BUS 303: Developing Your Professional Skills – Advanced Elements

Course Title: BUS 303: Developing Your Professional Skills – Advanced Elements
Class Dates/Times: Asynchronous (Sec. DL5)
Course Webpage: http://courses.gmu.edu
Instructor: Elaine Viccora
Office Hours: Virtual appointments available throughout the week. Email me to schedule.
Email: eviccora@gmu.edu

Course Description
In this course, you will continue to develop your professional skill set. Topics covered include understanding the modern work environment, business ethics and professional responsibilities, and professional judgment. You will 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

Course Outcomes (highlights emphasize Mason Impact)
1. Students will increase self-awareness by evaluating their interpersonal skills and the ability to influence and have an impact on the decision-making processes.
2. Students will evaluate various business trends, issues, perspectives, and industries to inform their own 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.
Mason Impact Distinction
This course is designated as one of the Mason Impact courses, as part of George Mason’s Undergraduate Education Program, preparing “students to tackle significant global questions and challenges by investigating meaningful questions, engaging multiple perspectives, and creating new knowledge within the context of Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity, Civic Engagement, Entrepreneurship, and Global Activities.”

More specifically, BUS 303: Developing Your Professional Skills – Advanced Elements has an interpersonal focus and encourages students to explore how they can impact others through use of professional skills such as persuasive oral and written communication, emotional intelligence, and teamwork. One of the major assignments has students using the business press to be aware of local and global trends and events, in order to inform their thinking and actions. In another team assignment, BUS 303 students work in teams to research a specific aspect of professional development, tailor that content to a target audience within a relevant company by way of a written persuasive training proposal, and deliver an oral training presentation with an interactive activity that educates and impacts peers.

As a member of the George Mason University community, the School of Business plays an integral role in building an educational environment that is committed to anti-racism and inclusive excellence. An anti-racist approach to higher education acknowledges the ways that individual, interpersonal, institutional, and structural manifestations of racism against Black individuals and other people of color contribute to inequality and injustice in our classrooms, on our campuses, and in our communities, and it strives to provide our community members with resources to interrupt cycles of racism so as to cultivate a more equitable, inclusive, and just environment for all of our students, staff, faculty, alumni, and friends, regardless of racial background.

Required Online Materials
There is no designated textbook for this course; instead, all readings will be 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 will rely on a combination of readings, videos, and online resources.

Approaches to Learning
This course uses active learning approaches during class time. Students are expected to complete all assigned pre-work prior to attending class and are expected to attend and fully participate in all class sessions. Professional behavior is expected throughout the course as defined in classroom discussions.

Assignments
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assignment 1: Employment Package</td>
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<td>Assignment 2: Infographic and Memo</td>
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<td>Assignment 3: Informational Interview Memo</td>
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<td>Assignment 4: Professional Training Webinar</td>
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<td>Assignment 5: Reflection and Projection</td>
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<td>Weekly Course Activities: Readings, Discussion Boards, journals, class participation, etc.</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<td>Professional Engagement Activities: ProfessionalQuest and one additional career event</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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Grading Scale

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<th>Highest</th>
<th>Lowest</th>
<th>Letter</th>
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Note that final grades will NOT be rounded up—please don’t ask.

Safe Return to Campus
For those students who have to visit campus, know that, in accordance with University Policy 1415, all faculty, staff, students, guests, vendors, and visitors must wear face coverings on campus and in university buildings including during class.

Similarly, all students who come to campus must complete the Mason COVID Health Check daily, seven days a week. The COVID Health Check system uses a color code system and students will receive either a Green, Yellow, or Red email response. Only students who receive a “green” notification are permitted to attend courses with a face-to-face component. If you suspect that you are sick or have been directed to self-isolate, please quarantine or get testing. Faculty members can ask you to show them that you have received a Green email and are thereby permitted to be in class.

Training is available in Blackboard (https://mymason.gmu.edu). Students are required to follow the university’s public health and safety precautions and procedures outlined on the university Safe Return to Campus webpage (www2.gmu.edu/safe-return-plan).

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, free expression and inquiry, and a commitment to truth, excellence, and lifelong learning.

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 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.

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
If these Standards of Behavior are violated, then students may be required to complete additional learning activities assigned by the instructor.

**Commitment to Inclusion and Anti-Racism**

As a member of the George Mason University community, the School of Business plays an integral role in building an educational environment that is committed to anti-racism and inclusive excellence. An anti-racist approach to higher education acknowledges the ways that individual, interpersonal, institutional, and structural manifestations of racism against Black individuals and other people of color contribute to inequality and injustice in our classrooms, on our campuses, and in our communities, and it strives to provide our community members with resources to interrupt cycles of racism so as to cultivate a more equitable, inclusive, and just environment for all of our students, staff, faculty, alumni, and friends, regardless of racial background.

To be anti-racist means:

- To make constant, conscious decisions to interrupt racism and cultivate equity, inclusion, and justice for people of all racial backgrounds, and in particular those from Black communities and other communities of color, who are most likely to bear the direct and indirect costs of systems of white supremacy;
- To interrogate histories of white supremacy and white-dominant culture, and to examine the ways in which these histories have impacted our individual beliefs, our interpersonal relationships, our institutional and structural policies and processes, and our entire society;
- To make a commitment to being responsible for our own relationships to, and actions within, systems of white supremacy; and
- To cultivate a practice of self-awareness and self-reflection that allows us to critically evaluate our own role in upholding white supremacy and identify the ways we can interrupt cycles of racism at the individual, interpersonal, institutional, and structural levels.

We believe that the work of anti-racism starts with each individual, and that in cultivating an anti-racist approach to research, scholarship, and practice, our students will build a skillset rooted in principles of equity, inclusion, and justice that they will carry with them throughout their lives.*

*Commitment Statement prepared by Dr. Charles Chavis, Assistant Professor, Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter School of Peace and Conflict Resolution

**Name and Pronoun Use**

If you wish, please share your name and gender pronouns with me and how best to address you in class and via email. I use she/her for myself and you may address me as “Professor” or “Mrs. Viccora” in email and verbally.

**Honor Code Statement**

The Honor System and Code adopted by George Mason University will be enforced for this class: [https://oai.gmu.edu/mason-honor-code/](https://oai.gmu.edu/mason-honor-code/). Plagiarism is a serious offense and will 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.
Attendance, Participation and Make-up Work
Participation entails completing the weekly online 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. In addition, you are encouraged to participate in BUS 303 virtual guest lectures (see the course calendar for days/times).

Please use your webcam and mic during team meeting with classmates or virtual conversations with me to ensure good communication and build community.

If course attendance becomes impacted by prolonged illness or other circumstances, inform the instructor as soon as possible in order to assess options.

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. 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.

Timely Submissions
All assignments are due by 11:59 pm (EST) 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 (EST) 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 Wednesday, 12/9/20 at 11:59 pm. There are no exceptions to this final due date.

Course Material and Student Privacy
All course materials posted to Blackboard or other course site are private; by federal law, any materials that identify specific students (via their name, voice, or image) must not be shared with anyone not enrolled in this class.
- Video-recordings of class meetings that include audio or visual information from other students are private and must not be shared
- Live Video Conference Meetings (e.g. Collaborate or Zoom) that include audio or visual information from other students must be viewed privately and not shared with others in your household
- Most of our synchronous meetings in this class will be recorded to provide necessary information for students in this class. Recordings will be stored on Blackboard and will only be accessible to students taking this course during this semester.

Formatting Guidelines
Please follow each assignment’s guidelines for formatting. 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, 7th Edition or at 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 “Sample Formats”. 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 two major assignments that are 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.

**Inclement Weather and Campus Emergencies**

If the campus closes or class is canceled due to weather or other concern, students should check Blackboard for updates on how to continue learning and information about any changes to events or assignments.

Information regarding weather-related changes in the University’s schedule (e.g., closing or late opening) will be provided on the GMU website and via Mason Alert. Students can sign up for the Mason Alert system to provide emergency information of various sorts at [https://ready.gmu.edu/masonalert/](https://ready.gmu.edu/masonalert/). An emergency poster in each classroom explains what to do in the event of a crisis.

**Additional 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 the instructor 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](http://www.gmu.edu/student/drc).
Library Resources
Should you need assistance with library resources, please contact Business and Economics Liaison Librarian Jo Ann J. Henson, MLIS: jhenson3@gmu.edu. Also, there is a library InfoGuide for this course: http://infoguides.gmu.edu/busfoundations.

Career Services in the School of Business
Career Services, located in Suite 042 in Enterprise Hall, currently offers virtual appointments. You can call 703-993-2140 or email mycareer@gmu.edu to set up an appointment. Review the career events calendar at http://business.gmu.edu/career/atp/.

Counseling Services
George Mason University’s Counseling and Psychological Services can provide assistance 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, please visit https://caps.gmu.edu/ or call 703-993-2380.

Student Emergency Assistance Funding
Emergency funding is available to students who experience unexpected financial situations and meet certain eligibility criteria. Visit the University Life website for more details and application information: https://ulife.gmu.edu/student-emergency-assistance-funding-2/

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 appointment, please visit http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/ or call 703-993-1200. Schedule appointments in advance; the center gets booked up very quickly each semester.

Professional Engagement Fall 2020
BUS 303 students will participate in TWO professional events during the semester. One of these events must be participation in School of Business Career Services' ProfessionalQuest, a series of virtual, live employer panels throughout the semester. The fall 2020 schedule is posted on Blackboard. After attending, the student will complete a writing activity on the class Discussion Board.

For the second event, students can participate in an additional career event of their choosing and complete a writing activity. These resources may help with choosing an event:

University Career Services Virtual Career Fair on October 8 & 9, 2020
University Career Services Virtual Workshops
School of Business Executive Development Webinars
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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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Violation</th>
<th>First Offense</th>
<th>Second Offense</th>
<th>Third Offense</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plagiarism</td>
<td>An F in the class; referral to Writing Center; and relevant Academic Integrity seminar/training completion</td>
<td>An F in the class and at least one semester suspension, and relevant Academic Integrity seminar/training completion.</td>
<td>An F in the class and expulsion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheating</td>
<td>An F in the class; and relevant Academic Integrity seminar/training completion</td>
<td>An F in the class, Academic Integrity Seminar completion; and at least one semester suspension or expulsion, and relevant Academic Integrity seminar/training completion.</td>
<td>An F in the class and expulsion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lying (e.g., providing fraudulent excuse documents, falsifying data)</td>
<td>An F in the class; and relevant Academic Integrity seminar/training completion, and at least one semester suspension</td>
<td>An F in the class and at least one semester suspension (and relevant Academic Integrity seminar/training completion) or expulsion.</td>
<td>An F in the class and expulsion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<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, relevant Academic Integrity seminar/training completion; and at least one year suspension</td>
<td>An F in the class and expulsion.</td>
<td>An F in the class and expulsion</td>
</tr>
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*Note: The School of Business reserves the right to initiate termination proceedings for any student found guilty of an Honor Code violation by the Office of Academic Integrity.*