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ENG 4760-001: Workplace Collaboration

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English 4760: Workplace Collaboration Spring 2015 | (3 credits)

Instructor: Dr. Terri Fredrick
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Email: tafredrick@eiu.edu (whenever possible, use D2L email)
Office hours: Tues 9:30–10:30, 12:30–1:30
Thurs 9:00–10:30, 12:30–1:30, 3:15–3:45
Monday or Wednesday by appointment

Instructional Objectives

Students often groan when they hear the words “group work” and “collaborative” in a course. Research into workplace writing, however, shows a high level of collaboration: one study of 700 professionals by Lisa Ede and Andrea Lunsford, for example, found that 87% reported spending time writing collaboratively in their jobs. In fact, the more important a document is to a company, the more likely that project is to be created collaboratively.

In this course, we will engage in in-depth study and practice of collaboration. We will read research and theories of workplace collaboration, management, and leadership. You will complete several projects using the strategies of collaboration that we learn about in the class. You will have the opportunity to collaborate with a client since several of our projects will be completed for outside audiences.

Specifically, by the end of the semester, you will be asked to demonstrate the following primary objectives:

- Use effective collaborative strategies to create a positive work environment and high-quality projects
- Demonstrate understanding of principles of professional collaboration and leadership
- Use collaborative communication strategies to solve hypothetical and real workplace problems (i.e., critical thinking and problem solving)
- Adapt general professional writing principles (related to content, organization, tone, and design) to specific audiences, purposes, and contexts
- Use revision and editing to improve your own and others’ writing
- Demonstrate awareness of your own strengths and areas for improvement as a collaborator

Required Materials

- Hamilton. *Communicating for Results*, 9th edition
- Van Rys, et al. *The Business Writer*
- Readings available via D2L

Course Requirements

In this class, you will complete a number of writing assignments of various sizes. Your grade in the course will be based on three areas: your ability to collaborate effectively, the final products produced by your collaborative groups, and your performance on individual assignments.

Company Research: In teams, you will research through several sources an organization's use of a team-based model. Your team will co-write a paper discussing the findings of your research.

Software Presentation: In teams, you will research one or more collaborative tools for their suitability in virtual / online collaboration. Your team will then prepare a 15–20-minute presentation that demonstrates the tool(s) and evaluates its usefulness.

Client Project: In teams, you will complete a project on behalf of a client from a local organization, government agency, or company.

Instructions: In teams, you will develop a set of instructions. You will then develop a usability test to test the effectiveness of your instructions.

Final Exam: Individually, you will complete a take-home exam that asks you to integrate and apply concepts from the course.

Collaboration: Over the course of the semester, you and your peers will be asked to evaluate, using multiple methods, the effectiveness of your collaboration. Your final collaboration grade will be based on your collaboration on each assignment as well as your growth over the course of the semester.

Homework/in-class activities/reading quizzes: Many reading assignments will include a written component—reading questions, a group discussion on D2L, a brief application for homework, or in-class quizzes. Homework must be completed prior to class time (even if you do not attend class) in order to receive credit, and quizzes will be given at the start of class.

Assessment

Assignments will be graded holistically on content, organization, expression, and correctness as adapted to the audience and context for which you are writing. Each assignment will include specific assessment criteria.

Assignment	% grade
Homework/In-class work	15
Company Research	10
Software Presentation	10
Client Project	20
Instructions	10
Final Exam	10
Overall Collaboration grade	25

Note: I reserve the right to make additions and alterations to this assessment breakdown should the need arise. Students will be informed in class and in writing prior to any changes being made.

Contacting me:

You can reach me in one of several ways:

- **D2L email:** This is my preferred method of contact for relatively simple questions or concerns. Use the email tool in D2L to search for my name, Terri Fredrick (not Terri Student Fredrick). A separate pop-up window will open for the email.
- **EIU email:** tafredrick@eiu.edu
- **Office Location:** 3070 Coleman. A face-to-face meeting is best for addressing complex questions or concerns; you should also schedule a face-to-face meeting if you would like me to review a draft before submission.
- **Text message:** (217) 714–6028. Please contact me via text only when your question is time sensitive. Identify yourself by name in your text, even if you have texted me before. Text only between the hours of 7 am–9pm. Think carefully before texting me over the weekend because I'm probably going to give you side-eye.

It is my policy to respond to email messages within 24 hours on business days. (If you email me on a Friday late afternoon, you might not receive a response until Monday morning.) If you have not received a response to an email within that 24-hour window, you have my permission to contact me again by email or text.

Attendance:

This class is about collaboration. That means that what you do (or don't do) directly impacts the success of this class and those in it. The first step to being a good collaborator is to show up. Every class period will include at least some work in groups.

Alternatively, you might consider this: according to the *Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills* published by the Department of Labor, the number one reason employers cite for firing young, post-collegiate employees is absence and tardiness. Now is the time to learn how to productively manage your vacation and sick time to prepare for your career:

- You may miss up to three classes. Each additional absence will reduce your grade by 2%.
- If you must miss a class, you are still responsible for meeting assignment and team deadlines. Send assignments to me or your team members, as needed.
- If you have to miss a class or a meeting, keeping your team informed should be a priority. Your team should know when you will return and what work you will complete by the next meeting.
- On days when teams are given time to work on group projects, missing class counts as missing a team meeting.
- Missed reading quizzes must be made up before the next class session. It is your responsibility to find out if we had a quiz and arrange a time to take it.
- Daily homework assignments and reading responses must be submitted by the beginning of class time on the date listed. Late homework assignments will receive no credit.
- Major individual and team assignments (listed in bold on the syllabus) are due by 11:59 pm on the date listed. For each day an assignment is late, the assignment grade will be reduced by 5%.

Expected Conduct

This class focuses on communicating in professional settings. As in a workplace setting, we have a code of conduct. In addition to your vacation/sick time, note the following course policies:

- Class correspondence (i.e., emails you send to someone in the class, including me) should be written professionally and according to the expectations of the business world. Expect to receive feedback from me on the style, content, and organization of your emails.
- We will use computers extensively in this class, and you will likely use at least one program that you have not used in the past. I will be happy to assist you and your team members in figuring out how to use different types of collaborative software, but I expect you to approach new software as a problem-solving activity in which you demonstrate willingness to learn the features of software that will help your team carry out its work.
- Keep copies of all the work you produce for this class. Don't delete files once you've turned in an assignment.
- Class time is for doing work related to the course. Limit your use of email, the Internet, cell phones, etc. to course-related work during class time.
- All major assignments listed on the syllabus must be completed in order to pass the course.
- Academic integrity—Students are expected to maintain principles of academic integrity and conduct as defined in EIU's [Code of Conduct](#). Violations will be reported to the Office of Student Standards. If you are in doubt of the appropriate way to identify your source, check with me before turning in the assignment.

Writing Intensive Course

Any individually written assignment of 750 words or more may be submitted to the [Electronic Writing Portfolio \(EWP\)](#). If you choose to submit an assignment from this class to the EWP, you must do so **by Thursday, April 30**.

Information for Students with Disabilities

Most accommodations may be easily met in this class. If you are a student with a documented disability in need of accommodations to fully participate in this class, please contact the [Office of Student Disability Services \(OSDS\)](#). All accommodations must be approved through OSDS. Please stop by Ninth Street Hall, Room 2006, or call (217) 581-6583 to make an appointment.

The Student Success Center / Writing Center

Students who are having difficulty achieving their academic goals are encouraged to contact the Student Success Center for assistance with time management, test taking, note taking, avoiding procrastination, setting goals, and other skills to support academic achievement. [The Student Success Center](#) provides individualized consultations. To make an appointment, call (217) 581-6696, or go to Ninth Street Hall, Room 1302.

Students who would like assistance with writing assignments from this or any other course may go to the [Writing Center](#). The Writing Center works with students from all disciplines, majors, and academic backgrounds at any stage of the writing process. To make an appointment, call (217) 581-5929, or go to Coleman Hall, Room 3110.

ENGLISH 4760: WORKPLACE COLLABORATION

Daily Syllabus

DATE	DUE	IN-CLASS ACTIVITY
Jan 13	Complete: Orientation activities Read: Module 1 readings	Introduction to course Discuss communication processes
Jan 15	Read: Module 2 readings Complete: Module 2 homework	Discuss organizational communication
Jan 20	Read: Module 3 readings Complete: Module 3 homework	Discuss interpersonal relationships
Jan 22	Read: Module 4 readings Complete: Module 4 homework	Discuss small group communication Form team for Assignment 1 (report on company)
Jan 27	Read: Assignment 1 material Complete: Assignment 1 homework	Discuss team participation and leadership Work on Assignment 1
Jan 29	Read: Module 5 readings Complete: Module 5 homework; homework assigned by team	Discuss conversational styles Work on Assignment 1
Feb 03	TBD	Work on Assignment 1
Feb 05	Submit: Assignment 1 (report on company)	Team/Self evaluations Analysis of team conversational styles
Feb 10	Read: Case Study 1 Complete: Précis/analysis	Discuss article
Feb 12	Read: Module 6 readings Complete: Module 6 homework	Discuss conflict in work groups
Feb 17	Read: Module 7 readings Complete: Module 7 homework	Discuss virtual collaboration Form teams for Assignment 2 (software research)
Feb 19	Complete: Assignment 2 homework	Discuss virtual collaboration Work on Assignment 2
Feb 24	Read: Module 8 readings Complete: Module 8 homework; homework assigned by team	Discuss informative presentations Work on Assignment 2
Feb 26	Read: Module 9 readings Complete: Module 9 homework; homework assigned by team	Work on Assignment 2
Mar 03		Present Assignment 2 (software research)

Mar 05	Submit: Team/self evaluations for Assignment 2	Meet with client for Assignment 3
Mar 10		
Mar 12		
Mar 24		
Mar 26		
Mar 31		
Apr 02		
Apr 07		
Apr 09		
Apr 14		
Apr 16		
Apr 21		
Apr 23		
Apr 28		
Apr 30	Submit: Assignment 4 (instructions)	Team/self evaluations
May 05	2 :45–4:45	Submit: Final Exam