

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

SYLLABUS

COURSE TITLE	Design Thinking and Storytelling for Business Communication
COURSE CODE	INCO 4103
CONTACT HOURS/CREDITS	45 hours / Three credits
PREREQUISITES, COREQUISITES, AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS	None specified

COURSE DESCRIPTION

A design-thinking and storytelling course focused on creating innovative, effective, and sustainable solutions for business communication in a technologically advanced workplace. The course develops qualitative research, business communication, and oral narrative-creation skills. It may be offered face-to-face, in hybrid format, or online.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

- Use narrative-storytelling skills to deliver presentations.
- Use mobile and related technologies to collect and analyze data.
- Integrate multiple communication channels to disseminate research findings.
- Explain the mindsets and methods of human-centered design for current problems and challenges.
- Apply human-centered design methods to innovative problem-solving.
- Conduct qualitative fieldwork using appropriate data-gathering methods and techniques.
- Analyze qualitative data as the basis for creating a solution.
- Practice interviewing, observation, prototyping, and solution-testing skills.
- Develop personal and business stories as part of a professional communication toolkit.
- Apply storytelling techniques to communicate business narratives.
- Apply a five-step process to integrate stories into presentations for change.

COURSE CONTENT AND DISTRIBUTION OF TIME

Topic and content	Face-to-face	Hybrid	Online
1. Course introduction Overview, objectives, content, and requirements.	3	3 face-to-face (2 sessions of 1.5h each)	3
2. Storytelling Narrative strategies for professional and business communication.	6	6 hours (5.25 face-to-face: 3 sessions of 1.5h each + 1 short session of 45 min; 0.75 online)	6
3. Design thinking Mindsets, methods, and applications.	6	6 hours (3 face-to-face: 2 sessions of 1.5h each; 3 online)	6
4. Examinations Assessment of concepts and applications.	3	3 online	3
5. Human-centered design research Research process and qualitative fieldwork.	9	9 online	9
6. Ideation Generating, organizing, and assessing ideas.	3	3 online	3
7. Prototyping Developing and testing possible solutions.	3	3 online	3
8. Presentation design Designing clear, persuasive, and audience-centered presentations.	6	6 online	6

Topic and content	Face-to-face	Hybrid	Online
9. Project presentation Delivery and evaluation of the culminating project.	6	6 online	6
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.

SUGGESTED TEXTBOOK

IDEO. (2015). The field guide to human-centered design: Design kit. IDEO. Selected readings are assigned each semester according to their relevance to course topics.

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
• Homework: 10% • Exams: 25% • Portfolio: 10% • Oral presentations: 15% • Cases: 10% • Group research projects: 20% Attendance and participation: 10% Total: 100%	• Homework: 10% • Exams: 15% • Portfolio: 10% • Oral presentations: 15% • Cases: 10% • Group research projects: 20% • Synchronous meetings: 10% Attendance and participation: 10% Total: 100%	• Homework: 10% • Exams: 20% • Portfolio: 10% • Oral presentations: 20% • Cases: 10% • Group research projects: 20% • Synchronous meetings: 10% 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

- Biesenbach, R. (2018). Unleash the power of storytelling: Win hearts, change minds, get results. Eastlawn Media.
- Brown, T., & Katz, B. (2019). Change by design: How design thinking transforms organizations and inspires innovation. HarperCollins.
- Curedale, R. (2019). Design thinking process and methods (5th ed.). Design Community College.
- Donovan, J. (2012). How to deliver a TED talk. CreateSpace.
- Duarte, N. (2019). DataStory: Explain data and inspire action through story. Ideapress Publishing.
- Gallo, C. (2014). Talk like TED. St. Martin's Press.
- Greenberg, D., McKone-Sweet, K., & Wilson, J. H. (2011). The new entrepreneurial leader. Berrett-Koehler.
- Hair, J., Page, M., & Brunsveld, N. (2019). Essentials of business research methods (4th ed.). Routledge.
- Hall, K. (2019). Stories that stick. HarperCollins.
- IDEO. (2015). The field guide to human-centered design: Design kit. IDEO.
- Lewrick, M., & Link, P. (2018). The design thinking playbook. Wiley.
- Mootee, I. (2013). Design thinking for strategic innovation. Wiley.
- Myers, M. D. (2008). Qualitative research in business and management. SAGE.
- Schindler, P. (2018). Business research methods. McGraw-Hill.
- Cortés-Selva, L., et al. (2018). Improving university students' results through design thinking and visual storytelling in communication.
- Köppen, E., Schmiedgen, J., Rhinow, H., & Meinel, C. (2016). This is design thinking: A storytelling project. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-40382-3_2

Lugmayr, A., Sutinen, E., Suhonen, J., et al. (2017). Serious storytelling: A first definition and review. *Multimedia Tools and Applications*, 76, 15707-15733. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11042-016-3865-5>

Stork, M. G. (2020). Supporting twenty-first-century competencies using robots and digital storytelling. *Journal of Formative Design in Learning*, 4, 43-50. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41686-019-00039-w>

ELECTRONIC RESOURCES

Duarte; IDEO; Design Kit; Interaction Design Foundation; and Strategyzer. Available instructional platforms include Microsoft 365, Teams, Azure, Moodle, Google Classroom, and Google Workspace for Education. Electronic resources should be reviewed and updated each semester.

Last updated: May 2026