

English 304: Business Writing

Spring 2010

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Office Hours T/TH, 12:00 – 2:00

Course Description & Objectives

ENGL 304: Business Writing is designed to introduce students from various educational backgrounds to professional and business communication and its influence and purpose in multiple workplace environments. With the idea that professionals who communicate need to be literate in multiple areas beyond simply reading and writing, this course focuses on many areas of communication that are useful in any field. Upon completion of the course, students can expect to have a solid understanding of what communication in the workplace means and demonstrate their business communication skills by producing, both individually and collaboratively, diverse professional documents. By the end of the semester, students can expect to demonstrate the ability to do the following:

- Express ideas effectively in both written and visual formats
- Design effective and usable documents
- Collaborate on communication projects
- Use communication skills to effectively prepare for a career
- Analyze ethical responsibilities involved in business communication
- Analyze communication context rhetorically by understanding audiences, purposes, and situations
- Create documents that solve problems and improve situations through communication

All in all, students will learn to be not only better writers, but better communicators in professional situations.

Required Text

Workplace Writing: Planning, Packaging, and Perfecting Communication, by Sharon J. Gerson and Steven M. Gerson. **Be sure to purchase this book as ISBN #0558327222**; this is a special number that comes with an online access card you will need for the course.

Assessment and Grade Breakdown

Your grade will be based on your attendance and completion of assignments. Some of your work will be completed individually while other assignments will be completed collaboratively. Everyone in collaborative groups will share the same grade unless documented circumstances indicate that a different arrangement is necessary. It is your responsibility to document any problems within your collaborative groups and to discuss these problems with me should they arise.

Every assignment will include an assignment description and scoring standard. It is up to you closely follow these documents. Your grade will depend on your ability to follow the guidelines given and to produce professional-level work in those areas.

For each assignment, I will use a grading rubric that scores content/style, design/format, and grammar/mechanics. There are 1000 points total in the course. The student's overall grade will

be taken from the percentage of total points earned during the semester. The following is a grade breakdown by percentages:

A 900 – 1000 B 800 – 899 C 700 – 799 D 600 – 699 F < 600

Assignments & Evaluation*

3 Tests @ 100 points each	300 points (30%)	2 Peer Reviews @ 25 points each	50 points (8%)
Job Application Project	150 points (20%) -Résumé, 50pts. -Cover Letter, 50pts. -Follow-up Letter, 25pts. -Interview Questions, 25pts.	Reflection	25 points (5%)
Routine Communication	100 points (20%) -Memo, 30pts. -Claim Letter, 30pts. -Request Letter, 30pts. -Email, 10pts.	Attendance & Participation	50 points
Group Recommendation Report	300 points (30%) -Proposal, 50pts. -Annot. Bib., 50pts. -Presen., 100 pts. -Report, 100 pts.	Quizzes	25 points
Grading Scale: A 1000 – 900 B 890 – 800 C 790 – 700 D 690 – 600 F 590 – 0			

*See assignment descriptions on BlackBoard under "Course Documents" > "Assignments Overview" for point breakdown on each individual assignment.

Saving Work

In order to give specific feedback on written assignments, I generally grade electronically using the "comments" function in Microsoft Word. Because of this, I ask that you save all written documents in Microsoft Word, saved as **projectname_yourlastname.doc** (for example: jobapplication_newbold.doc). All the assignments need to be in one file, not several. For example, when you do your job application project, **don't** upload your résumé, cover letter, interview questions, and thank-you letter separately. Copy all four into one file using page breaks. If you upload separate files for an assignment, I will not grade that assignment. Please note that late penalties will apply.

BlackBoard

I will be using BlackBoard for many purposes throughout the semester. If you are not already familiar with BlackBoard, please get to know it ASAP. The syllabus, class notes, and schedule, and assignments can be found in the "**Course Information**" folder. Assignment descriptions, additional readings, and sample assignments will be placed periodically throughout the semester in the "**Course Documents**" folder. You will need to use the "**Assignments**" folder to turn in many of your assignments. Please see following section for details on how to do this. Additionally, your grades will be recorded frequently in BlackBoard.

Turning in an Assignment

When certain assignments are due (I will specify which in class), they will need to be uploaded on BlackBoard by the due date (for example, if an assignment is due on September 12, it needs to be uploaded by 11:59pm on September 12). If it is uploaded past the due date, then it is late and will carry a late penalty. Please **DO NOT** upload the assignment and then email it to me. Just place your document on BlackBoard.

How to upload an Assignment:

1. Click on "**Assignments**" on the main screen in Blackboard. You should then see a list of all your assignments for this semester.
2. Click "**View/Complete Assignment**" under the assignment you wish to turn in. *For example, if you were turning in the Job Application assignment, Click "**View/Complete Assignment**" underneath the Job Application assignment.* Once there, the process is like attaching an email. You will need to type something into the comment space. Please just put something like "Curtis Newbold's Job Application assignment."
3. After attaching your file, you need to hit "**Submit**" NOT "**Save.**"
4. After submitting you need to go to "**Gradebook**" (found under "**My Tools**" on BlackBoard's home screen) and check to make sure you uploaded your assignment correctly. If you have successfully completed the process, you should see an "!" under that assignment.
5. Anything else means that it did not work, and you need to either try again or follow Plan B (see below). You may need to give BlackBoard a few seconds before it uploads your assignment.
6. PLEASE NOTE THAT IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO CHECK TO MAKE SURE THAT YOUR ASSIGNMENT WAS UPLOADED CORRECTLY. IF NOT, THEN IT WILL BE CONSIDERED LATE.

Plan B: If BlackBoard is experiencing difficulties, is not working properly, or you did not see the "!", only then will I accept your assignment as an email **attachment**. Please **DO NOT** copy and paste an assignment in an email. I **will not** accept any assignment that is copied as the text in an email; please note that late penalties will apply.

Attendance & Participation

As you can see from the point breakdown above, attendance is mandatory. You may miss two (2) classes without penalty. After two, you will be docked 10 points per day missed up to 50 points. So, if you miss six classes, for example, you will be docked 40 points. If you miss more than seven (7) classes during the course of the semester, you will fail the course. For participation, I expect that you come on time, are attentive, contribute to discussions, and participate in activities.

Late Work

All assignments are due on the due date; late assignments will be **docked 10% per late day**. Weekends count too. *For example, if an assignment is due on Thursday and you turn it in on Monday, it is four days late. This equals 40%, so the highest you could possibly make on an assignment worth 200 points would be a 120, assuming that the assignment was otherwise perfect.* Extensions (in rare circumstances) must be approved by me **PRIOR** to the due date.

Academic Integrity

According to the 2007/2008 Undergraduate Announcements, "As members of the Clemson University community, we have inherited Thomas Green Clemson's vision of this institution as a 'high seminary of learning.' Fundamental to that vision is a mutual commitment to truthfulness, honor, and responsibility, without which we cannot earn the trust and respect of others."

Furthermore, we recognize that academic dishonesty detracts from the value of a Clemson degree. Therefore, we shall not tolerate lying, cheating or stealing in any form."

I do not tolerate academic dishonesty. Any student who plagiarizes in any form will fail the course.

Other Information

Questions concerning a grade: If you have any questions concerning a grade, I will be happy to talk to you about it **24 hours** after the grade has been received and you have read through all the comments, and no later than **one week** after receiving the grade. After one week, there will be no discussion.

Gradebook: I will keep BlackBoard updated with your grades. It is up to you to keep up with your grades. If I have recorded a grade incorrectly, please let me know within 48 hours of the grade posting.

Rounding grades: At the end of the semester, I round grades to the nearest percentage. If it is a .5 or higher, I round up. If you have, for example, an 89.5, it will round up to a 90%, or A. But, if it is 89.4, it will remain a B. My reason for doing this it to be fair to all students.

My help: I know that it can sometimes be difficult to know what professors expect with written assignments. I will be more than happy to answer questions about anything covered in class, including specific questions about drafts of your assignments; however, please **do not ask me to proofread entire rough drafts** without meeting with me. Because of time constraints, I simply cannot read entire rough drafts that are emailed to me and keep up with the regular scheduled grading. I also ask that you are respectful of my time. Just like you, I am not at my computer all day. If you have questions about an upcoming assignment, to insure a timely response from me, I suggest that you ask the question **at least** a day or two ahead of when the assignment is due. I am also rarely available on the weekends so please keep that in mind when contacting me.

Class Proceedings: While we will cover the most pertinent information in class, it is important that you keep up with assigned readings on your own. Rest assured that you will not do well on the tests or assignments unless you **READ** the chapters. I will frequently post information throughout the semester to clarify chapters and further elaborate. It is important that you read these posts. If after reading the chapter you still need help clearing up any chapter information, just let me know. I will be happy to explain things further.

Email Responses: Because email seems to be a preferred method of communication for both students and professors, I will do my best respond within 24 hours (usually sooner) to your emails. For example, if you send me an email at 6:00pm on a Tuesday, do not expect a response that same evening. If I happen to be online, I will try to respond, but more than likely, you will not hear back until the next day. Also, like many workers in the field, I don't typically work in the evenings or much on the weekends, so my response time may be slower if I receive, for example, an email late Saturday night.

Non-Productive and Disruptive Behavior: All students and instructors have the right to enjoy a productive learning environment. If a student infringes on others' rights by being disrespectful or engaging in any non-productive or disruptive behavior, he/she will be removed from this class. No discriminatory behavior directed toward a person's race,

religion, national origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, or other will be tolerated.

Cell Phones and Other Personal Items: Noise-making devices such as cell phones, pagers, laptops, MP3 players, and other portable electronic devices can be very disruptive and annoying. Please be conscious of the learning environment for those around you. Do not answer cell phones, call, or text message during class. If you are expecting an emergency phone call during class, please inform me before class begins and turn your phone to vibrate.

Important Fall 2009 Dates:

January 6 – Classes begin

January 12 – Last day to register or add a class

January 18 – Martin Luther King holiday, no class

January 20 – Last day to drop without a W grade

February 26 – Last day to drop a class or withdraw without final grades

March 15 – 19 – Spring Break, no classes

April 23 – Last day of classes

April 26 – 30 – Examinations

Students with Disabilities

It is University policy to provide, on a flexible and individualized basis, reasonable accommodations to students who have disabilities. Students are encouraged to contact Student Disability Services to discuss their individualized needs for accommodation. *Please let me know as soon as possible so we can work out accommodations.*

General Education Competencies for Your University E-Portfolio

If you do a good job on your assignments in this course, they will fulfill all four of the General Education competencies listed under Communication Skills:

C1: Demonstrate effective communication skills appropriate for topic, audience, and occasion.

C2: Write coherent, well-supported, and carefully edited essays and reports suitable for a range of different audiences and purposes.

C3: Employ the full range of the writing process, from rough draft to edited product.

C4: Incorporate both print and electronic resources into speeches, presentations, and written documents.