

ENGL 3774: Business Writing Syllabus

ENGL 3774: 92852
Pamplin Hall 2001, 9:30-10:45
Fall Semester 2010
Mr. Gogan
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Course Description

Business writers face complex rhetorical situations. In business, even the briefest email carries ramifications—whether ethical or economic, personal or professional. ENGL 3774 engages these complexities and ramifications by offering you theoretically informed, situated practice in business writing. You will compose resumes, letters, emails, memos, reports, and policy documents as you progress through a client project and three micro-units. You should expect to write to, and for, actual businesses, and these compositions will require both primary and secondary research.

Course Goals

During this course, you will:

- Apply theories of rhetoric, writing, and communication to business practice.
- Write in a variety of workplace genres including resumes, letters, emails, memos, reports, and policy documents.
- Compose purposeful texts—written, visual, and oral—for diverse audiences.
- Conduct and write from original workplace research.
- Meet product-focused deadlines.

Course Texts and Materials

1. Paul V. Anderson. *Technical Communication: A Reader-Centered Approach*, 7th ed. Wadsworth/Cengage Learning, 2010. (TC)
2. Course Readings on Scholar Site (SS)
NOTE: You should print all supplementary course readings and handouts prior to class. You must bring a hard copy of the texts with you to class.
3. Postage for 9 Business Letters (9 stamps @ \$0.44 each = \$3.96)
4. Two-Pocket Folder (for submitting a hard copy of each portfolio, and all of the contributing work)
5. Compact Disc and Case (for the electronic copy of your **final** portfolio)

Course Requirements

During the semester, you will be working in teams and submitting interim deliverables to the course scholar site. At the end of the semester, you will be submitting **all** of your work, including draft work, to me in a final portfolio. Therefore, it is imperative that you keep hard copies as well as electronic copies of each version of your work. Do not throw your work away and do not “save over” files.

Portfolios will be submitted as a hard copy in a folder as well as an electronic copy through the scholar site dropbox function. We will be using our course’s scholar site to submit electronic copies of your individual portfolios and to exchange our collaborative work. Your final portfolio will be submitted on a compact disc.

In order to establish and maintain a system of organization, we will be using the following file naming system: “ENGL 3774-Last Name-Project Short Title-2 Digit Year-2 Digit Month-2 Digit

Day-Any additional description needed". For example, the title of a draft of a brochure that I created today for the Client Project would look like this: ENGL 3774-Gogan-Client Project-10-08-24-Brochure Draft

Please refer to the course scholar site for detailed descriptions of the following assignments.

Memos (10 points, or 1 possible point per memo)

Due: 8/26; 9/09; 9/14; 9/16; 9/23; 9/30; 10/26 (in-class); 11/02 (in-class); 11/11 (in-class); 11/18 (in-class)

Business Correspondence Portfolio (15 points)

Full Portfolio Due: 10/05 or 10/07

Employment Portfolio (15 points)

Full Portfolio Due: 10/19

Client Portfolio (40 points)

Full Portfolio Due: 12/07

Peer Review Sessions (10 points, or 2.5 possible points per peer review day)

Due: 8/31; 9/21; 9/28; 11/18

Popular Press Business Rhetoric Report (10 points)

Due: 12/16

Final Portfolio

Due on Compact Disc: 12/16

Course Grade

The total points possible for this class are 100. Your final course grade will be determined by the number of percentage points you earn: A 100-90; B 89-80; C 79-70; D 69-60; F 59-0.

Course Policies and Principles

Late Assignment Policy

All writings are due at the beginning of class; anything turned in later in the class is considered late.

Missing Assignment Policy

All course requirements must be submitted to pass the course.

Attendance Policy

Daily attendance is required. If you miss four classes, your grade may be lowered five percentage points for each subsequent absence.

Inclusive Language Policy

The use of inclusive language is an ethical obligation in business writing. Inclusive language, for instance, means using the word *businessperson* instead of *businessman* or *businesswoman*. For more information on inclusive language see pages 282-3 of the Anderson text and Chapter 9 on the text's website: www.cengage.com/english/anderson7e

Publication Policy

Any written course work may be used for pedagogical purposes within our class. Should a particular piece of work prove useful in another or subsequent class, or in a publication, as that piece's writer, you decide whether that piece can be used. Accordingly, I must receive your consent through a completed permission form. Denying consent will not affect your course grade in any way.

Academic Honesty Policy

The Honor Code will be strictly enforced in this course. All assignments submitted shall be considered graded work, unless otherwise noted. All aspects of your coursework are covered by the Honor System. Any suspected violations of the Honor Code will be promptly reported to the Honor System. According to the Constitution of the Virginia Tech Honor System "The fundamental beliefs underlying and reflected in the Honor Code are: (1) that trust in a person is a positive force in making that person worthy of trust, (2) that every student has the right to live in an academic environment that is free from the injustices caused by any form of intellectual dishonesty, and (3) that the honesty and integrity of all members of the university community contribute to its quest for Truth" (see <http://www.honorsystem.vt.edu/>).

The following is the Honor Code written verbatim from the VT Honor System Constitution:

The Honor Code is the University policy that expressly forbids the following academic violations:

1. Cheating -- Cheating includes the actual giving or receiving of any unauthorized aid or assistance or the actual giving or receiving of any unfair advantage on any form of academic work, or attempts thereof.
2. Plagiarism -- Plagiarism includes the copying of the language, structure, ideas and/or thoughts of another and passing off same as one's own, original work, or attempts thereof.
3. Falsification -- Falsification includes the statement of any untruth, either verbally or in writing, with respect to any circumstances relevant to one's academic work, or attempts thereof. Such acts include, but are not limited to, the forgery of official signatures, tampering with official records, fraudulently adding or deleting information on academic documents such as add/drop requests, or fraudulently changing an examination or other academic work after the testing period or due date of the assignment.

Virginia Tech's Principles of Community

Virginia Tech is a public land-grant university, committed to teaching and learning, research, and outreach to the Commonwealth of Virginia, the nation, and the world community. Learning from the experiences that shape Virginia Tech as an institution, we acknowledge those aspects of our legacy that reflected bias and exclusion. Therefore, we adopt and practice the following principles as fundamental to our on-going efforts to increase access and inclusion and to create a community that nurtures learning and growth for all of its members:

- We affirm the inherent dignity and value of every person and strive to maintain a climate for work and learning based on mutual respect and understanding.
- We affirm the right of each person to express thoughts and opinions freely. We encourage open expression within a climate of civility, sensitivity, and mutual respect.
- We affirm the value of human diversity because it enriches our lives and the University. We acknowledge and respect our differences while affirming our common humanity.

- We reject all forms of prejudice and discrimination, including those based on age, color, disability, gender, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, and veteran status. We take individual and collective responsibility for helping to eliminate bias and discrimination and for increasing our own understanding of these issues through education, training, and interaction with others.

We pledge our collective commitment to these principles in the spirit of the Virginia Tech motto of Ut Prosim (That I May Serve).

Computer Policy

On particular days, you will need to bring your laptop computer to class. At other times on other days, you may be asked to close your laptop.

Accommodations, Assistance, and Complaints

Accommodations

Reasonable accommodations are available for students who have a disability. Students should contact the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD), 231-3788 (V), 231-1740 (TTY); Susan P. Angle, spangle@vt.edu, www.ssd.vt.edu. "Students with disabilities are responsible for self-identification....To be eligible for services, documentation of the disability from a qualified professional must be presented to SSD upon request. Academic adjustments may include, but are not limited to: priority registration, auxiliary aids, program and course adjustment, exam modifications, oral or sign language interpreters, cassette taping of text/materials, notetakers/readers, or assistive technology."

Instructor Assistance

If you have questions, comments, concerns, etc., please visit me during my office hours, schedule an appointment, call my office, or call me at home—before 9 p.m. please.

Writing Center

The Virginia Tech Writing Center is open (Monday-Friday, 9:00 am-5:00 pm) to all Virginia Tech students, faculty, and staff, at all levels. The Writing Center works with writing and reading assignments from any University course and can also help you with writing projects that are not linked to classes. The Center is free and open for regular appointments or walk-in sessions. For an appointment, call 540-231-5436.

Grade Complaints

If you have a concern about a grade, workload, or any other aspect of the class, please bring it to my attention. Do not hesitate to ask me questions.

Course Calendar (Subject to Change)

8/24 T

Topics:

Syllabus

What is Business Writing?

Business Correspondence: Parody Evaluation

For next class:

Read:

Chapter 1: "Communication, Your Career, and This Book" (TC 3-23)

Chapter 22: "Writing Reader-Centered Letters and Memos" (TC 543-52)

Assigned Business Letter File (SS)

Rhetorical Concepts Handout (SS)

Write:

Memo 1: Justify your interpretation of a rhetorical concept based upon your letter file.

8/26 TH

Topics:

Business Letter Superstructure

Parody Evaluation Group Discussion and Presentations

Brainstorm Business Letter Purpose

For next class:

Read:

"Corresponding Digitally" (TC 448-54)

Print & Read:

Business Correspondence Portfolio Assignment Sheet (SS)

Draft and Upload to Scholar:

3 Business Letters

Download:

Business Letter Peer Review Sheet

Bring:

Laptops to class

8/31 T

Topics:

Business Correspondence Portfolio Assignment

Peer Review

Brainstorm Related Companies

For next class:

Revise:

3 Business Letters; Multiply into 9 Letters

Upload to Scholar:

9 Final Business Letters

Print & Sign:

1 copy of each of the 9 letters

Bring:

9 unsealed envelopes with postage, addressed to each respective company with your address as the return address

Laptops to class

9/02 TR**Topics:**

Peer Response Workday

For next class:**Print & Read:**

Popular Press Business Rhetoric Report Assignment Sheet (SS)

Booth, "How Many 'Rhetorics?'" (SS, 3-22)

Booth, "Judging Rhetoric" (SS, 39-54)

Write and Upload to Scholar (for 9/09):

Responses to each of your peer's letters

Bring:

Laptop to class

9/07 T**Topics:**

Popular Press Business Rhetoric Report Assignment

Wayne Booth's Definition of Rhetoric

Research Popular Press Business Books

For next class:**Write and Upload to Scholar:**

Responses to each of your peer's letters

Write:

Memo 2: Select and list 3 Popular Press Business Books which interest you enough that you would want to read and report on them. Begin with the most interesting.

9/09 TR**Topics:**

Deliver Peer Responses

Popular Press Business Book Selection

Business Memo Superstructure

For next class:**Print & Read:**

Employment Portfolio Assignment Sheet (SS)

Write:

Memo 3: What are your employment goals for the next five years?

Bring:

Laptops to class

9/14 T**Topics:**

Employment Portfolio Assignment Sheet

Scheduling Your Interview

Finding a Job

Job Postings

For next class:**Locate & Print:**

1 Job Posting for a job that you would like to have.

Read:

Chapter 2: "Reader-Centered Communication Process;" Resume sections only (TC 24-49)

VT Career Services: Resumes; especially the samples (SS)

Write:

Memo 4: Brief us on a job opening. Include the position title, position description, as well as the presumed skills, values, and attitudes that this position requires. Attach job posting.

Bring:

Laptops to class

9/16 TR

Business Horizons

Topics:

Resumes

For next class:

Download:

Resume Peer Review Sheet (SS)

Secure:

References

Revise and Upload to Scholar:

Resume

Bring:

Laptop to class

9/21 T

Topics:

Resume Peer Review

For next class:

Revise:

Resume

Print & Read:

Chapter 2: "Reader-Centered Communication Process;" Application Letter sections (TC 49-63)

VT Career Services: Cover Letters, especially the samples (SS)

Write:

Memo 5: Outline the differences between the Application Letter information from TC and the application letter information from Career Services.

Bring:

Laptop to class

9/23 TR

Topics:

Application Letters

For next class:

Revise:

Application Letter

Download:

Application Letter Peer Review Sheet (SS)

Upload to Scholar:

Job Posting

Revised Application Letter

Bring:

Laptop to class

9/28 T

Topics:

Application Letter Peer Review

For next class:

Revise (as needed):

Resume and Application Letter

Read:

"Interviewing Effectively," follow WWW link (TC 59)

VT Career Services: Interviewing Skills (SS)

Write:

Memo 6: Brief us on one interview guideline that you expected and one interview guideline that you did not expect. Refer to the readings. Finally, brief us on your approach to interviews.

Prepare (for 10/05):

Business Correspondence Presentation

9/30 TR

Topics:

Determine Business Correspondence Presentation Order

Interviewing

For next class:

Prepare:

Business Correspondence Presentations and Portfolios

10/05 T

Due:

Business Correspondence Presentations

Business Correspondence Portfolios

For next class:

Prepare:

Business Correspondence Presentations and Portfolios

10/06 W

Fall Focus Career Fair

10/07 TR

Due:

Business Correspondence Presentations

Business Correspondence Portfolios

For next class:

Read:

Chapter 6: "Gathering Reader-Centered Information" (TC 149-64)

"Using Five Reader-Centered Research Methods" (TC 165-88; 188-93 optional)

Skim:

Chapter 18: "Creating Communications with a Team" (TC 456-74)

Chapter 21: "Managing Client and Service-Learning Projects" (TC 524-39)

Print & Read:

Client Project Assignment Sheet (SS)

Bring:

Laptop to class

10/12 T**Topics:**

Introduction to Client Project

Determine Work Teams

Internet Research

Montgomery Museum & Lewis Miller Regional Art Center Website

For next class (10/19):**Read:**

Chapter 9: "Developing an Effective Style" (TC 263-85)

Complete:

Employment Portfolio

Bring:

Headphones and Laptop to class

10/14 TR**NO CLASS—PROFESSIONAL INTERVIEWS INSTEAD OF CLASS****10/19 T****Due:**

Employment Portfolio

Topics:

Policy and Procedure Review and Revision

Docent Document

Style

Research Interviews

For next class:**Read:**

Docent Policies and Procedures Document (SS)

Revise Individually:

Your group's section of the Docent Document. Submit the revised document to scholar.

Bring:

Headphones and Laptop to class

10/21 TR**Topics:**

Policy and Procedure Work Day

Schedule On-Site Research Visits with Client

For next class:**Read:**

Chapter 8: "Drafting Paragraphs, Sections, and Chapters" (TC 207-34)

"Using Seven Reader-Centered Organizational Patterns" (TC 235-62)

Montgomery Museum Brochures (SS)

Finalize Revisions:

To your group's section of the Docent Document. Submit the revised document to scholar.

Bring:

Laptop to class

10/26 T

Topics:

Brochure Revision and Document Development

Select Projects

Drafting

Organizing

Write Memo 7 (In-Class): As a team agree upon and write a detailed work plan for the Brochure Revision and Document Development parts of the Client Project. Include a research plan in this work plan. Alert me to any of your frustrations.

For next class:

Read:

Chapter 10: "Beginning a Communication" (TC 286-302)

Chapter 11: "Ending a Communication" (TC 303-10)

Meet:

Work Plan Expectations for Brochure Revision and Document Development

Bring:

Laptop to class

10/28 TR

NO CLASS—WORKPLACE RESEARCH DAY

11/02 T

Topics:

Brochure Revision and Document Development

Beginnings

Endings

Write Memo 8 (In-Class): Update me on your team's progress on, and future plans for, the Client Project. Alert me to any of your frustrations.

For next class:

Read:

Chapter 13: "Creating Reader-Centered Graphics" (TC 331-56)

"Creating Eleven Types of Reader-Centered Graphics" (TC 357-77)

Meet:

Work Plan Expectations for Brochure Revision and Document Development

Bring:

Laptop to class

11/04 TR

Topics:

Brochure Revision and Document Development

Graphics

For next class (11/11):

Read:

Chapter 14: "Designing Reader-Centered Pages and Documents" (TC 378-404)

Meet:

Work Plan Expectations for Brochure Revision and Document Development

Bring:

Laptop to class

11/09 T

NO CLASS—WORKPLACE RESEARCH DAY

11/11 TR

FINAL DAY TO BEGIN EXTRA CREDIT PROJECT

Topics:

Brochure Revision and Document Development

Document Design

Write Memo 9 (In-Class): Update me on your team's progress on, and future plans for, the Client Project. Alert me to any of your frustrations.

For next class:

Meet:

Work Plan Expectations for Brochure Revision and Document Development

Bring:

Laptop to class

11/16 T

Topics:

Brochure Revision and Document Development

For next class:

Finalize and Upload to Scholar:

Brochure Revision and Document Development

Download:

Brochure/Document Peer Review Sheet (SS)

Bring:

Laptop to class

11/18 TR

Topics:

Peer Review: Revised Brochure and Developed Document

Write Memo 10 (In-Class): Update me on the progress of your Popular Press Business Rhetoric Report.

For next class:

Read:

Chapter 19: "Listener-Centered Oral Presentations" (TC 475-500)

Revise:

Brochure and Developed Document

Bring:

Laptop to class

11/23 T

NO CLASS—Thanksgiving

11/25 TR

NO CLASS—Thanksgiving

11/30 T

Topics:

Executive Presentation Planning and Work Day

For next class:

Prepare:

Executive Presentation

Bring:

Laptop to class

12/02 TR

Topics:

Executive Presentation Work Day and Rehearsal

For next class:

Prepare:

Executive Presentation

Extra-Credit Presentation

Bring:

Laptop to class

12/07 T

NO CLASS—Meeting on 12/09 Instead

12/09 TR

Presentations to the Montgomery Museum Executive Board

Meet in Shanks Hall Room 370

3:30 PM

For next class:

Assemble:

Final Portfolio (SS)

Finalize:

Popular Press Business Rhetoric Presentation

12/16 F

EXAM: 10:05-12:05

Due:

Popular Press Business Rhetoric Presentations

Submit:

Final Portfolio