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ENG 2760-002: Introduction to Professional Writing

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English 2760.002 ~ Introduction to Professional Writing ~ Fall 2009

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Office Hours: T, 9:30-11:00; W, 8:30-10:00;
R, 9:30-11:00 & by appointment

Texts / Materials

- *Writing That Works: Communicating Effectively on the Job*. Ed. W. Oliu, C. Brusaw, and G. Alred. Bedford/St. Martin's, 2007.
- *Strategies for Business and Technical Writing*. Ed. Kevin J. Harty. Pearson, Longman.

Course Description

Introduction to the theory and practice of writing and writers in professional settings. Prerequisite 1002G.

Student Learning Objectives

- Refine writing and editing skills learned in previous writing courses
- Recognize the responsibility of technical and professional writers to communicate clearly and concisely to satisfy an audience's need for information
- Understand the value of professional and technical writing for readers in the world of work
- Demonstrate college- and professional-level writing produced through the process of prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and proofreading
- Write purposeful adequately developed paragraphs and sentences that are direct, economical, free of ambiguity, and structurally appropriate for the ideas expressed and for the audience to whom it is directed
- Develop research skills, including effective use of source materials and the principles of documentation

Expected Performance Outcomes

- Analyze the need for a document in terms of a rhetorical situation to be addressed, the context of the writing project, the purpose of the document, and the audience's needs
- Select an appropriate document format and writing style for a given writing situation
- Select and design simple graphics and integrate them logically into written text
- Revise and edit for clarity and correctness, and produce professional-looking final documents
- Distinguish between objective and subjective language

- Conduct library, electronic, and field research effectively
- Document sources appropriately within reports
- Work effectively and ethically in a group writing project and group presentation
- Write clear, concise prose in standard American English

Course Requirements

Class consists of in-class writing activities, discussions of assigned works, peer review sessions, short writing assignments, formal and informal presentations, reading quizzes, and in-class writing activities.

There will be six major writing projects. Please also note the participation grade, which will consist of your contribution to class discussion, your participation in group activities, and your attendance.

1. Writing Projects	170 points
• Project 1	20 points
• Project 2	20 points
• Project 3	30 points
• Project 4	30 points
• Project 5	30 points
• Project 6	40 points
2. In-Class Writing, Quizzes	30 points (approx.)
3. Participation (based on your attendance, involvement in and preparation for class activities and discussion)	30 points
Total:	230 points

Grading Scale:

90% - 100% = A
 80% - 89% = B
 70% - 79% = C
 60% - 69% = D
 Below 59% = F

Note: The order and exact schedule for the writing projects may change as I assess the class's writing needs. For each major writing project, you will receive a written assignment sheet, which will include, among other things, due dates, grading criteria, and point distribution for the assignment's required activities.

Evaluation

For each writing project, I will handout an assignment sheet that specifies the requirements, due date, expectations, and grading criteria. Usually the grading criteria will emphasize particular concepts that we will be discussing in class for that assignment. However, superior papers are

always those that express purpose clearly, that are well designed (in respect to format and overall look), and that are stylistically polished.

Since we will be following the idea of "writing as a process" — the idea that good writing comes from continual rethinking and revising of form, content, and style — it is important that you begin the writing for each project as quickly and possible, so that you can identify weaknesses and resolve them before the final draft is due.

Submitting Assignments

Unless otherwise indicated, all assignments are due on the date specified on the assignment sheet. Papers turned in after the due date will be penalized five points for each calendar day they are late — unless you have made prior arrangements with me. I will not accept work that is more than one week late.

Although I encourage you to turn in your projects in class on the due date, you have until 4:00 p.m. on the due date to turn in your work (either to me or in my mailbox, 3155 Coleman Hall). In other words, I want you to be in class on that day regardless of the status of your work.

Note: In most cases, you may email me your assignments. If you do submit via email, please send your papers as attachments (preferably as a RTF file). Also, bear in mind that when you submit an electronic document, you are entirely responsible for the format of the documents, which includes any visual aids or special formatting. Note also that there may be components of an assignment that you won't be able to email in which case you must make other arrangements for turning in. Please discuss any concerns of this nature with me prior to an assignment's due date.

Revisions

You may revise selected assignments. In fact, I encourage you to do so. However, you must speak with me before you submit the revision (so we can arrange a conference to discuss writing strategies), and you must turn in the revision within seven days of receiving the final paper back from me. You must meet these two stipulations for me to accept your revised paper.

Attendance Policy

Most of our class time will be spent discussing the writing projects you're working on, which we will discuss as a class or in small group workshops or in individual writing conferences. It is vital that you are in class all the time. I usually allow two absences or personal days. After that (on the third unexcused absence), your final grade will be deducted one full letter grade. If you miss more than 5 classes, you will receive an F for the course. No absence can be designated "excused" until documentation has been provided and verified, which must be done in person within one week of the date in question.

Please DO NOT email me that you are going to miss class or to tell me why you missed class. Any and all discussions about class attendance—including documenting an excused absence—must be done in person.

Plagiarism

Since the university is a place of ideas, discussion, and reflection, it views plagiarism—the taking of others' ideas as one's own—very harshly. The penalty for plagiarizing is swift and severe. You will receive an immediate F for the course and notice will be given to the Office of Judicial Affairs. If you have any questions about plagiarism—however small—please talk to me before you turn in your work.

**Electronic
Writing Portfolio**

This course is a writing-centered course and, as such, your papers satisfy the requirements for the Electronic Writing Portfolio. If you plan on using work from this course for your EWP, I ask that you complete this before the last two weeks of the semester.

Conferences

If you are having any problems with a paper, I encourage you to come by and see me during my office hours or make an appointment for a more convenient time. I will be more than happy to talk any number of times about a single paper or particular writing problem.

You may email me (rlbeebe@eiu.edu) to set up a time to meet to discuss your work. However, I will not discuss your paper with you via email. I would prefer we talk about your work in person—either before or after class or during a conference in my office.

**Computer
Etiquette**

You're welcome to bring your notebook computer to class. However, I ask that you observe common rules of etiquette and decorum when you use it. In brief, you may use it to take notes or complete an in-class writing activity. You may not use it for anything not directly related to class work.

**** Please turn off (or mute) cell phones or any other PDA. Out of respect for the class and the integrity of class activities, absolutely no text messaging during class is allowed.**

**Students with
Disabilities**

If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Coordinator of the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.

**Professional
Writing Minors**

Those students taking this course as part of the English Department's Professional Writing Minor should know that you may be asked to

complete a writing project for this course that is similar to an assignment you completed in another writing course. Although all professional writing instructors regularly meet to discuss our courses and assignments, identical or overlapping assignments are sometimes unavoidable. If you come across such an assignment, please discuss this situation with me and we can work out an easy solution.