

Professional Writing: Course Guidelines/Syllabus

PRINT THIS DOCUMENT FOR YOUR RECORDS.

There is a great deal of important information here, so read it all very carefully. The material here is (like an on-site course syllabus) subject to change upon notification by your instructor. In the event that something changes, your instructor will post a note to the "Announcements" thread on the "Discussions" message board. It is your responsibility to stay current with Discussion Board announcements.

E-mail

You should use WVU eCampus e-mail to contact me unless the WVU eCampus server should crash or become otherwise unavailable to you during the term. To use WVU eCampus email, simply click on the "Mail" icon on the course homepage, locate the intended addressee from the "Select Recipients" tab, and compose and send your message as you would with any other e-mail service. Consider posting questions about course content to the Discussion Board so that others may respond and benefit from the discussion.

Office Hours

My regular office hours for this class are posted in the "Announcements" topic on the WVU eCampus Discussion Board. You may also make an appointment with me via e-mail to speak on the phone, meet in my office, or chat in the WVU eCampus course chatroom. Please contact me via WVU eCampus e-mail to schedule such an appointment.

Interacting With Your Professor

The e-mail conferencing and available office hours mean that this course is based on tutorial-style learning in which you can contact me anytime for help. It is very important that you take a personal, vigorous initiative for your own learning in this course. I will act as your mentor, not as a lecturer or a day-to-day monitor of your learning. This style of learning represents an enormous change from the "in school" instruction you may be used to. All the materials are here--but you have to have the self-direction to keep track of the calendar, to keep up a pace of continuous learning, to contact me, and to keep a record of what you've done.

Required Texts

There is one required textbook for this class addition to our WVU eCampus coursepage: ***Essentials of Business Communication* by Mary Ellen Guffey. Thomson Publishers, 8th edition.**

You can purchase this book at the WVU Bookstore, either in person, by phone at 304-293-7461, or via the Internet at <http://wvu.bkstore.com>. Look at the "Weekly Assignment" for any given week to see what you will need to read from the book and what, if anything, you need to read from materials on the website.

Course Goals

Professional Writing is designed to help you become more familiar and comfortable with the conventions of business and professional written communication. To these ends, over the course of the term you should strive to

1. Become more aware of the value and role of writing in professional situations
2. Understand the basic rhetorical patterns of professional communication
3. Practice applying these patterns of professional communication
4. Develop your ability to target communications for a specific reader/audience
5. Apply the principles of visual rhetoric to successful workplace writing

Course Policies

Attendance: This online course has an attendance requirement. You are expected to "attend" (or visit and interact with) this course site at least **four days a week**. You may pick the times and days, but you must stay current with the course site. I suggest checking in on Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday each week. The WVU eCampus technology makes it possible for me to track where and how often you visit portions of this course site.

Even during the weeks when no discussion topics are assigned in the course schedule, I will occasionally post ideas, resources and questions concerning your current writing assignments. We all have experiences and ideas to contribute, so you are encouraged to do the same.

Participation/Reflection: Your participation grade will be calculated based on how often you visit the course site, whether or not you complete the **reflective writing assignments** and informal exercises, how frequently you respond to my and your classmates' postings to the Discussion Board (especially for non-graded postings), how consistently and effectively you engage with the demands of the course, and the overall quality and thoughtfulness of all aspects of your interaction with the course, your instructor, and your classmates.

Deadlines: This course has one hard deadline each week: every Thursday at 10 p.m. You will notice, however, that many assignments require multiple Discussion Board posts. In order to meet the Thursday deadline for online discussion posts, therefore, I suggest publishing your initial posts to the Discussion Board by Sunday at 10 p.m. so you and your classmates will have four days prior to the Thursday deadline for your Discussion Board responses. Failure to meet a deadline will result in a zero for work due.

Late Work: **This is a very fast-paced course and late work will not be accepted. There will be no "Incompletes" given for this online writing class.** It is especially important in an online class that you look ahead and make sure that you keep yourself current with upcoming projects and weekly assignments. I will not remind you of work that is due; that is your responsibility. If you have a technical or mechanical breakdown that will prevent you from completing your work, contact me immediately. Otherwise, if I don't hear from you by the time your work is due, I will not accept it. For quick reference you should print the "Weekly Assignments" for your records.

Special Needs: If you have a learning need or condition that might affect your participation in the course, please speak with me privately at the start of the term so that we can discuss potential accommodations.

Academic Honesty: I expect that all of the work you will do for this class will be completed on your own and will be done specifically to meet the requirements for this course. You may not consult with other editing students or share answers to any graded editing exercise. You should also refer to the West Virginia University Guidelines for Academic Dishonesty (available in the [WVU Undergraduate Handbook](#)) and be familiar with what constitutes academic dishonesty for the University, and therefore, for this

course. Academic dishonesty regulations will be enforced fully according to the University's policies and procedures.

Required Work

This web-based professional writing course will be very fast-paced. The writing components for Professional Writing are divided into four main categories: Writing Exercises, Quizzes, Participation/Reflection, and an Electronic Writing Portfolio.

Your final grade will be based on the following percentages:

Five Writing Exercises: 25% (5% each)

Quizzes: 25% (5% each)

Participation/Reflection: 10%

Electronic Writing Portfolio: 40%

Submitting Required Work

Each "Writing Exercise" covers one week of the term. You must submit work in the correct way (via e-mail, Discussion Board post, etc.) and on-time in order for it to be accepted. This means that you will need to find out how you are expected to submit work (via WVU eCampus e-mail, via attachment, via the Discussion Board) by reading the instructions for each writing assignment very carefully. **Work submitted either incorrectly (via the wrong format--e-mail instead of attachment) or late will not be graded and will be recorded as a zero for failure to submit work according to the guidelines.** Some of the work detailed above may ask that you work in collaboration with other students, but you should only do so if the instructions explicitly require that as a part of completing the work.

Overview of Required Work

Writing Exercises

There are five graded Writing Exercises. Each counts for 5% of your course grade, totaling 25% of your final course grade. You should print and keep hard (paper) copies of these exercises. Criteria for the Writing Exercises will be specified within the "Weekly Assignment" in the Course Guidelines/Syllabus for the week that it is due.

Quizzes

There are five scheduled Quizzes, each constituting 5% of your course grade. Material on the quizzes will come from reading assignments. Importantly, ***be aware that you are allowed only one attempt for each quiz and, once begun, a quiz must be completed.***

Participation/ Reflection

Participation is vital to your success in this course. Not only does this component constitute 10% of your course grade, but it serves as the vital link between you, your classmates, and your professor. Being active and professional on the Discussion Board and logging in to the course site frequently (as described by these course guidelines under "Attendance") are the main determiners of this grade. Failure in any one of these areas will result in a failing grade for "Participation/Reflection."

The Electronic Writing Portfolio (EWP)

The EWP comprises 40% of your course grade. During the semester, you will compose **five EWP Documents**. You will then revise and compile these documents into a singular **Electronic Writing Portfolio (EWP)** to be submitted at the term's close. This final EWP should be formatted as either a Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx) or Rich-Text Format (.rtf) document.

Portfolio Components

The Electronic Writing Portfolio should contain the following components:

Cover Page. The EWP cover page should include a title for your portfolio, your name, the course number and name, and date of submission.

Table of Contents. The table of contents should identify all documents included in the EWP along with the page numbers where each begins.

A Short Introduction to the Electronic Writing Portfolio (2-3 pages). In a 2-3 page, double-spaced typed paper, reflect on your progress in understanding business and professional correspondence. This document should serve as an introduction to your EWP. It is a chance for you to reflect on your attempts as a writer using a variety of genres and strategies to reach a variety of professional readers for a variety of business purposes. Browse your Discussion Board conversations, textbook readings, writing exercises, and EWP Document to help provide you with ideas for this introduction.

Five Electronic Writing Portfolio (EWP) Documents. The five Electronic Writing Portfolio documents are:

E-Mail or Memorandum

Information Request Letter

Resume and Cover Letter

Executive Summary

Unsolicited Proposal

An Appendix of EWP Document Rough Drafts. You will need to include, in an appendix, the initial draft submitted for each of the EWP Documents. This will assist me in evaluating the degree of revision you have completed for each of the EWP projects. Rough drafts that were not initially submitted on deadlines indicated in the "Weekly Assignments" document are not eligible for inclusion in the EWP; thus, failure to keep up with EWP deadlines as the term progresses will compromise your EWP grade.

Week One

All assignments must be completed and submitted by Thursday (8/25) at 10:00 p.m.

Read

- Welcome note from me in the "Announcements" topic on the "Discussion" Board.
 - "Course Guidelines/Syllabus" on the course home page.
 - Chapter 1, "Career Success Begins with Communication Skills" and Chapter 2, "Planning Business Messages" in *Essentials of Business Communication*.
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Quiz

- No quiz scheduled.
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Write

- Complete the "English 304 Start-of-Term Survey" located in the "Surveys and Evaluations" module on the "Coursework" course page.
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Discuss

- No discussion prompts scheduled. Feel free, however, to ask questions concerning the course or begin introducing yourselves per next week's assignment (Writing Exercise #1).
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Submit

- Submit the "English 304 Start-of-Term Survey" via WVU eCampus.
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-

Week Two

Assignments must be completed and submitted by Thursday (9/1) at 10:00 p.m.

Read

- Chapter 5, "Electronic Messages and Memorandums," in *Essentials of Business Communication*.

Quiz

- Take Quiz #1. Material for this quiz will come from Chapter 5 in *Essentials of Business Communication*.

Write

- Post a note to the Discussion Board (1/2 of Exercise #1, first graded Writing Exercise) which introduces you to the class in at least a few sentences (approximately 150-300 words). Tell where you are from and what your educational and professional goals and experiences are/have been. To do this: Click on the Discussions link in the left-hand column of the course Homepage, then click on the topic "Class Introductions" to contribute your introduction.

NOTE: In order to allow enough time for you and your classmates to respond to each other's posts by the Thursday deadline, I recommend publishing your intro post no later than Sunday, August 28.

Discuss

- Respond to at least five other introductory notes on the Discussion Board (1/2 of Writing Exercise #1). These responses will contribute to your participation grade for the class and count toward your grade for Exercise #1.

NOTE: You may post questions to the Discussion Board if you are unclear about work that is due or course policies and assignments. These informal postings will count as "participation" toward your final course grade. WVU eCampus allows me to keep a record of who visits different parts of the site and how often. I will use this record (as well as my own record of your productive contributions to the course Discussion Board) in assessing your participation. Please keep the tone and content of your communication with me and your classmates professional, constructive, and friendly.

Submit

- Quiz #1
 - Send a note to Discussion Board introducing yourself to the class and respond to at least five other introductory notes (Exercise #1)
-

Week Three

Assignments must be completed and submitted by Thursday (9/8) at 10:00 p.m.

Read

- Review Chapter 5, "Electronic Messages and Memorandums," in *Essentials of Business Communication*.
-

Quiz

- No quiz scheduled.
-

Write

- ***Electronic Writing Portfolio (EWP) Document #1—E-mail or Memorandum***

Refer to pages 125 and 128-129 in *Essentials of Business Communication* and locate Activities 5.5 and 5.17. Carefully read each scenario and select one to use as the basis for EWP Document #1. Draft your document according to the prompt delineated in the textbook.

Discuss

- There is no assigned discussion topic. However, feel free to post comments, questions, and concerns to the course Discussion Board.
-

Submit

- Electronic Writing Portfolio (EWP) Document #1 – E-Mail or Memorandum

This assignment should be submitted to me via WVU eCampus e-mail as an attachment.

NOTE: Please send any attachments to me as a Word document. If you are working on a Mac and do not have MS Word on it, please save your attachment as a Rich-Text Format (.rtf) document and send it to me in that format.

To send a document as a .rtf (Rich Text Format) file, create your document as you normally would using your word-processing software. Make sure you save it; then, using the "Save As" option, chose "Save As: Rich Text Format" and save it again (check for a pull-down menu near the box where you type in the title;

the .rtf "Save As" option will be located there). Send this .rtf document as you would any other attachment. You must submit work in the correct way in order for it to be accepted. Work submitted inappropriately (by the wrong format or late) will not be graded.

Week Four

Assignments must be completed and submitted by Thursday (9/15) at 10:00 p.m.

Read

- Chapter 6, "Positive Messages," and Chapter 8, "Persuasive Messages," in *Essentials of Business Communication*.
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Quiz

- Take Quiz #2. Material for this quiz will come from Chapters 6 and 8 in *Essentials of Business Communication*.
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Write

- Thoughtfully and substantively respond to Activity 6.3 on page 153 in *Essentials of Business Communication* (1/2 of Writing Exercise #2). There is no need to revise the letter, but thoroughly identify its weaknesses and outline a writing/revision plan for it. Post your response to the appropriately titled Discussion Board link. *(Remember! It's a good idea to publish your initial Discussion Board post by the Sunday prior to the deadline to allow sufficient time for Discussion Board responses!)*
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Discuss

- Respond to at least five other postings on the Discussion Board dealing with Activity 6.3 noted above (1/2 of Writing Exercise #2).
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Submit

- Quiz #2

- Post your response and offer feedback to your classmates for Activity 6.3 on page 153 in *Essentials of Business Communication* (Exercise #2).
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Week Five

Assignments must be completed and submitted by Thursday (9/22) at 10:00 p.m.

Read

- Review Chapter 6, “Positive Messages,” and Chapter 8, “Persuasive Messages,” in *Essentials of Business Communication*.
-

Quiz

- No quiz scheduled.
-

Write

- ***Electronic Writing Portfolio (EWP) Document #2 -- Information Request***

Refer to pages 153 in *Essentials of Business Communication* and locate Activity 6.4. Carefully read the scenario and use it as the basis for EWP Document #2. Draft your document according to the prompt delineated in the textbook.

Discuss

- There is no assigned discussion topic. However, feel free to post comments, questions, and concerns to the course Discussion Board.
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Submit

- ***Electronic Writing Portfolio (EWP) Document #2 -- Information Request***

This assignment should be submitted to me via WVU eCampus e-mail as an attachment. Be certain to save and send the file as a Rich-Text Format (.rtf) document if you do not have MS Word on your computer.

Week Six

Assignments must be completed and submitted by Thursday (9/29) at 10:00 p.m.

Read

- Chapter 7, “Negative Messages,” and Chapter 13, “The Job Search, Resumes, and Cover Letters,” in *Essentials of Business Communication*.
-

Quiz

- Take Quiz #3. Material for this quiz will come from Chapters 7 and 13 in *Essentials of Business Communication*.
-

Write

- Thoughtfully and substantively respond to Question #5 in "Critical Thinking" on page 405 in *Essentials of Business Communication* (1/2 of Writing Exercise #3).
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Discuss

- Respond to at least five other postings on the Discussion Board dealing with Question #5 on page 405 noted above (1/2 of Writing Exercise #3).
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Submit

- Quiz #3
 - Post your response and offer feedback to your classmates for Question #5 on page 405 in *Essentials of Business Communication* (Exercise #3).
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Week Seven

Assignments must be completed and submitted by Thursday (10/6) at 10:00 p.m.

Read

- Review Chapter 7, “Negative Messages,” and Chapter 13, “The Job Search, Resumes, and Cover Letters,” in *Essentials of Business Communication*.
-

Quiz

- No quiz scheduled.
-

Write

- ***Electronic Writing Portfolio (EWP) Document #3 -- Resume and Cover Letter***

Refer to pages 408 and 409 in *Essentials of Business Communication* and locate Activities 13.4, 13.9, and 13.10. Carefully read the directions for each and generate a resume and cover letter. **Note: You do not need to submit any written work for Activity 13.4, but use this as a foundation for building your resume.**

Discuss

- There is no assigned discussion topic. However, feel free to post comments, questions, and concerns to the course Discussion Board.
-

Submit

- ***Electronic Writing Portfolio (EWP) Document #3 -- Resume and Cover Letter***

This assignment should be submitted to me via WVU eCampus e-mail as an attachment. Be certain to save and send the file as a Rich-Text Format (.rtf) document if you do not have MS Word on your computer.

Week Eight

Assignments must be completed and submitted by Thursday (10/13) at 10:00 p.m.

Read

- Review Chapter 7, "Negative Messages," in *Essentials of Business Communication*.

Quiz

- No quiz scheduled.

Write

- Thoughtfully and substantively respond to Questions #2 and #5 in "Critical Thinking" on page 180 in *Essentials of Business Communication* (1/2 of Writing Exercise #4). Post your response to the appropriately titled Discussion Board link.
- Complete the "English 304 Midterm Evaluation" located in the "Surveys and Evaluations" module on the Coursework page. Please submit the assignment as a WVU eCampus e-mail attachment.

Discuss

- Respond to at least five other postings on the Discussion Board dealing with Questions #2 and #5 noted above (1/2 of Writing Exercise #4).

Submit

- Post your response and offer feedback to your classmates for Questions #2 and #5 in "Critical Thinking" on page 180 in *Essentials of Business Communication* (Exercise #4).
- Send the English 304 Midterm Evaluation to me via WVU eCampus e-mail.

Week Nine

Assignments must be completed and submitted by Thursday (10/20) at 10:00 p.m.

Read

- Chapter 9, “Informal Reports,” and Chapter 10, “Proposals and Formal Reports,” in *Essentials of Business Communication*.
-

Quiz

- Take Quiz #4. Material for this quiz will come from chapters 9 and 10 in *Essentials of Business Communication*.
-

Write

- Begin research for EWP Document #4, an Executive Summary, due next week (see appropriate module).
-

Discuss

- No discussion scheduled. Feel free, however, to post any comments or questions you may have.
-

Submit

- Quiz #4
-
-

Week Ten

Assignments must be completed and submitted by Thursday (10/27) at 10:00 p.m.

Read

- Read “Using the Library’s Resources to Complete Your Research,” located in the “Coursework” section of the course.
 - Review Chapter 9, “Informal Reports,” in *Essentials of Business Communication*.
-

Quiz

- No quiz scheduled.

Write

- ***Electronic Writing Portfolio (EWP) Document #4 -- Executive Summary***

Refer to page 248 in *Essentials of Business Communication* and locate Activity 9.17. Carefully read the scenario and use it as the basis for EWP Document #4. Draft your document according to the prompt delineated in the textbook.

Discuss

- There is no assigned discussion topic. However, feel free to post comments, questions, and concerns to the course Discussion Board.
-

Submit

- Electronic Writing Portfolio (EWP) Document #4 -- Executive Summary
This assignment should be submitted to me via WVU eCampus e-mail as an attachment. Be certain to save and send the file as a Rich-Text Format (.rtf) document if you do not have MS Word on your computer.
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-

Week Eleven

Assignments must be completed and submitted by Thursday (11/3) at 10:00 p.m.

Read

- Review Chapter 9, "Informal Reports," and Chapter 10, "Proposals and Formal Reports," in *Essentials of Business Communication*.
-

Quiz

- No quiz scheduled.
-

Write

- Thoughtfully and substantively respond to Activity 10.1 on page 291 in *Essentials of Business Communication* (1/2 of Writing Exercise #5). Be certain to post your answers to each prompt before responding to your classmates. After doing this, engage in a discussion where opinions differ and attempt to arrive at a general consensus regarding the "correct" answer.
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Discuss

- Respond to at least five other postings on the Discussion Board dealing with Activity 10.1 noted above (1/2 of Writing Exercise #5).
-

Submit

- Post your response and offer feedback to your classmates for Activity 10.1 on page 291 in *Essentials of Business Communication* (Exercise #5).
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-

Week Twelve

Assignments must be completed and submitted by Thursday (11/10) at 10:00 p.m.

Read

- Review Chapter 9, "Informal Reports," and Chapter 10, "Proposals and Formal Reports," in *Essentials of Business Communication*.
-

Quiz

- No quiz scheduled.
-

Write

- Begin research for EWP Document #5, an Unsolicited Proposal, due next week (see appropriate module).
-

Discuss

- No discussion scheduled. Feel free, however, to post any comments or questions you may have.
-

Submit

- There is nothing to submit this week.
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-

Week Thirteen

Assignments must be completed and submitted by Thursday (11/17) at 10:00 p.m.

Read

- Review Chapter 9, “Informal Reports,” and Chapter 10, “Proposals and Formal Reports,” in *Essentials of Business Communication*.
-

Quiz

- No quiz scheduled.
-

Write

- ***Electronic Writing Portfolio (EWP) Document #5 – Unsolicited Proposal***

Refer to page 294 in *Essentials of Business Communication* and locate Activity 10.13. Carefully read the scenario and use it as the basis for EWP Document #5. Draft your document according to the prompt delineated in the textbook.

Discuss

- There is no assigned discussion topic. However, feel free to post comments, questions, and concerns to the course Discussion Board.
-

Submit

- ***Electronic Writing Portfolio (EWP) Document #5 – Unsolicited Proposal***

This assignment should be submitted to me via WVU eCampus e-mail as an attachment. Be certain to save and send the file as a Rich-Text Format (.rtf) document if you do not have MS Word on your computer.

Week Fourteen

Thanksgiving Week. Begin EWP Revisions and get a head start on Week Fifteen reading.

Week Fifteen

Assignments must be completed and submitted by Thursday (12/1) at 10:00 p.m.

Read

- Chapter 3, "Composing Business Messages," and Chapter 4, "Revising Business Messages," in *Essentials of Business Communication*.
-

Quiz

- Take Quiz #5. Material for this quiz will come from Chapters 3 and 4 in *Essentials of Business Communication*.
-

Write

- There is no written assignment scheduled. Take this time to revise your Electronic Writing Portfolio documents.
-

Discuss

- There is no assigned discussion topic. However, feel free to post comments, questions, and concerns to the course Discussion Board.
-

Submit

- Quiz #5
-
-

Week Sixteen

Assignments must be completed and submitted by Thursday (12/8) at 10:00 p.m.

Read

- Review all course material and readings from *Essentials of Business Communication* to assist you in revising documents for inclusion in the Electronic Writing Portfolio.
-

Quiz

- No quiz scheduled.
-

Write

- Write the "Introduction" for your Electronic Writing Portfolio and revise EWP Documents for EWP inclusion.

Note: Refer to "Course Guidelines and Criteria" for a detailed overview of what the EWP should contain.

Discuss

- There is no assigned discussion topic. However, feel free to post comments, questions, and concerns to the course Discussion Board.
-

Submit

- Complete the eSEI (electronic course evaluation) for this course.
Please check your MIX email for the link to the SEI (course evaluation).
- Submit the Electronic Writing Portfolio via WVU eCampus e-mail as an attachment.
This assignment should be submitted to me via WVU eCampus e-mail as an attachment. Be certain to save and send the file as a Rich-Text Format (.rtf) document if you do not have MS Word.