

ENGLISH 304: BUSINESS & PROFESSIONAL WRITING (W04)
Spring 2013
T-Th 1:00-2:15
G06 Colson Hall

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Office Hours: Mondays 10:00-12:00
Tuesdays 2:30-3:45 and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

English 304 is a course that introduces students to genres of writing and oral presentation styles that are common in the professional world. A fundamental assumption of the course is that writing is not merely informational but also a form of persuasion that advocates a response or action within the workplace. That is, writing happens in response to a given situation and with a clear purpose. Therefore, this course will focus on particular strategies that are used in the professional world to accommodate specific audiences and purposes on the job.

REQUIRED TEXT

Alred, Gerald J. et.al., *The Business Writer's Handbook*, 10th ed.

PRE-REQUISITES

English 101 and 102 are pre-requisites for this course. First and second year students should not be registered for English 304.

OBJECTIVES

This course qualifies for "W" credit. The objectives of the course are:

- To make you more aware of the value and role of writing in professional situations.
- To clarify the basic rhetorical patterns of professional communication.
- To provide you with experience in applying these patterns.
- To emphasize the importance of designing communications for a specific reader.
- To demonstrate the importance of visual rhetoric and presentation styles.

COURSEWORK AND EVALUATION

Your success in this course will depend upon your ability to fulfill the following goals and meet the grading criteria established for English 304:

Portfolio	50 pts.
Group Presentation	20 pts.
Mock Interview	10 pts.
Peer Review	10 pts.
Participation	10 pts.

Throughout the semester you will be creating a variety of assignments that will comprise your final portfolio. You will not receive a grade on each individual assignment, but you will always receive feedback on your work in progress, and you will receive a preliminary grade for all major assignments (Correspondence, Job Application, Newsletter, and the Proposal). This process replicates the type of professional environment you may encounter in the business world, as many of you may be asked to compose a portfolio as a reflection of your professional work. When evaluating your final portfolios and group work, as well as the presentation and peer responses, I will consider how well the documents reflect your ability to:

- Identify and analyze both primary and secondary audiences.
- Choose appropriate writing strategies to accommodate your audience's needs.
- Convey your ideas clearly and effectively
- Gather, interpret, organize, and use information logically, effectively, and ethically.
- Manage the conventions of style and usage.

Pending **successful** revision of your documents, up to **four** additional points may be added to the final grade. **To receive full credit for your work, you must include the original draft with my comments, as well as your peer's comments of your work, in the final portfolio.**

This course is designed to help you achieve the greatest level of success in terms of your professional writing skills, so I will grade you holistically based on the progression of your work throughout the semester. In order to do this, I must see your evolution as a writer, which is why we keep a portfolio with all of your written work and peer memos so that I may assess how well you integrated the suggestions of both your peer members and me into your revisions.

Please keep all handouts, notes, and assignment information, as these documents will be essential to the portfolio. Please save all documents on a jump-drive and bring it to class with you each day.

GRADE DESCRIPTIONS

A (90-100%) Exemplary work that demonstrates originality and initiative. The content is mature, well-developed and researched with an effective sense of audience. The portfolio demonstrates a range of well-edited, well written, well- documented texts that a company could use without further revision, and may even use as examples when training new employees.

B (80-89%) Good work. The documents generally succeed in meeting their goals in terms of audience and purpose. They need some *minor* revisions in content, presentation or style.

C (70-79%) Satisfactory work. Documents are adequate in all respects but require some substantial revisions of content, presentation, style, or mechanics. For example, central ideas may be apparent but lack cohesive structure or strong development. In the workplace, the documents would be acceptable for an immediate deadline but would require further revision for company distribution.

D (60-69%) Documents are unprofessional. Perhaps they lack an effective sense of audience or present significant problems in style, content, mechanics, or research. In the workplace, the company would have to reassign the project to another writer for successful completion.

F (59% or below) The documents do not have enough information, do something other than is appropriate for a given situation, or contain major problems in the style, content, presentation or mechanics that interfere with the successful completion of the task. The portfolio may be incomplete, or plagiarism may compromise the portfolio on ethical grounds. In the workplace, the company would probably dismiss the writer on ethical grounds.

"Incompletes." I do not give incompletes, except in extreme cases and only if the majority of the work has been completed.

Plagiarism is basically defined as academic dishonesty. Taking someone else's published or unpublished ideas and submitting them as your own constitutes plagiarism. For a complete discussion of what constitutes plagiarism, students may consult the *West Virginia University Undergraduate Catalog*.

ATTENDANCE AND COURSE POLICIES

Attendance is required. A large portion of class time will be devoted to discussion, pre-writing, and peer review, so being in class on time and prepared is essential. Furthermore, meeting appointments, adhering to deadlines, and fulfilling commitments are part of being professional. Please note the consequences of missing class:

- More than two absences will compromise your final course grade by as much as one letter.
- More than three absences will result in a failing grade for the course.

We do not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences, nor do we accept medical excuses. If a student is going to be absent for an extended period due to illness, he or she should drop the course.

All assignments will be completed and submitted as scheduled on the syllabus. No credit will be given for work submitted to the portfolio that has not been not completed by the prior draft due dates.

Also be aware that I consider habitual lateness to be rude not only to me but to the other students as well, so I expect you to exercise the rules of etiquette.

As an additional courtesy to both the instructor and the other students in the course, please turn all cell phones off during class time. Students are also expected to remain in class during class time; leaving in the middle of class is disruptive to both the instructor and other students. No text messaging, please.

ASSIGNMENT OVERVIEW

- **Peer Response-** Throughout the semester you will be asked to respond to each other's writing within small conference groups of four or five students. *You will be asked to bring copies of your work for the other group members as well as a copy to me.* You will then be asked to submit a short, one-page memo to each student responding to his or her writing. I will also receive a copy of the memo to each student. You will include these memos, both as writer and recipient, in your portfolio.
- **Group Presentation-** You will work in groups of 3-4 students to complete a project. Each group will be assigned a task and list of goals ahead of time so that you will have ample opportunity to prepare your presentation. The project has two components: a proposal and a final report.
- **Portfolio-** All of your written work for the course, your peer review memos, the in-class assignments, as well as the written components of the group presentation, will comprise your final portfolio. The portfolio should be divided into clearly identified sections consisting of the following:
 - *A section for all four major assignments
 - *Presentation Materials
 - *In Class Activities
 - *Peer Review
 - *Informal Notes
- **Participation-** Your participation grade will be based on your preparation for class and your willingness to participate in a constructive manner to the task at hand.

The assigned readings for the course are designed to help you understand the nature of business and professional writing. You are expected to read the assigned readings to help you formulate your respective writing assignments; ***however, we will not address all of readings in each class session.*** Part of being professional is your ability to work independently. In the business world, no one will lead you by the hand to help you complete a project or figure out what you do not understand. You are expected to learn

how to achieve goals and accomplish tasks independently, and often this requires independent reading and research.

SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS

- T 1/15 Introduction to the Portfolio
Overview
- Th 1/17 "Five Steps to Successful Writing," Introduction to *The Business Writer's Handbook* xv-xxii
Letter Workshop
Audience Analysis, pp. 49-51
- T 1/22 **Introduction to First Assignment**
Correspondence Assignment
Tone, Style, Audience
pp. 115-123 and 272-275 in *BWH*
- Th 1/24 Workshop continued
Cover Letters and Format
Full Block, Modified Block Style
Writing Effective Memos, pp. 343-344 in *BWH*
International Business Correspondence, pp. 282-286 in *BWH*
- T 1/29 **Rough Draft of Correspondence Letter Due**
Peer Review (Copies x 2)
- Th 1/31 Discussion of Group Presentations-pp.415-423 and 573-576 (on visuals)
in *BWH*
Groups for Presentations Assigned
- T 2/5 **Introduction to 2nd Assignment**
The Job Application Package
The Job Search
pp. 304-314 in *BWH*
- Th 2/7 Finding a Job for which to apply
Bring a List of Job Ads and Responsibilities
Building a Resume- pp. 494-510 in *BWH*
Application Letters (Cover Letters) pp. 43-45 in *BWH*
- T 2/12 **Job Application Package Draft Due**
Peer Review (Copies x 2)
- Th 2/14 Interviewing for a Job
pp. 287-293 in *BWH*

Guest Speaker, Marsa Myers, Training and Development Specialist for Human Resources at WVU.

T 2/19 Mock Interview Workshop

Th 2/21 Mock Interviews

T 2/26 Mock Interviews

Th 2/28 Conferences-441 Stansbury Hall

T 3/5 **Introduction to the 3rd Assignment**
The Newsletter
pp. 359-363 in *BWH*

Documenting Sources Workshop
Documentation Style, Chicago, APA & MLA, pp. 142-168 in *BWH*

Mid-Semester Grade Reports Due

Th 3/7 Newsletter Workshop

T 3/12 **Newsletter Due**
Peer Review (Copies x 3)

Th 3/14 **Introduction to the 4th Assignment-The Proposal**
pp. 439-460 in *BWH*

T 3/19 Proposal Workshop
Last Day to Drop a Class-Friday, March 22

Th 3/21 **Draft of Proposal Due**
Peer Review (Copies x 3)

3/25-3/31 Week Eleven Spring Break

T 4/2 Grammar and Punctuation Workshop
pp. 88-96 in *BWH*

Th 4/4 Presentation Group 1

T 4/9 Revision Workshop
Revision Strategies-Paragraph Unity, pp. 385-390 in *BWH*

Th 4/11 Presentation Group 2

- T 4/16 Planning and Conducting Meetings
pp. 337-343 and pp.347-384 in *BWH*
- Th 4/18 Presentation Group 3
- T 4/23 Presentation Group 4
- Th 4/25 Last Day of Class-Portfolios Due
Last Day to Withdraw from the University.