

University of Puerto Rico
Río Piedras Campus
Faculty of Business Administration
Department of Business Communication

SYLLABUS

COURSE TITLE	Enhancing Leadership, Interpersonal Relationships, and Communication Skills in English via Storytelling and Performing Arts
COURSE CODE	INCO 4056
CONTACT HOURS/CREDITS	45 hours / Three credits
PREREQUISITES, COREQUISITES, AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS	None specified

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Application of storytelling and performing-arts strategies to strengthen professional soft skills, including empathy, ethical sensitivity, body-language awareness, English communication, interpersonal relationships, leadership, and negotiation. Skills are developed through hands-on exercises, improvisation, role-playing, readings, videos, qualitative research, writing, and reflection. The course may be offered face-to-face, in hybrid format, or online.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Explain the basic concepts of performing arts and their relationship to professional settings.
- Apply body-language awareness and communication skills to professional interaction.
- Use sensory awareness to strengthen empathy and understanding of diversity.
- Apply interpersonal communication and negotiation skills in professional and social settings.
- Demonstrate the key elements of effective public-speaking performance.
- Analyze and research topics of interest for oral presentations.
- Apply storytelling principles, narrative strategies, active voice, and creative writing to public speaking.
- Collaborate to plan, research, document, and complete team projects.
- Recognize the need for business research and identify its required processes.

COURSE CONTENT AND DISTRIBUTION OF TIME

Topic and content	Face-to-face	Hybrid	Online
1. Course overview Objectives, content, requirements, communication principles, and introductory interaction.	3	3 hours (0.75 face-to-face: 1 short session of 45 min; 2.25 online)	3
2. Trust, relaxation, and concentration Group ethics, teamwork, trust-building, and performing-arts exercises.	6	6 hours (1.5 face-to-face: 1 session of 1.5h; 4.5 online)	6
3. Introduction to storytelling Story elements and steps for producing an effective story.	6	6 hours (1.5 face-to-face: 1 session of 1.5h; 4.5 online)	6
4. The art of persuasion Hierarchy of needs and characteristics of human behavior.	6	6 hours (1.5 face-to-face: 1 session of 1.5h; 4.5 online)	6
5. Public speaking Delivery skills, body language, nonverbal communication, voice, intonation, and pitch delivery.	8	8 hours (1.5 face-to-face: 1 session of 1.5h; 6.5 online)	8
6. Collaboration and leadership Interpersonal communication, empathy, ethical sensitivity, diversity, and awareness of others.	6	6 hours (1.5 face-to-face: 1 session of 1.5h; 4.5 online)	6
7. Active listening and negotiation	6	6 hours (1.5 face-to-face: 1 session of 1.5h; 4.5 online)	6

Topic and content	Face-to-face	Hybrid	Online
Negotiation, rejection, interruption, patience, and constructive action.			
8. Pitch presentations Planning, rehearsal, and delivery of professional pitches.	4	4 hours (1.5 face-to-face: 1 session of 1.5h; 2.5 online)	4
TOTAL CONTACT HOURS	45	45 (11.25 face-to-face and 33.75 online)	45

Note: In the face-to-face modality, up to 25% of contact hours may be delivered through an alternate (distance) modality, if necessary.

TEXTBOOK

Not applicable. The course uses selected readings and professional articles.

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

Face-to-face	Hybrid	Online
• Lectures • Readings • Group work • Individual assignments • Assessment activities • Practice activities • Oral presentations	• Online modules • Professional articles • Instructional videos • Group and individual work • Assessment and practice • Oral presentations • Asynchronous and synchronous conferences	• Interactive modules • Professional articles • Instructional videos • Group and individual work • Assessment and practice • Oral presentations • Videoconferences and synchronous meetings

MINIMUM REQUIRED OR AVAILABLE RESOURCES

Resource	Face-to-face	Hybrid	Online
Institutional learning management system	Institution	Institution	Institution
Institutional e-mail account	Institution	Institution	Institution
Computer or mobile device with high-speed Internet	Student	Student	Student
Word processor, spreadsheet, and presentation software	Student	Student	Student
Integrated or external speakers	Not applicable	Student	Student
Webcam or mobile camera and microphone	Not applicable	Student	Student

EVALUATION TECHNIQUES

Face-to-face	Hybrid	Online
• Exams and quizzes: 10% • Oral presentation(s): 15% • Final report: 20% • Forum participation: 25% • Class work: 20%	• Exams and quizzes: 10% • Oral presentation(s): 15% • Final report: 20% • Forum participation: 25% • Class work: 20%	• Exams and quizzes: 10% • Oral presentation(s): 20% • Final report: 20% • Forum participation: 30% • Class work: 20%
Attendance and participation: 10%	Attendance and participation: 10%	Total: 100%
Total: 100%	Total: 100%	

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION

The University of Puerto Rico recognizes the right of students with disabilities to an inclusive, equitable, and comparable postsecondary education. Qualified students are entitled to equal participation and reasonable accommodations or modifications. Students who require an accommodation should notify the professor and promptly submit a request to the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (OSEI); disclosure of a diagnosis to the professor is not required.

GUIDELINES FOR THE INTEGRATION AND USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)

Under Academic Affairs Circular 8, 2024-2025, the use of AI tools is permitted in accordance with institutional and course-specific guidelines. Students must disclose and document any use of AI and explain how it contributed to the work submitted. AI may not be used to misrepresent authorship or to submit non-original content without proper attribution.

ACT 220-2024: ACADEMIC AGREEMENTS FOR UNIVERSITY ATHLETES

Act 220-2024 recognizes the right of certified student-athletes to request reasonable academic adjustments during training or competition periods authorized by the Interuniversity Athletic League (LAI). Official documentation and a written academic agreement are required.

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

Academic Senate Certification 111 (2023-2024), Río Piedras Campus, requires each course to state clear standards for attendance, punctuality, participation, and make-up work. It addresses excused absences, the Attendance Census, appeals, and procedures for extended absences.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Article 6.2 of the UPR General Student Regulations (Board of Trustees Certification 13, 2009-2010) identifies academic dishonesty, including fraud, plagiarism, unauthorized copying, impersonation, and facilitating such conduct. Academic Senate Certification 64 (2022-2023) further affirms honesty, respect, responsibility, and academic rigor in teaching, learning, and research. Violations are subject to disciplinary action. Users must also protect their institutional credentials.

POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR ADDRESSING SEX- OR GENDER-BASED DISCRIMINATION

Pursuant to Governing Board Certification 107, 2021-2022, the University promotes a safe environment and establishes procedures for addressing discrimination based on sex, gender, or pregnancy; sexual harassment; sexual violence; domestic violence; dating violence; and stalking.

GRADING SYSTEM

A, B, C, D, and F.

EMERGENCY CONTINGENCY PLAN

If an emergency or class interruption occurs, the professor will continue the course through distance or online modalities, in accordance with institutional directives, and will communicate with students through institutional e-mail or other available channels.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Alexa, O. (2021). Helping students overcome barriers to business communication nowadays. *Journal of Public Administration, Finance & Law*, 21, 5-12.
- Biesenbach, R. (2018). Unleash the power of storytelling. Eastlawn Media.
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- Gee, V., & Gee, S. (2011). *Business improv*. McGraw-Hill.
- Hall, K. (2019). *Stories that stick*. HarperCollins.
- Irizarry, A. (2023). Overcoming emotional and communication barriers with performing-arts strategies: The case of Puerto Rican business students. *International Journal of Business Communication*.
- Karia, A. (2015). TED Talks storytelling. Akash Karia.
- Lambert, J., & Hessler, B. (2018). *Digital storytelling: Capturing lives, creating community*. Routledge.
- Thill, J. V., & Bovée, C. L. (2020). *Business communication today*. Pearson.
- Villaespesa, E., & Wowkowych, S. (2020). Ephemeral storytelling with social media. *Social Media + Society*, 6(1), 1-13.
- Weber, P., & Grauer, Y. (2019). The effectiveness of social media storytelling in strategic innovation communication. *International Journal of Strategic Communication*, 13(2), 153-166.

ELECTRONIC RESOURCES

Merriam-Webster Dictionary; Purdue Online Writing Lab; Amy Cuddy's TED Talk on body language; National Institutes of Health research resources; and selected storytelling and leadership resources. Electronic resources should be reviewed and updated each semester.

Last updated: May 2026