

Business/Professional Writing

English 304-W02

G06 Colson Hall

MTWRF 10:30-11:45 a.m.

Instructor: Jill Higgins

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Office Phone: 304-293-9727

Office Hours: MTWR Noon – 1:30 p.m. (and by appointment)

Required Text

Oliu, Walter E., Charles Brusaw, & Gerald Alred. *Writing that Works: Communicating Effectively on the Job*. 9th Ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2007. ISBN: 978-0-312-44844-8

Additional readings will be available through WVU eCampus.

Required Technology

An activated MIX account and a Central ID.

Course Description

English 304 is designed to help you become an effective professional communicator before you enter the workplace, so we will focus on analyzing and developing successful strategies for writing on the job. By discussing successful communication strategies and practicing them in a variety of common business forms – emails, letters, memos, proposals and websites – we will learn to analyze different writing contexts, meet the needs of various readers, and organize and present material logically and practically.

Primary Course Objectives

- Apply strategies for analyzing professional writing contexts, including audiences, purposes for writing, and organizational cultures.
- Compose and design documents, including memos, employment documents, and reports that meet the needs of a diverse audience and accomplish persuasive goals.
- Construct and synthesize arguments both collaboratively and individually that demonstrate knowledge of rhetorical principles and that appeal to multi-faceted audiences.
- Conduct research and analyze data that can be used to support arguments. Demonstrate proper methods of documentation and the ability to comprehend and evaluate ethical responsibilities and potential dilemmas associated with writing and research.
- Know and apply composition methods and document design strategies for different media including print and electronic forms. Ability to synthesize this knowledge in order to create effective graphics for print, electronic, and presentation formats.

Course Requirements

This is a writing-intensive course in which you will be evaluated on written documents, oral presentations, class participation, and your online portfolio. You will receive a detailed assignment sheet for each task, and each assignment that will be graded on content, technique and style will pass through a drafting stage before you turn in your “final” version.

Assignments

“Minor” Writing Assignments and Quizzes – 15%

Correspondence Package – 10%

Employment Package – 10%

Investigative Report – 10%

Presentation – 10%

Online Portfolio – 35% (*Portfolio Reflection – 10%*)

Participation – 10%

The more writers write, reflect and revise, the better their writing becomes. For this reason, you will receive points for all draft and “minor” writing assignments, depending on whether the work you turn in meets the criteria set forth for that assignment. More important, you will also receive extensive comments from me and your peers that will help you in the revision process.

As you turn in your assignments, I will hold you to professional standards. For example, your employer will take for granted qualities such as promptness, neat appearance, and correct mechanics (grammar, spelling, and punctuation). ***Final assignments must be printed out before you arrive at class.***

Course Tools & Technical Resources

You will be using WVU eCampus for online discussions and document submissions. In addition, you will be working with a “what-you-see-is-what-you-get” or WYSIWYG web page editor such as iWeb, SeaMonkey, KompoZer, or Adobe/Macromedia Dreamweaver in order to construct your online portfolio. Basic instruction on HTML editors will be provided in-class. You are, of course, free to code by hand or use other applications such as Flash to create a more sophisticated web site. You will also need to verify your free web hosting space provided by the university at: <http://oit.wvu.edu/web/community/>. You will need to have an active **CENTRAL ID**. If you have access to another account, you are welcome to use it instead.

Portfolio Keeping & Peer Review

Please obtain a folder that you will dedicate to collecting the writing, editing, and revising done in this course. Please bring this folder to each class. As you work on your assignments both in and out of class, keep (within a reasonable limit) hard copies of all your notes, drafts, outlines, peer reviews, and research materials. Organize and label the documents as you go as you will regularly review these materials in order to learn how your discovery, drafting, and research processes evolve throughout the course. Moreover, these documents will be integral to preparing your final reflection, which is part of the online portfolio.

It is also a good idea to maintain electronic archives of your draft material in at least two places. This can be on your hard drive, a USB drive, an email folder, etc. You don’t want to lose your draft materials due to computer glitches and accidents! Also, since you will be turning in your final project of the class electronically, judicious archiving will help you avoid tedious retyping!

Every major writing assignment in this class will undergo peer review (see ***Digital Fridays*** section below) prior to submitting a “final” version for grading. Under no circumstances will I accept a “final” version of a document without a peer-reviewed rough draft.

Digital Fridays

Because much of your work in professional and corporate settings will be done remotely – with colleagues in different departments, from different companies, in different states or even in different countries – this course incorporates an online collaborative component.

There are a few ***Digital Fridays*** on which you are not required to physically attend class; however, you are required to meet peer-review deadlines set for those days. Your draft materials must be posted on the appropriate WVU eCampus discussion board by the beginning of our regularly scheduled class (10:30 a.m.), and your written review (tracked changes and/or memo, depending on the assignment) of a classmate’s materials must be posted to WVU eCampus by COB (close of business: 5 p.m.) the same day. This will give everyone sufficient time to revise their writing as needed before “final” drafts are turned in for grading on the following Monday. ***Pay close attention to the course schedule for mandatory-attendance Fridays!***

Attendance

You are expected to be prepared for and attend class every scheduled class day. This means your writing assignments must be complete, readings must be read, etc. If you amass more than **two** absences, your grade for the course will be lowered **one** full letter grade. For each unexcused absence after two, I reserve the right to lower your final grade by an additional letter grade. In addition, excessive tardiness (beginning with three instances of 10 minutes or more tardy) will be recorded as an absence.

Plagiarism Policy

West Virginia University defines academic integrity as the pursuit of scholarly activity in an open, honest and responsible manner. All students should act with personal integrity; respect other students' dignity, rights and property; and help create and maintain an environment in which all can succeed through the fruits of their efforts.

Dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated in this course. Dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarizing, fabricating information or citations, facilitating acts of academic dishonesty by others, submitting work of another person or work previously used without informing the instructor, or tampering with the academic work of other students. 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://www.arc.wvu.edu/rightsa.html>.

Talking over your ideas and getting comments on your writing from friends are NOT acts of plagiarism. Taking someone else's published or unpublished words and calling them your own IS plagiarism: a synonym is academic dishonesty. When plagiarism amounts to an attempt to deceive, it has dire consequences, which can include failure of an assignment, failure of the course and a permanent blemish on your University transcript.

Non-Discrimination & Disability Policies

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. Our University does 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 class will be appreciated and given serious consideration.

If you are a person with a disability and anticipate needing any type of accommodation in order to participate in this class, please advise me and make appropriate arrangements with the Office of Disability Services (293-6700).

Undergraduate Writing Center

Please consider taking your ideas and your written work to the WVU Writing Center, where trained peer tutors will consult with writers about any piece of writing at any stage of the writing process. The Writing Center is located in G02 Colson Hall. To schedule appointments or to ask questions, call 293-5788. For more information about Writing Center programs as well as for materials to help you negotiate various stages of the writing process, visit http://english.wvu.edu/centers_and_projects/wcenter. Summer session writing center hours are M-F 11 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Professional Expectations & Conduct

In addition to the requirements in this syllabus, you are expected to work until the class period has ended; to complete all reading assignments on time; to help your classmates learn by your

responses to their writing; to choose projects that require significant research and analysis; to spend at least ten hours per week out of class for writing and class preparation; to be courteous and considerate. Please turn all cell phones and pagers off during class time, as they are disruptive to the class. No text messaging, Facebook, etc, please.

Grading

Superior ~ A (100-90)	Strong ~ B (89-80)	Satisfactory ~ C (79-70)	Poor ~ D (69-60)	Failing ~ F (<60)
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If at any time course requirements, assignments and expectations are unclear, please do not hesitate to ask.

Course Schedule

(Like all writing...this schedule is open to revision!)

Week 1	Business Communication Principles and Correspondence
M 6/28	<i>Intro to course and colleagues</i> Assigned: Memo
T 6/29	<i>Audience & purpose</i> Due: Memo, WTW Ch. 1 & 2 Assigned: Correspondence Package
W 6/30	<i>Professional communication principles</i> Due: WTW Ch. 8 & 9
R 7/1	<i>Revision</i> Due: Draft Letter, WTW Ch. 3 & 4
<i>Digital Friday</i> F 7/2	Due 10:30 a.m.: Draft letters for digital peer review Due C.O.B. (5 p.m.): Peer review (tracked changes comments & edits) <i>No Class</i>
Week 2	Employment Communication
M 7/5	<i>Independence Day Recess</i> <i>No Class</i>
T 7/6	<i>Career research</i> Due: Correspondence Package, WTW Ch. 16 Assigned: Employment Package
W 7/7	<i>Resume formatting</i> Due: Jobs email
R 7/8	<i>Cover letters</i> Due: Draft resume
<i>Digital Friday</i> F 7/9	Due 10:30 a.m.: Draft cover letters/resumes for digital peer review Due C.O.B. (5 p.m.): Peer review (analysis memo <i>or</i> tracked changes) <i>No Class</i>
Week 3	Collaboration and Investigative Report
M 7/12	<i>Collaboration and report elements</i> Due: Employment Package, WTW Ch. 5, 10 Assigned: Investigative Report

T 7/13	<i>Research</i> Due: WTW Ch. 6
W 7/14	<i>Graphics</i> Due: Progress Report, WTW Ch. 7
R 7/15	<i>Workshop</i>
<i>Digital Friday</i> F 7/16	Due 10:30 a.m.: Draft Investigative Report for digital peer review Due C.O.B. (5 p.m.): Peer review (tracked changes) <i>Class workshop optional</i>
Week 4	Persuasive Communication (Proposal Presentation)
M 7/19	<i>Proposal elements</i> Due: Investigative Report, WTW Ch. 13 Assigned: Proposal Presentation
T 7/20	<i>Presentations</i> Due: Progress Report, WTW Ch. 14
W 7/21	<i>Graphics and additional research</i>
R 7/22	<i>Proofing and practicing</i>
<i>Digital Friday</i> F 7/23	Due 10:30 a.m.: Draft presentation for digital peer review Due C.O.B. (5 p.m.): Peer review analysis memo <i>No Class</i>
Week 5	Proposal Presentations/Writing Portfolio (Online)
M 7/26	<i>Presentations</i> Due: Proposal Presentation (Group I) Assigned: Online Writing Portfolio
T 7/27	<i>Presentations</i> Due: Proposal Presentation (Group II), WTW Ch. 15
W 7/28	<i>HTML editors</i> Due: LGW Ch. 1, 3 & 4
R 7/29	<i>Design and graphics</i> Due: Information architecture outline, LGW Ch. 7
F 7/30	<i>Online workshop</i> Class Mandatory
Week 6	Writing Portfolio (Online) and Revision
M 8/2	<i>Publishing to the web</i>
T 8/3	<i>In-class peer review</i> Due: Draft Online Writing Portfolio for peer review and mini-presentations
W 8/4	<i>Usability testing/troubleshooting</i>
R 8/5	<i>Revision workshop and evaluations</i>
<i>Digital Friday</i> F 8/6	Due C.O.B. (5 p.m.): Final Online Writing Portfolio posted and email sent to me with link <i>No Class</i>