WRIT 304-701:
Business & Professional Writing

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Welcome to WRIT 304! The material in this syllabus is important, so read it thoroughly and even print it for your records. It is subject to change upon notification. If/when something does change, I will send an email or announcement via eCampus. It is your responsibility to stay current with all course emails, announcements, and discussion posts. ***This is especially important since this is a fully online and asynchronous course.***

Communicating with your instructor

WVU Email
Please contact me via email (jhiggin7@mix.wvu.edu OR Jill.Woods@mail.wvu.edu), and I will respond within 24 hours during the week and 48 hours on the weekend. The "email" link on the left-hand side of our eCampus course site will take you to my or your course colleagues' Mix addresses should you need them (e.g., for group work). Practice good, clear writing by being sure to include an informative subject line, beginning with the course number (e.g., WRIT 304: *Question about deadline for WP #1*).

Office Hours
I will hold office hours, in person (209 Colson Hall) and online (Zoom link on eCampus), on **Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11:30 am–12:30 pm** or by appointment: just email me to set something up.

Class Meetings
We will not hold any whole-class synchronous classes, though you will have a few small-group synchronous meetings in the second half of the term. (More on that later.) Otherwise, this course is based on tutorial-style learning—you can contact me anytime for help, but you must take a personal, vigorous initiative for your own learning in this course. I will act as your mentor, not as a lecturer or a day-to-day monitor of your learning. Keep track of work due, keep pace with the coursework, and be proactive about contacting me when you have questions.

Required texts and equipment

- ***Essentials of Business Communication* (11th ed.)** by Mary Ellen Guffey and Dana Loewy (ISBN: 978-1337386494) *No additional access card necessary.*
- A Mix email address and internet access (for eCampus, online office hours, small group meetings)
- For some assignments, you are required to locate additional reading material on your own using the Internet or WVU Libraries search tools.
- Webcam and microphone (built-in or headphones with mic should work fine for our needs) to participate in Zoom office hours and small-group meetings.

Course goals

This course helps you become more familiar and comfortable with the conventions of business and professional communication used across various professional fields. To these ends, over the course of the term you should strive to:

- Demonstrate awareness of the value and role of writing in professional situations.
- Recognize the basic rhetorical patterns of professional communication in a variety of print, oral and digital channels.
- Practice applying these patterns of professional communication in individual and group contexts.
- Develop your ability to target communications for a specific audience.
- Apply the principles of visual rhetoric to successful workplace writing.
- Demonstrate your understanding and acquisition of professional communication skills through writing revision and creation of a polished, writing portfolio.

These goals align with the outcomes of SpeakWrite certified courses. That means this class is committed to helping you communicate your knowledge effectively as you keep four key components in mind: purpose, audience, conventions, and trouble spots (or PACT for short).

Purpose: What exactly do I want to happen?
Audience: Who is reading, listening, or viewing?
Conventions: What is expected in this context?
Trouble: What could get in the way of my goals?

If you'd like additional help, contact the **WVU Writing Studio (**https://speakwrite.wvu.edu/students) to schedule an appointment with a writing consultant..

Course Policies

You can access and read institution-level policies here: *https://tlcommons.wvu.edu/syllabus-policies-and-statements*. These include policies on academic integrity, inclusivity, and COVID-19 procedures. No incompletes will be provided for this course. Here are additional details for policies particularly relevant to this course:

Participation/Reflection
Your participation grade—an assessment of the quality and quantity of your interactions with course content, your instructor, and your classmates—is integrated with your discussion and journal assignments that require thoughtful interaction.

Netiquette
In a fully online course, clarity and professionalism in our written communication is imperative to course success. Here are a few tips on how to achieve clarity and professionalism in our eCampus course emails and Discussion Board Forums in particular:
- Never type a message in ALL CAPS. Users may interpret that as shouting.
- In a Discussion Board Forum thread, clarify for whom a response is intended. You can do this by beginning a response post with a name (e.g., Jill – You make a good point about…) or with the "at" symbol (e.g., @ Jill: You make an interesting point about X. @ Tom: Do you think Jill's comment contradicts what you said about Y?). If you're adding an audio or video comment to a Voicethread, you can still begin your message with a name: "Latesha: I think you're right. What you said about X is the same thing the EBC authors said in chapter 3…"
- Make your subject lines – be they for Discussion Board Forum posts or email messages – specific so they are easy to sift through even weeks after a forum takes place. (They may be useful in studying for quizzes or completing writing projects!) For instance, rather than the generic subject line "DB Forum #1," you could be more specific by putting your name in your post, e.g. "Jill's Introduction." Think about using concepts or textbook chapters as specific information for use in subject lines, too, e.g.: "Resumes: objectives vs. summary of qualifications."
- Proofread your posts and emails.

In general, remember to be respectful. We want to create a community that is rich and conducive to learning. Sometimes that means disagreeing with each other, but you can always do this in a respectful manner.

Generative Artificial Intelligence Tools

The best way to achieve our course communication goals is for you to actually do the writing (and thinking). Forms of writing assistance that utilize artificial intelligence (AI) to proofread a student's own written work (such as spellcheck or Grammarly) are helpful and acceptable to use in this class. However, tools that rely on generative AI (such as GPT-3, ChatGPT, and Bard) that actually "write" (or generate) text from a prompt are not to be used to generate drafts or written work for any assignment in this course. If students are unsure which AI tools are acceptable, they should consult the instructor prior to using them.

Deadlines/Late Work
This course has biweekly deadlines: **every Thursday and Sunday at midnight (i.e. 11:59 p.m.)**. Failure to meet a deadline will result in a zero for work due. It is especially important in an online class that you look ahead and keep yourself current with upcoming projects and weekly assignments. If you have a technical or mechanical issue that will prevent you from completing your work, contact me immediately. Otherwise, if I don't hear from you before your work is due, I will not accept it. An outline of deadlines is included in the schedule in this syllabus. More specific assignment details will become available in the **coursework modules** at least a week prior to a deadline.

Mental Health Services
Finally, mental health concerns or stressful events can adversely affect your academic performance and social relationships. WVU offers services to assist you with addressing these and other concerns that you may be experiencing. You can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus at the Carruth Center for Psychological and Psychiatric Services (CCPPS) website: https://carruth.wvu.edu/

If you are in need of crisis services, call the CCPPS main number 24/7: (304) 293-4431.

Required Work

The writing components for WRIT 304 are divided into four main categories: Discussions (Ds), Quizzes (Qs), Reflective Practitioner Journals (Js), and a Writing Portfolio (WP).

Your final grade (out of 500 points total) will be based on the following percentages:

Assignments	%	Points
Discussions	**20%**	**100** (10 Ds x 10pts)
Quizzes	**20%**	**100** (7 Qs x 12pts; 1 Q x 16pts)
Reflective Practitioner Journals	**10%**	**50** (5 Js x 6pts; 2 Js x 10pts)
WP—Writing Portfolio *(including drafts)*	**50%**	**250**
WP#1: Positive Correspondence	*6%*	Draft: 10; **Final: 20**
WP#2: Negative Correspondence	*6%*	Draft: 10; **Final: 20**
WP#3: Employment Documents	12%	Draft: 20; **Final: 40**
WP#4: Informal Report (Summary)	*6%*	Draft: 10; **Final: 20**
WP#5: Research, Collaboration, & Visual/Oral Channels	12%	**Draft/Final: 40** / **Collaboration Report: 20**
Portfolio Content (Intro/Reflection Memo) & Design	8%	**Final: 40**
	100%	**500**

Discussions (20%, 100 points)
There are **10 graded discussion forums,** which will take place on the eCampus Discussion Board or VoiceThread tools. Criteria will be specified within the coursework module for the week it is due. Points for these assignments are earned based on the quality and substance of BOTH your initial post and your responses to peers.

Quizzes (20%, 100 points)
There are **eight scheduled reading quizzes**, which cover the Essentials in Business Communication (EBC) textbook reading assignments. Be aware that you are allowed two attempts for each reading quiz (though questions will vary with each attempt and scores averaged). They are timed, and, once begun, a reading quiz must be completed. You're welcome to use your textbook.

There are also several Grammar/Mechanics Checkups quizzes listed on the course schedule. *These Grammar Mechanics (GM) quizzes are optional.* Material on GM quizzes comes from the textbook's Grammar/Mechanics Handbook (at the end of each EBC chapter and Appendix D 1–44). You are not assigned readings from the handbook; rather, you can review the handbook information as needed and at your own convenience. While not required, if you feel you need to brush up on any of your grammar and mechanics skills, taking these quizzes according to the course schedule will help ensure you get that practice prior to turning in your final Writing Portfolio (WP) documents. (You will be expected to employ correct grammar and mechanics in those documents [see WP description below]).

Reflective Practitioner Journals (10%, 50 points)

The reflection (Journal) assignments are vital assignments that help to measure the higher-order course goals that aren't as easily measured through written work alone (e.g., demonstrating your "understanding" and "awareness" of writing/rhetorical processes in context). When taken seriously, they are tool of self-awareness and agency, too. (Meaning, for example, you don't have to wait for your professor or a peer to tell you why something is effective or ineffective.)

I will provide you with prompts, but you should think of your journals, first and foremost, as **conversations with yourself (thinking and talking about your own thinking)** related to course readings, assignments, and learning goals. You can add me, your instructor, as a secondary audience, but these need not be polished (meaning they aren't graded on grammar and typos or ums and video quality, depending on what channel you choose to use), but they should demonstrate your engagement with the related course content to help you leverage your own experiences and expertise in achieving course outcomes.

The Writing Portfolio (WP, 50%, 250 points)

During this course, you will compose several Writing Portfolio (WP) documents—from professional correspondence to a researched report and visual/oral presentation. You will submit drafts of these documents (WP #1–#4) according to the course schedule for credit/partial credit/no credit during the early and middle parts of the semester, based on how well they meet the assignment requirements. You will then revise and present these polished documents in a combined Writing Portfolio (WP) at the end of the course. These WP documents will not be assessed on quality, therefore, until you have had a chance to revise them. (See the grades section below for general criteria.) The only exception to this rule is WP#5, which is a group project. More details on this later in the term.

Submitting Required Work

Each week of this course has a corresponding *coursework module* listing work due on Thursday (by midnight) and work due on Sunday (by midnight). You must submit work in the correct way and on time in order for it to be accepted, so read the instructions carefully and ask questions when you have them. Generally, all draft **WP documents should be submitted as attachments** via eCampus to the appropriate assignment prompt and should be formatted as Word documents (.doc or .docx), portable document format (.pdf) or multimedia files (e.g., .ppt, .mp3, link to YouTube) as described in the assignment instructions. **Journal assignments (J) and Discussion (D) posts should be written (or pasted) directly into eCampus** text editing boxes (or uploaded to VoiceThread…depending on the tool being used) for each respective assignment.

Schedule of Work Due

In the schedule below, your textbook *Essentials of Business Communication is abbreviated as EBC*. Note that supplementary readings with the (eCampus) notation are available through the related coursework module. *Remember that the Grammar/Mechanics (GM) quizzes are optional.*

Coursework Module	Reading	Discussion	Writing	Quiz
Week 1: Introductions and Course Review				
Week 1.1 **Due Thurs. 1/11**	– Course Syllabus, Announcements and Messages – EBC Ch. 1, 2	Discussion Forum (D) #1	– Pre-Term Survey	– Practice EBC Quiz (Ch. 1, 2)
Week 1.2 **Due Sun. 1/14**		D#1 (responses)		–GM Nouns (Ch. 1, p. 31) –GM Pronouns (Ch. 2, p. 59). *Remember these optional GM quizzes are in your textbook, not eCampus*
Week 2: Professional Correspondence (Internal)				
Week 2.1 **Due Thurs. 1/18**	– EBC Ch. 3, 5	D#2		**– EBC Quiz #1: Ch. 3, 5**
Week 2.2 **Due Sun. 1/21**		D#2 (responses)	– WP#1: Internal Correspondence (Memo or Email) – Journal #1	– GM Verbs (Ch. 3, p. 84) – GM Prepositions and Conjunctions (Ch. 5, p. 147)
Week 3: Professional Correspondence (External)				
Week 3.1 **Due Thurs. 1/25**	– EBC Ch. 6, 7	D#3		**– EBC Quiz #2: Ch. 6, 7**
Week 3.2 **Due Sun. 1/28**		D#3 (responses)		– GM Commas (Ch. 6, p. 183) – GM Commas (Ch. 7, p. 216)
Week 4: Professional Correspondence (External) & Employment Documents				
Week 4.1 **Due Thurs. 2/1**			– WP#2: External Correspondence (Letter or Email) – Journal #2	
Week 4.2 **Due Sun. 2/4**	– EBC Ch. 8, 13		– Journal #3	**– EBC Quiz #3: Ch. 8, 13**
Weeks 5-6: Employment Documents				
Week 5.1 **Due Thurs. 2/8**		D#4		– GM Commas (Ch. 8, p. 248) – GM Number style (Ch. 13, p. 441)
Week 5.2 **Due Sun. 2/11**	– EBC Ch. 14	D#4 (responses)		**– EBC Quiz #4: Ch. 14** – GM Total Review (Ch. 14, p. 479)
Week 6.1 **Due Thurs. 2/15**	– Supplementary materials (eCampus)	D#5		
Week 6.2 **Due Sun. 2/18**		D#5 (responses if async)	– WeP#3: Employment Documents – Journal #4	
Week 7-8: Informal Reports (Summaries)				

Summaries	**Week 7.1** **Due Thurs. 2/22**	– EBC Ch. 9 – Supplementary materials (eCampus)			**– EBC Quiz #5: Ch. 9**
	Week 7.2 **Due Sun. 2/25**		D#6		– GM Quiz Semicolons and Colons (Ch. 9, p. 281–282)
	Week 8.1 **Due Thurs. 2/29**		D#6 (responses)		
	Week 8.2 **Due Sun. 3/3**			– WeP#4: Summary – Journal #5	
	Weeks 9-14: Group Communication (Research, Collaboration, Textual & Visual/Oral Channels)				
Research, Collaboration, & Multimodal Channels	**Week 9.1** **Due Thurs. 3/7**	– EBC Ch. 10, 11 – Supplementary materials (eCampus)	D#7: Visual/Oral Channels (initial)		**– EBC Quiz #6: Ch. 10, 11** – GM Apostrophes (Ch. 10, p. 320) – GM Other Punctuation (Ch. 11, p. 358)
	Week 9.2 **Due Sun. 3/10**	– EBC Ch. 12	D#7: Visual/Oral Channels (refined)		**– EBC Quiz #7: Ch. 12** – GM Capitalization (Ch. 12, p. 392)
	Week 10 **3/11–17**	**Spring Recess**			
	Week 11.1 **Due Thurs. 3/21**	– Supplementary materials (eCampus)		– Journal #6 (begins)	
	Week 11.2 **Due Sun. 3/24**		D#8: Group Meeting & Progress Report		
	Week 12.1 **Due Thurs. 3/28**	– Your group communications/work			
	Week 12.2 **Due Sun. 3/31**				
	Week 13.1 **Due Thurs. 4/4**				
	Week 13.2 **Due Sun. 4/7**	– EBC Ch. 4 – Supplementary materials (eCampus)			**– EBC Quiz #8: Ch. 4** – GM Adjectives and Adverbs (Ch. 4, p. 110)
	Week 14.1 **Due Thurs. 4/11**			– Journal #6 (due)	
	Week 14.2 **Due Sun. 4/14**		D#9: Behind the scenes/CR ideas	– WeP#5: Report & Presentation – Journal #7	
	Weeks 15-16: Portfolio & Collaboration Report				
Portfolio	**Week 15.1** **Due Thurs. 4/18**	– Review EBC	D#10		
	Week 15.2 **Due Sun. 4/21**		D#10 (responses)		
	Week 16.1 **Due Thurs. 4/25**	–Supplementary materials (eCampus)			
	Week 16.2 **Due Sun. 4/28**			**– Final Writing Portfolio (WP)** – Course Evaluation	

Grading

Rubric will be available on eCampus, but generally, when evaluating each of your writing assignments, I will ask one overriding question: *Does this document do its job successfully?* The "job," or purpose, of each document—particularly the final WP documents—will be explained in assignment instructions and assessed on this scale:

A – Superior: The work is of near professional quality. The document meets or exceeds all the objectives of the assignment. The content is mature, thorough, and well-suited for the audience; the style is clear and accurate; the information is well-organized and designed so that it is accessible and attractive; the mechanics and grammar are correct. It is assured of success and of winning praise.

B – Good: The document meets the objectives of the assignment, but it needs improvement in style, or it contains easily correctable errors in grammar, format, or content, or its content is superficial. It is likely to succeed.

C – Competent: The document needs significant improvement in concept, details, development, organization, grammar, or format. It may be formally correct but superficial in content. It stands a chance of succeeding.

D – Marginally Acceptable: The document meets some of the objectives but ignores others; the content is inadequately developed; or it contains numerous or major errors. It is not likely to succeed without major revision.

F – Unacceptable: The document does not have enough information, does something other than the assignment required, or it contains major errors or excessive errors. It fails to do its "job."

Even the reflective and less formal writing exercises have a "job" to do; while mechanics becomes less important in accomplishing writing goals in eCampus discussions and journals, standards of content, detail, development, and clarity still weigh heavily. Keeping this in mind, your Ds and Js will be assessed using the following criteria:

	A – Superior	B – Good	C – Competent	D – Marginally acceptable	F – Unacceptable
Critical Thinking	Rich in content, insight and analysis	Contains substantial information, thought, insight, and analysis has clearly taken place	Generally competent, yet information is thin and commonplace	Rudimentary and superficial, displaying no analysis or insight	Displays no analysis or insight
Connections	Clear connection to previous or current content, course readings, and to real-life situations	Contains new connections that lack depth or detail	Limited, if any connections or vague generalities	No connections are made or are off topic	Makes no connections
Uniqueness	New ideas and new connections made with depth and detail	Contains new ideas that lack depth or detail	Few, if any, new ideas; rehashes or summarizes other postings	No new ideas or "I agree/disagree with…" statement without explanation	Contributes no new ideas
Timeliness	All required postings appear early and throughout the discussion	All required postings with some not in time for others to respond	All required postings with most at the last minute without allowing time for others to respond	Some or all required postings missing	Most or all required postings missing
Stylistics	Few grammatical or stylistic errors	Several grammatical or stylistic errors	Obvious grammatical or stylistic errors that interfere with the readability of content	Obvious grammatical or stylistic errors that make understanding nearly impossible	Grammatical or stylistic errors make understanding nearly impossible or impossible