WRIT 403: Grant Writing for Community & Industry
Mondays 4:00–6:50 p.m. | Hodges Hall 322

Professor: Dr. Erin Brock Carlson, erin.carlson@mail.wvu.edu
Course Links: Schedule and Classroom
Office Hours: Mondays 3-4 p.m., Thursdays 4-5 p.m., and by appointment
Office Location: Colson Hall 227

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.

Outcomes

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 and package design.
- **Understand** the generic and conventional requirements of grants and proposals.
- **Evaluate** influences of 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.

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). It is available through the library, but if you would like to purchase it, the bookstore does have it. You can also get it from Amazon for about $30, with rentals for less all around. Any other reading materials will be provided via Classroom.

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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 to join or enter this code: prqcnpm). 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 page summary about the opportunity, and present your findings to the class so that we can start to assemble resources related to grant funding.

RFP comparison essay (10%)

In order to practice close reading and annotation practices, you will select two RFPs and write a brief essay that compares and contrasts those documents. While you will have a lot of freedom in which RFPs you focus on, one **must** be from a federal agency.

Narrative storytelling analysis (20%)

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.

Grant application package (mid-to-late term project) (30%)

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 respond appropriately to the RFP, containing all required sections including a narrative. **Note**: this may be completed as an individual or team project; if the opportunity presents itself, we can work with a real client.

Tensions in grantseeking essay (20%)

In lieu of a final exam, you will write an essay that captures the most important aspects of your knowledge gained this semester. You will identify an ethical issue or tension related to grantseeking, research that tension, and write a brief position paper about that tension that addresses the implications of that issue with real examples.

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In-class activities and homework (10%)

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. Additionally, each assignment should be well-researched, respectful of the intended audience, grammatically and stylistically sound, and be rhetorically effective for its intended purpose.

Each major assignment will have **two** deadlines: a **feedback** deadline and a **grade-only** deadline. If you turn in your assignment by the first deadline, you will receive personalized feedback as well as a letter grade. If you turn in your assignment by the second deadline, you will receive only a letter grade and summative feedback that reflects trends across the class.

In compliance with relevant privacy laws (FERPA), I must discuss grades with you in confidence. 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 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 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 review material you might have missed; however, you will not be able to make up activities missed in class for credit.

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If you miss four or more classes, I will advise you to drop the course. Once you miss three classes, you will need to meet with me to discuss a plan of action to avoid further disruption in your learning.

This class depends on your engagement and participation, meaning that you must be not only physically present, but mentally present, and ready to work in class. Additionally, I expect you to use technology (computers, phones, etc.) with care and consideration for others. If you are working on assignments for other classes, you will not earn points for in-class activities.

Communication

I will use Google Classroom for class-wide communication. I will post any important announcements, updates, or changes on the Stream for our class. The best way to contact me is through email at erin.carlson@mail.wvu.edu or ebc00001@mix.wvu.edu (they go to the same account). I check my email regularly between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

I am always happy to meet with you to talk about your work, your life, and your plans for the future. My office hours are noted at the top of the syllabus, and I do my best to be available and present during those times in my office; however, I sometimes have to schedule meetings during that period, so if you'd like to speak with me, it is always best to set up an appointment.

Community health

Sicknesses abound these days, so please…If you are sick, do not come to class. (Part of my generous absence policy is to try and keep us all healthy.) 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. Writers at all levels improve by writing, by receiving timely feedback, and by writing some more. Late work interrupts that process. As a way to mitigate the possibility of late work, every assignment has two possible deadlines (see above). Barring extenuating circumstances that must be discussed with me in advance, **I do not accept late work.** Finally, please remember that the end of the semester imposes a final deadline on all of us. I do not give incompletes except in extraordinary circumstances.

Intellectual property, academic integrity, and generative AI

Intellectual property is an increasingly relevant concern in both academic and professional spaces. I expect that the work you submit in this course will be your **original intellectual contribution**. Any academic dishonesty (including, according to WVU's standards, plagiarism, cheating, and fabrication/falsification) will result in a failing grade of 10% for the assignment.

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In regard to generative AI: AI is here to stay and there are beneficial uses for it; however, outsourcing all of your writing is not an effective practice and will not yield the results that this course is designed to deliver. There are also a plethora of ethical issues tied up in AI (low-paying content moderation jobs; environmental impacts; data privacy; etc.) that I would prefer to not contribute to during our time together. For those reasons, I ask that you **do not use** generative AI platforms to complete assignments in this class, unless specifically instructed otherwise (e.g. experimenting with a platform with intention). Not acknowledging AI-generated work will be treated as academic dishonesty (see above).

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

Our classroom will be a respectful and supportive environment for everyone. 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 [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. 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. [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. Part of college is learning how to manage stress and difficult situations, so I want to encourage you to be cognizant of your own wellness and to advocate for yourself in every space, including this class. I look forward to learning with you this semester!

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Unit 1 | Surveying the landscape of grantseeking
Week 1: So…what is a grant?

	Monday, January 13 by 4:00 p.m.	**Thursday, January 16** by 11:59 p.m.
Reading		1. *S4G* Intro 2. Lesson 2 (PDF)
Writing		Goal setting document
In-Class	Introductions	

Week 2: Seeking out funding opportunities

	Monday, January 20 by 4:00 p.m.	**Thursday, January 23** by 11:59 p.m.
Reading		1. *S4G* Chapters 1 & 2 2. Top tips and sources to find grants
Writing	Complete survey	Funding opportunity brainstorming sheet
In-Class	No class, MLK Jr. Day	

Week 3: Unpacking opportunities and grantmaker expectations

	Monday, January 27 by 4:00 p.m.	**Thursday, January 30** by 11:59 p.m.
Reading	1. Lesson 3 (PDF) 2. Hart-Davidson, What do I have to do to get funded? 3. U.S. lawmakers tell DOJ… 4. Optional, but timely: What contractor and grantees need to know…	Roundtable 1 (PDF)
Writing	1. Funding opportunity presentation and summary (Overview) 2. Reading response	Reflection activity on presentations
In-Class	Funding opportunity presentations Resources scavenger hunt	

Unit 2 | Understanding RFPs and the grantseeking process
Week 4: Matching project ideas with grant opportunities

	Monday, February 3 by 4:00 p.m.	**Thursday, February 6** by 11:59 p.m.
Reading	1. Lessons 4 & 5 (PDF) 2. A celebrated startup promised… 3. Revisit *SFG* Introduction	Start reading example RFP and application

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Writing	Reading response	Be working on your annotations
In-Class	Visit to the MPLS Downtown Library Stakeholder and storytelling activity	

Week 5: Federal grants; RFPs and reviewer criteria

	Monday, February 10 by 4:00 p.m.	**Thursday, February 13** by 11:59 p.m.
Reading	1. Example RFP, grant app (PDF) 2. Porter, What reviewers want… 3. Some farmers left in limbo…	Understanding RFPs
Writing	1. Annotations on example RFP, application 2. Peruse website linked below; come prepared with questions for Colleen	Select RFPs for comparison essay
In-Class	Special guest: Colleen Benison, ECAS Research Office Federal grants and their babies Grant review activity	

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

	Monday, February 17 by 4:00 p.m.	**Thursday, February 20** by 11:59 p.m.
Reading	1. *S4G* Chapter 3 2. Lesson 10 (PDF) 3. What Philanthropy Elites… Also, if you have time, please review the example letters folder.	Roundtable 3 (PDF)
Writing	1. Reading response 2. Peruse website linked below; come prepared with questions for Kelly	RFP comparison essay feedback deadline
In-Class	Class meeting moved to Zoom; click this link to join Special guest: Kelly Karbowicz Riley, IPS Foundation Foundation grants Genre examples	

Unit 3 | Crafting effective application packages
Week 7: Writing narratives and assembling packages

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	Monday, February 24 by 4:00 p.m.	**Thursday, February 27** by 11:59 p.m.
Reading	1. *S4G* Chapter 4 2. Lesson 6 (PDF) 3. Lesson 9 (PDF)	Success/unsuccessful application
Writing	1. More formalized MPLS project ideas 2. RFP comparison essay grade-only deadline	Select grant narrative for storytelling analysis
In-Class	Special guest: Erik Carlson, Morgantown Area Partnership Mapping out story narratives	

Week 8: Need statements + goals, objectives, and methods

	Monday, March 3 by 4:00 p.m.	**Thursday, March 6** by 11:59 p.m.
Reading	1. *S4G* Chapters 5, 6 2. Lessons 7, 8 (PDF) 3. Florida arts organizations…	Roundtable 2 (PDF)
Writing	1. MPLS project pitch 2. Please bring an accessible copy of the narrative you're using for the storytelling analysis	1. Storytelling analysis grade + feedback deadline (11:59 p.m.) 2. Please fill out the MPLS project ranking survey
In-Class	Measuring outcomes MPLS project pitches (with Abby in attendance)	
	Note: Friday, March 7 at 7 p.m., screening of *Small Town Universe* featuring EBC as a panelist for discussion following the film; Oglebay/Ming Hsieh Hall G20	

Week 9: Evaluation, future funding, budgets, and all dat cash

	Monday, March 10 by 4:00 p.m.	**Thursday, March 13** by 11:59 p.m.
Reading	1. *S4G* Chapters 7 & 8 2. Lessons 11 & 12 (PDF) 3. Philly anti-violence gun program…	Be researching for the application project
Writing	1. Fill out team assignment survey **BY NOON** 2. Come up with questions for Megan, see links below 3. Storytelling analysis grade-only deadline (11:59 p.m.)	MPLS project scope of work
In-Class	Special guest: Megan Faver Hartline, The	

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	Grants Clearinghouse Budget activity	

Week 10: Spring Break

	Monday, March 17	**Thursday, March 20**
Reading		
Writing		
In-Class		

Week 11: Assembling compelling narratives

	Monday, March 24 by 4:00 p.m.	**Thursday, March 27** by 11:59 p.m.
Reading	Review *S4G* Chps. 4-6, if needed Lesson 14 (PDF) Aronoff, How to write an effective…	
Writing	Funding leads summary	Funding opportunity annotation
In-Class	Special guest: Terra Rogerson, WVU librarian Project management and workflows Working with qual/quan data	

Week 12: Developing materials

	Monday, March 31 by 4:00 p.m.	**Thursday, April 3** by 11:59 p.m.
Reading		
Writing		Draft of needs/problem statement
In-Class	No official class meeting; use this time to develop your materials	

Week 13: Community impacts and additional documents

	Monday, April 7 by 4:00 p.m.	**Thursday, April 10** by 11:59 p.m.
Reading	1. *S4G* Chapter 9 2. Lessons 13 (PDF)	Lesson 15 (PDF)
Writing	Full draft of **narrative** (intro, needs statement, goals/outcomes, methods/plan of action, evaluation)	

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In-Class	Writing workshop	

Week 14: Looking beyond the grant package

	Monday, April 14 by 4:00 p.m.	**Thursday, April 17** by 11:59 p.m.
Reading	1. *S4G* Chapter 10 2. Lessons 16, 17 (PDF)	
Writing	Full draft of **all package** components (narrative, budget, budget justification, and any other components)	Draft of funding action plan (if you'd like some feedback)
In-Class	Writing workshop Meta documents	
Notes	Don't forget about Week of Writing Activities, available on this schedule! You can earn 5 points of extra credit applied to any assignment you want for attending any of these events and sending me a short summary (100-150 words) of what you learned.	

Unit 4 | Considering the impact of grants in our communities

Week 15: After the dust settles…now what?

	Monday, April 21 by 4:00 p.m.	**Thursday, April 24** by 11:59 p.m.
Reading	1. Ray, Hollowed Out 2. NEH Get Going Guidebook (PDF)	
Writing	Reading response Optional: Draft of materials to EBC by 11:59 p.m. if you want feedback on them	
In-Class		

Week 16: Reflecting on the course, sharing our work

	Monday, April 28 by 4:00 p.m.	**Thursday, May 1** by 11:59 p.m.
Reading		
Writing	Presentation slides (upload to this folder)	
In-Class	Presentations to MPLS	

Week 17: Finals Week

> Final materials due on Monday 5/5, anytime
> - Final deliverables for MPLS project (upload to this folder)
>   - Narrative, budget, budget justification, funding action plan, letter of

transmittal
- Final postmortem report (Classroom assignment portal)
- Team survey ([click here](); also available on Classroom)
- Final reflective project (Classroom assignment portal)

And please fill out your SPOT survey if you would like to let me know what was effective about the class and what you think could make it better in the future.