2011 Fall – ENGL 304: Business and Professional Writing

This course is designed to introduce you to the forms of writing and the writing situations that are common in the professional world, including routine correspondence, job application materials, and recommendation reports. Drawing on the expertise developed in your major, you will explore professional writing through topics and issues important to the work you plan to do. Because a primary assumption of this course is that all writing emerges from and responds to a particular problem, audience and purpose, the course focuses on helping you develop multiple strategies for persuading your audience to your purpose.

Policy Statement

General information

Course number: ENGL 304
Course name: Business and Professional Writing
Term and year: Fall 2011
CRN/Section: 82833 / W01
Location: Colson Hall (CLN-D), G18
Times: TTh 8:30–9:45
Instructor: John Jones, Assistant Professor
Email: john dot jones at-sign mail dot wvu dot edu
Twitter: johnmjones
Office: Colson 231
Office hours: office hours: T 1-2, W 11-12:30, or by appointment

Course objectives

By the end of the semester, students will:

1. Learn the nature, role, and conventions of professional writing in the workplace.
2. Understand and apply rhetorical principles of professional communication; be able to articulate rhetorical analyses thoroughly and specifically. That is, students will learn to analyze and set goals for writing before writing begins; to use appropriate expression and professional style in workplace documents; to meet the needs of different readers in different contexts; and to develop practical arguments for the workplace.
3. Learn the formats, strategies, and basic approaches of professional writing; that is, how to structure, style, and correctly format letters, memos, informational documents, and professional reports.
4. Learn to design and professionally lay-out workplace documents and visuals.
5. Learn to construct competitive employment documents to secure a place in the world of work.

6. Work collaboratively as members of a team on professional writing projects.
7. Apply research and professional writing techniques to professional situations to develop effective oral and written professional reports.

Texts

Required:

- Oliu, Brusaw, & Alred (2010). *Writing that Works: Communicating Effectively on the Job*. 10th edition. Boston: Bedford/St. Martins. ISBN: 0-312-69217-X

Recommended:

- Alred, Brusaw, & Oliu (2009). *The Business Writer's Handbook*. 9th Edition. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's. ISBN: 0-312-47709-0

Additional readings will be made available via eCampus.

Additional course requirements

- Regular access to a computer,
- A Google Docs account, and
- A MIX email account which is checked daily. All official communication from the instructor will be sent to students' MIX email accounts.

Evaluation

Course evaluations will be determined using the Learning Record portfolio system. Students will record regular observations of their learning behavior and submit midterm and final Learning Records consisting of these observations, samples of their work, and analyses of this data keyed to the **course strands** and the **Five Dimensions of Learning**.

Course activities will center around the following **course strands**. Students will:

Writing & Rhetoric

- demonstrate familiarity with the principles of rhetorical communication, including:
  o analyzing and setting goals for writing before writing begins
  o using appropriate expression and professional style in workplace documents
  o meeting the needs of different readers in different contexts
  o developing practical arguments for the workplace
- show a clear understanding of the process of revision, including the ability to re-conceptualize written material as it moves from draft to draft
- complete all writing exercises and assignments on time and in good faith

Collaboration

- engage classmates in constructive debate during class discussion
- turn in materials to be workshopped on time

- edit and proofread their own and others' work
- provide constructive criticism of classmates' work in peer-revision workshops
- demonstrate sensitivity to audience concerns by responding to peer feedback of their own work
- work effectively with classmates on group projects, both by equitably sharing work loads and fully participating in all parts of the group-work process

Research / Technology

- demonstrate familiarity with the research resources provided by the WVU Library System, including print materials, scholarly databases, and online resources
- discover outside sources relevant to particular writing assignments and effectively integrate that material into those assignments
- demonstrate effective techniques for presenting sources as evidence
- correctly cite outside research in a manner appropriate to different genres of business writing
- Students will effectively master classroom technology for submitting assignments, conducting electronic workshops, sending and receiving course-related communication, and any other necessary classroom applications

Grade scale

Course grades will be based on the grade scale below (adapted from this scale).

A. Represents outstanding participation in all course activities; all assigned work completed, with very high quality in all course work. Evidence of significant development across the five dimensions of learning. The Learning Record at this level demonstrates that the minimum requirements for all course strands have been met, while providing evidence for activity that goes significantly beyond these requirements in one or more course strands.

B. Represents excellent participation in all course activities; all assigned work completed, with consistently high quality in course work. Evidence of marked development across the five dimensions of learning.The Learning Record demonstrates that the minimum requirements for all course strands have been met, while providing evidence for activity that goes somewhat beyond these requirements in one or more course strands.

C. Represents good participation in all course activities; all assigned work completed, with generally good quality overall in course work. Evidence of some development across the five dimensions of learning. The Learning Record demonstrates that the minimum requirements for all course strands have been met.

D. Represents uneven participation in course activities; some gaps in assigned work completed, with inconsistent quality in course work. Evidence of development across the five dimensions of learning is partial or unclear. The Learning Record does not provide evidence that the minimum requirements for all course strands have been met.

F. Represents minimal participation in course activities; serious gaps in assigned work completed, or very low quality in course work. Evidence of development is not available.

Attendance

In this class students will be learning a skill—writing—that they will be expected to develop over the course of the semester. For that reason, it is important that they attend class, arrive on time, bring any assigned work, and participate in all in-class writing, editing, revising, and discussion sessions. **Each student will be allowed four (4) absences without it affecting his or her grade. For each absence over four (4), the student's grade will be lowered by one letter grade. This includes absences for illnesses and other emergencies.** For this reason, students should reserve their absences for truly unavoidable emergencies.

Because we have a limited number of class meetings, it is important that students be in class on time and stay for the entire period. **If a student arrives at class more than 5 minutes late or leaves class more than 5 minutes before it is dismissed, he or she will be counted absent.** Further, if a student comes to class on a peer-review or conference day unprepared—that is, without a draft to workshop with his or her classmates—he or she will be counted absent.

If a student finds that any other unavoidable conflict prevents him or her from attending class or being on time, that student should discuss this conflict with me prior to the absence (if possible). Otherwise, the student should contact me about the absence as soon as possible.

Late work

If a student cannot attend class on the date an assignment is due, he or she should discuss a make-up date with me before the absence. If the student does not contact me before the time an assignment is due, the assignment will be considered late. I am generally flexible when I am kept informed of absences, but I am generally not flexible when a student skips multiple classes without contacting me, then shows up wanting to make up missed work.

I will not accept any project or assignment that is more than one week late unless the student makes an appointment with me during office hours to discuss his or her reason for turning in the work after the deadline. If a student fails to attend class on the day he or she is scheduled to lead a class discussion or give a presentation, that student should expect to receive no credit for the assignment. Homework, and in-class assignments will not be accepted late.

Submitting course work

Unless otherwise noted, all course assignments will be submitted electronically. We will discuss the method and procedures for submitting assignments in class. All assignments are due before the start of class on the day they are listed in the course schedule.

Technology policy

We will use technology frequently in this class. Occasionally, you will be introduced to new technologies that you may be unfamiliar with. When this happens, these new technologies will often be discussed in class; however, when faced with new tools and technologies you should expect to

spend some time working with and learning the technology, researching the technology, and, when possible, sharing what you learn about the technology with your fellow students when they need help.

You are welcome to use the provided computers during class for note-taking and relevant research; you are also welcome to bring laptops or other portable computing devices for these purposes. In general, most technology is welcome in class as long as it is used to aid student learning; technology that doesn't serve this purpose—or actively distracts you or your classmates—is not welcome.

Work visibility

Due to the nature of the course, you will be sharing your work with your fellow classmates as part of workshops and peer review sessions. Additionally, you may occasionally be required to share your non-graded work publicly on the web (e.g., on a class blog). By taking this course, you are indicating that you accept these requirements.

Research and scholastic honesty (The P-Word)

One of the most common forms of academic dishonesty is plagiarism. Taking someone else's published or unpublished ideas and submitting them as your own constitutes plagiarism and will result in formal academic discipline. In general, if a student turns in work that is not her or his own, in whole or in part, without adequate attribution to the original author, or if he or she any commits any other form of scholastic dishonesty, these actions will result in either a major course penalty or, depending on the severity of the violation, failure for the course. If a students have any questions about the use they are making of sources for an assignment, they should see me *before*the assignment is turned in. For a complete discussion of what constitutes plagiarism and the relevant WVU disciplinary procedures, students may consult the West Virginia University Undergraduate Catalog (pdf) and the West Virginia University Student Conduct Code.

Accommodations policy

If you have a documented learning disability, hearing or vision problem, or any other special need that might affect your performance or participation in the class, please contact WVU's Office of Disability Services to arrange accommodations.

Social justice policy

English 304 supports WVU's commitment to social justice. The classroom community will work to create a positive learning environment based on open communication and mutual respect.

Miscellaneous notes

Please keep the following in mind:

- Bring all materials to each session. This includes all course texts as well as printouts of any additional reading, assignment drafts and research sources, lecture notes, and a writing implement.
- Make an effort to check the online schedule often. Any updates to the course schedule, additional assignment information, or new reading material will be posted on this site. Students are responsible for all assignments posted on the schedule, so they should be sure to check for updated assignments before each class meeting.

Schedule

This is the course schedule for the fall 2011 section of **English 304, Business and Professional Writing**. Readings and assignments are due on the day they are listed in the schedule.

Week	Meeting	Schedule/Readings	Assignments Due
Aug. 22-26	1	**Course Introduction**: Rhetoric and Professional Writing	
	2	Read the Learning Record (LR) "Information for Students," following all the links in the main article	Twitter Assignme
Aug. 29-Sep. 2	1	**Unit 1: Job Seeking** Read Chapter 1, "Assessing Audience and Purpose" & Ch. 16, "Finding the Right Job" of *Writing that Works* (WTW)	**Complete Parts** **LR** ~~and record or~~
	2	Read WTW Ch. 2, "Organizing Your Information"	
Sep. 5-9	1	Peer review	
	2	Personal websites, online resumes, & file formats	**Project 1.1 due**

Sep. 12-16	1	Read WTW Ch. 3, "Writing the Draft"	
	2	Read WTW Ch. 4, "Revising the Draft"	
Sep. 19-23	1	Peer review	
	2	Non-traditional business correspondence	**Project 1.2 due**
Sep. 26-30	1	**Unit 2: Business Correspondence** Read WTW Ch. 8, "Understanding the Principles of Business Communication"	
	2	Read WTW Ch. 9, "Writing Business Correspondence"	
Oct. 3-7	1	Read WTW Ch. 6, "Researching Your Subject"	**Meet in room 13** **lower level of th** **Library**
	2	Read WTW Ch. 7, "Designing Effective Documents and Visuals" and Tufte, "Chartjunk" and "Aesthetics and Technique" (download pdfs on ecampus)	
Oct. 10-14	1	Peer review	
	2	Midterm LR Workshop	**Project 2.1 due**

Oct. 17-21	1	LR Moderation	**Midterm LR part**
	2	Read WTW Ch. 13, "Writing Proposals"	
Oct. 24-28	1	Peer review	
	2	Using online collaboration tools	**Project 2.2 due**
Oct. 31-Nov. 4	1	**Unit 3: Reports** Proposal Conferences	Project 3 propos conference
	2	Read WTW Ch. 11, "Writing Formal Reports"	
Nov. 7-11	1	Read WTW Ch. 5, "Collaborative Writing"	
	2	Read WTW Ch. 14, "Giving Presentations and Conducting Meetings" & Tufte, "The Cognitive Style of PowerPoint" ([ecampus](#))	
Nov. 14-18	1	Peer review	
	2	Discuss [Presentations Handout](#) (pdf)	**Project 3.1 due**
Nov. 21-25		**Thanksgiving Break: No class**	

Nov. 28-Dec. 2	1	Presentations	
	2	Presentations	
Dec. 5-9	1	Presentations	
	2	Course Evaluations	**Project 3.2 due** **Final LR parts B2**