

English 202

Elizabeth Juckett, ENGL 202, Spring 2004, Business/Professional Writing

ENGLISH 202: BUSINESS PROFESSIONAL WRITING

Spring, 2004

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REQUIRED TEXTS AND MATERIALS:

- Alred, Brusaw and Oliu. *The Business Writer's Handbook* (7th edition).
- An activated MIX email account. Access MIX by going to <http://star.wvu.edu> and then clicking on 'WVU STAR web' and then on "WVU STAR system." Then follow the instructions on the screen. For more information, go to <http://intranet.wvu.edu>. (Note: You can get your MIX email forwarded to your regular email account if you don't want to use it as your default email.)

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND GOALS: English 202 is designed to help you become competent and effective professional writers before you enter the workplace. Therefore, we will focus primarily on analyzing and developing successful strategies for workplace communication. A fundamental assumption of this course is that writing happens in response to a given situation and with a clear communicative purpose. By discussing successful communication strategies and practicing them in a variety of common business forms –letters, memos, informational documents, proposals, formal reports—we will learn to analyze different writing contexts, meet the needs of various readers, and organize and present material logically and practically.

Course goals for English 202 students include:

1. Learn the roles and importance of professional writing in the workplace, from initial employment application documents to the types of writing you will likely do on the job.
2. Understand and apply rhetorical principles of professional communication; be able to articulate your rhetorical analysis thoroughly and specifically. Learn to analyze and set goals for writing before writing

begins; to use appropriate expression and professional style in workplace documents; to meet the needs of different readers in different contexts; and to develop practical arguments for the workplace.

3. Learn the formats and conventions of professional writing, that is, how to structure and correctly format letters, memos, informational documents, and reports.

4. Learn to design and professionally lay-out workplace documents.

5. Work collaboratively as members of a professional team on research and report writing.

6. Apply research techniques to professional situations to develop effective professional reports.

ASSIGNMENT OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTIONS: The most successful professional writers view writing as a process, not a product, a process that includes, ideally, planning, drafting, revising and re-drafting. Recognizing this, I am asking you to focus on two major processes in English 202: the individual production of a professional writer's portfolio and the production, with at least one other student, of a three-stage professional research project.

Individual portfolio projects: (50% of semester grade): Over the course of the semester you will be compiling your short professional documents in English 202 into a professional portfolio that demonstrates your understanding and successful attainment of goals 1 through 4, above. To complete your professional writing portfolio, you must complete the required portfolio project assignments' below.

1) An introductory e-mail to me explaining your goals for this course, and two case scenario responses (3 short documents). Production of these documents will usually begin in class with a partner or group and be finished individually for submission to me. The introductory e-mail message to me will outline your own individual goals for the course; you will be encouraged to refer back to these goals in assessing your mid-semester progress and end-of-the-semester completion of the course. As to the case-scenario responses' in response to real-life professional-writing problems, you will analyze rhetorical situations and develop writing solutions for any problems you identify

2) The Professional Editing Project (2 short workplace documents; 1 memo to me). Demonstrate your understanding of basic business formats (memos, letters), your ability to communicate professionally with different audiences in different contexts, and your expertise in editing a text for content, organization, style and mechanics.

3) An Employment Portfolio (3 short application documents; 1 memo to me). Research and apply for a professional position. You will produce a portfolio presenting (a) an application letter, (b) a resume, (c) a

follow-up letter, and (d) a rhetorical analysis of why and how you shaped the application letter and resume the way you did.

4) Policy and Procedure Documents Project (2 medium-length informational documents, 1 memo to me). Produce policy or procedure documents that show you can communicate clearly and authoritatively with workplace readers in different contexts; apply your knowledge of document design and formatting to produce effectively organized documents. Write me a memo explaining your strategies.

Because you are creating a collection of professional documents to demonstrate your success in this course, you will not earn individual letter grades on the introductory e-mail, the professional editing project, the policy/procedure documents, the case scenarios, or the employment portfolio. Instead, I will write evaluative comments that should give you a sense of how you have performed on each assignment. Most of your individual portfolio work will be completed before the midsemester. You can revise and re-submit any of these writing assignments as often as you want, and I will evaluate and return each revision to you with suggestions for improvement.

At the end of the semester you will work more intensively on revising your documents and preparing your portfolio (see schedule); you will then produce your final document revisions. The thoroughness with which you revise your writing, as documented in your various drafts and revisions, will contribute to your grade. For the final portfolio grade, you will select at least ten final-draft pages of your best representative work to include in your portfolio. You will also be asked to present all the drafts, revisions, and teacher comments that went into their production. After choosing your best work, you will write a preface to your entire portfolio that shows me how you have met the goals and expectations for the professional portfolio (#s 1-4 under Course Goals and Expectations). Your preface should also explain why you've chosen the work you included in your portfolio. Your portfolio will be evaluated and returned to you during finals week. Note: You MUST pick up your portfolio folder from 231 or 350 Stansbury during finals week in order to earn a grade for the professional portfolio. All individual portfolios will be evaluated and ready for pick-up by noon on Friday of finals week; if you need to retrieve yours earlier, make an appointment to pick it up before then.

The collaborative research project (30% of semester grade): In addition to producing your professional writing portfolio, you will also engage with another student in a three-stage professional research project that will introduce you to the practical context of workplace research and teamwork. The research project will be produced during the second half of the semester; it will be due on the Friday of the penultimate week of classes, with the proposal and literature review due earlier as preliminary stages of its production. The proposal, the literature review, and the report will be evaluated together when the final project is submitted; they will comprise your research grade.

1) Proposal for Professional Research Project (2-3 pages). With another student, propose a topic within your professional field or interest area. Your unsolicited proposal should be directed toward a specific professional audience offering to analyze and solve a problem within their community

2) Review of Research for Professional Research Project (3-4 pages). Continuing with your partner, formalize the research you have done in preparation for your research project by analyzing and discussing the sources you have found.

3) Professional Report (8-10 single-spaced pages). In this recommendation report written for a stipulated professional audience, you will analyze, find solutions for, and recommend the best solution to a real-life problem in your future profession or in our university, local, or state community.

In-class work and participation (20% of semester grade): This grade is constituted by your assessments and response memos in conferences, your attendance and participation record in class, and your work on various in-class and homework assignments.

1) Response Writing (One assessment for each conference group member at four different conferences sessions, two in-class and two outside-class.) For the in-class conferences on the professional editing project and literature review: you will complete assessment forms that will be returned to the writer, who will then submit your assessment with the final draft of his/her project. These assessments you wrote, submitted by your group members' will be evaluated by me for thoroughness and helpfulness. For the outsideclass conferences: individually read and respond to group members' drafts; then prepare written comments for each writer and copy to me. May be handwritten Note: Without copies of the assessments you got from your fellow-students at inside-class conferences, and the conference memos you submit to your fellow students at outsideclass conferences, I cannot evaluate your work and you will get a 0 for this assignment. To outside-class conferences, please bring two copies of each memo to each conference' one for the writer, one for me to evaluate.

2) Other writing. You will get a couple of in-class writing and homework assignments, including an internet exercise to be completed during the employment unit. The quality, completeness and seriousness with which you do this work will contribute to your grade.

3) Your attendance' participation, and commitment to class. Attendance and participation will be assessed every day. Commitment will be measured by the promptness with which you submit assignments, as well as the energy with which you revise your writing and complete in-class work. For more on this, see "Attendance," below.

REQUIREMENTS, POLICIES, AND FRIENDLY ADVICE (arranged alphabetically):

Attendance: Attend class. Meeting appointments and commitments is part of being a professional. Without attending class, you cannot perform your job as a student involved in planning, drafting, discussing sample professional writing, or practicing writing strategies. For this reason, you are expected to attend class and to have your textbook and all your work with you every day. Failure to do so will affect both your in-class work and participation grade (#3 above) and your overall semester grade. Keep a good attendance record by remembering the following rules: Avoid absenteeism. An occasional absence is perhaps understandable, but habitual absence is inexcusable. If you are absent more than two times without a written excuse from an appropriate authority justifying your absence, your final grade for the course will be lowered one full letter grade. If you accumulate more than five unexcused absences, your final grade may be lowered to an F.

- If you're absent for good reason, your absence can be excused. There are two types of excused absence: 1) Advance Notice: You know ahead of time that, for good reason, you will have to miss class. You see me at least one class period in advance and negotiate an excused absence, providing some kind of appropriate written documentation for doing so (example: you're on the track team and have an away meet). 2) Emergency Situation: Some emergency prevents you from getting to class. You contact me as soon as possible and on your return provide some kind of appropriate written documentation of your absence.

- You must show up for conferences. It is particularly important for you to attend—and be prepared to participate in—conference group workshops on drafts of your and other students' papers. An unexcused absence from a conference group meeting or from the in-class literature review rough-draft exchange counts as two absences.

Back-up copies: Make back-up copies of your assignments. As in the workplace, a self-protective attitude will help you in English 202. So always prepare two legible copies of each major assignment. I will grade one copy and hand it back; the other copy will be for your own safekeeping and permanent records.

Cell phone and pager courtesy: Be thoughtful. While cell phones and pagers make life safer and more convenient for students and teachers alike, they can be disruptive in the classroom. As a courtesy to me and your fellow students, please turn your cell phones and pagers off or use a silent signal while in class.

Conference groups: Participate in them conscientiously. One of the unique features of English 202 is working with a conference group of 3-4 other students throughout the semester. Your individual schedules will determine the membership of your group. Conference groups will function both in and outside class throughout the semester: As well, when group work or conferencing is being done in class, your assigned conference group members will usually be your partners.

Your first meeting with your group members will be in-class. At that time, you will review each others' professional editing projects and offer constructive criticism in order to improve each others' achievement. The assessment forms you complete for each student in your group will contribute to your in-class writing grade

Your second and third group conferences will be outside class. On the days designated on the syllabus schedule, you will meet with me and your group members outside class for an hour to review each group member's rough draft. At that time, you should use the memo you have written each student in your group (see Response Writing, above) to share constructive criticism of the rough drafts produced by each group member. This will help you to improve your performance on each assignment and will give you experience as a critical thinker and evaluator of professional writing. To gain the maximum benefit from your group conferences, you will need to distribute your rough draft to each member of your conference group the class day before conferences begin. Although your draft need not be "polished," it should be complete enough for you to receive substantial help from your fellow students. Under no circumstances will I accept a "final" paper unless I have seen a rough draft. At each meeting, give a copy of your evaluative memo to each writer and to me.

Also, during the second half of the semester, you will meet with your conference group members to exchange assessments of the literature reviews. As with the conferences on the professional editing projects, you will review each others' literature reviews and offer constructive criticism in order to improve each others' achievement. The assessment forms you complete for each student in your group will contribute to your in-class writing grade.

Disabilities: Let me know if you have special needs and I will accommodate them. If you are a person with a disability and anticipate needing any type of accommodation to participate in this class, please let me know. You should also make appropriate arrangements with Disability Services (293-6700).

Editing: Edit your work carefully before you submit it. At work, even a single error in spelling, grammar, or proofreading can jeopardize the effectiveness of some communications. Grading will reflect the great seriousness with which grammar, spelling, and proofreading are viewed in the working world. I expect you to proofread your work carefully and to pay attention to the mechanics of your writing. Note: A glossary of grammar and proofreading terms I will use in assessing this aspect of your writing will be distributed when your first writing assignment, the Case Scenario Response #1, is returned to you.

Emergencies or health crises: Call student life. If you encounter an emergency situation or serious health problem in the course of the semester—and I sincerely hope you don't—you or your family should immediately contact the Office of Student Life in E. Moore Hall (293-5611). The Dean of Student Life will

then communicate with me concerning your problem and authorize me to make any necessary arrangements for you to complete this course. Note: please reserve the Dean's services for serious circumstances or emergencies; don't go there for minor problems or everyday excuses.

Grading criteria: Note that your work will be assessed by its readiness to be used in a professional context. Your professional writing portfolio, as well as your research project, will be judged holistically using the grading criteria below. (Please note that class policies on attendance and late work will also affect your grade.) Please take these criteria seriously; I will use them very carefully to assess your work.

- A, exemplary. your work is of professional quality. A company could use your writing without further revisions and might even use the work as an example when training new employees.
- B, good: your documents meet the objectives of the assignment, but they need improvement in style, or they contain easily correctable errors in grammar, format, or content (typically, no more than two types of error in punctuation, grammar, format, or spelling), or their content is superficial. Thus at the B level a company could use your writing with only minor revisions of content, presentation, or writing style/mechanics.
- C, competent. the documents need significant improvement in concept, details, development, organization, grammar, or format. Your writing may be formally correct but superficial in content.
- D, marginally acceptable: your writing meets some of the objectives but ignores others; the content is inadequately developed; or it contains numerous or major errors.
- F, unacceptable: the documents do not have enough information, do something other than the assignment required, or they contain major errors or excessive errors.

Incompletes: Request only in the case of end-of-semester catastrophe. WVU policy does not allow professors to give incompletes to students unless those students have satisfactorily completed almost all the work of the course and are prevented from finishing the course by some kind of personal catastrophe (e.g. hospitalization, death of a parent). Only under these circumstances, verified by the office of the Dean of Student Life, will I grant you an I. (See above, "emergencies or health crises.")

Lateness: Come to class on time. Keeping appointments promptly is required in the workplace, so I will expect you to come to class on time. Given Morgantown's traffic congestion and parking problems, occasional mild lateness is understandable. However, your being ten or more minutes late to class is unprofessional and disruptive. If therefore you are extremely late (defined as over ten minutes late) for class at any time, I will count your lateness as half an absence and apply the attendance penalties described above.

Late work: Get it in on time (but better late than never). In this course, as in the working world, you must turn your work in on time. All projects are due on the dates indicated on the syllabus. If you cannot be in

class, your project is due in my mailbox during class-time. That being said, it is better to submit a late assignment and earn partial credit than it is to submit nothing and earn no credit. Assignments turned in late (after the due-date) will be penalized one full letter grade unless you have made advance arrangements with me or show me a written excuse validating your absence from class on the due-date. Further letter grades will be subtracted if the work becomes more than one week late.

Plagiarism: Don't take the easy way out. Talking over your ideas and getting comments on your writing from friends are NOT examples of plagiarism. Copying or paraphrasing a friend's work is. So is taking someone else's published or unpublished words and calling them your own; a synonym is academic dishonesty. This is true whether the text being "borrowed" is from the internet or in hard-copy form. When plagiarism amounts to an attempt to deceive, it has dire consequences, as spelled out in University regulations.

Professionalism: Present documents and materials professionally. All work should be neatly typed, using standard margins and spacing in a word-processing program. Whether it is a literature review, proposal, or report, your communication should be carefully and appropriately formatted. Except work done in class, all writing for the course should be prepared on a computer and printed clearly.

Questions about grades: Phone or visit, don't e-mail. Due primarily to confidentiality concerns, I will not respond via email to requests for information about grades, either during the semester or after final course grades have been issued. If you want to discuss any grade with me, please contact me by phone or set up an office appointment.

Social justice: Let's maintain high standards of respect. West Virginia University is committed to social justice. I share that commitment and expect to foster a nurturing learning environment based on open communication, mutual respect, and non-discrimination. Our University does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, age, disability, veteran status, religion, sexual orientation, color, or national origin. Any suggestions on how to further such a positive and open environment in this class will be appreciated.

Your returned papers: Keep ALL your work. Store everything you write in a folder; don't throw anything away! Since all your written work automatically will become part of the record of your achievement over the course of the semester, you will be able to use this folder to submit your mid-term and end-of-term work for individual assessment.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

****cross-check against updated assignments and due-dates given in class.**

BWH = The Business Writer's Handbook ALL CAPS = ASSIGNMENT DUE

Date; Day; Topic; Work Due

Week 1

1/13, Tu

Introductions;

introductory e-mail assigned;

Focus on rhetorical awareness;

1 Activate your MIX account.

2 Buy text

3 Read syllabus and sign course contract.

1/15, Th

E-mails, electronic communications

in the workplace

More on rhetorical awareness

(Handouts given)

Case Scenario Response #1 given

Personal schedule forms distributed

1 SUBMIT SIGNED COURSE CONTRACT

2 SEND INTRODUCTORY E-MAIL TO JUCKETT BY THURSDAY END OF BUSINESS

Week 2

1/20 Tu

Principles of professional writing;

Introduce Professional Editing

Project (the PEP)

1 SUBMIT CASE SCENARIO #1

2 SUBMIT COMPLETED PERSONAL SCHEDULE FORMS

1/22 Thu

Principles of professional writing,

continued

Conference groups assigned

Read BWH pages as assigned

Week 3

1/27, Tu

PEP rough draft exchanges, in class

BRING ROUGH DRAFTS OF YOUR PEPs to class
for in-class conferences with conference group.

1/29 Thu

Introducing writing within the organization;
Policy & procedure documents
assignment distributed

PROFESSIONAL EDITING PROJECT DUE.

Week 4

2/3 Tu

Writing policy and procedure
documents

Read BWH readings assigned

2/5 Thu

Professional document design and
lay-out Complete BWH readings assigned.

Week 5

2/10 Tu

POLICY AND PROCEDURE ROUGH DRAFTS

Policy and Procedure documents: DUE in multiple copies for conference group
members and Juckett. Memo to Juckett optional.

2/11, 2/12, 2/13, 2/16

NO CLASS IN CLASSROOM– COME TO 350 OP 344 DOCS, COME TO 350 OR 344 STANSBURY.
FOR CONFERENCES

OUTSIDE-CLASS CONFERENCES ON P&P

Bring evaluative memos for each group member,

Week 6

2/17, Tu Introduction to employment writing;

Employment writing assigned

POLICY AND PROCEDURE DOCUMENTS DUE

2/19 Thu

Resumes close-up

Complete BWH readings assigned.

Week 7

2/24 Tu

Document design. Scannable resumes

1. Complete BWH readings assigned.

2. MIDTERM PORTFOLIO MEMO AND ALL DOCUMENTS PRODUCED THUS FAR DUE in folder to me. Memo should evaluate your progress in English 202 up to this point.

2/26 Thu

Cover letters

Complete BWH readings assigned

Week 8

3/2 Tu

Interviews and follow-up letters

[Note: 2/27 is mid-semester; midterm

grades are due 3/2]

ROUGH DRAFTS OF RESUME AND COVER LETTER ONLY DUE in multiple copies for conference group members and Juckett.

3/3, 3/4, 3/5, 3/8 Thu

NO CLASS IN CLASSROOM–

COME TO 350 OR 344 STANSBURY FOR CONFERENCES.

Midterm portfolios returned at conferences

OUTSIDE CLASS CONFERENCES ON EMPLOYMENT DOCUMENTS, COME TO 350 OR 344 STANSBURY. Bring evaluative memos for each group member, with copies to Juckett, at your pre-scheduled time.

Week 9

3/9 Tu

Final portfolio production assigned so you can work ahead if you want.

Introducing the Professional Research Project (Phase I assigned)

1.EMPLOYMENT PORTFOLIOS DUE

2.Complete BWH readings as assigned

3/11 Thu

Proposals Identifying your readers and meeting their needs.

1. Complete BWH readings as assigned

Week 10

3/13-3/22

SPRING BREAK .

Week 11

3/23 Tu

Proposals and the final report: the practical context

Evaluating sample proposals

1. Complete BWH readings as assigned

3/25 Thu

Introducing stage 2 of the professional research project: the literature review [Professional research project stage

2 (literature review) assigned]

PROPOSALS DUE

Week 12

3/30Tu

Finding and evaluating popular, professional and academic secondary sources

Complete BWH readings as assigned

4/1 Thu

Documentation in the literature review

Complete BWH readings as assigned

Week 13

4/6 Tu

Evaluating your peers' lit review

REVIEW OF RESEARCH ROUGH DRAFTS DUE, with copies needed for each team member to use in conferences. You'll evaluate each other's work in a rough draft exchange in class with original conference group members.

4/8 Th

Introducing final stage of the professional research project: the written report (with oral presentation).

[Stage 3 of the prof. research project assigned.]

Practical context of professional reports: organization

1. REVIEW OF RESEARCH DUE, with all rough draft peer evaluations (completed previous Tuesday) attached.

2. Complete BWH readings as assigned

Week 14

4/13 Tu

The practical context of workplace

reports: document design

Progress reports in the professional context

Complete BWH readings as assigned

4/15 Th

The criteria/ match structure

Tips on oral presentations

COMPLETE PROGRESS REPORTS IN CLASS

Week 15

4/20 Tu

BRIEF IN-CLASS PRESENTATIONS

BRIEF (5 minute) IN-CLASS PRESENTATIONS of projects.

4/22 Th

BRIEF IN-CLASS PRESENTATIONS

BRIEF (5 minute) IN-CLASS PRESENTATIONS of projects.

4/23 Fri

RESEARCH PROJECTS DUE

RESEARCH PROJECTS DUE IN MY OFFICE OR MAILBOX NO LATER THAN 4:45 P.M. TODAY

(Mailbox = 231 Stansbury; Office = 350 Stansbury)

Week 16

4/27 Tu

preparing the professional portfolio

Work on portfolio preparation in class

4/29 Thu

Preparing the final portfolio

4/30 Fri

PROFESSIONAL PORTFOLIO IS DUE

in 350 Stansbury (my office) or

231 Stansbury (my mailbox) by

4 :45 p.m.

Extensions are available by prior request only,
and may not go past Tuesday 5/4

PROFESSIONAL PORTFOLIO CONSTRAINTS:

Timeliness: Your grade will drop one letter grade each day late if submitted Monday or Tuesday without an extension. Due to finals week constraints, I CANNOT accept portfolios after Tuesday, even with an extension.

Pick-up: You must pick up your portfolio from 231 or 350 Stansbury by 5/7 at 4:45 p.m. in order to earn a grade for your portfolio work.