

# HIGH POINT UNIVERSITY

## MASTER OF ARTS

### COMMUNICATION & BUSINESS LEADERSHIP

#### COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

The Master of Arts Degree in Communication and Business Leadership is built around four “Power Skills” of communication, leadership, teamwork and critical thinking. This is accomplished through personal and organizational leadership development, ability to craft thoughtful and strategic communication messages to manage relationships, organizations and brands, being able to negotiate for mutual benefit, critical thinking and synthesis of information to solve problems, using available data to improve decisions and weigh multiple options, collaborate with people from different backgrounds for team success.

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**Graduates with a degree in MA-CBL will demonstrate mastery in:**

**COMMUNICATION** | Create and deliver well-structured documents and presentations that effectively demonstrate analytical thinking, adhering to industry standards and expectations to address organizational needs and support business objectives.

**LEADERSHIP** | Articulate vision and goals clearly to influence others to achieve desired outcomes and build strong professional relationships with stakeholders from varying cultural backgrounds.

**TEAMWORK** | Actively participate in and facilitate collaborative problem-solving processes and manage group dynamics to develop innovative solutions to pursue common goals.

**CRITICAL THINKING** | Analyze complex situations, evaluate and align communication strategies with business objectives to enhance organizational performance, support strategic goals, while considering broader impact on the organization and stakeholders.

## **CORE COURSES**

### **CBL 5000 | STRATEGIC MESSAGE DESIGN**

This writing-intensive course provides a general overview to the theories and practices of written, oral, and mediated strategic messaging. Emphasis is placed on understanding how strategic communication can influence public opinion, audience behavior, and organizational outcomes. Students will also examine the role and use of technology to communicate and lead in several workplace settings, ultimately creating a communication plan grounded in best technological practices for use in a number of circumstances, including high-stakes scenarios frequently encountered by those in leadership positions. Throughout the course, students will practice several genres of professional communication that they will encounter in workplaces, gaining the writing and presenting skills they will need to gain and excel in a variety of professional roles.

### **CBL 5100 | DATA AND DECISION-MAKING**

This course exposes students to research methods and statistics available for acquiring and analyzing data to improve decision making. Topics involve learning and applying both qualitative and quantitative methods and analysis and conveying outcomes to a target audience. Students will learn how to use surveys, focus groups and interviews to gather data and use statistics to compare differences and identify relationships. They will also utilize excel to create graphs and use financial information to create benchmarks and measure key performance indicators. Students will learn techniques to best communicate data persuasively, both orally and visually.

### **CBL 5200 | PERSUASION AND NEGOTIATION**

Business people need analytical skills to discover optimal solutions to problems but need persuasion and negotiation skills to get them implemented. The course asks students to learn persuasion and negotiation skills experientially and to understand communication strategies via analytical and theoretical frameworks. The class emphasizes readings, simulations, exercises, and case study analysis.

### **CBL 5020 | ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR**

This graduate-level course in Organizational Behavior provides a comprehensive exploration of human behavior within organizational contexts. Students will gain theoretical insights and practical knowledge to understand individual and group dynamics, leadership, communication, motivation, and organizational culture. Through critical analysis and case studies, students will develop the skills necessary to enhance workplace effectiveness, foster positive organizational outcomes, and excel as leaders in dynamic business environments.

## **CBL 5220 | LEADERSHIP**

This course critically examines major theories of leadership through discussions of relevant research and practice. Important aspects of leadership such as leading change, team leadership, and leadership styles are explored. Emphasis will be given to contemporary theories and their application to current political, societal, and business leaders and the issues surrounding them. Students will evaluate their own strengths and weaknesses with respect to leadership and create individualized development plans to improve their leadership skills.

## **CBL 6010 | CAPSTONE**

This course is the culminating course of the MA-CBL. The course is taken in the final session that the student is enrolled in and incorporates elements of their other classes. Students will work individually and in teams, to develop effective solutions to complex business problems and successfully present the proposed solution to different audiences. This course will examine business problems from multiple perspectives and challenge students to create, and defend, an effective response. Students will be able to demonstrate complex analytical skills, teamwork, strategic thinking and communication through various channels, as well as apply the knowledge that they have gained in their other coursework, creating a true culminating experience.

## **ELECTIVE COURSES**

### **CBL 5400 | SUPER COMMUNICATORS**

This course provides students with an in-depth understanding of effective communication. Understanding the three layers of communications: practical, emotional and social, students will learn how to connect on the proper layer by using two critical skills: listening and questioning. By learning effective techniques to hear more clearly and connect more deeply, students will sharpen their teamwork and leadership skills. The course will create opportunities for students to engage in active communication techniques of different formats and audiences to effectively target their message. Students will enhance their oral, written and visual communication skills in addition to crafting a cohesive message.

### **CBL 5410 | CORPORATE CULTURE**

The course examines the impact of culture (internal organizational environment) on organizational behavior and success. Students will learn the elements of creating, and sustaining, a positive organizational culture. The course will include an analysis of individual motivations and core values, shared values, structure, personal and shared beliefs. The course will examine different cultures and the impact culture has on strategy and enhancing employee engagement. Students will be able to understand the mechanisms that create strong cultures, the leadership necessary to sustain it and the challenges of changing an existing culture.

### **CBL 5420 | COMMUNICATING WITH A STRATEGIC MINDSET**

This course provides students with knowledge related to strategy as a critical thinking tool. The course builds student understanding of how vision, mission, core values and strategy are developed and effectively communicated to organizations. Students will evaluate existing strategies and positions of real-world examples and explore the positive and negative results of those examples. They will focus on how best to craft communications, both internally and externally, to bring vision and strategy to life. They will develop alternatives and communicate a strategy to align organization efforts.

### **CBL 5520 | CRISIS COMMUNICATION**

This course provides students with a fundamental understanding of crisis management, risk communication and media relations in multiple contexts. It introduces students to crisis management principles, strategies, tactics, and communications methods. The class will also focus its lens on optimal rhetorical strategies meant to move communities to better health and medical outcomes. Working with a community client, students will produce a crisis communication plan that can be utilized to communicate important health messaging in times of distress and uncertainty.

## **CBL 5610 | LEADERSHIP ETHICS IN A GLOBAL CONTEXT**

This course explores approaches to leadership and analyzes how they address the complex ethical issues faced by individuals and corporations in our global context. It teaches students how to develop and assess ethical solutions by drawing on rigorous philosophical theory. Through collaborative problem-solving and real world case studies, the course engages students in becoming ethical leaders as it equips them with the knowledge and skills to tackle the ethical challenges they may face.

## **CBL 5650 | STORYTELLING AND LEADERSHIP**

The ability to engage, motivate and coordinate others to create value as an organization is a core leadership necessity. The leaders who can effectively create a “story narrative” around the vision, mission and values of their team or organization increase their ability to set a desirable course and navigate the roadblocks created by a changing environment. This course provides students with an in-depth presentation of the “Why, what and how of effective storytelling.” Students will understand why storytelling is essential in building and motivating teams and organizations as well as themselves as individuals. They will engage in reviewing effective stories currently in the world and will also be challenged to develop their storytelling skills through individual and team exercises and projects.

## **CBL 5710 | CHANGE MANAGEMENT**

An organization’s ability to anticipate, plan for, manage, and navigate through mergers, acquisitions, downsizings and leadership changes and emerge stronger afterward is an important measure of the effectiveness of its leaders. Strategic communication plays a critical role in the change-management process, and students will examine best practices in organizational leadership and change management. Strategic communicators also need to understand organizations’ business goals, the motivations of their leaders, and the framework in which business decisions are made.

## **CBL 5720 | BRAND MANAGEMENT**

This course will explore core brand management concepts such as brand positioning, value, identity, and loyalty ranging from personal branding to luxury brands. This course will examine the dynamics of the luxury brand environment, including the influence of exclusivity, heritage, craftsmanship, and pricing strategies, using case studies and real-world examples. Students will be exposed to a broad range of brands and how companies build a brand, the strategic management of brands, along with the elements of successfully communicating the brand to stakeholders.

## **CBL 5735 | DESIGN THINKING**

The course combines theory with practice, encouraging students to challenge conventional approaches to problem-solving and embrace failure as a learning opportunity. Students will leave the course equipped with the tools, mindset, and experience to lead innovative initiatives, whether in entrepreneurship, corporate innovation labs, or consultancy roles. The course provides a deep dive into the design thinking process, guiding students through each phase: Empathize, Define, Ideate, Prototype, and Test. Students will learn how to apply these stages to real-world challenges, with a focus on developing creative, user-focused solutions across various industries. This course is ideal for those seeking to apply design thinking principles to drive strategic, human-centered change in any field.

## **CBL 5740 | GLOBAL COMMUNICATION AND LEADERSHIP**

An in-depth review of communication, teamwork, and leadership from a global perspective, this course will introduce students to cultural intelligence and management with a global mindset. Increasingly, business is conducted at the global level and leaders must understand how other groups communicate to create a culture of teamwork and cooperation while leading within this environment. Leaders must understand how to interact with stakeholders from a variety of cultures, as well as manage a workforce that is increasingly disparate. Major topics include navigating cultural differences both at home and abroad, managing workforces, building teams, basic protocol, and etiquette with an emphasis on both the current literature and practical application.

## **CBL 5750 | AI, MEDIA, AND MARKETING (online, synchronous)**

This course explores the effective use of Artificial Intelligence in content creation and marketing. Students explore the evolution of AI technologies, with a focus on the transformative impact of Generative AI on content development, consumer analysis, and marketing strategies. The course examines the application of tools like ChatGPT, DALL-E, Canva, and Sora in marketing campaigns, as well as the use of AI-powered insights for consumer targeting. Ethical considerations surrounding AI adoption are critically assessed.

## **CBL 5760 | SALES AND MARKETING IN A GLOBAL ECONOMY**

Through this course, students will acquire necessary skills to be competitive in the global economy. Students will examine trends and developments and examine their impact on sales and marketing strategies. Students will learn how to design and implement effective marketing strategies tailored to different regions and cultures. This course will cover best practices for recruiting, training, motivating, and leading sales teams across various countries and cultural backgrounds. Students will also gain insights into the legal and regulatory frameworks that impact sales and marketing activities in different countries. Throughout the course, students will evaluate real-world case studies of successful and unsuccessful global sales and marketing initiatives. By examining practical scenarios, students will gain valuable problem-solving and critical thinking abilities.

## **CBL 5810 | CONSUMER INSIGHTS**

In this course, students will enhance their understanding of how and why people consider, choose, use, and evaluate goods and services. Students will learn various marketing research techniques to collect, analyze and act upon customer information, especially in the internet and digital environment. These tools will help students better understand and predict customer behavior and will become essential for developing a successful career in marketing/management consulting, customer relationship management, database marketing, digital marketing, etc. Course discussions center on empirical insights and theories developed in marketing and other behavioral sciences to better predict how consumers will respond to different marketing activities.

## **CBL 5820 | LEADING MULTIDISCIPLINARY TEAMS**

This course provides an opportunity to explore the scientific discipline of group and team dynamics. Students will gain an intellectual and personal understanding of fundamental differences between teams and groups, including team processes, development, interaction, and how one's interpersonal style impacts both personal and professional dynamics in a team. Topics of study include effective formation and development, cohesion, structure, interpersonal influence and power, leadership, performance, decision-making, and inter and intra team conflict. Course emphasis will focus on how teams can be created effectively and deliver value added results.