

English 286: Professional Writing
Winter 21-22 asynchronous (CANVAS)
December 23-January 17
Work posted two times per week (MW)

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ENGL 286: PROFESSIONAL WRITING

Welcome to Professional Writing! Thank you for taking this course. Because this is a four-week course, it will move through assignments rapidly so be prepared.

Catalog Description (FSU): A career-oriented course introducing students to a wide variety of writing formats used in business, government, and the professions. Assignments may include resumes, employment documents, letters, memos, short proposals, a variety of report formats, public relations and advertising documents, and basic technical writing. This course emphasizes drafting, critiquing, rewriting, and editing, as well as collaborative writing and presentations skills.

Details for this course: ENGL 286 focuses on the analysis and creation of documents that rely on a critical understanding of reader-text relationships, rhetorical contexts, and visual rhetoric. During the course, we will cover the basics of professional writing: readability, using effective visual and digital elements, analyzing audience, analyzing how a text is used, effective organization, ethics and writing, and usability.

Learning Outcomes: In addition to the specific course requirements, by the end of the course, successful students will be able to do the following:

- Adapt their writing to different audience expectations
- Understand how tone can affect reception of different messages depending on the situation
- Understand the relationship between all parts of the rhetorical triangle and how to adapt these to communications in the work place
- Understand the difference between revising and editing
- Be able to choose which kind of writing is most appropriate for different writing expectations at work

Required Texts and Materials:

Business Communication for Success: open source book available here

<https://open.lib.umn.edu/businesscommunication/>

Technical Writing Essentials: open source book available here [Technical-Writing-Essentials-1563391738. print.pdf](#)

Excerpts from *The Non-Designers Design Book*: [Non Designer's Design Book Excerpts.pdf](#)

Other readings as posted on Canvas Discussion

Canvas and email (all communication will be conducted through these platforms)

OVERVIEW OF ASSIGNMENTS AND PROJECTS

PRE-COURSE: Introduce yourself through a video (and see mine). Create a short video and post it to the discussion board.

1. RÉSUMÉ AND LETTER OF APPLICATION, ELEVATOR SPEECH

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

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. Post your ad to the discussion board where we will analyze for key terms and references to business communication.

Part B: Write First Drafts of the Resume and Letter of Application

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. Share on CANVAS in group.

Revise and Revise Again

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

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? In one document include the cover letter, the final draft, and the paper trail (the first draft, the second draft, and the copy of the job ad). Submit through CANVAS.

Part D: Elevator Speech

After you have your potential job lined up, you never know when you may meet someone who asks about your intentions for employment. An elevator speech is an opportunity for you explain your qualifications for a job in 2-3 minutes (as if you are riding in an elevator with a potential employer). Prepare your speech and record it. Post the recording to Canvas.

2 Writing Documents and Designing Visuals for an Organization, Group, or Cause

This assignment allows you to imagine yourself as part of an organization, group, or cause and to consider how one communicates within that space. Each of you will join or create an organization and produce writing for that organization. You may support an established group such as UNICEF or some other charitable group OR you may create your own idea. You could also consider a campus group that you will produce materials for. In any case, find something that interests you for this project. You will design materials such as a logo for letterhead and business cards, design a newsletter or brochure, and write internal and external communication such as letters, reports, memos, and so on. You will present your plan in class to your group.

Part A: Description

1. Create your own plan to promote the organization, group, or cause. To do so, you should consider the message that you want to send out to a wider audience and the purpose of your organization. For example, write a mission statement. If you are creating a new group, how will the name represent that message? What are you seeking to do (for example, get donations or garner support for a rally, or recruit members). You should also provide a

flow-chart of the organization or group as a visual. We will share these on Canvas, give feedback, and you will have an opportunity to revise your plan

2. Create a logo or redesign an existing logo; use this logo to create letterhead and business cards. You can create with text and/or visuals (use fonts, Wordart, clipart, photos, or your own designs). Keep in mind your message and your audience as you create these markers of your group. 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. On Canvas 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 you get followers? How so? You will have an opportunity to revise these. (Here is where the *Non-Designer’s Design* book is useful).
3. Create a newsletter or brochure. A newsletter provides stories, a calendar, announcements and more along with the mission and purpose of the organization; usually a newsletter is a monthly or bi-monthly publication. A brochure is a tri-folded publication which is often designed once and updated in a year or more; this provides the mission and purpose and can contain events as well. Either of these can be produced for a special event held by the organization or as semi-permanent materials. Examples are in *Non-Designer’s Design* and will also be posted for you. There are many computer programs to help you set up a newsletter or brochure. We will share these for feedback on a Canvas discussion.

Part B: Correspondence

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 members 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 members about related webinars and education programs.
3. Write a memo to your members regarding an incident which took place (a theft or hate crime for examples) where the perpetrator is unknown. Explain the incident and how your organization 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 organization..

Part C:

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 started a new organization and are looking for members. Write a letter to potential members to announce your organization, its service, and what members will benefit from.
2. Someone has notified you with a complaint about your organization (for example trash left after a road race organized by your group). The person is irate and demands something be done. Write a letter addressing the complaints and what your organization will do to rectify the situation.
3. An member has been injured, and the recovery process is costly. Write a letter to address concern and how your organization might help.
4. Your organization has been nominated for an award (of your choice). Write a letter which outlines why you are deserving of this award. Try to be humble, yet provide evidence for your good work.
5. AN event has happened that directly affects your organization's mission (a natural disaster or a racism incident). Write a letter to your members that describes to your members your organization's position and how your organization will respond.

3. REFLECTION ON CLASS each of you will write a reflection on the class (details to come).

GRADING

Each project has a value of 100 points and counts for 70% of your final grade.
Homework and being prepared for class count for 30% of your final grade

Homework and being prepared for class mean 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. This also includes providing effective feedback and sharing in our CANVAS discussions. Active class participation includes participating actively in class through discussion and questions,

Attendance, Plagiarism and Other Suggestions

1. In Native American and Indigenous communities, we talk about the four Rs: Relationships, 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 being prepared and engaging in deep listening as well as contributing.
2. I teach at Bridgewater State University, but am teaching this course through Framingham State University. I have emails at both places, but will be more likely to see the on for BSU first, so please try to use j10anderson@bridgew.edu to reach out to me. You also will have Echo (Yifan Yu yyuecho@163.com) as your student guide for the class so question can also be directed through Echo.
2. Our class is asynchronous which means we will not be online with one another. Rather the work will be shared through CANVAS. When you are assigned to share work with each other, you should be respectful of each other's time and prepare in advance. Try to give useful feedback that will help your peer improve on their work.

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 can always be available. 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 The schedule contains the dates due, but the class works well when you self-pace the work. However, you must do this over the four weeks—NOT all at the end.. Since we are a virtual class, the discussion board and CANVAS groups will be our formats for talking with each other. You will also be producing some videos and other ways of sharing work. **CANVAS contains more information with readings to supplement your assignments.**

Please note: Each of us will record and post a video introduction and respond to one another. You will also respond to other posts and especially give feedback to your classmates.

You may revise at any time as long as you are letting me know. This gives you opportunity to revise any of your work to present the best work possible.

Over the course, there will be questions and reading responses that we will discuss on CANVAS. I will post the questions there one to two times per week.

Abbreviations: In the schedule, I will abbreviate the on-line books as BUS or TECH rather than write them out. You can access these by going back to the beginning of the syllabus and right-clicking on the link .

Week 1 December 23 (Materials have been sent prior to start)

Class Introductions via video—please have yours posted and watch mine

Project 1—job ad analysis and draft of résumé due

Reading Job Ads –what is an employer looking for? Post to discussion board.

Articles on résumés and samples to be posted for you

Begin revisions and draft cover letter (see chapters 1 and 9 in *BUS*)

NOTE: Both online books have sections on how to write found in the table of contents. You should refer these for hints to improve your writing. As well, the Purdue Online Writing Lab is a valuable resource for all kinds of writing: <https://owl.purdue.edu/> (you should bookmark this site)

December 24

Résumé and cover letters due for feedback (post on CANVAS discussion). Once revised, submit them for grading (by Dec 30)

Prepare and record Elevator Speech—Read Ch 14 (14.8) in *BUS* respond in discussion post.

Submit Elevator Speech by Dec 30.

Project 2-- Organization, Group, or Cause: Read “Understanding the Rhetorical Situation” (Ch. 1 p 17) and “Document Design (Ch 3)—both in *TECH* . Post a response to discussion. Begin writing your description of your Organization, Group, or Cause and submit draft for feedback. (Ch 10 in *BUS* has advice on choosing topics)

Week 2 December 27

Revise Organization, Group, or Cause description and submit.

Read about designing in the *Non-Designer’s Design Book*. Post a response in discussion.

Begin work on logo and business cards and submit for feedback

December 30

Revised Organization/Group Description should be handed in by January 3
Revised Logo and Business cards should be handed in by January 7
Read Newsletters and Brochures <https://tinyurl.com/yckmufae> –post to discussion
Begin work on your newsletter or brochure (see *Non-Designer's Design Book*)—submit draft for feedback

Week 3 January 3

What is effective communication? Chapter 14 (BUS) and Intercultural Communication and Collaboration—Chapters 18 and 19. Read and post to discussion board. Be sure to post both points and questions.
Continue work on your newsletter or brochure (see *Non-Designer's Design Book*)

January 6

Memos and Letters (Chapter 9.1 and 9.2; also Chapter 17BUS)—read and respond in discussion
Begin work on CORRESPONDENCE (Part B of Project 2)
Post Drafts of memos and letters for feedback
Revise and submit your newsletter or brochure

Week 4 January 10

Revise memos and letters and submit
Revise any past project

January 14

Work on reflection and any revisions

January 17-19

SUBMIT REFLECTION: What did you get from this course? What did you find useful to learn? What more would you like to know? How did you revise each assignment?
All your final work is due. Grades will be posted by January 20.