

English 201W, section 1T3RA: Writing for Business

Professor Nancy Agabian

Office: Klapper 318 Office hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 3 - 4 pm

Phone: 718 997-4619 E-mail: [nancyagabian@yahoo.com](mailto:nancyagabian@yahoo.com)

**Required Text:** Essentials of Business Communication, 7<sup>th</sup> edition, Mary Ellen Guffey (South-Western College Publishing)

**Objective:** This course will introduce you to some of the written documents and protocols that you will encounter in various business situations. The objective of the course is to give you enough business writing experience to make you a more competent and confident writer and to prepare you for that aspect of the professional world.

The text for the class covers many aspects of business literacy as well as providing models of many types of business writing. However, expert writing skills cannot be developed by solely reading a textbook. Writing is a skill that must be honed through practice, revision, and feedback. The writing assignments that you will be given this semester will provide you with ample opportunity to cultivate your writing skills and increase your fluency in business rhetoric.

**Participation:** Regular attendance is important as we'll be covering a lot of material and doing a lot of group work during class time. If you miss a class, it's your responsibility to find out what you missed and to keep up with the assigned work (exchange phone numbers and/or e-mail addresses with a classmate or two for that purpose). Punctuality is also important; latecomers disrupt the class and miss part of the lesson. Please come to class on time, and don't leave the classroom unless you have an emergency to attend to. Please turn off cell phones and put them away before class. Any disruptions to the class or lack of your presence will result in a lower participation grade and will jeopardize your chances for a high final grade.

**Assignments:** There will be ten weekly writing assignments; these writings will be emails, memos or letters, about a page long. There will also be one longer assignment (about 10 pages), a consumer report, due at the end of the semester. You will write a rough draft of an assignment, bring copies of it to class for peer review, then revise it and produce a final draft to turn in the following class session. If you don't hand in copies of your peer's comments from the peer review with your final draft, I'll deduct one letter grade. Late papers will also be lowered one grade for each class session they are late. Please speak with me if you are having trouble turning in an assignment on time because of some unforeseeable event.

**Evaluation:**

Weekly writing assignments: 60%

Final consumer report: 25%

Participation: 15%

If you wish to know how you are doing in terms of your grades or to discuss your progress in the course, make an appointment with me and we'll have a conference.

**Schedule:** Homework (**HW**) is listed under the date assigned and due the following class

session. Class content, readings and assignments are listed below. Please note: not all class activities are listed here, and this schedule is subject to change with our class needs. If you are late or absent, please check with Nancy or a student to confirm what you missed. In class we will mainly review and discuss the reading, do related group exercises, work on grammar and editing, and discuss business issues.

1/29: Introduction to Business Writing

**HW:** Read pp. 2-4, 15-17, 18-20, 32-33, 39-45, 59-61 (Direct/Indirect Pattern)

1/31: Review Chapters 1-3. Exercises on Concise Wording.

**HW:** Read pp. 101-103, 107-108, 112-114

2/5: Discuss Information Memos; discussion and exercise on Parallelism, p. 66.

**HW:** Draft 5.4, p. 124

2/7: Peer review of 5.4; Writing Effective Sentences, pp. 61-63

**HW:** Revise 5.4

Read about Reply Emails, pp. 105-111, 114-116

2/12: No class

2/14: Turn in 5.4. Discuss Emails and Reply format. More exercises on Concise Wording.

**HW:** Draft 5.14, p. 128

2/19: Peer review 5.14. More exercises on Writing Effective Sentences.

**HW:** Revise 5.14

Read about Direct Request Letters, pp. 134-137

2/21: Turn in 5.14. Discussion of Direct Request Letters; discussion and exercises on Active/Passive Voice.

**HW:** Draft 6.5, p. 161

2/26: Peer review 6.5. More exercises on Writing Effective Sentences.

**HW:** Revise 6.5

Read about Direct Claim Letters, pp. 137-139

2/28: Turn in 6.5. Discuss Direct Claim Letters. Discussion and exercises on Developing Emphasis.

**HW:** Draft 6.13

3/4: Peer review 6.13. Research procedure: locating personnel and job titles. Grammar: "However" as a conjunctive adverb.

- HW:** Revise 6.13  
Read about Persuasive Writing, pp. 172-173, 175-177
- 3/6: Turn in 6.13. Discuss Persuasive Writing. Discussion and exercises on Developing Unity, pp. 66-68.  
**HW:** Draft 7.11, p. 193
- 3/11: Peer review 7.11. Comma review; restrictive/nonrestrictive clauses and phrases.  
**HW:** Revise 7.11  
Read about Sales Letters, pp. 179-184  
Find an example (good or bad) of a sales letter in your junk mail or spam.
- 3/13: Turn in 7.11. Discuss Sales Letters. Discuss Abraham Maslow's "Hierarchy of Needs." Review examples of sales letters.  
**HW:** Draft 7.17, p. 196
- 3/18: Peer review 7.17. Grammar: who vs. whom. Review more sales letters.  
**HW:** Revise 7.17  
Read about Delivering Bad News, pp. 201-202, 205-210
- 3/20: Turn in 7.17. Discuss Delivering Bad News. Review Passive Voice.  
**HW:** Draft 8.6, p. 228  
Read about Preventing Legal Problems, pp. 204-205
- 3/25: Peer review 8.6. Discuss legal issues.  
**HW:** Revise 8.6  
Read about Breaking Bad News to Employees, pp. 217-218
- 3/27: Turn in 8.6. Discuss Breaking Bad News to Employees. Discuss Transitional Expressions, p. 69.  
**HW:** Draft of Breaking Bad News to Employees (assignment handout in class)
- 4/1: Peer review of Breaking Bad News to Employees letter. Review subordinate clauses.  
**HW:** Read about Justification Reports, pp. 238-242, 244-249, 251-252
- 4/3: Turn in Bad News Letter. Discuss Team Justification Report Assignment, 9.8, p. 261 and p. 265-66  
**HW:** Read about Formal Reports, pp. 272, 290-302
- 4/8: Discuss Formal Report assignment, 10.16, p. 310; Team Justification Meeting  
**HW:** Read about Résumés, pp. 383-395; if you've already written a résumé, please also read pp. 396-402.
- 4/10: Discuss Résumés, 13.9 and 13.10, p. 414. Team Justification Meeting  
**HW:** Read about cover letters, pp. 403-409

- 4/15: Discuss Cover Letters. Team Justification Meeting.  
**HW:** Read Chapter 12 on oral presentations, pp. 345-366  
Draft of cover letter and résumé, 13.9 and 13.10
- 4/17: Peer review of Cover Letter and Résumés. Final Team Justification Meeting.
- 4/22: No class
- 4/24: No class; Deadline to submit by email 13.9 & 13.10, Cover Letter and Résumé.
- 4/29: Presentations of 9.8, Team Justification Reports.  
**HW:** Read about researching Formal Reports, pp. 273-280,
- 5/1: Discussion of research for Formal Reports.  
**HW:** Read about organizing and presenting data, pp. 280-290
- 5/6: Discussion of organization and presentation. Review of headings.  
**HW:** Draft of Formal Report, 10.16
- 5/8: Peer review of Formal Report, 10.16.
- 5/13: Turn in final draft of Formal Report, 10.16. Last day of class.