Notes and overview of Bollinger's COM 325: Business and Professional Communication for Fall 2009

This class will be a corporate simulation where the instructor will act as the owner and CEO, and the student's role will be that of an associate. The course will combine elements of oral presentation, field research, and client interaction with participating local organizations.

Skill sets for this class will include:

1) Conducting and participating in effective and professional meetings
2) Persusive presntations (selling)
3) Interaction with actual clients in the real business world
4) Working in a team with the same members for the entire semester

The first section of the class will focus on an overview of business, including economic theory and finance. I believe it is crucial for the emerging COM major to have a minimal grasp of these basic concepts since they will probably be working in some aspect of business.

The second section will be an overview of the research methods that will be used by the class, specifically ethnography. In graduate school I had the opportunity to study with one of the country's leading ethnographers, Dr. H. L. "Buddy" Goodall. I would not describe myself as being a disciple of Dr. Goodall, but the approach he taught has been shown to be extremely effective in penetrating meanings, hidden and open, in organizations.

The third section will require the students to locate a client. Through a series of classroom "meetings" the students, working in teams of 5, will make their pitches. The rest of the class will offer critiques and/or suggestions. All communication that occurs will be in specific business formatting. All pitch meetings will be conducted in business attire (for everyone!).

The fourth section has the students out in the field, collecting ethnographic data on their "client".

The fifth section has the students presenting their findings to the class, and possibly the actual client, if the client is interested.