

Business & Professional Writing

ENGL 304.W04 CRN 12230

MWF 11:30am - 12:30pm

Colson G18

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Office Hours: MW 10:30am-11:15am, and by appt.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK:

Writing that Works, 11 ed., Oliu, Brusaw, & Alred
(also, a USB drive is recommended)

Course Description

English 304 is designed to help you become competent and effective professional writers and communicators before you enter the workplace. Due to the importance of collaboration in most professional settings, we engage in multiple forms of group work, from peer review and in-class work groups to a final collaborative project.

Goals

A fundamental assumption of 304 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, emails, long reports—you will:

- Become familiar with the persuasive, and evidence-based, nature of all workplace writing by learning about the purpose, audience, context, and effects (PACE) of professional writing situations.
- Apply an understanding of PACE and rhetorical strategies to effectively compose, design, and revise documents.
- Know how and when to employ the conventions of different workplace media and genres. These media and genres, which can be in print or electronic form, will include résumés, cover letters, memos, emails, proposals, reports, and PowerPoint/other presentations.
- Conduct research and analyze data to support your evidence-based writing projects.
- Work collaboratively with team members on professional writing projects using the contemporary medias and technologies that are common in the workplace.

304 Grade Breakdown

The course will essentially consist of 4 primary projects, each containing several distinct components.

1. Correspondence Project [20%]
2. Document Design Project [20%]
3. Employment Project [20%]
4. Report and Presentation Project [30%]

The final 10% will come from your overall “job performance”—that is, your participation and performance in 304.

Evaluation of Projects

This is a project-based course; you are creating a collection of professional documents to demonstrate your writing success and mastery of PACE analysis. When you turn in a project, then, you will not earn individual letter grades on its components. Instead, I will return each project with a cumulative letter grade, along with evaluative comments that should give you a sense of how you have performed overall. The following are the grade descriptors I will rely on:

A—Superior work with recognizable purpose. Its content is mature, thorough, and well suited for the audience; it also adheres to all grammatical conventions effectively. Genre conventions are effectively used and reflect an understanding of the writing situation’s context. The project demonstrates a range of well-edited, well-written, well-argued, and well-documented texts that a company could use without further revisions.

B—Good work. The documents in the project generally succeed in meeting their goals in terms of purpose, audience, contexts, and effects without the need for further *major* revisions. They may need some minor improvements in content, generic conventions, or grammar.

C—Satisfactory work. The project meets the basic requirements I have set forth. Its documents require, though, some substantial revisions of content, generic conventions, or grammar, or they may require further work in more than one those areas. The documents may not fulfill the needs of their purpose, audience, contexts, and effects. In the workplace, the documents would be functional for an immediate deadline, but would require further revisions before being distributed or made part of a permanent record.

D—Documents are unprofessional. They generally require extensive revisions of content, generic conventions, and grammar. The writer has encountered *significant* problems meeting goals of purpose, audience, and genre. In the workplace, a company would most probably have to reassign the project to another writer for successful completion.

F—Failing. Documents do not have enough information, do something other than is appropriate for a given situation, or contain major and pervasive problems in terms of content, generic conventions, or grammar that interfere with meaning. The project may be incomplete. A company would most probably dismiss the writer from their job position.

304 POLICIES

Attendance

Each student is allowed up to three absences without a drop in the final grade. A fourth absence will compromise your grade by one full letter. Each additional absence will continue to lower your final grade. Thus, six or more absences necessarily results in a failing grade for this course. Please note that all absences (*including excused absences*) will count toward the total number, and this policy starts from the moment you are registered in the course. As part of this workshop course, you are required to set up several mandatory conferences with me throughout the semester. Each conference will only last between ten and fifteen minutes, but it will count as a full class day for attendance purposes.

Late Work

Late work is both unprofessional and unacceptable. You are responsible for making up any work you may miss by failing to attend class, even if the absence is necessitated by illness or personal emergency. However, I do not accept late projects. If you do need to miss a class, you should notify me immediately via email (within twenty-four hours) and you must arrange to complete your missed work in a timely fashion.

Cheating/Plagiarism

Integrity is of upmost importance in ENGL 304. Students are expected to be familiar with the sections on Academic Honesty in the **University Student Conduct Code, Policy Bulletin 31**, which is online at: <http://studentlife.wvu.edu/studentconductcode.html>. If you have any questions about when and how to document sources, or any other question that will help you avoid unintentional plagiarism, please speak with me.

Computers and Cell Phones

304 activities require your full attention, so please turn off your cell phones, put them out of sight, and refrain from texting in the workplace. Since the class meets in a computer classroom, please be sure that, during class time, you are using the computers only as instructed for that day's class session (and not for Facebook, etc.). If you are ever using technology in a way that is distracting or unrelated to the work of 304, you will be asked to put away the device or log off the computer. If there is an unusual circumstance where you must leave your phone on, please speak to me privately *before* class.

Social Justice

West Virginia University is committed to social justice. I concur with that commitment and expect to maintain a positive learning environment based upon open communication, mutual respect, and non-discrimination. West Virginia University—and 304 specifically—will not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, age, disability, veteran status, religion, sexual orientation, color, or national origin. Any suggestions as to how to further such a positive and open environment in this workplace will be appreciated and given thoughtful consideration.

Students with Disabilities

If you have a documented learning disability, a serious hearing or vision problem, or any other special need that might affect your performance and participation in class, please be sure to inform me. Also, please be aware of the support services available to you through the Office of Accessibility Services in Suite 250 at 1085 VanVoorhis Rd (beside Applebee's and across from the Mountaineer Station transportation center). The phone number is 304-293-6700, and email is access2@mail.wvu.edu. Access the website at <http://accessibilityservices.wvu.edu/>.

Writing Center

The WVU Writing Center is another resource that can not only help you to brush up on your basic skills, but also help support you in all aspects of the writing process. It is located in Go2 Colson Hall. This is a free resource for students where you can meet with a tutor to go over any assignment or just to get help brainstorming the best topic. Call 304-293-5788 to schedule an appointment or stop by to see if a tutor is available. For more information, check online at: http://english.wvu.edu/centers_and_projects/wcenter.

Course Schedule

Regardless of whether or not there are readings due, I expect you to bring your textbook to every class period. Quizzes on readings may be given without notice and will count towards your overall job performance grade. The schedule is subject to changes throughout the semester according to class needs. Please check your MIX accounts often for updates.

Week/Date	Day	Topic	Reading Due	Work Due & Other Notes
Week 1 1/8	Wed	Course Introduction		Buy textbook
1/10	Fri	PACE Strategy Discuss your intro emails Discuss textbook (bring yours to class!)		Intro email due (email it to me and bring a hardcopy to class)
Week 2 1/13	Mon	<i>Start Correspondence Project</i>	WTW Ch. 1, "Assessing Audience and Purpose"	
1/15	Wed	Direct/Indirect Approaches Discuss reading	WTW Ch. 8, "Understanding the Principles of Business Communication"	
1/17	Fri	Correspondence genres Discuss reading Sign up for conferences	WTW Ch. 9, "Writing Business Correspondence"	
Week 3 1/20	Mon	NO CLASS		
1/22	Wed	Discuss reading	WTW Ch. 3, "Writing the Draft"	
1/24	Fri	Conferences – meet in my office		
Week 4 1/27	Mon	<i>Peer review – bring 2 copies to class</i>		Correspondence Project Rough Draft Due (2 copies)
1/29	Wed	Discuss revision / reading	WTW Ch. 4, "Revising the Draft"	
1/31	Fri	<i>Start Document Design Project</i>		Correspondence Project Final Draft Due (1 copy)
Week 5 2/3	Mon	Discussion: lay-out and organization, content	WTW Ch. 7, "Designing Effective Documents and Visuals"	Hard copy of a document to analyze (In Class)
2/5	Wed	Visual rhetoric		Hard copy of a document to analyze (In Class)
2/7	Fri	Basics of design		Hard copy of a document to analyze (In Class)
Week 6 2/10	Mon	<i>Peer review – bring 2 copies to class</i>		Document Design Project Rough Draft Due (2 copies)
2/12	Wed	<i>Start Employment Project</i>	WTW Ch. 16, "Finding the Right Job"	Document Design Project Final Draft Due (1 copy)
2/14	Fri	Resumes		Find 3 job prospects (provide details)
Week 7 2/17	Mon	Cover Letters		Work on resumes
2/19	Wed	Managing your presence on social media		Work on cover letter
2/21	Fri	<i>Peer review – bring 2 copies to class</i>		Employment Project Rough Draft Due (2 copies)
Week 8 2/24	Mon	<i>Start Report & Presentation Project (RPP)</i> Choose partners for the RPP Brainstorm, research RPP ideas with partners		Employment Project Final Draft Due (1 copy)
2/26	Wed	Features of the proposal	WTW Ch. 13, "Writing Proposals"	Work on RPP proposal
2/28 <i>mid-semester</i>	Fri	Proposal / topic work with partners		Work on RPP proposal
Week 9 3/3	Mon	Practical and ethical research in the workplace; documentation.	WTW Ch. 6, "Researching Your Subject"	
3/5	Wed	Collaborative writing	WTW Ch. 5, "Collaborative Writing"	Work on RPP
3/7	Fri	Discuss proposals with whole class		1 page RPP proposal due

Week 10 3/10-14	MWF	NO CLASSES		
Week 11 3/17	Mon	Comparing proposals and reports; Introduce the formal long report: including the Executive Summary and Recommendations	WTW Ch. 11, "Writing Formal Reports"	Work on RPP
3/19	Wed	Features of the formal long report: the body text; project management triangle		Work on RPP
3/21	Fri	Features of the formal long report: Abstracts and front matter		Work on RPP
Week 12 3/24	Mon	Features of the formal long report: back matter		Work on RPP
3/26	Wed	Citation practice, grammar, etc.		Work on RPP
3/28	Fri	Present 'Explanation of RPP' to class for discussion/analysis		Explanation of RPP Due
Week 13 3/31	Mon	Present 'Explanation of RPP' to class for discussion/analysis		Explanation of RPP Due
4/2	Wed	Preparing successful oral presentations for work	WTW Ch. 14, "Giving Presentations and Conducting Meetings"	Work on RPP
4/4	Fri	Effective PowerPoint presentations; Presenting information visually	<i>From email:</i> Edward Tufte, "The Cognitive Style of PowerPoint"	Work on RPP
Week 14 4/7	Mon	Time to work on RPP & PowerPoint presentation with partners in class		Work on RPP
4/9	Wed	Evaluating presentations		Drafts of section of Report: Executive Summary and Recommendation
4/11	Fri	Time to work on RPP		Work on RPP
Week 15 4/14	Mon	Time to polish and rehearse presentation in class		Report & Presentation Project Due (1 copy)
4/16	Wed	STUDENT PRESENTATIONS		<i>Hard Copy of PowerPoint (In Class)</i>
4/18	Fri	NO CLASS		
Week 16 4/21	Mon	STUDENT PRESENTATIONS		<i>Hard Copy of PowerPoint (In Class)</i>
4/23	Wed	STUDENT PRESENTATIONS		<i>Hard Copy of PowerPoint (In Class)</i>
4/25	Fri	LAST DAY - Wrap Up SEIs (in class)		