

# Course Syllabus for English 3100: Business Writing

## **Instructor Information**

Instructor: Lori Beth De Hertogh

Office Hours: Mon 12:30-1:30 & by appointment

Virtual Hours: I typically respond to emails within 24 hrs. of receipt.

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## **Course Information**

Course: English 3100: Business Writing

Term: Second Summer Session, 2012

Section: 101

Location: Sanford Hall 202

Days/Time: MTWR 10:20-12:25

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

A significant complaint that many business employers have today is that their employees don't write well, that they do not understand how and when to use standard business writing genres, and that they continue to communicate poorly even after being informed of their weaknesses. Employers often end up dismissing such employees or, at the very least, avoid giving them promotions or challenging projects to work on. This class is intended to help ensure that you don't end up one as one of those employees.

Throughout our time together, we will study the rhetorical principles and writing practices necessary for producing effective business letters, memos, reports, and collaborative projects in professional contexts. The curriculum is informed by current research in rhetoric and professional writing and is guided by the needs and practices of business, industry, and society at large.

Another major aspect of this class is teaching you how to work effectively and professionally in collaborative settings. Graduates of business schools must be prepared to spend a significant portion of their working hours reading, drafting, and revising formal and informal communications both individually and collaboratively. The reading and writing assignments in this course are intended to help prepare you for this type of workload.

## **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

Upon successful completion of this course, you should be able to:

- Analyze written and verbal communications and evaluate their usefulness
- Think critically about rhetoric and audience awareness
- Prepare clear, powerful messages using logical arguments and effective organization
- Design visually attractive documents with informative and eye-catching visual elements
- Use technology to effectively present your messages
- Use non-verbal communication successfully

## **REQUIRED TEXTS & MATERIALS**

- Courtland L. Bovee and John V. Thill. *Business Communication Today*, 10th edition. (Rental)
- Daily access to the internet, ASU e-mail account, ASULearn, and a computer with MS Word software, graphics and table programs/features
- Reliable method of backing up work
- Approximately \$5 on an Appcard for classroom printing

## **METHODS OF TEACHING**

Reading, lecture, discussion, online forums, individual and collaborative writing and speaking, individual and collaborative revision

## **ATTENDANCE**

You are permitted one free absence. If you miss more than the allotted amount, your final letter grade will be reduced by 1/3 for each absence, unless there are extenuating circumstances. If you miss more than three classes, you risk failing the course.

In addition, you will be counted absent if you:

- Arrive more than 15 minutes late
- Leave early
- Sleep
- Use unapproved electronic devices (laptops, cell phones, ipods, etc.)
- Read outside materials or do work for another class
- Disrupt class—this includes chatting, text-messaging, inappropriately using a computer, or generally disrupting the flow of class

If you do any of the above, I will ask you to leave class and you will be counted absent. Dismissal from class will count toward your allotted class absences.

I'm certainly not a Luddite, but I do have a bit of a beef with personal electronic devices in class, so please leave them at home or tucked away in your book-bag. If you use them, or if they vibrate incessantly, I'll ask you to leave class.

I do not differentiate between excused and unexcused absences. Once you are tardy 2 times, it will count as one class absence. You are tardy after class has begun. If you come in late, it is your responsibility to notify me or you may be marked as absent instead of tardy.

## **COMPUTER LAB**

Once class has begun, you should not use a computer or printer, unless directed to do so. If you are using a computer/printer once class has begun, I will automatically count you as absent without warning. If your use of the computer is distracting, I will ask you to leave class. Dismissal from class will count toward your allotted class absences.

## GRADING SCALE

The final grade you receive is based on a 100 point scale.

Points	Grade	Quality
94-100	A	Exceptional
90-93	A-	Outstanding
80-89	B+ through B-	Praiseworthy
70-79	C+ through C-	Satisfactory
60-69	D+ through D-	Less than Satisfactory
0-59	F	Inadequate

## COURSEWORK

Drafts	16 points
Individual Presentations	3 points
Memo of Introduction	5 points
Email Message	7 points
Positive & Negative Letters	17 points
Jobs Portfolio	20 points
Proposal	25 points
Self-Evaluation Report	7 points

## COURSEWORK OVERVIEW

Below is a brief overview of each major assignment you will complete for the course. All assignments must follow the guidelines of the assignment in regards to length, content, and focus to be considered for credit. Assignments must also be submitted in the designated format (i.e. electronic or hard copy) to be considered for credit.

- ❖ **Drafts:** For each major assignment, you will complete one draft which is worth 4 points.
- ❖ **Individual Presentations:** At the beginning of the semester, I will provide a sign-up sheet on ASULearn for individual presentations. At some point during the semester, each of you will spend the first part of the designated class period sharing with us a website, news source, or genre of business writing.
- ❖ **Brief Messages:** This part of the course will focus on showing you how to create practical formal and informal messages for conveying information.
- ❖ **Positive & Negative Letters Packet:** This assignment will help you develop rhetorical strategies for delivering both positive and negative information.
- ❖ **Jobs Portfolio:** This is pretty straight forward—we will dedicate this portion of the class to job-seeking strategies and documents.

- ❖ **Proposal:** For this project, you will write a proposal on the topic of your choice. Your proposal will be lengthy, research-based, and include several components, including a presentation.
- ❖ **Self-Evaluation Report:** For this assignment, you will create a reflective report based upon previous work you have completed for the course.

## **RUBRICS & HANDOUTS**

I will provide a handout and grading criteria/rubric for each assignment specifying the general focus, formatting requirements, length, etc. Many students use the rubric and handout as a checklist to ensure they have covered all aspects of the assignment.

## **FEEDBACK**

My goal is to return all work to you within one week of submission, if not sooner. If you ever have questions about my feedback or a grade, please do not hesitate to ask.

## **LATE WORK POLICY**

I do not accept anything late unless there are extenuating circumstances. Having a hangover or your dog eating your homework is not extenuating. Having the flu or a family crisis is. Documentation is required for such circumstances. Your assignment is late once class has begun.

## **ASU LEARN**

I will post materials such as the course syllabus, handouts, writing resources, power-point presentations, etc. on ASU Learn. In-class assignments such as draft workshops, in-class work, homework assignments, etc. will not be posted on ASU Learn. I will also use ASU Learn to keep track of your course grades and attendance as well as to post important class messages. Please plan to check ASU Learn daily.

## **EXTRA CREDIT**

There are no extra credit opportunities available, so be prepared to perform well on each of your assignments!

## **CLASS READINGS**

There will likely be readings for each class, so please bring your textbook to class daily, unless otherwise directed.

## **COURSE ETIQUETTE**

Simply put, this means that we should always be polite and respectful to one another. This is an academic learning environment and should be treated as such.

## **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Students are expected to follow the University's Academic Integrity Code. If you are caught plagiarizing, you risk failing the course. To read the conditions of the AIC, visit the following website: <http://studentconduct.appstate.edu> and click on "Academic Integrity Code" for the policy. A link is also posted for you on ASU Learn.

### **ABSENCES FOR RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES**

Students requesting excused absences for religious observances as required by their faith must complete the Absence for Religious Observance form. (I will provide you with a copy of this form should you need one.) You are responsible for submitting this form no later than two weeks after the first day of class. You will be allowed two excused absences for religious observances.

For the purposes of this policy, the term “religious observances” shall include religious holidays or holy days or similar observances that require absence from class. You will be afforded the opportunity to make up tests or other work missed due to an excused absence for a religious observance. Specific arrangements to make up work will be made upon receipt of your absence form.

### **ASU ACCOMMODATIONS STATEMENT**

Appalachian State University is committed to making reasonable accommodations for individuals with documented qualifying disabilities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Those seeking accommodations based on a substantially limiting disability must contact and register with The Office of Disability Services (ODS) at [www.ods.appstate.edu](http://www.ods.appstate.edu) or 828-262-3056. Once registration is complete, individuals will meet with ODS staff to discuss eligibility and appropriate accommodations.

### **UNIVERSITY WRITING CENTER**

The writing center may very well be your best friend throughout your time in this course. It's free, it's easy, and it's well worth your time. For additional information, please visit the following: [www.writingcenter.appstate.edu](http://www.writingcenter.appstate.edu)

### **TENTATIVE SCHEDULE**

Please use this tentative schedule to keep up with assignment due dates. If something changes, I will let you know in advance. Be aware that additional readings/assignments may be assigned in class and some readings may occasionally be replaced by others. It is therefore in your best interest to regularly attend class so that you are up-to-date on assignments. If you ask me what is due and it is outlined on the schedule, I will refer you to this document.

Please note that all course assignments will be submitted electronically via ASULearn unless otherwise indicated. **All assignments are due by the beginning of our class period.**

<b>Week/Day</b>	<b>Tasks</b>
<b>Week One</b>	
Monday, July 2	<p><u>In-Class Activities</u> Introduction &amp; Course Syllabus</p> <p><u>Review on ASULearn</u>—Complete by Tuesday’s Class Email Etiquette Power-Point Academic Integrity Code Handout: Memo of Introduction Handout: Individual Presentations</p> <p><u>Reading</u>—Complete by Tuesday’s Class Chapter 1—Achieving Success (Skim for main ideas) Chapter 4—Planning Business Messages (Skim for main ideas) Chapter 6—Memos 164-167 &amp; OWL at Purdue Link on ASULearn Chapter 7—Effective Email Messages 179-185</p> <p><u>Homework</u>—Complete by Tuesday’s Class Memo of Introduction Sign up for Presentation Time on ASULearn under “Individual Presentations &amp; Brief Messages” topic</p>
Tuesday, July 3	<p><u>Assignments Due</u> <b>Memo of Introduction</b></p> <p><u>In-Class Activities</u> Discuss Readings Review Handout: Email Message</p> <p><u>Homework</u>—Complete by Thursday’s Class Draft #1 Email Message</p>
Wednesday, July 4	<i>No Class—State Holiday</i>
Thursday, July 5	<p><u>Assignments Due</u> <b>Draft #1 Email Message</b>—bring four hard copies of your draft to class &amp; upload to ASULearn</p> <p><u>In-Class Activities</u> Discuss Readings Peer Workshop</p> <p><u>Homework</u>—Complete by Monday’s Class Email Message</p>

Reading—Complete by Monday’s Class  
Chapter 8—Writing Routine and Positive Messages  
Chapter 10—Writing Persuasive Messages  
Chapter 9—Writing Negative Messages

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## Week Two

Monday, July 9

Assignments Due  
**Email Message**

In-Class Activities  
Discuss Readings  
Review Handout: Positive & Negative Letters

Reading—Complete by Tuesday’s Class  
Zinsser Article “Writing in Your Job” on ASULearn under “Writing, Citation, and Other Resources” topic

Homework—Complete by Tuesday’s Class  
Draft #1 Positive & Negative Letters Packet

Tuesday, July 10

Assignments Due  
**Draft #1 Positive & Negative Letters Packet**—bring four hard copies of your draft to class & upload to ASULearn

In-Class Activities  
Peer Workshop

Reading—Complete by Wednesday’s Class  
Zinsser Article “Clutter” on ASULearn under “Writing, Citation, and Other Resources” topic

Wednesday, July 11

In-Class Activities  
TBA

Reading—Complete by Thursday’s Class  
Chapter 18—Building Careers and Writing Resumes  
Resume & Cover Letter links on ASULearn under “Resumes, Cover Letters, and Interviews” topic

Homework—Complete by Thursday’s Class  
\*Locate sample job ads (newspapers, online job listings, etc.), print out and bring to class

Thursday, July 12

Assignments Due

**Positive & Negative Letters Packet**

In-Class Activities

Visit from Career Development Center

Discuss Readings

Review Handout: Jobs Portfolio

Reading—Complete by Monday’s Class

“Why I Tossed Your Resume” article on ASULearn under resume and cover letter topic

Homework—Complete by Monday’s Class

Draft #1 Jobs Portfolio

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**Week Three**

Monday, July 16

Assignments Due

**Draft #1 Jobs Portfolio**—bring four hard copies of your draft to class & upload to ASULearn

In-Class Activities

Discuss Readings

Peer Workshop

Sign up for an interview time

Homework—Complete by Tuesday’s Class

Use “Perfect Interview” program—see link on ASULearn under resume/cover letter topic

Tuesday, July 17

In-Class Activities

Practice Interviewing Techniques

Wednesday, July 18

Assignments Due

**No Class: Mock Interviews—Jobs Portfolio Due at Interview**

Reading—Complete by Thursday’s Class

Chapter 11 – Finding, Evaluating, and Processing Information

Chapter 12 – Designing Visual Communication

Chapter 13—Planning Reports & Proposals

Chapter 14—Writing Reports & Proposals

Homework—Complete by Thursday’s Class

Review Handout: Proposals



Thursday, July 19

In-Class Activities

Discuss Readings  
Discuss Proposal Handout  
Brainstorm Proposal Topics

Homework—Complete by Monday's Class  
Proposal Work Plan

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**Week Four**

Monday, July 23

Assignments Due

**Proposal Work Plan**—bring four hard copies of your plan to class (do not upload to ASULearn)

Tuesday, July 24

Library Session on Proposal Research—Details TBA

Wednesday, July 25

Assignments Due

**Draft #1 Proposal**—bring four hard copies of your draft to class & upload to ASULearn

In-Class Activities

Peer Workshop

Thursday, July 26

In-Class Activities

Review Handout: Self-Evaluation Report

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**Week Five**

Monday, July 30

Complete Online Discussion Forum on ASULearn—due by 11:55 p.m. Monday night

Homework—Complete by Tuesday's Class

Revise your proposal. Next, upload your proposal for Tuesday's online draft workshop by 11:55 p.m. to link on ASULearn titled "Proposal Draft Workshop" under course assignments topic

Tuesday, July 31

In-Class Activities

Online Draft Workshop for Proposal—must be completed by 11:55 p.m. Tuesday. See ASULearn workshop link for details

Wednesday, August 1

Individual Workday—Complete All Assignments for Thursday & Friday!

Thursday, August 2

Assignments Due

**Proposal** (extended due date to 11:55 p.m.)

Friday, August 3

Assignments Due

**Self-Evaluation Report** (extended due date to 11:55 p.m.)

Note: Final Grades will be posted by Monday, August 6<sup>th</sup>

NOTE: This syllabus is tentative and may be amended at my discretion. Every effort will be made to cover the material identified herein, but occasional changes may be made for educational purposes or scheduling reasons.