Instead, each grade scale presents a continuum of qualities and characteristics of good writing. How well your writing accomplishes all the identified qualities will determine its position on the continuum for each grade.

More specifically, your assignments will be graded as follows:

Papers and Company Analysis:

- Papers and Company Analysis are graded using a Rubric, a copy of which you will be given before the paper is due.
- Drafts that are late will reduce your final grade by 5 points; if they are more than 1 day late, you will not be given feedback by your professors on your paper. This will severely limit your possibilities of earning a good grade on your final paper.
- Final papers that are 1 day late will be reduced by 10 points, and you will receive a "0" after the first day late.

Service Project Presentations:

- **Group:** Your final grade will be determined based on the quality of your project and all deliverables.
- **Individual:** Your final grade will be determined on the quality of all deliverables.

Weekly Responses to Readings:

- There are a total of 10 of these assignments, and each is assigned a grade of 1-5. The points are added together and multiplied by 2 to get the total possible out of 100 points.
- Weekly assignments are to be typewritten hard copies due at the beginning of the breakout session.
- Papers that are not received by the start of the breakout session will be given a "0".

Class Participation:

- **Lecture Sessions:**
 - These grades start from a base of 87 points. There will be in-class writing exercises for each class. You will get up to 1 point for each in-class writing; if you are absent, you may not make up the work.
- **Breakout Sessions:**
 - These grades start from a base of 87 points. For each class where you contribute, you receive 1 additional point. For each class where you are absent or disruptive, 2 points are deducted.

Final Exam: The final exam will be comprehensive, with some objective and some essay questions.

A Deliverables Calendar to Help Guide You

	Monday Large Group Day	Tuesday	Wednesday Breakout Section	Thursday	Friday
January	1/12	1/13	1/14	1/15	1/16 Email Response to Complaint
	1/19 Holiday No Class	1/20	1/21 Hard copy of response to reading	1/22	1/23
	1/26	1/27	1/28 Hard copy of response to reading	1/29	1/30 Draft of Paper I due
	2/2	2/3	2/4 Hard copy of response to reading	2/5	2/6 Svc Proj Memo Due
February	2/9	2/10	2/11 Hard copy of response to reading	2/12	2/13 Company Request to Prof. Nixdorff (optional); Final Paper I due
	2/16 Holiday No Class	2/17	2/18 Hard copy of response to reading	2/19	2/20
	2/23	2/24	2/25	2/26	2/27 Draft of Paper II due
	3/2	3/3	3/4 Hard copy of response to reading	3/5	3/6 Peer Review of Paper II due
March	3/9	3/10	3/11 Hard copy of response to reading	3/12	3/13 Final Paper II due
	3/16 Spring Break	3/17	3/18 Spring Break	3/19	3/20
	3/23 Service Project Checklist to B/O Leader	3/24	3/25 Hard copy of response to reading	3/26	3/27
	3/30	3/31	4/1 Individual Presentations (Extra Credit)	4/2	4/3 Draft of Company Analysis due
	4/6	4/7	4/8 Service Project Checkpoint	4/9	4/10 Peer Review of Company Analysis due
April	4/13	4/14	4/15	4/16	4/17 Final Company Analysis due
	4/20	4/21 Svc Proj Presentation due to B/O Leader NLT 6 p.m.	4/22 Service Project Practice Session	4/23	4/24 Indiv Memo on Grp Svc Proj due
	4/27 Svc Proj Presentation on Main BB site by 6 p.m.	4/28	4/29 Svc Proj Presentations; Presentation Evals & Team Assessments due		

The Final Exam will be given as scheduled by the Registrar (tentatively 5/11)

If you want additional feedback on any of your papers, please make an appointment with your Breakout Leader or Professor Nixdorff. We are happy to work with you.