Course Title: Developing Your Professional Skills: Foundational Elements
Course Number: BUS 103, Section K01
Course Description: In Developing Your Professional Skills: Foundational Elements, students will begin to investigate and develop their professional skill set. Topics covered include an introduction to the business school and the business world, what it means to be professional, how to consume the business press, and how to research business issues. Students also will begin to develop professional writing and presentation skills, explore career options and the job search process, and develop personal educational and professional development plans.

Class Location: Inchon Global Campus Administration Building, 4020
Class Meeting Time: Mondays and Wednesdays, 9:15 A.M. to 10:30 A.M.
Final Exam: To be determined
Instructor: Jeffrey Kulick
Contact information: E-mail addresses: jkulick@gmu.edu
University: Inchon Global Campus Administration Building, 4064
Office: +82 32-636-5116
Office phone: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2:00 P.M. to 3:00, P.M.
Office hours: Other times by appointment

Course Materials
This course uses a combination of pre-class preparation through reading and online resources and active learning approaches during class time. You are expected to complete all assigned pre-work prior to attending class and are expected to attend and participate fully in all class sessions.

I will provide you with additional materials from other sources during class – videos appropriate to the class discussion, other books, magazines, maps, etc. The classroom discussions and presentations will be the basis for insights and understanding of key concepts. These materials, including the text readings, will be the basis for examination questions.

I highly recommend, though do not require, daily reading of the business sections of US business publications, such as *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Financial Times*, *Business Week*, or *The Economist*. These periodicals and others like these are available through the GMU Libraries in electronic formats. You will use these sources for class assignments.

**Course objectives**

The course provides a foundation for skills that will be used throughout your undergraduate career and beyond. The School of Business is committed to preparing each of its graduating students to move effectively into the business professions. This foundational course addresses skills in critical thinking, communications, working effectively in groups and using the business press. Additional courses in the curriculum focus on polishing these skills and learning others.

The course objectives will map to the School of Business Undergraduate Learning Goals as follows:

2. *Our students will be aware of the uses of technology in business.*
   
   You will use technology for research, creation, editing and developing presentations. These are the keys to modern business practice and essential for your success in the School of Business.

3. *Our students will be effective communicators.*
   
   You will develop and use business writing and presentation skills through the assignments and classroom discussions. These are essential foundational elements for your development.

6. *Our students will recognize the importance of ethical decisions.*
   
   As a manager and business practitioner, you will confront ethical issues and dilemmas. Knowing how to address these ethical issues is another foundational element.

8. *Our students will be knowledgeable about team dynamics and the characteristics of effective teams.*
   
   Much of the work of business is done in teams and groups. There are ways to improve the way teams work, and we will focus on learning these approaches and practicing them.
9. **Our students will understand the value of diversity and the importance of managing diversity in the context of business.**
The nature of modern business requires a recognition and celebration of the differences between people and cultures. Learning to see issues through the eyes of other cultures and disciplines will help create the foundation for success in business.

10. **Our students will be critical thinkers.**
The course will require you to explore many issues and will require you to learn to draw from other perspectives and disciplines. Business success depends on knowing both the foundations and when you need to break the rules and innovate.

School of Business Undergraduate Learning Goals #1, #4, #5, and #7 are not specifically addressed in this course.

Your progress against these goals will be measured in the final exam, exercises, individual assignments, classroom discussions and a group project.

**Class structure**
The course focuses on five areas:

- How to succeed in business school
- An introduction to business and business functions
- Consuming the financial press and researching business topics
- An introduction to business writing, and,
- An introduction to professional presentations.

The development of skills necessary in each of these areas requires practice. To do so, we will work on these five areas simultaneously with a series of exercises and assignments. Feedback from the instructor and peers will be an essential part of your learning.

You are responsible for your learning. The quality of your learning will dramatically increase if you are well-prepared for class. Thoughtful and timely preparation is essential.

Class attendance and participation are expected. You will be tested on materials in the reading and class discussions.

**Grades**
You may earn up to 1,000 points during the course of the class. Your grade will be determined by the total points you earn. Exams and assignments are not given letter grades.
Points may be earned as follows:

- Short writing assignments (5) 200 points
- Semester-long writing project (three scored deliverables) 250 points
- Scored classroom discussion/exercises (5) 150 points
- Group project (two scored deliverables) 250 points
- Final Exam (comprehensive) 150 points
- TOTAL POINTS TO BE EARNED 1,000 points

Your final grade for the course will depend on the total number of points you earn:

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<tr>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>930 – 1,000 points</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>900 – 929 points</td>
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<td>870 – 899 points</td>
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<td>830 – 869 points</td>
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<td>Below 600 points</td>
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Excellent demonstrations of understanding, application, integration and clear understanding will distinguish efforts that receive the highest points in assignments. Concise, insightful responses and comments are preferred over rambling, unfocused responses.

Please note:
The University considers a B to be a good grade. The School of Business considers a B to be a good grade. I consider a B to be a good grade. I hope there are many A’s in the class, but an A is a grade that is not earned automatically. Grades are not negotiated.

The School of Business requires a grade of C or better in this course.

**Short writing assignments**

You will be given five short writing exercises, each focusing on the topics we are developing in the readings, your research and in class discussion.

Work submitted may not meet the appropriate standards. If there are serious problems, students might be required to resubmit the assignment to be rescoring, and the score will be reduced. Revision and editing are important writing skills. It is the effective practice of revising and editing that separates good communicators from those who cannot communicate effectively.

These five exercises, scored individually, will be worth up to a total of 200 points toward the 1,000 points available in the course. Detailed assignment, including scoring criteria, will be provided. See the Course Schedule at the end of this syllabus for due dates.
Semester-long writing project
You will choose a topic from a provided list and produce three papers, each building on the previous papers. This will require research using the GMU Library databases. The focus will include both using research and analysis to think critically and to communicate your conclusions effectively. The focus of the paper will be on professional development topics.

You will be asked to create a short research paper, an expanded version, and then a condensed version. The last two deliverables build on the earlier submissions. You will use feedback and new skills to build better submissions each time.

These three parts of this assignment, scored individually, will be worth up to a total of 250 points toward the 1,000 points available in the course. A detailed assignment, including scoring criteria, will be provided. See the Course Schedule at the end of this syllabus for due dates.

Classroom discussion/exercises
During five designated classes, you will be given an exercise or topic for class discussion or to prepare and submit. You will be evaluated on how well complete the exercise or how well you participate in the discussion.

These five exercises, scored individually, will be worth up to a total of 150 points toward the 1,000 points available in the course. Detailed assignments, including scoring criteria, will be provided throughout the course.

Group Project
You will work with a group of your colleagues to explore a business issue and how it affects you as students and as business persons. You will choose from among the list of topics, and you and your group will focus on that topic throughout the semester. At the conclusion of the semester, you and your group will present your findings to the class. The focus of the paper will be on broader business issues or current events, e.g., ethics in the workplace or the recent problems with Greece and the European Union.

There will also be one scored, interim deliverable – an Interim Report – which will outline the major arguments you and your group will make in your presentation.

This is a major project for this course, and you will earn up to a total of 250 of the 1,000 points available in the course. A detailed assignment, including rubrics, will be provided. See the Course Schedule at the end of this syllabus for due dates.
Examination Policies
The Final exam will be closed-book, with no notes. The class will review major concepts before the exam.

The exam will cover the materials and skills developed in the course.

You will earn up to 150 points toward the 1,000 points in the course. Date, time and place of the exam will be announced.

Any use of electronic devices during the testing times will be interpreted as a violation of the University Honor Code. These devices include portable music players, cellular phones, electronic translators (without specific, prior approval), calculators and similar devices. Any student using such devices during an exam or any form of cheating during the exam will result in a score of zero for the test.

Consistent with University policy, only provable, i.e., documented, absences due to personal illness or family emergencies constitute acceptable absences for missing the exam. There are no make-up exams.

*You must read the materials thoroughly. Lecture, notes and summaries will help you understand the ideas, but they cannot be considered an adequate substitute for reading the assigned materials.*

Your specific responsibilities
To meet the course objectives, you will use reading, assignments, the project, discussion and research. Emphasis will be placed on learning and applying theories and techniques to a variety of situations. Practice is essential.

Attendance is expected. Much of the material will be developed in class and in discussion.

If there are emergencies or unavoidable absences, you should contact me prior to the class. You must arrange to get handouts and assignments from fellow students or Blackboard.

Detailed class and reading assignments will be made during the course. Assignments will be posted on Blackboard.

Written materials
All written reports should be neatly typed, legible and free of errors in grammar and spelling. Formats of the deliverables will be part of the assignment.

All work is due at the beginning of the class on the due date. Late work will not be accepted unless specific, prior arrangements have been made with the instructor. If
accepted, late work will receive a lower grade. All work must be completed by the final examination.

You will receive specific assignments on all assignments. You will be required to conduct research for the individual and group course-long projects. You should be able to complete this using the electronic databases available at the University Libraries.

Community 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 that participate in these educational programs contribute to the well-being of society. High quality educational programs require an environment of trust and mutual respect, 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 Community 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.

The 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.

Through our personal commitment to these Community Standards of Behavior, we can create an environment in which all can achieve their full potential.

George Mason University Honor Code
Students are reminded of their responsibilities under the George Mason University Honor Code. It is understood that that the students will uphold the highest standards of academic work and keep their efforts free of the four areas the Honor Code addresses specifically—cheating and attempted cheating, plagiarism, lying and stealing. We go discuss the Honor Code and the penalties for violating the Code in class.

Students are also evaluated individually. While individuals may wish to consult, analyze and discuss their work with others, the student is responsible for ensuring he or she complies with the Honor Code.

The following paragraph is taken from http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/honorcode
Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work.

I take the Honor Code seriously. I will be glad to discuss any of the Honor Code definitions or implications. The responsibility of each student as well as the faculty to ensure the Honor Code is upheld.
Course Schedule

Notes:

- In general, the short writing assignment is due the second session of the week. You will receive feedback that will help you develop the next assignment. Detailed topics and formats will be part of each assignment.

- In general, the scored classroom discussion are conducted in the second session of the week. When students have a major deliverable due, there will be no scored classroom discussion.

- All deliverables for the individual course-long writing project will be due the second session of the due week.

- Students will present their final reports and make the classroom presentation during the week of December 7. No other assignments are due that week.

- Readings will be assigned each week for the upcoming week to give students adequate time to prepare. We will also use the book’s topics and approaches as starting points for class discussions. The text for the course is *Asking the Right Questions: A Guide to Critical Thinking*, 11th Edition, by M. Neil Browne and Stuart M. Keeley, Pearson, 2015, ISBN 978-0-321-90795-0.

- Research performance will be monitored, but students will do so on their own time.

- Individual assignments will be provided for each deliverable, exercise or scored discussion.

Week One
Monday, August 31, and Wednesday, September 02
Focus on introducing the textbook, course topics, assignments and group dynamics
Textbook reading assignment is Chapter 1: The Benefit and Manner of Asking the Right Question
No deliverables due

Week Two
Monday, September 07, and Wednesday, September 09
Focus on teams, time management and business functions
Textbook reading assignment is Chapter 2: Speed Bumps Interfering with Your Critical Thinking.
Scored classroom discussion (#1 of five)
Week Three
Monday, September 14, and Wednesday, September 16
Focus on conducting research and business press
Textbook reading assignment is Chapter 3: What are the Issue and the Conclusion?
Short writing assignment due (#1 of five)

Week Four
Monday, September 21, and Wednesday, September 23
Focus on ethics and academic integrity
Textbook reading assignment is Chapter 4: What Are the Reasons?
First deliverable in semester-long writing project (individual) due

Week Five
Wednesday, September 30, and Monday, October 05
Focus on business current events
Textbook reading assignment is Chapter 5: What Words or Phrases Are Ambiguous?
Scored classroom discussion (#2 of five)
Short writing assignment due (#2 of five)

Week Six
Monday, October 12, and Wednesday, October 14
Focus on group dynamics and developing final report and class presentation
Textbook reading assignment is Chapter 6: What Are the Value and Descriptive Assumptions?
Scored classroom discussion (#3 of five)

Week Seven
Monday, October 19, and Wednesday, October 21
Focus on editing your own work
Textbook reading assignment is Chapter 7: Are There Any Fallacies in the Reasoning?
Short writing assignment due (#3 of five)

Week Eight
Monday, October 26, and Wednesday, October 28
Focus to be determined from student concerns
Textbook reading assignment is Chapter 8: How Good is the Evidence: Intuition, Personal Experience, Case Examples, Testimonials, and Appeals to Authority.
Second deliverable in semester-long writing project (individual) due
Week Nine
Monday, November 02, and Wednesday, November 04
Focus on last minute concerns and making learnings explicit
Textbook reading assignment is Chapter 9: How Good is the Evidence: Personal Observation, Research Studies, and Analogies.
Group project Interim Report due

Week Ten
Monday, November 09, and Wednesday, November 11
Focus on giving and receiving feedback and group dynamics
Textbook reading assignment is Chapter 10: Are There Rival Causes?
Short writing assignment due (#4 of five)

Week Eleven
Monday, November 16, and Wednesday, November 18
Focus on business events
Textbook reading assignment is Chapter 11: Are the Statistics Deceptive?
Scored classroom discussion (#4 of five)

Week Twelve
Monday, November 23, and Wednesday, November 25
Focus on presentation skills
Textbook reading assignment is Chapter 12: What Significant Information is Omitted?
Short writing assignment due (#5 of five)
Scored classroom discussion (#5 of five)

Week Thirteen
Monday, November 30, and Wednesday, December 02
Focus on project preparation and preparing for Final Exam
Textbook reading assignment is Chapter 13: What Reasonable Conclusions Are Possible?
Final deliverable in semester-long writing project (individual) due

Week Fourteen
Monday, December 07, and Wednesday, December 09
Group Presentations

Week of December 13
Final Exam. Date, time and location to be determined