



COURSE OUTLINE: Communication for Consultants; MCOM-GB.3111.30
Spring 2025

[Link to Week by Week Assignments](#)

Class meets Wednesdays, 6-9 pm in **KMC 3-130**
February 5 – April 30, 2025

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Office: Management Communication; Suite KMC 3-100

Today's rapidly changing global marketplace requires strategic and analytic thinkers who can manage relationships and work with entire organizations to discover and implement the most effective solution, plan, or idea for their clients. Successful consultants must combine strategic and analytic thought with the ability to communicate clearly, effectively, and memorably—all while taking client preferences into account. In this class, we will focus on the two most essential criteria for success as consultants:

Thinking Innovatively and Communicating Strategically.

The course operates as a simulated consulting firm. As the firm's consultants, you will be assigned to a real client with a real challenge in real time. Your success within the course and for the client will depend on your team's capacity to manage resources efficiently, creatively and ethically.

Additionally, the class is specifically designed as an advanced communication course for students who are focused on a consulting career and/or anyone who wants more experience working with a team to address business problems and persuade others to take your ideas. I will provide learning experiences within the class meetings to build and enhance your personal portfolio of communication techniques for quality consulting. And, I will schedule coaching sessions for you as individuals and as a team when preparing your final presentations.

This class is not, however, an "introduction to consulting." We will not be discussing the nuances of different firms, the consulting interview process, etc.

You will learn how to communicate effectively with clients and think creatively about the most effective outcomes to meet their needs. We will also explore some of the best thinking and insights from the major consulting firms to provide perspective and ideas for your projects.

By the end of the course, your team will have analyzed a situation, problem or opportunity, brainstormed and facilitated alternatives, and delivered a formal recommendation to a client from the for-profit, government, or not-for-profit community within New York.

Course Topics will include:

1. Building Trust and Relationships

- a) Strategic Communication
- b) Communication Strategy (tools, approaches, etc.)
- c) Trust and Reputation
- d) Emotional Intelligence and Empathy
- e) Active Listening
- f) Self-Awareness

2. Understanding Group Dynamics

- a) Communication / Behavioral Preferences
- b) Conflict management

3. Breaking Down Projects / Scoping

- a) Business ethnography
- b) Frameworking / Methodology

4. Interviewing, Presenting and Listening to Various Stakeholder Groups

- a) Networking
- b) Briefings
- c) Internal meetings with peers

5. Packaging your solution into a compelling narrative

- a) Storytelling
- b) Visual models, aids, games & graphics to create simulations for clarifying concepts and data analysis
- c) Consulting Slide decks

6. Delivering the Solution with Persuasion and Clarity

- a) Persuasion
- b) Storytelling
- c) Delivery

Expectations:

In an advanced communication course, students are expected to understand business communication strategy, and fundamentals of presentation techniques. We have included opportunities in the class for presentations, rehearsals and coaching. All of the in-class exercises are designed to complement the project work.

Confidentiality:

Building trust with a client requires a level of candor that can only come from in-depth reflection and measured risk taking. You will also be asked to sign a confidentiality / non disclosure agreement. Presentations and in-class are taped for coaching purposes.

Course Evaluation and Grading

The course is structured similar to a capstone course. You are evaluated on all aspects of the project. There are no tests. Your deliverables are recommendations to the client in the form of a project portfolio and presentation, and a personal reflection learning paper. You are expected to attend classes which will include specific exercises that will be applied to your projects. We will also allocate class time for team meetings (see course calendar).

- 40% of the grade will be team based on your client project work
- 60% of the grade will be based on your individual contributions as described below

**COURSE Schedule: Communication for Consultants;
MCOM-GB.3111.30**

Spring 2025

	<i>Session / Topic</i>	<i>Schedule of Activities</i>
Feb 5	1. Engaging with Others about <u>You</u> <i>Topics Include:</i> ● <i>Strategic Communication Framework</i> ● <i>Common Communication Tools</i>	<i>During Class</i> ● <i>Discuss course (schedule/assigns)</i> ● <i>Discuss our course's conceptual framework (referred to regularly)</i> ● <i>Participate in networking exercise (recorded)</i> <i>After Class</i> ● <i>Review Company overviews and what guidance I have given them</i> ● <i>Vote for your preferences (after class)</i>
Feb 12	2. Understanding What Makes a Good Consulting Project <i>Topics Include:</i> ● <i>Reflective Active Listening</i> ● <i>Review Five Past Projects</i> ● <i>Meet your Team</i>	<i>During Class</i> ● <i>Do active listening exercise</i> ● <i>Take active listening assessment</i> ● <i>Participate in project discussion</i> ● <i>Meet your team!</i> <i>After Class</i> <i>Team should conduct a client introduction prior to Session Three (Note: if you cannot get everyone together, please move forward with those who can join). <u>One person should officially lead this discussion.</u> If you can [audio] record this conversation for any unavailable teammates, that would be ideal (w/ client permission).</i>

Feb 19	3. Connecting with the Client Topics Include: ● <i>Emotional Intelligence</i> ● <i>Adapting to your Client's Preferences (through communication)</i> ● <i>Top Down Communication</i>	During Class ● <i>Learn about cognitive style, needs theory, and tolerance for ambiguity</i> ● <i>Understand different communication styles and ways to adapt to them</i> ● <i>Listen to a client call and analyze their preferences / preferred behaviors</i> ● <i>Learn about top-down communication (MECE)</i> ● <i>Practice top-down communication in breakout rooms (recorded)</i> After Class ● <i>Fine tune (as a team) your top-down framework for your client</i>
Feb 26	4. Communicating your Thinking through Frameworks Topics Include: ● <i>Top Down Communication (continued)</i> ● <i>Presenting to a Panel of Consultants</i>	During Class ● <i>Team time to finalize framework</i> ● <i>Present methodology and framework to outside experts (recorded)</i> ● <i>Communicate your <u>value</u> (recorded)</i> After Class ● <i>Conduct a meeting with your client about your thinking / approach / framework. <u>A new person on the team should officially lead this discussion.</u></i>

Mar 5	5. Working Well in Teams and Establishing Trust Topics Include: ● Team Communication ● Facilitating Meetings	During Class ● Work as a team. <u>A new person on the team should officially lead this discussion.</u> ● Assess your team's communication (individually and as a team) After Class ● Take the class survey. What is working? What did you hope to have more of? ● Prepare for Bootcamp # 1
Mar 12	6. Communication Bootcamp # 1 <i>This is an opportunity for you to work on something that matters to YOU. The class will be split up into three "learning communities." I will work with you <u>before today's class</u> to develop a 5 minute communication that matters to you (difficult conversation, persuading, managing anxiety, communicating visually, talking about complex concepts, pushing back on a client, impromptus, etc.).</i>	During Class ● Conduct your communication (recorded) ● Practice giving / Receiving Feedback ● Work with your "learning community" to give and receive feedback ● Work with your team on project After Class ● Prepare for Bootcamp # 2
Mar 19	7. Communication Bootcamp # 2 <i>This is an opportunity for you to work on something that matters to YOU. The class will be split up into three "learning communities." I will work with you <u>before today's class</u> to develop a 5 minute communication that matters to you (difficult conversation, persuading, managing anxiety, communicating visually, talking about complex concepts, pushing back on a client, impromptus, etc.).</i>	During Class ● Conduct your communication (recorded) ● Giving / Receiving Feedback ● Work with your "learning community" to give and receive feedback ● Work with your team on project After Class ● Take Conflict Assessment (see Brightspace)

Apr 2	8. Managing Conflict with Client and Team Topics Include: ● <i>Conflict Dynamics</i>	During Class ● <i>Learn about managing conflict</i> ● <i>Discuss a past conflict (with partner)</i> ● <i>Analyze the conflict and re-think the conversation</i> ● <i>Facilitate a meeting on the team's conflict behavior. <u>A new person on the team should officially lead this discussion.</u></i> After Class ● <i>Watch this video on data visualization and consulting slides</i>
Apr 9	9. Working Session	During Class (with teams—can meet however you'd like) ● <i>Develop 4-5 slides (or more) as a team that you will present to the client. <u>A new person on the team should officially lead this discussion.</u></i> ● <i>Focus on at least ONE slide “looking” like a final deliverable</i> After Class ● <i>Submit slides to Brightspace (one submission per team)</i>
Apr 16	10. Info/Data Visualization Topics Include: ● <i>Data Visualization in Consulting</i> ● <i>Meet with Panel of Consultants</i>	During Class ● <i>Learn about visualizing data</i> ● <i>Present your slides to class and consulting panel</i> ● <i>Get feedback on your data visualization</i> ● <i>Get feedback on your overall client project</i> After Class ● <i>Work on your final consulting projects</i>

Apr 23	11. Presentation Runthroughs <i>Topics Include:</i> • <i>Developing your Story Arc</i> • <i>Developing your Structures</i> • <i>Visualizing information</i>	<i>During Class</i> • <i>Discuss your presentation through the final (team) rubric as the lens. <u>A new person on the team should officially lead this discussion.</u></i> • <i>Ask questions to me!</i> <i>After Class</i> • <i>Finalize presentation for client (and deliver it whenever you can). Note: you must be a co-host on MY zoom when meeting with the client. This is non-negotiable (so I can “own” and view the recording).</i>
Apr 30	12. Reflection and Celebration!	<i>During Class</i> • <i>Reflect on all the different in-class components</i> • <i>Celebrate with the clients (in-person..as much as possible). Food and drink will be provided.</i> <i>After Class</i> • <i>If you haven’t already, please deliver your client presentation. Note: you must be a co-host on MY zoom when meeting with the client. This is non-negotiable (so I can “own” and view the recording).</i>

Graded Assignments

	Deliverable	Value	Success Factors
Team based evaluation	Final Client Presentation (On Zoom or In-Person)	40	Teams will present their findings to the client in a MAX one hour meeting (including Q+A). The focus is on conducting a sound methodology and delivering findings and recommendations that stimulate and engage client thinking. Presentations should be client appropriate and persuasive. It will be important to present as a unified team that reflects well on the Stern/NYU brand. The deliverable should include: • Zoom recording (You will be a co-host on MY zoom account) • Deck used during the presentation • Compilation of raw data indexed for client future use. • Any other materials the client requests or that you deem important
	Analysis of EITHER Bootcamp # 1 or # 2	20	During sessions 6+7, you will conduct two communications <u>that matter to you</u> for feedback. These conversations might include “pushing back on a client,” “managing a client (or teammate) with an aggressive communication style,” “persuading someone to adopt an idea,” “reframing a client’s expectations,” “answering difficult questions,” “communicating a complex idea,” etc. I will work with you ahead of time on figuring out what they will be. For this assignment, you will select ONE of the two bootcamp communications and analyze it using the rubric (on Brightspace). I will review your rubric, the recording, and respond with a recording <u>back</u> to you with feedback and thoughts.
	Final Reflection Document	20	After delivering the final client presentation, please fill out a rubric that 1) assesses your team’s performance during the final 2) your individual performance during the final and 3) reflects on <u>ONE</u> of the activities done during the semester. These include: • How you communicate what’s important to you (while making it about the audience) in networking sessions • How you listen to others (at work) • How you communicate your thinking in a top-down manner • How you navigate your client’s communication preferences • How you navigate your team’s communication preferences • How you facilitate meetings • How you manage conflict • Something else not listed here
Individual evaluation	Participation & 5 min Reflections (done during class)	20	Participation includes attending class, engaging in class discussions, and completing the “five minute reflections” (done during class) after we complete various activities. I understand that you have priorities other than my course. If you have to miss a session, please tell me ahead of time and take ownership of your absence (i.e. complete the five minute reflection, check in with a teammate, schedule a meeting with me). <u>If you miss more than two sessions, I reserve the right to lower your grade.</u> Note: if you are absent for a religious observance, I consider you “present” during that session and will work with you to figure out a plan. Please share with me the date(s) in advance.
		100	40% Team grade 60% Individual grade

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

We take pride in our well-rounded education and approach our academics with honesty and integrity. Indeed, integrity is critical to all that we do here at NYU Stern. As members of our community, all students agree to abide by the [NYU Academic Integrity Policies](#) as well as the NYU Stern Student Code of Conduct, which includes a commitment to:

- Exercise integrity in all aspects of one's academic work including, but not limited to, the preparation and completion of exams, papers and all other course requirements by not engaging in any method or means that provides an unfair advantage.
- Clearly acknowledge the work and efforts of others when submitting written work as one's own. Ideas, data, direct quotations (which should be designated with quotation marks), paraphrasing, creative expression, or any other incorporation of the work of others should be fully referenced.
- Refrain from behaving in ways that knowingly support, assist, or in any way attempt to enable another person to engage in any violation of the Code of Conduct. Our support also includes reporting any observed violations of this Code of Conduct or other School and University policies that are deemed to adversely affect the NYU Stern community.

STERN CODE OF CONDUCT

The Stern Code of Conduct and Judiciary Process applies to all students enrolled in Stern courses.

For graduate students, information can be found here:

<https://www.stern.nyu.edu/uc/codeofconduct>.

To help ensure the integrity of our learning community, prose assignments you submit to NYU Brightspace will be submitted to Turnitin. Turnitin will compare your submission to a database of prior submissions to Turnitin, current and archived Web pages, periodicals, journals, and publications. Additionally, your document will become part of the Turnitin database.

GENERAL CONDUCT & BEHAVIOR

Students are also expected to maintain and abide by the highest standards of professional conduct and behavior. Please familiarize yourself with Stern's Policy in Regard to In-Class Behavior & Expectations for Graduate and Undergraduate students. (<https://www.stern.nyu.edu/portal-partners/registrar/policies-procedures/general-policies/code-conduct>) (<http://www.stern.nyu.edu/portal-partners/current-students/undergraduate/resources-policies/academic-policies/index.htm>) and the NYU Student Conduct Policy

(<https://www.nyu.edu/about/policies-guidelines-compliance/policies-and-guidelines/university-student-conduct-policy.html>).

STUDENT ACCESSIBILITY

If you will require academic accommodation of any kind during this course, you must notify me at the beginning of the course and provide a letter from the Moses Center for Student Accessibility ([212-998-4980](tel:212-998-4980), mosescsa@nyu.edu) verifying your registration and outlining the accommodations they recommend. If you will need to take an exam at the Moses Center for Student Accessibility, you must submit a completed Exam Accommodations Form to them at least one week prior to the scheduled exam time to be guaranteed accommodation. For more information, visit the CSA website:

<https://www.nyu.edu/students/communities-and-groups/student-accessibility.html>

Graduate Recommended Language

Our aim is for students to be as successful academically as they can, and to help them overcome any impediments to that. Any student who may be struggling and believes this may affect their performance in this course is urged to contact the Moses Center for Student Accessibility (see also the Student Accessibility section of this syllabus) at 212-998-4980 to discuss academic accommodations. If mental health assistance is needed, call the NYU's 24/7 Wellness Exchange hotline 212-443-9999. Furthermore, please approach me if you feel comfortable doing so. This will enable me to provide relevant resources or referrals. There are also drop in hours and appointments. Find out more at <http://www.nyu.edu/students/health-and-wellness/counseling-services.html>

Graduate students can also reach out to the Academic Advising team at academicaffairs@stern.nyu.edu if you would like to receive more information or further support.

NAME PRONUNCIATION AND PRONOUNS

NYU Stern students now have the ability to include their pronouns and name pronunciation in Albert. I encourage you to share your name pronunciation and preferred pronouns this way. Please utilize this link for additional information:

[Pronouns & Name Pronunciation](#)

RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES AND OTHER ABSENCES

NYU's [Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays](#) states that members of any religious group may, without penalty, absent themselves from classes when required in compliance with their religious obligations. You must notify me in advance of religious holidays or observances that might coincide with exams, assignments, or class times to schedule mutually acceptable alternatives. Students may also contact religiousaccommodations@nyu.edu for assistance.

NYU Stern is committed to ensuring an equitable educational experience for all students regardless of identity or circumstances and strives to recognize the obligations its students have outside of Stern. Please review all class dates at the start of the semester and review all course requirements to identify any foreseeable conflicts with exams,

course assignments, projects, or other items required for participation and attendance. If you are aware of a potential conflict, please contact me as soon as possible to discuss any potential conflicts to determine whether/how they can be accommodated.

LAPTOPS, CELL PHONES & OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES

The use of electronic devices (e.g., tablets or laptops), for the purpose of note-taking only, is permitted. However, students should make every effort to avoid distracting their classmates or disrupting the class, including arriving early and choosing a seat that is less distracting for peers.

INCLUSION STATEMENT

This course strives to support and cultivate diversity of thought, perspectives, and experiences. The intent is to present materials and activities that will challenge your current perspectives with a goal of understanding how others might see situations differently. By participating in this course, it is the expectation that everyone commits to making this an inclusive learning environment for all.

AI STATEMENT

Artificial Intelligence and the products and software tools that make use of them have a variety of benefits and costs in terms of your learning experience in the course.

This policy aims to guide students in maximizing the benefits of AI while ensuring it complements the educational experience without compromising academic values. Feedback on this policy is welcome, and it may undergo revisions based on practical experiences and advancements in AI technology.

Guidelines for Use

I recommend that you use AI as a tool to help with the following:

- *Summarization and Organization: Utilize AI for summarizing content and notes, and organizing main points from lectures.*
- *Brainstorming: AI may be helpful in assisting with the brainstorming process, but it should not replace the ideation process.*
- *Clarifications: Employ AI to explain definitions and terms, and clarify concepts.*
- *Assistance with Comprehension: Use AI to provide alternate explanations for better comprehension.*
- *Research: Leverage AI to assist in the research process by offering overviews of topics.*
- *Text Refinement: Utilize AI for grammar checks and refining texts.*
- *Transcriptions: Employ AI for transcribing lectures.*
- *Visualization: Generate visuals (pictures, videos) related to course material with AI.*

Restrictions

Here are some restrictions on the use of AI in the course:

- *Bypassing Learning: Do not use AI to bypass learning the fundamentals or to replace in-depth analytical thinking.*
- *Academic Integrity: Maintain academic integrity at all times. Directly submitting raw answers from AI is prohibited.*
- *Citation: If AI is used as a source or for direct insights, ensure it's cited appropriately.*
- *Qualitative Tasks: Avoid using AI for tasks requiring you to reflect or demonstrate individualized thinking or perspectives.*
- *Original Ideas: AI should not completely replace the generation of new, original ideas without your input.*