

English 202-001: Business Communication
FALL 2017 TTH 12:30-1:45
TTH 12:30-1:45
LIB 012



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ENGL 202 BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

Kunepeum (Welcome) to Business Communication!

English 202 Business Communication focuses on the analysis and creation of documents that rely on a critical understanding of reader-text relationships, rhetorical contexts, and visual rhetoric. In this course, you will gain experience with genres that are used in a variety of disciplines and workplaces, such as letters, email, memos, proposals, instructions, brochures, presentations, webpages, blogs, and social media.

During the course, we will cover the basics of business communication: readability, using effective visual elements, analyzing audience, analyzing how a text is used, effective organization, ethics and writing, and usability testing. Each of you will create your own “business” through writing a business plan, creating promotional materials (letterhead, logo, marketing tools, etc.). This “business” will be the focus of your internal and external communication.

Course Learning Objectives

By the end of this semester, you should be able to

- Understand the business communication activities in your chosen field.
- Understand the concepts of rhetorical situation, discourse community, tacit knowledge, specialized discourse, register, genre system, and visual rhetoric.
- Analyze the rhetorical situation of a business communication task.
- Analyze the effectiveness of a business-related document in relation to the rhetorical situation, content, organization, and overall design.
- Design effective business-related documents in a variety of genres.
- Plan and conduct effective oral presentations, making use of visual aids.
- Use technology to compose, design, and send documents.
- Conduct usability testing to test the effectiveness of a document with the target audience.
- Collaborate effectively with a team to successfully complete projects.

Required Texts and Materials:

- Reading packet
- A binder or pocketed folder for you work
- Your BSU email account (Note: I send all communication through BSU email)

OVERVIEW OF ASSIGNMENTS AND PROJECTS (Note: Assignments 3 and 5 may be done as individual or group projects. If you chose to work with another, you need to divide the work appropriately and are responsible for all the work.)

1. “JUST GOOGLE ME!” RESEARCHING YOUR DIGITAL FOOTPRINT

This assignment asks you to write a report on the current state of your digital identity.



To begin, research your web presence or what is called your digital footprint. Consider what sites you contribute content to. What social networks do you use? What types of participation do you use most (lurking, posting, commenting, re-blogging)? Do you do all this under your own name or with a screen name? Taken together, what do these sites, networks, and modalities of participation imply about who you are? How does "you" change within different situations or networks? Based on all this, what do the various networks think of you? Google yourself. Search for yourself on Facebook without logging in. Do you have a profile on other sites such as LinkedIn, Twitter, Reddit, Tumblr, or other platforms? Who follows you, likes your posts or tweets; what do you like or retweet?

You will also be reading a couple articles on the implications of your digital identity.

Once you gather material, you will be able to understand your digital ethos—who and what you are online that many others can see, including prospective employers. Analyze what they know about you from this online presence. Write a 3-4 page report with relevant images (though images do not substitute for length).

DUE: SEPTEMBER 12-19 (Final write-up due to hand in on 9/19)

2. RÉSUMÉ AND LETTER OF APPLICATION

This project allows you to apply knowledge about visual design and audience analysis while creating your résumé. The project will include locating an advertisement and writing a cover letter and résumé, peer editing and revision as well as interviewing someone in that profession.

Part A: Locate and Analyze a Job Ad (due September 14)

Find a job ad for a position you will be qualified for by the end of your studies, or for an internship that you are currently qualified for. You may find this ad in a newspaper or online. Bring a copy of the ad to class, and analyze for key terms and references to business communication.

Part B: Write First Drafts of the Resume and Letter of Application (due September 19)

Write first drafts of the résumé and letter of application. During in-class workshops, give feedback to your peers' drafts, focusing both on global and local features of the texts.

Revise and Revise Again (due September 21 for peer review—2 copies of each)

During this revision, focus on organization, development, and overall design, paying attention to the impression you want to leave your reader with, as well as editing.

Part C: Write Cover Letter and Hand in Project (due September 28)

Write a cover letter, answering the following questions: How did you revise based on peer feedback? How does your document meet the needs of your target audience? What would you revise further if you had more time? Hand in the cover letter, the final draft, and the paper trail (the first draft, the second draft, and the copy of the job ad). Presentation for this project counts!

3. BUSINESS PLAN

This assignment allows you to develop a plan for a business and to consider the communication within that business. Using the Business Plan Guide (handout), you will summarize and outline all the aspects of and criteria for your business. You will also design letterhead and business cards, create an advertisement for employment, design a brochure and conduct internal and external communication such as letters, reports, memos, and so on. You will present your plan in class to your group.

Part A (due dates for each step below; Part A in entirety due 2/24)

1. Using the template for creating a business plan, create your own plan to be used throughout the semester. You should complete all sections, but only a brief budget is necessary for the financial section. Your "business" will be used as a heading for letters, memos and other communications and assignments. Be sure to be precise and use clear language in your plan. We will share these in class, give feedback, and you will have an opportunity to revise your plan. **(due 10/3; revised 10/10; with logo/designs 10/12)**
2. Create a logo for your business; use this log tp create letterhead and business cards. You can create with text and/or visuals (use Wordart or clipart or your own designs). Keep in mind your audience as you create these markers of your business. Write a brief explanation (a paragraph) of why you chose this particular design and how you chose to set up the letterhead and business cards. In class we will share your designs and get feedback on the "readability" of your design; in other words, what message are you conveying? Will your design help your business? You will have an opportunity to revise these. **(due 10/12)**

Part B (drafts due 10/17; finals 10/19):

Memos: Using the following scenarios, or an approved scenario of your own, write two memos—one to an individual and one to a group.

1. Write a memo to your employees which announces a staff meeting about work ethics. This meeting can include training on sexual harassment, dress code, use of company equipment or resources, or professional conduct.
2. Write a memo to your employees about work-place education programs.
3. Write a memo to your employees regarding an incident which took place (a theft or hate crime for examples) where the perpetrator is unknown. Explain the incident and how your company responds to such incidents.
4. Write a memo to a colleague about a project with which you are jointly involved. You can choose if there is a conflict or agreement on a matter associated with the project.
5. Write a memo to a colleague regarding the results of a meeting for which he/she could not attend due to another commitment.
6. Write a memo to a colleague or supervisor suggesting a new project or initiative which will benefit the company.

Part C (drafts due 10/24; finals 10/26):

Letters: Using the following scenarios, or an approved scenario of your own, write two letters—one for a positive situation and one for a negative situation.

1. You have just opened a new company and are looking for customers. Write a letter to potential consumers to announce your company, its service or product, and what consumers will benefit from.
2. A customer has notified you with a complaint about your product or service. The customer is irate and demands reparations. Write a letter addressing the complaints and what your company will do to rectify the situation.
3. Your company has not been doing well lately due to the fluctuating stock market, high gasoline prices or other recession-related issues. You now find yourself having to down-size which may mean laying off employees or reducing benefits among other things. Write a letter in which you discuss the financial stress and the possible solutions as you try to allay the fears of the employees.
4. An employee has been injured, and the recovery process has taken up most of his/her benefits. Write a letter to address the problem of the termination of benefits and offer some alternatives.
5. An employee is being recognized for some kind of service to the company (20 years, outstanding sales, going above and beyond, etc.). Write a letter to the employee which applauds this service.
6. An employee has been terminated for a reason of your choice. Write a letter in which you discuss the reasons for and terms of the dismissal.

Part D: Brochure or webpage (drafts due 10/26; peer review 10/31; finals 11/7)

For this last part of the assignment, you will design a tri-fold brochure or a webpage for a service or project for your company. This brochure or webpage is part of your marketing strategy so you will not only include the service or product, but also a brief history of your company. You will need to consider the audience for your brochure or webpage as well as the conciseness of language and layout of the advertisement. We will be discussing the effectiveness of brochures and webpages in class which will help you in designing your own.

4. BUSINESS COMMUNICATION IN THE NEWS (presentations 11/14, 11/16 and 11/21; written due 11/28)

In this project, you will locate a newspaper or magazine article related to business communication, and then share information from the article with your classmates during a brief 10- minute) presentation.

Look for an article that either focuses on an aspect of business communication, such as posting resumes electronically, communicating across languages and cultures, or writing a specific type of document, or can focus on a story that involves business communication, such as a story on how documentation played into a business's success or demise, or a story on how a business has decided to change its image through its logo and document design.

Good places to find an article:

- Newspapers, such as the *Boston Globe* (particularly in the business section)

- Popular business magazines, such as *Business Week*
- Magazines focusing on specific professions, such as *English Language Teaching*

After completing your research, create a handout to use during your presentation. The handout should include the following components:

- A bibliographic entry on the source, using either MLA or APA format
- A brief summary of the article
- Two or three key quotes from the article
- A reflection on how this article adds to our overall class discussion
- Two or three discussion questions

Be sure to send me a copy of your handout via email prior to your presentation, and bring enough copies of your handout for everyone in the class. Or if you email your handout to me **two days** before your presentation, I will print copies for you.

5. INSTRUCTIONS AND USABILITY TESTING (in entirety due 4/28; see dates below)

This project allows you to gain experience with a genre important to business communication—instructions—and a research method important to technical writing—usability testing. During this project, you will create a Lego™ design, write instructions for your original Lego™ creation, test the instructions using usability testing, and then revise the instructions based on the results of the testing and peer review.

Part A: Legos Creation in class (12/7) –Please note: the materials for this project could change from Legos to something else.

Using the Legos I've supplied, design a Legos creation; you must use a minimum of 15 pieces (a handout with more specific instructions will be provided.) We will take a digital photo of the creation, so that you can remember what it looks like

Part B: Write First Draft of Instructions—homework (12/16)

Write instructions for building your Legos creation, using only prose (no visuals). Make your instructions as clear as possible, paying attention to organization, use of details, and effective document design.

Peer Review in class (12/28 bring 2 copies)

Reading from the perspective of a fellow technical writer, provide constructive feedback to the instructions of two of your peers. Pay attention to how the document is reader-oriented, in terms of language, organization, and overall design.

Part C: Usability Testing in class (12/21)

Test your instructions with three classmates; can they build the same creation as you following your instructions? During usability testing, carefully observe the person testing the instructions and take notes on your observations. When did the person pause and reread an instruction? When did the person skip a step? Did the person complete the task effectively? You may want to ask the person to think out loud while completing the instructions, and/or ask the person for feedback on how you could revise the instructions to make them more effective.

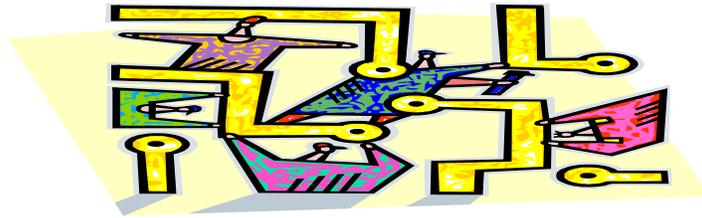
Revise the Instructions --homework (12/5)

Based on the feedback provided by usability testing and from peer review, revise your instructions.

Part D: Write Cover Letter and Hand in Project (12/7)

Write a cover letter, answering the following questions: How did you revise based on peer feedback? How did you revise based on feedback from usability testing? How does your document meet the needs of your target audience? What would you revise further if you had more time? Hand in the cover letter, the final draft, an early draft, and notes from usability testing.

REFLECTION ON CLASS (DUE 12/12) Details in handout.



GRADING

Each project has a value of 100 points and counts for 70% of your final grade.
Homework and being prepared for class counts for 15% of your final grade
Active participation counts for 15% of your grade.

Homework and being prepared for class means you have completed any assigned work before coming to class. This includes reading and writing activities as well as any other preparation for assignments or projects.

Active class participation includes participating actively in class through discussion and questions, providing effective feedback to peers, bringing proper materials to class, demonstrating engagement with the class without outside distractions (cell phones, etc), and contributing to a class atmosphere that makes learning possible for all.

Attendance, Plagiarism and Other Suggestions

1. In Native communities, we talk about the four Rs: Reverence, Reciprocity, Respect, and Responsibility. I make every attempt to conduct my personal and professional life under these four Rs. I hold great admiration for each of you and for the work we will do together. We are in a space of sharing gifts of learning with one another. As with any endeavor, there are responsibilities that we take on and expectations that need to be fulfilled. It goes without saying that respectful behavior is expected from all of us. Respecting one another includes coming to class on time and prepared as well as being present and engaging in deep listening as well as contributing. While we may disagree, and I hope we will, there are ways to challenge and ask difficult questions in ways that do not devalue anyone in the room.
2. You must come to class on time. While things happen such as illness, car troubles, unplanned events, try to make every class. After four missed classes (equally two weeks), your grade will be affected; miss six classes and do not expect to pass the course. If you are habitually late or you are not taking the class seriously, your grade will be affected.
3. **Use of Electronic Devices:** Sometimes it seems we must be available to others 24/7, which leaves no time for anything else. Yet this “on-call status” does not allow for us to be attentive to other things. While I may not say anything to you, I (and other students) do take note of your attentiveness in class. In this class cell phone use is only for emergencies—put them on a silent mode and keep them out of sight. Likewise, while you

may bring laptops or other devices to class, they should be used only for class-related tasks. Websurfing, viewing Facebook or checking email are not part of the work at hand. Finally, earphones, unless they are for purposes of hearing-impaired students, are not to be in your ears. I do not care to waste my time and the time of the class monitoring your use of electronic devices. Your inappropriate use of such devices is disrespectful to me and to your peers; violation of this policy will result in your being marked absent for the class.

4. Please let me know if you have a preferred name or preferred pronouns. I expect the class to be respectful of anyone's preferences.

5. Plagiarism—we all know that this is intellectual theft. Bottom line, don't do it. It's a serious offense that could not only jeopardize your grade, but has other serious consequences. This is a link to BSU's Academic Integrity Policy: <http://catalog.bridgew.edu/content.php?catoid=10&navoid=970>

6. Feel challenged—one of the great things about this work is that we are still breaking some new ground. While the reading load is very heavy, there is still so much more. If you find something that looks interesting, bring it in or discuss it in your responses. Enjoy the learning, work hard at it, and open yourself to thinking in challenging ways.

7. Talk to me—I make myself available in multiple ways. Let me know if there are any issues before they grow.

8. Have a sense of humor.

9. Take risks



TENTATIVE SCHEDULE (This is by no means set in stone and may change with advanced notice to the class.) All your assignments are contained in the syllabus (pp 2-5). The schedule contains the dates due. **Each day has the homework listed for the next class.**

Week 1 September 7

TH—Class Introductions. Go over syllabus. Create groups.

Homework: Assignment 1—“Just Google ME”; watch “Who’s Creating Your Digital Dossier” <https://ed.ted.com/featured/trHoMot0#review> and read “How One Stupid Tweet...” Write a response and bring a copy to class

Week 2 September 12 and 14

T—Assignment 1 due for class discussion; Inkshedding for reading response.

Discussion of Digital Footprints

Groups to discuss businesses and advertisements.

Homework: Read “Résumés”. Assignment 2, Part A

TH—Review job advertisements. Career Services.

Homework: Assignment 2, Part B. Bring to class on Monday

Week 3 September 19 and 21

T—Assignment 1 due to hand in

Groups to review résumés and letters

Homework: Based on group feedback, revise résumés and letters. Bring 2 copies to class

TH—Peer Review of résumés and letters.

Homework: Assignment 2, Part C. Complete project due Monday

Week 4 September 26 and 28

T—Assignment 2 due (presentation counts!); In-class reading

Homework: Review Business Plan Format (handout); bring notes from Assignment 1

TH—Discuss Business Plan (Assignment 3); group work to discuss ideas

Homework: Assignment 3, Part A

Week 5 October 3 and 5

T—Starting a Business

TH—Go over Business Plans with groups

Homework: Revise Assignment 3, Part A (Business Plan)

Bring Assignment 3, Part A (logo) rough drafts to class.

Week 6 October 10 and 12

T—Groups to discuss Part A(logos and designs)

Homework: work on revisions of Part A to hand in on Wednesday.

Read “Positive Messages” and “Negative Messages” and write a response. Bring copy to class

TH—Assignment 3, Part A due. Inkshedding on writing positive and negative messages.

Homework: Assignment 3, Part B (memos) drafts

Week 7 October 17 and 19

T—No Class as I am giving a talk out of state

TH— Go over memos in groups. In-class email memos.

Homework: revise Part B (memos) to hand in on Wednesday.

Week 8 October 24 and 26

T— Assignment 3, Part B due. In-class discussion of writing letters.

Homework: Assignment 3, Part C (letters) drafts

<p>TH—Groups to go over Assignment 3, Part C (Letters) Homework: Revise letters and begin Part D (design)</p>
<p>Week 9 October 31 and November 2</p>
<p>T—Assignment 3, Part C (Letters) due. Groups to discuss brochure/webpage Homework: revise brochure/webpage TH—Peer review Part D (bring copies or computer). Discussion of blogs/social spaces Homework: Revise Part D to hand in on Monday. Find news articles for Assignment 4</p>
<p>Week 10 November 7 and 9</p>
<p>T—Assignment 3, Part D due (if webpage, you will need to email before class starts). Discussion of news articles and possibilities for handouts. Homework: Prepare presentation of Assignment 4 (written due April 5) TH—Presentations and Discussion: each of you has developed discussion questions. Audience participation is expected (you will be graded on your thoughtful participation) Homework: Prepare written portion of Assignment 4 to hand in Monday.</p>
<p>Week 11 November 14 and 16</p>
<p>T—Assignment 4 written part due. Presentations and Discussion Homework: Find a blog or FB Business and write a response. Bring copy to class. TH—Presentations and Discussion; Inkshedding on homework.</p>
<p>Week 12 November 21 and 23*</p>
<p>T—Presentations and Discussion Homework: Read Online Technical Writing-Instructions and write a response. Bring copy to class TH—Enjoy your feast and time with others</p>
<p>Week 13 November 28 and 30</p>
<p>T— Inkshedding on instructions. Begin Assignment 5, Part A—in-class construction Homework: Assignment 5, Part B (Instructions) draft TH—Review instructions in groups Homework: Revise instructions; bring 3 copies to class</p>
<p>Week 14 December 5 and 7</p>
<p>T—Usability testing in class. Homework: Revise the instructions and included with Part D. TH—Assignment 5 due in its entirety. Discussion of class and assignments. Homework: Write a reflection on the class (see handout)</p>
<p>Monday, December 11 is the Undergraduate Symposium—Extra Credit for those who presents something about/from this class.</p>
<p>Week 15 December 12</p>
<p>T—Reflections due</p>
<p>December 13 is reading day. Finals occur between December 14 and 21.</p>