

**BUSINESS COMMUNICATION – BSMT350A – FALL 2015**  
**Wednesdays 10:15 – 11:45 AM – Room 268 / 418 (lab)**  
**3 Credit Hours**

## GENERAL INFORMATION

---

### PROFESSOR INFORMATION

---

**Instructor:**

Prof. Steve A. Varela

**Phone:**

(219) 473-4355 (office)

**Office:**

Fifth Floor, Room 523

**Office Hours:**

Monday's 9:30 – 10:10, Wednesday's 13:30 – 17:00, Tuesday's 9:30-12:00 or by apt.

**E-mail:** [svarela@ccsj.edu](mailto:svarela@ccsj.edu)

48 hour response time (excluding weekends)

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

---

Effective communication reduces the risk inherent in business operations by a staggering 56% according to the Project Management Institute. Indeed, poor communication inhibits performance in critical areas such as employee turnover, absenteeism, production, sales, and customer service among others.

This course investigates written and oral communication skills through the study of communication theory and its practical application in leading, marketing, and managing organizations. Students in this course will: identify understand and execute critical oral and written communication processes; consider the ethical, cultural, and technological ramifications of the communication process; apply appropriate techniques to various business-related communication scenarios; and understand the role of communication in support of organizational goals.

Topics include communication foundations, the 3x3 writing process, business correspondence, proposals, presentations, and oral communication skills. Students will also be exposed to an extensive review of key grammar and usage issues.

### ABOUT YOUR PROFESSOR

---

Steve A. Varela, MBA, MSc. is a native of Chicago, Illinois and speaks English, Portuguese, and basic Spanish. He has conducted business in more than 25 countries and has spent more than half of his adult life as an expatriate. He has lived and worked on four continents including the countries of: Chile, China, Brazil, Nigeria, Taiwan and

the US operating as a senior business development executive or academic within the technology, telecommunications, and international education sectors. <http://www.linkedin.com/svarela>.

My teaching values are built on three tenets: service to the student, a global perspective, and the connection between theory and practice. Creating a learning environment for students to cultivate, critique, or enhance an idea is what benefits the cohort and our greater society as a whole.

My learning philosophy is tied to the notion that scoring high on academic tests does not translate into high performance. To me, it is a matter of how we learn as much as it is what we learn. Students in this course will be required to think like the leader/shareholder, to dutifully consider the risks and rewards, and to evaluate how these decisions position the organization and its stakeholders for future market participation. This involves much more than producing quick answers or even completing a semester-long project. It involves exercising and strengthening your curiosity, incisiveness of thought, and tolerance for ambiguity. It will also test your capability to find clarity in a society drowning in information overload.

I feel my role is a guide to the world of business, to illustrate the connection between theory and practice, and to demonstrate the value of theory and its efficacy relative to the varied situations that students will encounter throughout their careers.

### **COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

---

By the end of this course, successful students will be able to:

- LO1 Identify and understand critical oral and written communication processes;
- LO2 Consider the ethical, cultural, and technological ramifications of the communication process;
- LO3 Apply appropriate oral and writing techniques to various business-related scenarios;
- LO4 Understand the role of communications in supporting organizational goals; and,
- LO5 Complete an extensive review of key grammar and usage issues.

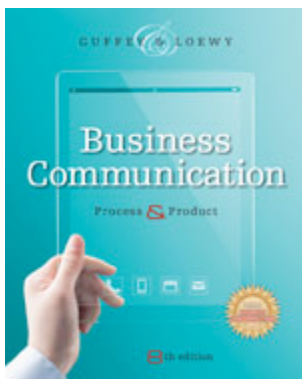
### **COURSE PREREQUISITES**

---

This course requires students to have successfully completed 30 semester hours of college level credit (sophomore standing) and be fluent in the English language. Cross-listed: EWPC 350. For more information about prerequisites go to: <http://www.ccsj.edu/academics/resources/catalogs.html>.

### **DIGITAL TEXT BOOK, MULTIMEDIA, JOURNAL ARTICLES, AND OPTIONAL READING MATERIAL**

---



Business Communication: Process and Product with integrated Mindtap and Write Experience feature, . 8<sup>th</sup> Edition, 2015.

by Mary Ellen Guffey and Dana Loewy  
Cengage Publishing, ISBN: 9781285514956

The cost for this package is about \$125 and is required for all students to remain in the course. The publisher offers immediate access to the text and digital features as part of a two week grace period. Students are required to have the course materials from Day 1, no exceptions.

(NOTE: Print books without MindTap and Write Experience are not acceptable.)

**Additional Required Reading: Journal Articles**



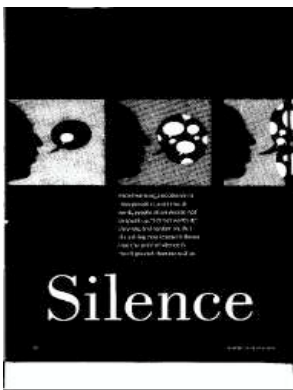
**1. The Silent Killer of Big Companies** By Groysberg and Slind  
Harvard Business Review, October, 2002

**Boris Groysberg and Michael Slind** Boris Groysberg (bgroysberg@hbs.edu) is a professor of business administration at Harvard Business School. Michael Slind (mike@talkinbook.com) is a writer, editor, and communication consultant.

The cost for your own copy of the article is about \$9, but a special free edition can be obtained from <https://hbr.org/2012/10/the-silent-killer-of-big-companies>

**Additional Supplemental Reading: Journal Articles (Posted on Black Board or available online)**

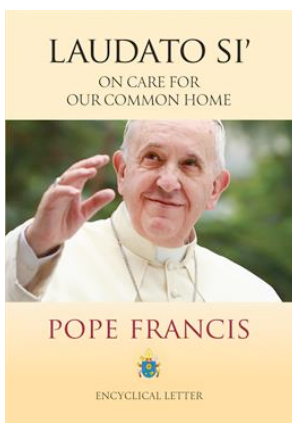
**1. Is Silence Killing your Company?** Leslie A. Perlow and Stephanie Williams, Harvard Business Review, May, 2003



**Leslie A. Perlow** is the Konosuke Matsushita Professor of Leadership at Harvard Business School. She is the author of *Sleeping With Your Smartphone* (HBR Press, 2012).

The cost for your own copy of the article is about \$9, but can be obtained from the library free of charge. A special edition of the article appears here: <https://hbr.org/2003/05/is-silence-killing-your-company>

**2. Laudato Si: On Care for our Common Home**



Pope Francis  
The Vatican, April 2015

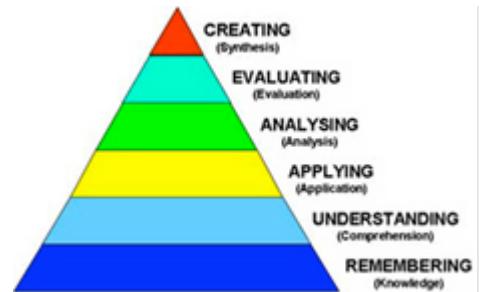
This is the latest encyclical letter by the leader of the Catholic Church addressed to all of humanity on environmental issues, our place in creation, and responsibility towards our common home authored by **Pope Francis** himself.

This letter is available free from the Vatican Files in rich text format ( [http://w2.vatican.va/content/dam/francesco/pdf/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco\\_20150524\\_enciclica-laudato-si\\_en.pdf](http://w2.vatican.va/content/dam/francesco/pdf/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si_en.pdf)) or available on Apple iTunes for about \$5 (September, 2015).

## LEARNING AND TEACHING METHODOLOGY – LEVELED LEARNING STRATEGY

---

This course incorporates three content modules which incorporate “scaffolding” features designed to maximize the student’s learning outcomes. The first module, *setting the stage*, focuses on student recall (recognition and recall of communication concepts) and understanding (interpretation, summarizing, inferring, and comparing) and includes content and activities that rely on retrieving foundational knowledge that will be relied on in later modules.



---

The second module, *the writing process*, provides tactical advice relative to strategically preparing and completing your messages and includes assignments that deal with actual written/oral communication based on the writer’s goals and assignment strategy.

Finally, the third module, *Proposals and Presentations*, puts the concepts and skills to use while comprehensively applying the course content as students develop a written and oral evaluation of a current pressing or controversial, real-world business concept.

## LEARNING METHODS

---

Class lecture, video presentation, Mindtap multimedia based text, Write Experience™ adaptive language assignment engine, peer review, individual and peer revision, and group presentations (in-class and virtual).

## EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING ACTIVITIES

---

This course does not offer experiential learning activities.

## EVALUATION CRITERIA / ASSIGNMENT WEIGHTING

---

Graded assignments are similarly weighted such that the likelihood of falling behind is limited and a very low score from one assignment will not jeopardize the student’s ability to successfully pass this course. This is not a ‘high stakes’, midterm and final style course.

Course Requirements	Weights
<a href="#">Weekly Assignments (Ch. 1-15)</a>	25%
Foundational Exam (Ch. 1-6)	20%
Three Applied Writing Exercises (Ch. 8, Ch. 9, & Ch. 10)	15%
Grammar and Mechanics Proficiency Improvement (pre & post-test)	15%
Group Project & Integrative Assignment (weeks 9-15)	15%
Class & Online Participation: Instructor’s Discretion, and Peer Evaluations	10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

### **CLASS ASSIGNMENTS (25%)**

There are several assignments integrated with your text readings that must be completed for this class. All of these assignments are individual in that they must be completed separately by each student. You will find a complete listing of these assignments and reading activities in your MindTap course portal and Blackboard. NOTE: Weekly Critical Thinking and Item Activities are 'Check-in' assignments. You will receive full credit for your thoughtful submission, provided it is submitted on time. *Check-in* assignments will be graded on a percentage of assignments submitted on-time (e.g. 12 of 15 total assignments submitted by the date due = 80%)

The details for each assignment is located on BB or MindTap. Assignments are due per due dates provided. **LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED FOR CREDIT.** This class has time-sensitive assignments so students are expected to submit their assignments on or BEFORE the due dates (generally before the start of the respective class – see Mindtap Portal).

### **GROUP WORK (20%)**

An important portion of this course's grade is based on group activities. On the first day students will form teams (groups) and communicate with their groups through the course of the semester. NOTE: Each student will submit **a confidential peer evaluation** on all the members of his or her group. These evaluations will be used at the Professor's discretion when determining participation grades.

### **EXAMS & WRITING ASSIGNMENTS (15% EACH)**

To ensure that you are keeping up with the textbook and foundational concepts, there will be one exam and three writing exercises and tests. The exam will cover the material from the text, the chapter power points (including the videos) the articles posted, and any other class related discussion. The writing assignments will evaluate your skills in applying the theory to a specific business communication scenario.

### **CLASS PARTICIPATION (Instructor's Discretion, Peer Evaluations 10%):**

Everyone will be expected to attend class, to come prepared, and to participate actively in the discussion. Before class, you should have read the assigned readings, thought critically about the concepts they present and their application to the case or topic of the day, and be prepared to answer the assigned study questions (with written pre-session notes in hand- typically one page in length). The best contributions are those that are relevant to the concept at hand. They often build on or respond to the observations of others, make connections to prior class sessions, or draw on materials and lessons from other courses.

Debates and disagreements can be powerful opportunities for learning (conflict is an energizing motivator that can propel us forward). You are encouraged to challenge the views of your classmates and the instructor – provided that you do it constructively and with civility. **IF YOU DO NOT PARTICIPATE YOU WILL RECEIVE A LOW PARTICIPATION GRADE – NO EXCEPTIONS – FOR YOU BASKETBALL FANS, PARTICIPATION IS LIKE THE FREE THROW LINE: DO WELL AND YOU WILL WIN THE GAME.**

Of course, regular attendance is a must. You cannot participate if you are not there. All classes will start promptly. **You will be expected to be on time.** Late arrivals can delay the start of class, disrupt the conversation, and are disrespectful to guests, classmates, and me. If you expect to be late for some good reason, please alert me if possible and take a seat quietly. Without a compelling excuse, late arrivals will count against your class participation grade. We will have a break some time at or shortly after the halfway point in class. **You will be expected to return promptly from all breaks.**

## GRADING POLICY

---

Letter Grade	Range
A	94 – 100
A -	90 – 93
B +	87 – 89
B	84 – 86
B -	80 – 83
C +	77 - 79
C	74 – 76
C -	70 – 73
D +	67 – 69
D	64 – 66
D -	60 – 63
F	< 60

## EXPECTATIONS

---

This class is demanding in terms of outside-of-class time. Students are expected to collaborate after course hours while developing your final project. **Expect to spend 2 hours in out-of-class preparation for each in-class hour.** My goal is for every single student to see a noticeable improvement in your understanding of the human side of business. I expect you to work very hard on your own, and as teammates, to accomplish this goal.

Chapter assignments, normally 15-25 in-text questions, are designed to measure student comprehension and engagement. Case analysis projects (individual and group) measure both individual and team contributions.

## COURSE TECHNOLOGY

---

This course utilizes two learning management systems: Blackboard and Mindtap. **MindTap** is digital text with integrated exercises and author videos which explain the chapter content in familiar terms. It also includes an artificial intelligence based writing engine referred to as WriteExperience. WriteExperience offers students immediate feedback on their writing, tailored to the situation, along with prescriptive advice on how to improve their writing. As writing is iterative, based on constant revisions, this feature permits students to engage with the assignment both in and out of class.

This course also relies on **Blackboard** for important course announcements, assignment submission, grades, and serves as the main repository for course documents such as this syllabus and course policy, customized lecture slides, relevant articles, and current events as they relate to the course concepts.

## RULES, POLICIES, AND ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

---

Assignments from the text and other resources are listed below for each class session. Students are expected to pace their learning according to the posted course assignments.

It is expected that interactive learning and teaching will enrich the learning experience of all students, and that each student will work in partnership with the professor to create a positive learning experience for all. Student engagement is a necessary condition for an effective learning experience, and includes contributions to debate and discussion (if any), positive interactive learning with others, and an enthusiastic attitude towards inquiry. Everyone is expected to be a positive contributor to the class learning community, and students are expected to share the in the responsibility of learning.

## COURSE CALENDAR

### WEEKLY SCHEDULE

# BSMT 350 – Business Communication

## Fall 2015

<p>Week 1: (August 31 – September 5)</p> <p><i>Setting the Stage</i></p>	<p><b>Session 1:</b> <u>Course Introduction, Methodology, Syllabus, Instructor, Course Technology</u></p> <p>Welcome! Learning strategy, student work group establishment (5 persons maximum), MindTap™ registration.</p> <p><u>Activity 1.5: Getting to know you (in class).</u></p> <p>First assignment: Persuasive messages</p> <p><u>Ch. 1. Self-Assessment &amp; Importance of Communication Skills, Grammar/Mechanics Guide, appendix “A”</u></p> <p><b>Session 2:</b></p> <p><u>Ch. 1. Business Communication in a Digital Age</u></p>	<p>Note: all assignments are due prior to the start of the class meeting.</p> <p>Register for MindTap!</p> <p>ALWAYS Read chapters prior to arriving in class and complete the chapter review questions.</p> <p>Grammar Mechanics Diagnostic Test#1</p> <p>Activity 1.5</p>
<p>Week 2: (September 6 - 12)</p> <p><i>Setting the Stage</i></p>	<p><b>Session 1:</b> <u>Chapter 2: Professionalism in the Workplace</u></p> <p><b>Session 2:</b> <u>Chapter 2: Professionalism - Continued</u></p>	<p>Ch. 2</p> <p>CT #1 or #3 and</p> <p>Item 2.1 or Item 2.2 in Blackboard.</p>
<p>Week 3: (September 13-19)</p> <p><i>Setting the Stage</i></p>	<p><b>Session 1:</b> <u>Chapter 3: Intercultural Communication</u></p> <p><b>Session 2:</b> <u>Chapter 3: Continued</u></p>	<p>Ch. 3: CT #1 or #4 (BB)</p> <p>Item 3.5 or Item 3.6 (BB)</p>
<p>Week 4: (September 20-26)</p> <p><i>The Writing Process</i></p>	<p><b>Session 1:</b> <u>Chapter 4: Planning Business Messages</u></p> <p><b>Session 2:</b></p>	<p>Ch. 4 CT # 3 or #5(BB)</p> <p>Planning Business</p>

	<u>Chapter 4: Continue</u>	Messages (MT)  Item 4.2, p. 146 or Item 4.9, p. 147 (BB)
Week 5: (September 27- October 3)  <i>The Writing Process</i>	<b>Session 1:</b> <u>Chapter 5: Organizing and Drafting Business Messages</u>  <b>Session 2:</b> <u>Chapter 5: Continued</u>	Ch. 5: CT # 1, or #2 and #5 (BB).  Organizing Business Messages (MT)  Item 5.8, p. 172 or Item 5.14, p. 173 (BB)
Week 6: (October 4 - 10)  <i>The Writing Process</i>	<b>Session 1:</b> <u>Chapter 6: Job Revising Business Messages</u>  <b>Session 2:</b> <u>Chapter 6: Continued</u>	CT # 3 or #5 (BB)  Revising Business Messages (MT)  Item 6.4, p. 198 or Item 6.12, p. 200 (BB)
Week 7: (October 11 - 17)  <i>The Writing Process</i>	<b>Session 1:</b> <u>Introduction to Write Experience 2.0 and practice assignment: <i>Letter of Interest</i></u>  <u>Chapter 1-6: Review &amp; Workshop</u> Instructor review of major objectives and student study group nominations, times, locations.  <b>Session 2:</b> <u>Exam 1: Chapters 1-6</u> (Test of foundational knowledge)	Examine Write Experience assignment on MindTap prior to arriving in class.  See BB Announcements for test specifics/results.
*****	<b>Course Midpoint</b>	<b>Review Progress</b>
Week 8: (October 18-24)  <i>Workplace Communication</i>	<b>Session 1:</b> <u>Flipped (student led) TECH WEEK! &amp; Chapter 7: Short Workplace Messages and Digital Media</u> Linked-In, Podcasts (AVR, iTunes), Virtual Communications  <b>Session 2:</b> <u>Chapter 7: Continued</u>	Item 7.4, p. 235 or Item 7.12, p. 237 (BB)



<p>Week 9: (October 25-31)</p> <p><i>Workplace Communication</i></p>	<p><b>Session 1:</b> <u>Chapter 8: Positive Messages</u></p> <p><b>Session 2:</b> <u>Chapter 8: Write Experience 2.0 measured assignment: <i>Who Done It?</i></u></p> <p><b>Group Project</b> Discuss and answer questions related to Group Project</p>	<p>CT# 1 or #4 (BB)</p> <p>Positive Messages (MT)</p> <hr/> <p>Item 8.13 (BB)</p>
<p>Week 10: (November 1-7)</p> <p><i>Workplace Communication</i></p>	<p><b>Session 1:</b> <u>Chapter 9: Negative Messages</u></p> <p><b>Session 2:</b> <u>Chapter 9: Write Experience 2.0 measured assignment: <i>Crisis at Canoe</i></u></p>	<p>Item 9.23, p. 322 or Item 9.29, p. 323 (BB)</p> <p>Negative Messages (MT)</p> <p><b>Group Project</b> Due: Submit brief written outline class.</p>
<p>Week 11: (November 8-14)</p> <p><i>Workplace Communication</i></p>	<p><b>Session 1:</b> <u>Chapter 10: Sales and Persuasive Messages</u></p> <p><b>Session 2:</b> <u>Chapter 10: Write Experience 2.0 measured assignment: <i>Saving Money at the Office</i></u></p>	<p>Item 10.1, p. 359 or Item 10.8, p. 362.</p> <hr/> <p>Persuasive and Sales Messages (MT)</p>
<p>Week 12: (November 15-21)</p> <p><i>Course Integration</i></p>	<p><b>Session 1:</b> <u>Chapter 13: Integrative Assignment - Proposals, Business Plans, and Formal Reports</u></p> <p><b>Session 2:</b> <u>Chapter 13: Integrative Assignment - Continued</u></p>	<p>CT # 3, or #5 (BB)</p> <hr/> <p>Proposals, Business Plans, and Formal Business Reports (MT)</p>
<p>Week 13: (November 22-28)</p> <p><b>Thanksgiving Week</b></p> <p><i>Course Integration</i></p>	<p><b>Session 1:</b> <u>Chapter 14: Integrative Assignment - Business Presentations</u></p> <p><b>Session 2:</b> <u>Chapter 14: Integrative Assignment - Continued</u></p>	<p>CT: # 1 or 2 (BB)</p> <p>Business Presentations (MT)</p> <p><b>Group Project</b> Submit Executive Summary in Class.</p>
<p>Week 14: (November 29-December 5)</p>	<p><b>Session 1:</b> <u>Chapter 15: Employment Communication</u></p> <p><b>Session 2:</b> <u>Chapter 15: Personal Language Trainer Post Assessment</u></p>	<p>CT:#1 or 2</p> <p>The Job Search and Resumes for the Digital Age (MT)</p> <p>Prepare/Update Personal Resume: Due next class (BB)</p>

Week 15:

(December 6 - 12)

**Final Exam Week (See college schedule exam times and location)**

Single Session Only

Case Presentations

Group Project  
Deliver Group  
Presentations

(Dec 13-18)

Grades evaluated, calculated, & reported.

**Happy Holidays!**

- *Subject to change based on student progress, school schedules/closings, and official holidays.*

<b>Responsibilities</b>	
<b>Attending Class / Exams</b>	<p>You cannot succeed in this class if you do not attend. We believe that intellectual growth and success in higher education occur through interaction in the classroom and laboratories. However, we do not want to penalize students for participating in college-sponsored events. When you miss class because of a college event, <u>you must give written notice of your absence at least two days in advance, and you are responsible for completing all missed work by their original due dates.</u></p> <p>There are no makeup exams in this course. Therefore, you must pre-arrange to complete an exam prior to the general exam date in order to earn credit. It is the student's responsibility to make these arrangements with the faculty at least one week in advance.</p> <p>Finally, any student who misses a total of three weeks of classes will be automatically dropped from the course. For hybrid courses, this means two face-to-face sessions.</p>
<b>Turning In Your Work</b>	<p>You cannot succeed in this class if you do not turn in all your work on the day it is due.</p> <p>The learning strategy in this course uses scaffolding and the activities in this course are cumulative. Therefore, you must complete assignments in sequence as indicated in the syllabus and online learning management system (Blackboard, Connect, Mindtap, etc.). In most cases, you will not be permitted to start a new exercise until you have completed its prerequisite. No exceptions can be made to this policy.</p>
<b>Using Electronic Devices</b>	<p>Electronic devices can only be used in class for course-related purposes. If you text or access the Internet for other purposes, you may be asked to leave, in which case you will be marked absent.</p>
<b>Participating in Class</b>	<p>You must be on time, stay for the whole class and speak up in a way that shows you have done the assigned reading. If you are not prepared for class discussion, you may be asked to leave, in which case you will be marked absent.</p>
<b>Doing Your Own Work</b>	<p>If you turn in work that is not your own, you are subject to judicial review, and these procedures can be found in the College Catalog and the Student Planner. The maximum penalty for any form of academic dishonesty is dismissal from the College.</p> <p>Using standard citation guidelines, such as MLA or APA format, to document sources avoids plagiarism. The Library has reference copies of each of these manuals, and there are brief checklists in your Student Handbook and Planner.</p> <p><b>PLEASE NOTE:</b> All papers may be electronically checked for plagiarism.</p>
<b>Withdrawing from Class</b>	<p>After the last day established for class changes has passed (see the College calendar), you may withdraw from a course by following the policy outlined in the CCSJ Course Catalog.</p>

## Resources

<b>Student Success Center:</b>	The Student Success Center provides faculty tutors at all levels to help you master specific subjects and develop effective learning skills. It is open to all students at no charge. You can contact the Student Success Center at 219 473-4287 or stop by the Library.
<b>Disability Services:</b>	Disability Services strives to meet the needs of all students by providing academic services in accordance with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines. If you believe that you need a “reasonable accommodation” because of a disability, contact the Disability Services Coordinator at 219-473-4349.
<b>CCSJ Alerts:</b>	<p>Calumet College of St. Joseph’s emergency communications system will tell you about emergencies, weather-related closings, or other incidents via text, email, or voice messages. Please sign up for this important service annually on the College’s website at: <a href="http://www.ccsj.edu/alerts/index.html">http://www.ccsj.edu/alerts/index.html</a>.</p> <p>In addition, you can check other media for important information, such as school closings:</p> <p><b>Internet:</b> <a href="http://www.ccsj.edu">http://www.ccsj.edu</a></p> <p><b>Radio:</b> WAKE – 1500 AM, WGN – 720 AM, WIJE – 105.5 FM, WLS – 890 AM, WZVN – 107.1 FM, WBBM NEWS RADIO 78</p> <p><b>TV Channels:</b> 2, 5, 7, 9, 32</p>

**\*\*\* Instructor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus.**