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ENG 2760-001: Introduction to Professional Writing

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ENGLISH 2760: INTRODUCTION TO PROFESSIONAL WRITING

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Instructional Objectives

English 2760 introduces the principles and practices of communication (written, oral, and visual) in professional settings. In this course, you will be asked to complete two types of projects: those that require you to *research* common communication issues in a field of your interest and those that require you to *apply* professional communication concepts. The specific objectives for this class are as follows:

- Develop critical thinking strategies appropriate for professional settings
- Develop understanding of general and field-specific principles and practices of composing
- Demonstrate your ability to adapt general principles to specific audiences, purposes, and contexts
- Increase your ability to revise and edit your own and others' writing
- Learn and implement basic principles of effective document design
- Increase facility using computer software to complete professional communication work
- Develop basic collaborative strategies

Required Materials

- Harty, Kevin J. *Strategies for Business and Technical Writing*, 6th edition
- Kolln, Martha, *Rhetorical Grammar*, 5th edition
- Suggested: A USB “thumb” drive (also known as “jump” or “flash” drives) for data storage.

Course Requirements

Refusal letter: Using a case provided to you, you will write brief letters delivering bad news to readers. Evaluation criteria: critical thinking; application of professional writing principles and letter format; basic writing skills

Letter analysis and rewrite: You will take a poorly written letter, analyze its features, and then rewrite the letter to be more effective. Evaluation criteria: critical thinking; application of professional writing principles and letter format; basic writing skills

Ethics report: You will research the codes of ethics and a sample ethical situation from a chosen field. You will then write a short report to me describing what you have found. Evaluation criteria: effective secondary research, basic writing skills, appropriate citation, grasp of ethical issues; ability to critically analyze a case

Audience-focused document: Using the information you gathered for the ethics report, you will create a document about ethics for employees at a specific workplace. You will assess your audience and then adapt your content, organization, format, and tone accordingly. Evaluation criteria: adaptation to audience, effective decision making, basic writing skills, grasp of ethical issues

Radio Public Service Announcement: You will work with the Health Education Resource Center (HERC) and EIU's radio station to create and record a public service announcement (PSA) on a health-related topic. Your PSA will air on EIU's radio station. Evaluation criteria: Ability to explain health information, effective research, oral communication, professionalism

Research project: In teams of two, you will propose and carry out a small-scale research study on some aspect of communication in a professional setting of your choice. The study you design will include interview(s) with workplace professionals, on-site observation, secondary research, and a text analysis of one or more concrete pieces of workplace communication (a document, an email, a videotape of a presentation). You will begin with a proposal and later write a report based on your findings and give a brief presentation. Evaluation criteria: primary and secondary research, critical thinking, application of professional writing principles and proposal/report formats, informative writing, grasp of professional communication issues, document design, oral communication

Note: EIU stresses the importance of ethical approaches to conducting research. Because your project will involve interviews and observations of people in workplace environments, we will discuss ways to protect research participants.

Reading responses: You will write 8 responses to the articles we read in class. These responses may focus on (1) your reactions to the article, (2) connections to your own career, and (3) questions you have about the article you read. You will also be asked to discuss the articles in class. Evaluation criteria: reading comprehension, ability to analyze, clear writing

NOTE: The syllabus lists 11 dates for writing responses. You may choose any 8 of the 11. If you complete all 11, I will apply 15 extra credit points to your semester grade.

Grammar/editing: We will review common conventions of grammar, punctuation, style, and organization in the course. You will edit sentences, paragraphs, and documents for homework and on two exams. Evaluation criteria: grasp of editing concepts, ability to edit writing in context

Assessment

Assignments will be graded holistically on (1) critical thinking/planning and (2) content, organization, tone/style, and correctness as adapted to the specific audience, purpose, and context.

Revision Guidelines

Assignments marked with an asterisk in the table below may be revised as many times as you choose (note: assignments have specific deadlines for revisions). The grade on a revised assignment cancels out the previous grade. If you would like me to re-evaluate a revised assignment, you must follow these instructions:

1. Read all of the comments carefully. Check with me about comments you do not understand.
2. Start big. Don't bother with grammar until you've revised for organization and content.
3. Complete a substantive revision before handing the document back to me. If you have changed only a few minor elements and/or deleted a few words, you have not made a complete enough revision to improve the paper, and I will not re-evaluate it.
4. In the margins of the paper, insert notes indicating major changes you have made and why. These notes should draw on the principles we have discussed in class.

Repeat these steps as many times as you choose. And don't be afraid to try something new! It may be an excellent improvement to your paper! And if it's not, you have time to change it back!

NOTE: Grade penalties (for late work, failure to turn in a draft, etc.) WILL carry over to any revisions. So be sure to meet all deadlines.

Assessment Breakdown

Assignment	% grade
Refusal letter*	5
Letter analysis/rewrite*	5
Ethics report*	10
Audience-based document*	10
PSA	5
Research Report	35
Project proposal*	5
Research plan/notebook	10
Report	15
Presentation	5
Reading Responses	10
Grammar/Editing	20
Homework	10
Exam 1	5
Exam 2	5

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 if any changes are made.

Attendance:

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. Contrary to popular belief, getting out of bed and to work on time does not magically become easier after graduation, so this course offers you an excellent opportunity to "practice" the professional skill of prompt attendance. Furthermore, since the concept of "excused absences" does not exist in the workplace (you're either there doing your job, or you're using your vacation/sick time), we have no protocol for excused and unexcused absences in this class. I assume you will be in class whenever it is possible for you to be here.

Since developing the ability to edit and design effectively requires extensive practice and collaboration, the majority of our class time will be devoted to working on concepts that will be applied in the projects and exam. I don't re-teach class sessions: if you miss class, contact a classmate to get the material. Other specific attendance rules:

- Even if you miss class, you must still meet assignment deadlines, which means you may need to email work before the class period you will miss.
- Missing class time during the PSA project and the final research project may hurt your grade as other people's work depends on your participation. We will discuss these "can't miss" dates as they arise.
- If you end the semester within 2% (20 points) of the next highest grade, your semester grade will be rounded up if you have missed no more than two days of class. There are no exceptions to this policy.

Deadlines

Due dates for homework and assignments are listed on the course syllabus.

- Reading responses and grammar/editing homework must be submitted by the beginning of class time on the date listed. Late work will not be accepted under any circumstances.
- Unless otherwise noted, assignments listed in bold on the syllabus must be submitted by the end of the business day (4 p.m.) on the date listed. Late projects will be docked 5% or 2 points (whichever is greater) each day until they are turned in.

Expected Conduct

This class focuses on communicating in professional settings. In a workplace setting, certain types of conduct would be expected and outlined in a code of conduct. We have one here, too. In addition to your vacation/sick time, pay attention to 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.
- You are expected to convert your documents as necessary to be able to work on them in class. I will give you advice and out-of-class assistance at your request, but I expect you to have a basic understanding of word processing and/or the willingness to spend time out of class learning features of software programs that will improve the appearance of your documents.
- Keep multiple copies of all the work you produce for this class. Don't delete files once you've turned in the assignment.
- Class time is for doing work related to the course. Checking or sending email, surfing the web, using Facebook or instant messenger, text messaging, etc. should be done on your own time.
- All assignments listed in bold on the syllabus must be completed in order to pass the course.
- Plagiarism of any kind will not be tolerated. According to English Department policy, "any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism...has the right and the responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty up to and including immediate assignments of a grade of F for the assigned essay and a grade of F for the course, and to report the incident 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

Several assignments from this course may be submitted to the Electronic Writing Portfolio (EWP). If you choose to submit a writing assignment from this course, you **must** do so before the end of the semester. To submit a paper or for more info on the EWP, go to www.eiu.edu/~assess/electronic_writing_portfolio1.htm.

Information for Students with Disabilities

Most accommodations may be easily met in this class. If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.

ENGLISH 2760: INTRODUCTION TO PROFESSIONAL WRITING

Daily Syllabus

SBTW = *Strategies for Business and Technical Writing*

RG = *Rhetorical Grammar*

White rows = Coleman Hall 3130 (classroom); Shaded rows = Coleman Hall 3120 (lab)

DATE	DUE	IN-CLASS ACTIVITY
Aug 25	WebCT post (due 11:59 p.m.)	Introduction to course
Aug 27	Read SBTW pp. 1-4, 7-14; write <u>response</u>	Discuss articles; audience
Aug 29	Read <u>Munger, Case 4</u> ; <u>complete Task 1</u>	Complete Task 2
Sep 01	No school	
Sep 03	Read SBTW pp. 105–113; 127–130; write <u>response</u>	Content principles
Sep 05	Read SBTW pp. 131–140; RG Ch 2; write <u>response</u>	Organization principles
Sep 08	Read SBTW pp. 64–71; 122–126; write <u>response</u>	Style/tone principles; approaches for giving bad news
Sep 10	Read RG Ch 2; complete Ex 16 #1 (p110)	Style/tone
Sep 12	Project: <u>Munger, Case 4, Task 3</u> Read RG pp. 44–45, 58–60	Subject-verb agreement; parallel structure
Sep 15	Read RG pp. 37–38, 46–57; complete Ex 8 #1–5	Sentence punctuation
Sep 17	Editing homework	In-class writing assignment
Sep 19	Project: Letter/analysis rewrite	Review / catch-up
Sep 22	Read SBTW pp. 335–346, 355–366; write <u>response</u> ; Bring code of ethics/case	Ethics in professional settings
Sep 24	Read SBTW pp. 170–186; write <u>response</u>	Report-writing
Sep 26	Project: Ethics report	Adapt report to professional setting

Sep 29	Read RG Ch 12; complete Ex 43 #1–3	Pronoun use; work on report
Oct 01	Read SBTW pp. 233–244; write <u>response</u>	Pronoun use; work on report
Oct 03	Bring <u>complete</u> draft (x2) of report	Peer review
Oct 06	Project: Audience-based report	Review for grammar exam
Oct 08		Grammar exam
Oct 10	No school	
Oct 13		Meeting with Rachel Miller
Oct 15	Choose PSA topic	Research topics
Oct 17	Bring PSA ideas	Review/refine ideas
Oct 20	Bring draft of PSA	Peer review
Oct 22	Bring draft of PSA (by 10 a.m.) Submit PSA to HERC (by 4 p.m.)	Second peer review
Oct 24	Read <u>RPW 107–112</u> ; editing homework	Punctuation
Oct 27	Editing homework	Research project; project notebook
Oct 29	Read Burnett; write <u>response</u> Bring 300+ words on proposed topics	Respond to project ideas; form teams
Oct 31		Meet at radio station to record PSAs
Nov 03	Read SBTW pp. 245–261; <u>response</u>	Proposals; teams generate plans
Nov 05	Write Summary/analysis of one secondary source (by 10 a.m.)	Effective interviews; consent forms
Nov 07	Project: Research project proposal	Modifiers

Nov 10	Read Johnson-Sheehan; <u>RPW 69–71</u> ; write <u>response</u>	Conciseness; work on projects
Nov 12	Write Summary/analysis of two primary sources (by 10 a.m.) ; Editing homework	Conciseness; modifiers; work on projects
Nov 14	Editing homework	Conciseness; work on projects
Nov 17	Read SBTW pp. 200–206 Bring 3 (double-spaced) pages of report	Create report outline; team meetings with Dr. F
Nov 19	Read SBTW pp. 207–232; write <u>response</u>	Design issues
Nov 21		Design issues; presentations
Thanksgiving week		
Dec 01	Bring complete (x2) draft of report; Submit draft of report via email	Peer review
Dec 03	Read SBTW pp. 195–199; Editing homework	Discuss abstract, title page, cover letter
Dec 05	Editing homework	Work on projects; presentations
Dec 08	Project: Report and notebook	Presentations
Dec 10		Presentations
Dec 12		Review grammar/editing
Dec 16	8:00 a.m.–10:00 a.m.	Grammar/editing exam