

# Engl 304: Business/Professional Writing Syllabus

CRN 89964 | Fall 2022, Online Asynchronous

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**Required Texts** (all texts are open access/free for reading and download):

Google Classroom Code: **rwwzp35**

*Business Writing Style Guide*, 1st Edition. By John Morris and Julie Zwart

<https://open.oregonstate.education/businesswriting/chapter/1/>

*Technical Writing* by Allison Gross; Annemarie Hamlin; Billy Merck; Chris Rubio; Jodi Naas; Megan Savage; and Michele DeSilva

<https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/technicalwriting/>

^These will be referred to most often, though openly accessible supplemental readings will be peppered throughout the course, too.

**Required Tools:** internet access, ECampus, Google Classroom Code:

## Course Introduction:

English 304 will give you the **guidance and tools** for producing writing that earns you employment in your prospective workplaces, and then makes you a successful communicator within those workplaces. We will **practice common forms of professional writing** such as **letters, resumes, memos, emails, social media (including visual and audio elements) proposals, and reports**. You will have the freedom to **choose topics and ideas from your discipline** and research them further. While your peers and I may not be familiar with your subject matter, part of the focus will be on **translating specific, nuanced knowledge** to an audience who has not done your depth of research. Therefore, your **concentration will be on the mode (genre), manner (style), and method (form)** of presentation rather than just the ideas themselves. Through this practice, you will learn that ideas become clearer and more persuasive through effective communication.

Good business writing depends on connections, analyzing and understanding brands and institutions (meaning any organized entity) and then implementing the best communication skills possible to effectively engage in/with them. We'll discuss the types of communications that go on within institutions, as well as between institutions and their audiences.

## Course Goals:

- Develop an **awareness of workplace style and forms**, and practice the communication skills to make you more effective at producing them.
- **Emphasize the importance of understanding context**—the purpose, audience, conventions, and obstacles involved in each communication project.
- Become masters of **smart brevity—good ideas, plainly spoken**.
- **Communicate your individual ideas to other individuals/the larger group** and have them tested.
- Develop **familiarity and confidence creating and expanding** on essential employment documents to establish personal ethos.
- **Practice, practice, practice your communication skills**, report-writing, and develop a foundation of employment documents to take with you into the professional world.

## Assignments and Grading:

There are **three units and two major projects** in this course. Each unit has multiple components that build on one another, and we will track your progress and help each other out along the way. **Your grade will be based on your participation and success in each of these steps.**

### *Unit 1: Writing at Work 10%*

The first three weeks will focus on the types of **writing and base-knowledge you are most likely to encounter/need in a professional workplace—emails, memos, letters, text messages, netiquette, etc.** Assignments in this section will be concise, and help you practice an efficient, business-writing style.

### *Unit 2: Employment Writing Project 20%*

To help lay the groundwork for your professional careers, this first major project asks that you **create an original resume** for yourself, **a free online profile** either on Indeed or LinkedIn.com, and **conduct an online job search** (or equivalent professional step, i.e. graduate school, peace corps etc. ), and **write a cover letter applying** for that position. **Peer Review memos** and/or discussion boards will be required along the way.

### *Unit 3: Analytical Report and Presentation 30%*

Over the course of several weeks, you will **develop an Analytical Research Report and Presentation** for solving a problem, improving a situation, or satisfying a need at WVU or another institution of your choosing. You will be asked to **complete a series of steps in this**

**process**—a **proposal** and **elevator pitch**, an **annotated bibliography**, **progress reports** (some in the form of Tweets), the **report** itself, and an **accompanying audio or audiovisual presentation** to help translate the report to your audience.

#### *Personal Evaluations 20%*

**Reflective writing is an essential tool for success in the professional world, as well as life in general.** You will be asked to **evaluate yourself three times throughout the course**—the beginning, middle, and end—likely corresponding with and considering the completion of your major projects. The depth of your reflection and exhibition of self-awareness will determine your grade.

#### *Discussion Boards 10%*

**Collaboration is inevitable and crucial in the workplace.** Though our ability to do that in this course is limited, discussion board questions (where I ask that you respond to readings, your peers, videos, podcasts, or other relevant material in **50-150 words**) will help develop your communication practices and concise style. **For each discussion board, you must acknowledge the material itself and directly to AT LEAST one peer.**

#### *Participation 10%*

Being an online class, we cannot engage with each other as regularly as I'd otherwise like to, but that said—it is your job to **stay current** with required readings, assignment **deadlines**, discussion boards, and peer review assignments as I post them each week. **Peer review is especially important, as one or more of the classmates you're assigned will be depending on your collaboration to complete those assignments.** A significant lack of participation will affect your grade for the other units as well.

#### **Grade Scale**

The grade scale is pretty standard if not generous. **There are no "minuses," just pluses and whole letters.** If you're curious about Ds and Fs, follow the pattern down, but I expect any of you who put forth your best effort not to have to worry about those letters.

A+ – 100-96% A– 95-90%

B+ – 89-86% B– 85-80%

C+ – 79-76% C– 75-70%

#### **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

You are responsible for the integrity of your work. This means that **all of your work for this course must be your own and must be created specifically for this course.** Failing to maintain the integrity of your work will have serious consequences. We will discuss academic integrity as part of our course, but here are a few things you need to know right away:

Submitting someone else's paper, including papers you obtain online, as your own writing is fraud. It will result in a failing grade for the course and may result in additional action by the Office of Student Conduct.

Copying paragraphs or other passages of someone else's writing without properly citing them is plagiarism. It may result in a grade reduction or failing the course. It, too, may result in additional action by the Office of Student Conduct.

**The Eberly College of Arts and Sciences provides a helpful online resource for undergraduate students on understanding and avoiding plagiarism**

(<http://eberly.wvu.edu/undergraduate/ug-studies/preventing-plagiarism> ). If you have any questions about when and how to document sources, or any other question that will help you avoid unintentional plagiarism, please talk with your instructor, a librarian, or one of the Writing Center tutors in Colson Hall.

## **SOCIAL JUSTICE**

The West Virginia University community is committed to creating and fostering a positive learning and working environment based on **open communication, mutual respect, and inclusion.**

If you are a person with a disability and anticipate needing any type of accommodation in order to participate in this class, please advise me and make appropriate arrangements with the Office of Accessibility Services (293-6700). For more information on West Virginia University's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiatives, please see <http://diversity.wvu.edu>.

## **RESOURCES**

### ***The Eberly Writing Studio***

The Eberly Writing Studio is a resource that can support you in all aspects of the writing process. It is located in G02 Colson Hall. For more information about the Eberly Writing Studio see Work in Progress or visit [speakwrite.wvu.edu/writing-studio](http://speakwrite.wvu.edu/writing-studio).

### ***WellWVU: The Students' Center of Health***

Well WVU: The Students' Center for Health provides resources to help manage stress, improve relationships, make healthy lifestyle choices, and face new challenges and transitions.

## **SCHEDULE OF WORK**

Week 1 (8/17-8/23): Intro to Business and Professional Writing.

**Readings/Assignments:** Read Course Syllabus and first four sections of the Introduction of *Business Writing Style Guide*

**Watch:** "Spelling Bee" and **respond to Discussion board question**

**Due 1:00 pm on 8/22.**

Week 2 (8/22-8/29): Intro to Unit 1: Writing at Work. Genres

**Readings/Assignments:** Read Chapter 1 of *Technical Writing* Sections 1.1-1.5; ["12 Tips for Writing Effective Emails..."](#) and ["25 Formal Email Writing Format Examples and Best Practices"](#)

**Write:** "Personal Evaluation Email #1" **Due 1:00 pm 8/29**

Week 3 (8/29-9/6): Writing at Work. Style

**Readings/Assignments:** Read "Grammar" and "Writing Concisely" sections in *Business Writing Style Guide* (can be found in Chapter called "Writing Essentials"); Read Chapter 11: "Basic Design and Readability in Publications" sections 11-11.3 in *Technical Writing*;

**Listen to:** "Smart Brevity" podcast

**Write:** Style Memo Brevity Exercise **Due 1:00 pm 9/6**

Week 4 (9/6-9/12): Intro to Unit 2: Employment Writing Project. Resumes, Online Profiles, Job Searches.

**Readings/Assignments:** Read Chapter 12 "Employment Materials" in *Technical Writing*; Read ["GenZ Resumes"](#) article and:

**Respond to Discussion board** question **Due 1:00 pm 9/12**

**Begin job search, crafting resume, and establishing online profile.**

Week 5 (9/12-9/19): Employment Writing Project Cont. Resume and Cover Letters

**Readings/Assignments:** Check out ["How to Add Your Resume to LinkedIn"](#); other readings TBD.

**Complete:** job search. **Begin writing cover letter** to employer.

**Write:** Resume with link to complete online profile. **Due for Peer Review 1:00 pm 9/19**

Week 6 (9/19-9/26): Employment Writing Project Cont. Resume and/or online Profile Peer Review.

**Readings/Assignments:** Readings TBD.

**Peer Review Resume, Online Profile,** Cover Letter to Employer (optional)

**Write:** Cover Letter to Employer; Revise Resume and Online Profile **Due 1:00 pm 9/26**

Week 7 (9/26-10/3): **EMPLOYMENT WRITING PROJECT DUE 1:00 pm 9/26: Resume, Cover Letter, and Online Profile;** Intro to Personal Evaluation #2

**Readings/Assignments:** Readings TBD

**Write:** Personal Evaluation #2 **Due 1:00 pm 10/3**

Week 8 (10/3-10/12): Intro to Unit 3: Analytical Report and Presentation.

**Readings/Assignments:** Read "[How to Write a Business Report](#)"; Start thinking about what you want to write your report on; and Enjoy Fall Break!

Week 9 (10/12-10/17): Analytical Report Cont. – Process

**Readings/Assignments:** Read Chapter 1 "The Writing Process" (just sections 1 and 2) in *Business Writing Style Guide*; Read Chapter 3 "Proposals" in *Technical Writing*;

**Check out:** Forbes Magazine "[Mastering the Elevator Pitch](#)"

**Watch:** [CNBC "6 Tips for the Perfect Elevator Pitch"](#)

**Respond to Discussion board:** TBD.

**Write:** Proposal and Elevator Pitch **Due 1:00 pm 10/19**

Week 10 (10/17-10/24): Analytical Report Cont. – Research and Planning

**Readings/Assignments:** Read Chapter 4 "Information Literacy"; Chapter 5 "Citations and Plagiarism"; and Chapter 7 "Outlines" in *Technical Writing*; Read Chapter 2 "Writing Essentials" sections 1, 3, 8, and 9 in *Business Writing Style Guide*.

**Write:** Annotated Bibliography **Draft Due 1:00 pm 10/24**

**Begin (if you haven't already):** Organizing/ writing analytical report and presentation.

Week 11 (10/24-10/31): Analytical Report Cont. – Process cont.

**Readings/Assignments:** Read Chapter 6 "Progress Reports" and Chapter 8 "Creating and Integrating Graphics" in *Technical Writing*; other reading TBD.

**Write:** Progress Tweet(s) **Due 1:00 pm 10/31**

Week 12 (10/31-11/7) Analytical Report Cont. – Presentation

**Readings/Assignments:** Read Chapter 2 “Audience Analysis” and Chapter 11, section 11.5 “Slides and Powerpoint Presentations” in *Technical Writing*; other readings TBD.

**Write:** Analytical Report and Presentation **Due 11:59 pm 11/18**

Week 13 (11/7-11/14): Analytical Report Cont. – Presentation cont.

**Readings/Assignments:** Read Chapter 13 “Communication Across Cultures” in *Technical Writing*; Read Chapter 3 “Writing and Business Models” section 5 “What if I have to present” in the *Business Writing Style Guide*.

**Discussion Board:** TBD

**Write:** Analytical Report and Presentation **Due 11:59 pm 11/18**

Week 14 (11/14-11/21): **ANALYTICAL REPORT AND PRESENTATION DUE 11:59 PM 11/18;**

Intro to Personal Evaluation #3

**Readings/Assignments:** Readings: TBD

**Discussion Board:** TBD

**Write:** Personal Evaluation #3 **Due 11:59 pm 12/2**

Week 15 (11/21-11/28): **GIVE THANKS! – IT’S THANKSGIVING BREAK!**

Week 16 (11/28-12/5): Personal Evaluation Reviews and Final Meetings