

## WRIT 403: Grant Writing for Community & Industry

Mondays 4:00–6:50 p.m. | Hodges Hall 322



Image courtesy of Dylan Gillis via [Unsplash](#)

**Instructor:** Dr. Erin Brock Carlson, [erin.carlson@mail.wvu.edu](mailto:erin.carlson@mail.wvu.edu)

**Office Hours:** Monday 1-3 p.m. Colson 337; Wednesday 8.30-9.30 a.m. [virtually](#); by appointment

**Course Links:** [Schedule](#) and [Classroom](#)

### Overview

Grant application packages (and all they contain) are a complicated but increasingly important genre for professionals across a range of fields. This course is designed to demystify grant seeking and the persuasive writing that supports winning funding. We will learn each component of the granting process, including identifying appropriate funding streams, developing fundable themes, writing a specific work plan and budget, and understanding the grant review process. Throughout the semester, you will develop your knowledge of rhetorical theory, research approaches, design skills, and communication strategies, in the service of writing effective proposals and accompanying documents. At the end of the semester, you will feel confident in your ability to respond to funding opportunities, regardless of scope or focus, adding a new set of skills to use in professional contexts.

### Course goals

By the end of the semester, students who earn a passing grade in the course (C- or above) will have demonstrated their ability to:

- Apply rhetorical principles to grant and proposal writing
- Use principles of effective document design and the display of quantitative data
- Practice the generic and conventional requirements of grants and proposals
- Evaluate influences of organizational settings in the composition of grants and proposals
- Research and evaluate potential funding sources and RFPs
- Demonstrate collaborative planning and completion of grant and proposal projects
- Explain how ethical issues influence grant research, applications, and funding

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## Required texts

There is one textbook required: *Storytelling for Grantseekers: A Guide to Creative Nonprofit Fundraising* by Cheryl A. Clark, 2nd edition (ISBN: 978-0470381229). The [bookstore's price](#) on this book isn't too bad: \$33 new, \$25 used. You can get it from [Amazon](#) for \$30, with rentals for less through Chegg or the bookstore.

Any other reading materials will be provided via Classroom.

## Course tools

If you have access to a mobile device (laptop or tablet, ideally) that you can access Classroom through, please bring that to class. We will be using Google Classroom as a headquarters for our class ([click this link](#) or enter this code to join: [jrb5l6m](#)). In addition to online platforms, we will also use pen and paper fairly often, so come prepared!

## Assignment overviews

Below are overviews of each major assignment. I will provide more in-depth instructions in class. Please note that the course is split into four sections: finding opportunities, analyzing application materials, practicing applying for funding, and reflecting on grantseeking. Your grade will be based on the categories below.

### Funding opportunity profile (10%)

Our first task will be to discuss grantseeking practices and to learn about different funding sources. You will identify a funding source (foundation, federal, or otherwise), research that group and related information, write a one pager on the opportunity, and present your findings to the class so that we can start to assemble resources related to grant funding.

### Grant package review (10%)

As a way to get ourselves into the reviewer mindset, we will practice reviewing a grant application alongside the same criteria to examine 1) the genre of the application and 2) what types of preconceived notions reviewers might bring to the review process. You will fill out and submit a reader report template.

### Application storytelling analysis (15%)

To gain a better understanding of what packages actually look like, you will analyze an application package that has successfully won funding. You will find an example of an application, conduct background research on the opportunity and the organization that wrote the package, perform a close reading of the materials, and write a document that summarizes the storytelling and rhetorical moves made in the documents.

### “Mid-to-late term” project: Grant application package (25%)

A significant project for us will be putting together a grant package to gain funding for a research, service, or business-oriented project. The package will have four major components: a letter of inquiry to clients; a letter of intent to funders; the proposal package; and a postmortem report. You will present this project to the class. **Note:** this can be completed as an individual or team project; if the opportunity presents itself, we can work with real clients, as well; additionally, this might turn into a more structured project with all of us responding to same CFP.

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## Final project: Grantseeking guide (20%)

In lieu of a final exam, you will complete a final project that serves a particular audience who might benefit from additional support in finding, applying, and evaluating funding. Think of this as a way to share what you've learned over the course of the semester in a meaningful way. There will be several components to this project: a brief proposal, a mockup, a final version with effective visual design, and a letter of transmittal. **Note:** this can be completed as an individual or team project; if the opportunity presents itself, we can work with real clients, as well.

## In-class activities and homework (20%)

Class engagement (more than just attendance) is key to your success in this class, which contains a lot of content. You will earn points for homework as well as in-class activities. In-class activities **cannot** be made up for credit.

## Grading

Specific criteria and rubrics for each major assignment will be provided; however, all of the writing you produce in this course should meet the requirements of the specific project, be well-informed and thoughtful, be respectful of audience, be grammatically and stylistically sound, and be rhetorically effective for its intended purpose.

If you are unsatisfied with your grade on a major assignment, you may revise it for a higher grade; but, you must correspond with me about those revisions and write a brief rationale that explains your changes. (After all, this is what would happen in a professional environment.)

In compliance with relevant privacy laws (FERPA), I must discuss grades with you in confidence. This means I cannot email grades to you; please set up a meeting where we can discuss virtually. I post grades on Classroom regularly, so you can keep track of them there.

letter grade	range	letter grade	range	letter grade	range
A+	100-99%	B-	82-80%	D	67-63%
A	98-93%	C+	79-78%	D-	62-60%
A-	92-90%	C	77-73%	F	59-0%
B+	89-88%	C-	72-70%		
B	87-83%	D+	69-68%		

## Course policies

I follow all of [WVU's standard policies](#), but there are a few (below) that I'd call your attention to.

## Attendance and engagement

WVU's [full attendance policy](#) covers a wide range of circumstances (extended illness, military deployment, official university events, etc.). Just as you would if you were going to miss a shift at

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work, it is good practice to notify your instructor that you won't be in class. If you must be absent from class for any reason, I expect you to take full responsibility for your academic work and to complete any missed assignments that were due during the class period. (However, you will not be able to make up activities missed in class unless you and I have made alternate arrangements beforehand.) Attendance is especially important in this course, since we meet only once a week; that being said, **if you miss more than three classes, you'll need to meet with me** to discuss a plan of action, and depending on the circumstances, I might advise you to drop the course. This classroom will be run like a work environment, meaning that you will have a fair amount of freedom. With that freedom comes the expectation that you will be not only physically present, but mentally present, and ready to work in class. I also expect you to use technology (computers, phones, etc.) with care and consideration for others.

### Community health

Sicknesses abound these days, so please...If you are sick, do not come to class. If you don't feel well or have been around other folks you know are ill and attend class, please wear a mask and respect others' personal space. There are folks in class (including me!) that are high risk or live with high risk individuals.

### Late work

I set deadlines for a reason – to help you be better students and to help me be a better teacher. This class is modeled after real work environments, where deadlines matter. That being said, in professional environments, you may ask for an extension; an approved extension will not affect your grade, but do not over use this professional courtesy. Additionally, if you submit an assignment late, you will not get detailed written feedback as per usual. If you do not ask for an extension before the due date, your late work will not be accepted, and you will receive a zero.

### Accessibility

I strive to make my courses as accessible and accommodating to all persons as I can. If you require any specific accommodations, please send me an email within the first week of the term in order to discuss any necessary adjustments. I want you to succeed and I will work with you to ensure that you do! For more information, consult the [Office of Accessibility Services](#).

### Community

I take seriously the need to provide a respectful and supportive environment in our classroom. You are expected to behave professionally in class and out of class (this includes while corresponding through email), and to treat everyone in our community with kindness and respect. I have a zero-tolerance policy for discrimination and harassment in all forms.

### Student success, basic needs, and mental health

WVU has a number of resources and offices dedicated to student success. Of special note, when it comes to writing, is the [Eberly Writing Studio](#) where you can receive personalized help for your projects at any stage: brainstorming, drafting, revising, or editing.

I understand that student success involves more than just succeeding in classes. Any student who faces challenges securing their food, housing, mental health, or other elements of wellbeing, and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact the

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[Student Advocacy Center](#) for support. Also, please notify me if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable me to provide any resources that I may possess and to try and connect you to others who can help, too.

I know that college students face many stressful issues that affect one's ability to remember, learn, and perform, and interact socially in and out of the classroom. According to a [2019 survey conducted by the American College Health Association](#), 66.4% of college students felt "overwhelming" anxiety, while 46.2% experienced depression so severe they had difficulty functioning. With the increased stress and isolation of living in a COVID-19 environment, these difficulties have been amplified: [60% of college students surveyed](#) stated that the pandemic has made it more difficult to access mental healthcare.

If you (or a friend) are struggling, I strongly encourage you to seek support. I take your mental health seriously and can help you navigate the resources available to you as a WVU student. Supportive resources are available on campus, and most are at no-charge. [The Carruth Center for Psychological and Psychiatric Services](#) (CCPPS) offers consultations, short-term individual therapy, group therapy, and various mental health-related workshops. Virtual and in-person services are available. You can text "WVU" to 741741 for support 24/7 from a trained Crisis Counselor or call 304-293-4431. If you're experiencing mental distress, need immediate attention, and would prefer to use a non-university support service, you can call the [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#) at 1-800-273-8255.

WRIT 403: Grant Writing for Community & Industry **Schedule**

Unit 1 | Surveying the landscape of grantseeking

Week 1: So...what is a grant?

	<b>Monday, January 8</b>	<b>Thursday, January 11</b>
<b>Reading</b>		S4G Intro Lesson 2 (PDF)
<b>Writing</b>		Goal setting document
<b>In-Class</b>	Introductions	

Week 2: Seeking out funding opportunities

	<b>Monday, January 15</b>	<b>Thursday, January 18</b>
<b>Reading</b>		S4G Chapters 1 & 2 <a href="#">Top tips and sources to find grants</a> Peruse databases (see Classroom for list)
<b>Writing</b>		Funding opportunity handout
<b>In-Class</b>	No class, MLK Jr. Day	

Week 3: Unpacking opportunities and grantmaker expectations

	<b>Monday, January 22</b>	<b>Thursday, January 25</b>
<b>Reading</b>	Roundtable 1 (PDF) <a href="#">Hart-Davidson, What do I have to do to get funded?</a>	Class one-pagers Class presentations
<b>Writing</b>		<b>Post presentation by today at latest; review one-pagers and watch presentations</b>
<b>In-Class</b>	<b>Please post presentation ASAP</b>	

Unit 2 | Understanding RFPs and the grantseeking process

Week 4: Matching project ideas with grant opportunities

	<b>Monday, January 29</b>	<b>Thursday, February 1</b>
<b>Reading</b>	Lessons 3 & 4 (PDF) <a href="#">A celebrated startup promised green jobs</a>	Lesson 5 (PDF)

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<b>Writing</b>	1. Reflection activity on presentations 2. Reading response on green jobs article	
<b>In-Class</b>	Resource scavenger hunt Stakeholder activity	

Week 5: Federal grants; RFPs and reviewer criteria

	<b>Monday, February 5</b>	<b>Thursday, February 8</b>
<b>Reading</b>	<a href="#">Understanding RFPs</a> Example RFP, grant application (PDF)	Lesson 6 (PDF) H4W: Style and Tone (PDF)
<b>Writing</b>	Annotations on example RFP, application	Style activity
<b>In-Class</b>	Identifying sections of an application Federal grant review activity	

Week 6: Foundation grants; Letters of inquiry and letters of support

	<b>Monday, February 12</b>	<b>Thursday, February 15</b>
<b>Reading</b>	S4G Chapter 3 Lesson 10 (PDF) Example letters (PDF)	Roundtable 3 (PDF)
<b>Writing</b>	Draft of rubric for grant package review	[Be working on your grant package review]
<b>In-Class</b>	Foundation grants Genre examples (reviewer reports, letters)	

Unit 3 | **Crafting effective application packages**

Week 7: Writing proposals

	<b>Monday, February 19</b>	<b>Thursday, February 22</b>
<b>Reading</b>	S4G Chapter 4 Lesson 6 (PDF) [You read this already] Lesson 9 (PDF) Jones & Williams, "Plain Language"	<a href="#">Success/unsuccessful application</a>
<b>Writing</b>	Grant package review due Bring 🔥 quote from Jones & Williams	Select grant application for storytelling analysis

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<b>In-Class</b>	Mapping out story narratives	
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Week 8: Need statements + goals, objectives, and methods

	<b>Monday, February 26</b>	<b>Thursday, February 29</b>
<b>Reading</b>	S4G Chapters 5, 6 Lessons 7, 8 (PDF)	Roundtable 2 (PDF)
<b>Writing</b>	Bring copy of application for storytelling analysis ARC RFP annotation and questions	
<b>In-Class</b>	Pitching ideas	

Week 9: Assembling data ethically and effectively

	<b>Monday, March 4</b>	<b>Thursday, March 7</b>
<b>Reading</b>	<a href="#">Laflen, Data stories</a> Lesson 14 (PDF) Optional: Loukissas excerpt (PDF)	
<b>Writing</b>	-More of a cohesive idea for the ARC grant project -Peruse <a href="#">Chamberlin/Dunn LLC's site</a> and revisit <a href="#">our questions</a> ; come prepared with 2 questions for our guest	-Storytelling analysis due -Informal project pitch
<b>In-Class</b>	Workflow and research processes Guest Speaker: Nicole Dunn of Chamberlin/Dunn LLC	

Week 10: Spring Break

	<b>Monday, March 11</b>	<b>Thursday, March 14</b>
<b>Reading</b>		
<b>Writing</b>		
<b>In-Class</b>		

Week 11: Evaluation, future funding, budgets, and all dat cash

	<b>Monday, March 18</b>	<b>Thursday, March 21</b>



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<b>Reading</b>	S4G Chapters 7 & 8 Lessons 11 & 12 (PDF)	
<b>Writing</b>	-A developed enough idea for the ARC project that you could work on a needs/problem statement in class -Peruse <a href="#">TFA's site</a> and revisit <a href="#">our questions</a> ; come prepared with 2 questions for our guest	Draft of needs/problem statement + goals and outcomes
<b>In-Class</b>	<b>Guest Speaker: Kandi Workman of Tamarack Foundation for the Arts</b> Budget activity Mini writing workshop	

Week 12: Community impacts and additional documents

	<b>Monday, March 25</b>	<b>Thursday, March 28</b>
<b>Reading</b>	S4G Chapters 9 & 10 Lessons 13 (PDF)	Lesson 15 (PDF)
<b>Writing</b>	-Draft of full narrative (intro, needs statement, goals/outcomes, methods/plan of action (if applicable), evaluation), budget -Peruse Dr. Totzkay's <a href="#">site</a> and revisit <a href="#">our questions</a> ; come prepared with 2 questions for our guest	Drafts of letter of support, syllabus
<b>In-Class</b>	<b>Guest Speaker: Dan Totzkay of WVU</b> Writing workshop Syllabus development	

Week 13: Polishing application packages

	<b>Monday, April 1</b>	<b>Thursday, April 4</b>
<b>Reading</b>		Review RFP as you complete your peer review, start revising your own package
<b>Writing</b>	Post full draft for peer review	Peer review due
<b>In-Class</b>	No in-class meeting on Monday, April 1	

Unit 4 | Creating materials for grantseeking audiences

Week 14: Identifying audiences in need of grant funding support

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	<b>Monday, April 8</b>	<b>Thursday, April 11</b>
<b>Reading</b>		
<b>Writing</b>		Grant application package (by 11:59 p.m.)
<b>In-Class</b>	Note: We will start class at 5 instead of 4 given the ~partial solar eclipse~ that will be visible for us from <u>2:00 to 4:30</u> according to the internet. Informal grant pitches	

Week 15: Translating complex funding processes for non-experts

	<b>Monday, April 15</b>	<b>Thursday, April 18</b>
<b>Reading</b>	Lessons 16, 17 (PDF)	Writing for Public & Doc Design (PDF)
<b>Writing</b>	-Peruse sites in comment and revisit <a href="#">our questions</a> ; come prepared with 2 questions for our guest	Audience analysis and planning memo
<b>In-Class</b>	Guest Speaker: Jim Denova Guided drafting activities	

Week 16: Designing documents for effective use; reflecting on the course

	<b>Monday, April 22</b>	<b>Thursday, April 25</b>
<b>Reading</b>	Lesson 1 (PDF) <a href="#">Ray, Hollowed Out</a>	
<b>Writing</b>	Tough draft of guide	
<b>In-Class</b>	Writing workshop Course takeaways Postmortem reports	

Week 17: Finals

Final materials due on Monday 4/29, anytime <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final grantseeking guide</li> <li>• Postmortem report</li> </ul>
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