

ENGL 304

Business/Professional Writing

Instructor: Mr. Deaton Office: G19 Colson
Section W01, Fall 2013, CRN 82450
MWF 10:30am-11:30am
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Office Hours: Mon and Fri 12:30pm-1:30pm

COURSE DESCRIPTION

English 304 is designed to help you become competent and effective professional writers and communicators before you enter the workplace. Due to the importance of collaboration in most professional settings, we engage in multiple forms of group work, from peer review and in-class work groups to a final collaborative project.

Our English 304 class's atmosphere will be like that of a professional workplace. We will imagine ourselves as the members of an organization—304 Inc.—where the instructor is the supervisor and the students are apprentice employees. We will learn and practice professional writing in this context.

GOALS

A fundamental assumption of 304 Inc. is that writing happens in response to a given situation and with a clear communicative purpose. By discussing successful communication strategies and practicing them in a variety of common business forms—letters, memos, emails, long reports—you will:

- Become familiar with the persuasive, and evidence-based, nature of all workplace writing by learning about the purpose, audience, context, and effects (PACE) of professional writing situations.
- Apply an understanding of PACE and rhetorical strategies to effectively compose, design, and revise documents.
- Know how and when to employ the conventions of different workplace media and genres. These media and genres, which can be in print or electronic form, will include résumés, cover letters, memos, emails, proposals, reports, and PowerPoint/other slideware presentations.
- Conduct research and analyze data to support your evidence-based writing projects.
- Work collaboratively with team members on professional writing projects using the contemporary medias and technologies, like Google Drive, that are common in the workplace.

304 INC. GRADE BREAKDOWN

1. Individual Portfolio [50%]
 - Introductory Email
 - The Employment Project
 - The Correspondence Project
 - The Document Design Project
 - Final Reflective Memo
2. The Report and Presentation Project (RPP) [30%]
3. General Job Performance [20%]

TEXTBOOK AND MATERIALS

Writing that Works, 11 ed., Oliu, Brusaw, & Alred
A Google Drive Account

KEY DEADLINES/DATES

Weds 8/21

Intro Email Due

Weds 9/4 (Rough Draft) & Mon 9/9 (Final for Now)

Employment Project Deadlines

Mon 9/16 (Rough) & Fri 9/20 (Final for Now)

Correspondence Project Deadlines
Midterm Memo Due 9/20

Mon 9/23

Midterm Reflective Memo Due

Weds 10/2 (Rough) & Mon 10/7 (Final for Now)

Doc. Design Project Deadlines

Fri 10/11

Draft of RPP Rhet. Analysis Due

Fri 10/18

RPP Proposal Due

Fri 11/1 & Mon 11/4

eCampus Discussions of Reports

Weds 11/13

Draft of Report Due: Executive
Summary and Recommendation

Fri 11/22

RPP Reports, Proposals Due

Week 17 (12/2, 12/4, 12/6)

RPP Presentations Due
PowerPoint Due (hard copy)

Mon 12/9

Final Portfolios Due

Thurs 12/12

Portfolio pick-up

PROJECT OVERVIEW AND REQUIREMENTS

The most successful professional writers view writing as a process, not a product. This process includes, ideally, planning, drafting, revising, and re-drafting documents. I am asking you to focus on two major processes in English 304: the individual production of a professional writer's portfolio and the production, with one or two other students, of a Report and Presentation Project (the RPP).

Individual Portfolio [50%]

Over the course of the semester you will compile your short professional documents in 304 Inc. into a writer's portfolio. A portfolio is traditionally a collection of a writer's or artist's best work. The portfolio is the document that best presents the writer or artist to employers, schools, or competitions by thoughtfully arranging a selection of work to demonstrate skills and abilities; the portfolio for this class, then, can demonstrate to future employers your understanding of professional/business writing purposes, audiences, contexts, and effects. To complete your professional writing portfolio, you must complete the required portfolio project assignments below; assignment handouts will be forthcoming.

Nearly all required Final Portfolio project assignments will be turned in physically; on occasion, some will be emailed to me. Each addition to your portfolio will also include a memo that analyzes the PACE (purpose, audience, context, and effects) of your compositions. These PACE memos will help you better develop effective arguments and display an understanding of key concepts.

An introductory email to me (no PACE analysis necessary until later in the semester)

During our first week together, you will write an email to me to help me get to know you. Your email should tell me about your background, your intentions/goals for 304 Inc., and your understanding of its policies (found in this syllabus). When you write about your background, you may include material about your education, your job experience, your community service experience, and your writing experience.

The Employment Writing Project (2 short application documents; 1 PACE memo to me; 1 emailed job application)

You will locate three job prospects within your field (i.e. fashion design or engineering) and respond to one of the job ads with a cover letter and résumé that shows your qualifications for the position. With these documents, you will argue that you would make a good employee for that organization. As we learn about employment writing, we will go into detail about the letter and memo genres as well as the basics of document layout and design. As a bonus, we will also discuss ways to manage our social media/network profiles to better market ourselves to future employers. The majority of your Employment Writing Project will be handed in to me physically; the only item you will send separately, via email, to me is an electronic plain-text version of your job application.

The Correspondence Project (2 short workplace documents; 1 PACE memo to me)

You will demonstrate your understanding of basic business formats (memos, letters) and routine business messages, as well as your ability to communicate professionally with different audiences in different contexts, by role-playing two different professional writing situations. Specifically, you will show your expertise in organizing professional messages by your understanding of PACE—in particular your understanding of the special approach necessary for audiences that are unreceptive, hostile, or need to be persuaded to accept your message. For these professional documents you will also include a PACE analysis memo.

A Midterm Reflective Memo to me (not included in Final Portfolio)

In your midterm memo, you will reflect on your progress as a professional writer at 304 Inc.'s "midterm."

The Document Design Project (1 redesigned document; 1 letter to a business owner; 1 PACE memo for the letter to the businessperson and the redesigned document)

Based on conversations about what qualities make for rhetorically successful content and form in professional flyers and brochures, as well as your own careful brainstorming of best design practices, you will analyze an existing document for a Morgantown business or non-profit. After you have conducted your analysis, you will redesign the document, making it more effective. You then compose a letter to that organization's owner/decision-maker in which you suggest the organization accepts your redesigns (and, hopefully, improvements). The original document, your document design, e-mail to the owner, and rhetorical analysis for the design and e-mail will be submitted to me as hard copies.

A Final Reflective Memo to me (included in the Final Portfolio)

In your final memo, you will reflect on your progress as a professional writer at the conclusion of 304 Inc.'s semester.

The Report and Presentation Project [30%]

In addition to producing your professional writing portfolio, you will also collaborate with at least one other student (or two, depending on the size of our class) in a three-stage project that will introduce you to teamwork, professional research, and oral and visual presentations. Unlike the documents for the individual portfolio, the majority of the work you do for the RPP may not be revised. The project will include:

Brainstorm topic, conduct research, draft a rhetorical analysis, and write and a proposal (2 pages in the memo format) to instructor

As you begin this project you will conduct research to help you find a problem you would like to address on behalf of a business or nonprofit. After finding your topic, you and your partner will write a PACE analysis of your communication situation for the RPP (this draft of the rhetorical analysis will be one of your informal writing assignments). You will then compose a *proposal* for your project. This proposal will be based on an argument backed up by evidence. After you submit both the PACE analysis and the proposal memo, I will respond to them with suggestions and concerns. The proposal and PACE analysis are the only documents of the RPP you will revise—polished versions must be added to your final RPP.

Compose and design a formal professional report (it should be about 5-6 pages [not including front and back matter])

After learning the conventions of both proposal and report writing in the workplace, you will complete an analytical *report*. As you work on your report, you and your partner should prepare the text collaboratively via Google Drive (aka Google Docs). You will be writing your report to help the local business or non-profit you previously discussed in your proposal. For this business or nonprofit you will specify a specific problem, present research on the issue, discuss potential solutions to the problem, and make a recommendation regarding the best possible solution. You will, on occasion, discuss your report with other colleagues on eCampus, or turn in a draft of your report to your instructor. The final copy of your report (8-10 pages or so), your revised RPP rhetorical analysis, and your revised proposal (2 pages) will be due before the week of presentations.

Create and give a professional presentation

You and your partner will design and give a persuasive oral *presentation* of your report project. This oral presentation will be supplemented by Microsoft PowerPoint slides. The presentation must target the business or non-profit on whose behalf you are writing—your fellow students and instructor will represent that organization as we listen to the presentation. With your oral and PowerPoint presentations you should aim to persuade your audience that your reported solution is the best, most helpful one. On the day of your presentation you will submit to me a hard copy (physically, in person) of your PowerPoint slides. As you give your presentation, your audience of 304 Inc. colleagues (including me) will assess the effectiveness of your oral presentation. Additionally, you and your partner[s] will complete a survey that will help me evaluate your levels of teamwork.

General Job Performance [20%]

Your General Job Performance grade will be determined by two things: your business etiquette and your informal writing. Good business etiquette requires you to respect your instructor and your colleagues by listening when they are speaking and responding to them in a considerate way. Good business etiquette also entails active participation; 304 Inc. depends on your active participation for every class and your active involvement during every class meeting. The informal writing assignments you complete throughout the semester, such as the working draft PACE analysis for your RPP, will be thought of as the everyday jobs you carry out at workplace. They will, then, contribute to your job performance grade.

304 INC. POLICIES

Evaluation of Portfolios

This is a portfolio-based course; you are creating a collection of professional documents to demonstrate your writing success and mastery of PACE analysis. When you turn in a portfolio, then, you will not earn individual letter grades on your “Final for Now” assignments. Instead, I will return each project you turn in throughout the semester with evaluative comments that should give you a sense of how you have performed on the assignment. At the end of the semester, as you put together your portfolio for final submission, you will review your individual portfolio work and assess your professional writing performance as a whole.

The following are the grade descriptors I will rely on for the final portfolio. If you have questions, please ask.

A—Superior work with recognizable purpose. Its content is mature, thorough, and well suited for the audience; it also adheres to all grammatical conventions effectively. Genre conventions are effectively used and reflect an understanding of the writing situation’s context. The portfolio demonstrates a range of well-edited, well-written, well-argued, and well-documented texts that a company could use without further revisions.

B—Good work. The documents in the portfolio generally succeed in meeting their goals in terms of purpose, audience, contexts, and effects without the need for further *major* revisions. They may need some minor improvements in content, generic conventions, or grammar.

C—Satisfactory work. The portfolio meets the basic requirements set forth by the instructor. Its documents require, though, some substantial revisions of content, generic conventions, or grammar, or they may require further work in more than one those areas. The documents may not fulfill the needs of their purpose, audience, contexts, and effects. Some of the revisions recommended by the instructor have been ignored. In the workplace, the documents would be functional for an immediate deadline, but would require further revisions before being distributed or made part of a permanent record.

D—Documents are unprofessional. They generally require extensive revisions of content, generic conventions, and grammar. The writer has encountered *significant* problems meeting goals of purpose, audience, and genre. Many of the revisions recommended by the instructor have been ignored. In the workplace, a company would most probably have to reassign the project to another writer for successful completion.

F—Failing portfolio. Documents do not have enough information, do something other than is appropriate for a given situation, or contain major and pervasive problems in terms of content, generic conventions, or grammar that interfere with meaning. The portfolio may be incomplete. A company would most probably dismiss the writer from current projects—or from their job position.

Attendance

Each student is allowed up to three absences without a drop in the final grade. A fourth absence will compromise your grade by one full letter. Each additional absence will continue to lower your final grade. Thus,

six or more absences necessarily results in a failing grade for this course. Please note that all absences (*including excused absences*) will count toward the total number, and this policy starts from the moment you are registered in the course.

Late Work

Late work is both unprofessional and unacceptable. You are responsible for making up any work you may miss by failing to attend class, even if the absence is necessitated by illness or personal emergency. Additionally, I do not accept late projects. If you do need to miss a class, however, you should notify me immediately via email (within twenty-four hours) and you must arrange to complete your missed work in a timely fashion.

Conference Attendance

As part of this workshop course, you are required to set up several mandatory conferences with me throughout the semester. Each conference will only last between ten and fifteen minutes, but it will count as a full class day for attendance purposes.

Cheating/Plagiarism

Integrity is of utmost importance in ENGL 304. Students are expected to be familiar with the sections on Academic Honesty in the **University Student Conduct Code, Policy Bulletin 31**, which is online at: <http://studentlife.wvu.edu/studentconductcode.html>. If you have any questions about when and how to document sources, or any other question that will help you avoid unintentional plagiarism, please speak with me.

Computers and Cell Phones

304 Inc. activities require your full attention, so please turn off your cell phones, put them out of sight, and refrain from texting in the workplace. Since the class meets in a computer classroom, please be sure that, during class time, you are using the computers only as instructed for that day's class session (and not for Facebook, etc.). If you are ever using technology in a way that is distracting or unrelated to the work of 304 Inc., you will be asked to put away the device or log off the computer. If there is an unusual circumstance where you must leave your phone on, please just speak to me privately *before* class.

Social Justice

West Virginia University is committed to social justice. I concur with that commitment and expect to maintain a positive learning environment based upon open communication, mutual respect, and non-discrimination. West Virginia University—and 304 Inc.—will not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, age, disability, veteran status, religion, sexual orientation, color or national origin. Any suggestions as to how to further such a positive and open environment in this workplace will be appreciated and given thoughtful consideration.

Students with Disabilities

If you have a documented learning disability, a serious hearing or vision problem, or any other special need that might affect your performance and participation in 304 Inc., please let me know. Also, please be aware of the support services available to you through Disability Services in room G30 of the Mountainlair. Their phone number is: (304)-293-6700, and their email is: access2@mail.wvu.edu.

Writing Center

The WVU Writing Center is another resource that can not only help you to brush up on your basic skills, but also help support you in all aspects of the writing process. It is located in G02 Colson Hall. This is a free resource for students where you can meet with a tutor to go over any assignment or just to get help brainstorming the best topic. Call 304-293-5788 to schedule an appointment or stop by to see if a tutor is available. For more information, check online at: http://english.wvu.edu/centers_and_projects/wcenter.

Course Schedule

Subject to changes throughout the semester according to class needs. Please check your MIX accounts often for updates.

Week/Date	Day	Topic	Reading	Work Due & Other Notes
Week 1 8/19	Mon	Course Introduction Google Drive and eCampus workshop		Buy textbook
8/21	Weds	PACE Strategy Revisiting Google Drive and eCampus	Chapter 1, "Assessing Audience and Purpose" of <i>Writing that Works</i> (WTW)	Intro email
8/23	Fri	<i>Start Employment Documents</i> Find 3 Job Prospects	WTW Ch. 16, "Finding the Right Job"	
Week 2 8/26	Mon	Résumés		Details on 3 job prospects
8/28	Weds	Cover Letters		Work on résumés
8/30	Fri	Managing your presence on social media, social networks		Work on cover letters
Week 3 9/2	Mon	Labor Day		
9/4	Weds	Peer review of Employment Documents (bring 2 copies)	WTW Ch. 3, "Writing the Draft"	2 copies of Empl. Doc. Drafts
9/6	Fri	CONFERENCES ON EMPL. PROJECT (G19 Colson) Note: No class in classroom because of conferences	WTW Ch. 4, "Revising the Draft"	No class due to conferences; meet by appointment in my office (G19 Colson)
Week 4 9/9	Mon	<i>Start Correspondence Project</i>		EMPLOYMENT DOC. FINAL FOR NOWS
9/11	Weds	Direct/Indirect Approaches	WTW Ch. 8, "Understanding the Principles of Business Communication"	
9/13	Fri	Correspondence genres	WTW Ch. 9, "Writing Business Correspondence"	
Week 5 9/16	Mon	Peer review of Correspondence Documents (bring 2 copies)		2 copies of Corr. Doc. Drafts
9/18	Weds	CONFERENCES ON CORR. PROJECT (G19 Colson) Note: No class in classroom because of conferences		CONFERENCES IN MY OFFICE (G19 Colson)
9/20	Fri	Progress reports in the workplace Write midterm progress report memo in class		CORR. PROJECT FINAL FOR NOWS
Week 6 9/23	Mon	<i>Start Document Design Project</i>		MIDTERM PROGRESS MEMO
9/25	Weds	Discussion: lay-out and organization, content	WTW Ch. 7, "Designing Effective Documents and Visuals"	Hard copy of a document to analyze (In Class)
9/27	Fri	Visual rhetoric	Anne Francis Wysocki, "Impossibly distinct"	Hard copy of a document to analyze (In Class)
Week 7 9/30	Mon	Basics of design		Hard copy of a document to analyze (In Class)
10/2	Weds	Peer review of Document Design Project (bring 2 copies)		2 copies of Doc. Design Drafts
10/4	Fri	CONFERENCES ON DOC. DESIGN PROJ. (G19 Colson) Note: No class in classroom because of conferences		CONFERENCES IN MY OFFICE (G19 Colson)
Week 8 10/7	Mon	<i>Start Report & Presentation Project (RPP)</i> Choose partners for the RPP Brainstorm, research RPP ideas with partners		DOC. DESIGN PROJECT FINAL FOR NOWS
10/9	Weds	Features of the proposal	WTW Ch. 13, "Writing Proposals"	Work on RPP
10/11/2013 Mid-Semester	Fri	Practical and ethical research in the workplace; documentation.	WTW Ch. 6, "Researching Your Subject"	Drafts of Rhetorical Analysis
Week 9 10/14	Mon	Fall Recess		

10/16	Weds	Collaborative writing with Google Drive	WTW Ch. 5, "Collaborative Writing"	Work on RPP
10/18	Fri	CONFERENCES ON P3 (G19 Colson). No class in classroom because of conferences		CONFERENCES IN MY OFFICE (G19 Colson). RPP Proposal
Week 10 10/21	Mon	Comparing proposals and reports; Features of the formal long report: the Executive Summary and Recommendations	WTW Ch. 11, "Writing Formal Reports"	Work on RPP
10/23	Weds	Features of the formal long report: the body text		Work on RPP
10/25	Fri	Features of the formal long report: Abstracts and front matter		Work on RPP
Week 11 10/28	Mon	Features of the formal long report: back matter		Work on RPP
10/30	Weds	Citation practice; grammar		Work on RPP
11/1	Fri	Time to work on RPP with partners in class		Explanation of Report posted to eCampus discussion thread
Week 12 11/4	Mon	Time to work on RPP with partners in class		2 comments posted to colleagues' report explanations on eCampus
11/6	Weds	Preparing successful oral presentations for work	WTW Ch. 14, "Giving Presentations and Conducting Meetings"	Work on RPP
11/8	Fri	Effective PowerPoint presentations; Presenting information visually	<i>From eCampus:</i> Edward Tufte, "The Cognitive Style of PowerPoint"	Work on RPP
Week 13 11/11	Mon	New thoughts on PowerPoint presentation, style		Work on RPP
11/13	Weds	Time to work on PowerPoint presentation with partners in class		Drafts of section of Report: Executive Summary and Recommendation
11/15	Fri	Time to work on PowerPoint presentation with partners in class		Work on RPP
Week 15 11/18	Mon	Evaluating presentations		Work on RPP
11/20	Weds	Time to work on RPP Rhetorical Analysis		Work on RPP
11/22	Fri	Time to polish and rehearse presentation in class		RPP REPORTS
Week 16		Thanksgiving Break		
Week 17 12/2	Mon	STUDENT PRESENTATIONS		HARD COPY OF POWERPOINTS (In Class)
12/4	Weds	STUDENT PRESENTATIONS		HARD COPY OF POWERPOINTS (In Class)
12/6	Fri	STUDENT PRESENTATIONS		HARD COPY OF POWERPOINTS (In Class)
Week 18 12/9	Mon	Course conclusion		FINAL PORTFOLIOS DUE
12/12	Thurs	Portfolio pick-up		