

ENGLISH 320: BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL WRITING

3 Credits

Contact Information	Office Hours
Instructor name: Jo Cavins Instructor office: 316-M Minard Hall Instructor email: jo.cavins@ndus.edu Instructor phone: 701-231-8768	TR 9:00-11:00 AM and by appointment

Course Description

Intensive practice employing the conventions of writing needed in professional genres and settings: writing for specific audiences and purposes. Inform, analyze, evaluate, and persuade. **Engl. 120 (or equivalent) and junior standing are prerequisites.**

Course Objectives

Students will learn the following concepts through analysis of professional documents and practice with varied writing tasks.

- General Education Outcome C <https://bulletin.ndsu.edu/academic-policies/undergraduate-policies/general-education/> : Communicate effectively in a variety of contexts and genres, using a variety of communication skills to
 - effectively communicate analysis, knowledge, understanding, expression and/or conclusions
 - skillfully use high-quality, credible, relevant sources
 - demonstrate appropriate conventions in a variety of communication situations
 - demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively with diverse audiences in a variety of contexts
- Departmental Outcome 4: Manage sophisticated writing and research projects, planning, documenting, completing, and assessing work on time and within the constraints of the project.
- Departmental Outcome 7: Develop professionalism exhibited in such qualities as self-direction, cooperation, civility, reliability, and care in editing and presenting the final product.
- Master the discourse and generic conventions of writing in business and professional settings.

Textbook

Anderson, Paul V. *Technical Communication: A Reader-centered Approach*. 9th ed. Boston: Thomson, 2016.

Attendance Policy

“According to [NDSU Policy 333 \(www.ndsu.edu/fileadmin/policy/333.pdf\)](http://www.ndsu.edu/fileadmin/policy/333.pdf), attendance in classes is expected.” The course instructor must clearly inform students on the first day of class and in writing in the syllabus of their (1) policy regarding class absence and (2) policy, if any, for making up missed assignments. If class attendance is a component of the course grade, the course instructor must clearly communicate this to the class in writing in the syllabus. See NDSU Policy 333 for faculty and student responsibilities related to attendance, including for university-sponsored activities.

Attendance is expected in all NDSU writing program classes. All sections adhere to the following policy regarding attendance:

- * A student may not miss more than 3 weeks of class due to unexcused absences.
- * A student may not miss more than 4 weeks of class total due to a combination of unexcused and excused absences.
- * If a student exceeds the limits delineated above, he/she will automatically fail the class.

In this section of English 320, the above policy translates to missing no more than 3 days of class for unexcused reasons, and no more than 4 days of class for a combination of excused and unexcused reasons. Exceeding these limits will result in automatic failure for the course.

If you anticipate that absenteeism will be a problem for you, please consider taking a section of this course that will better work for your schedule, i.e., a section with a different daily schedule, an online, section, or a section in a later semester.

Excused vs. Unexcused Absences

The writing program differentiates between excused and unexcused absences as follows:

- Excused absences are covered by NDSU University Senate Policy, Section 333: Class Attendance and Policy and Procedure. These absences include university sanctioned events, pregnancy, religious observations, and legal or military/veteran obligations or duties. Work missed during an excused absence may be made up within a reasonable amount of time.
- Unexcused absences include all other absences. Work missed during an unexcused absence may not be made up.

For excused absences:

- Students must notify me of known excused absences within the first three weeks of the semester. If unexpected excused absences occur, students must notify me as soon as possible, preferably prior to the absence.
- In the case of all excused absences, students must establish with me, as soon as possible, amended due dates for missed coursework. While I will provide accommodations whenever possible, please note that the university policy recognizes that “sometimes an assignment is impossible to make-up.”

Veterans and student service members with special circumstances or who are activated are encouraged to notify the instructor as soon as possible and are encouraged to provide Activation Orders.

Americans with Disabilities Act for Students with Special Needs

Any students with disabilities or other special needs, who need special accommodations in this course, are invited to share these concerns or requests with the instructor and contact the [Disability Services Office \(www.ndsu.edu/disabilityservices\)](http://www.ndsu.edu/disabilityservices) as soon as possible.

Academic Honest Statement

The academic community is operated on the basis of honesty, integrity, and fair play. [NDSU Policy 335: Code of Academic Responsibility and Conduct](#) applies to cases in which cheating, plagiarism, or other academic misconduct have occurred in an instructional context. Students found guilty of academic misconduct are subject to penalties, up to and possibly including suspension and/or expulsion. Student academic misconduct records are maintained by the [Office of Registration and Records](#). Informational resources about academic honesty for students and instructional staff members can be found at www.ndsu.edu/academichonesty.

Course Requirements

Reading assignments on the syllabus should be completed **before coming to class on the day they are listed**; syllabus dates are subject to change with adequate notice. Unless you have worked with me to establish other arrangements, you are responsible for attending class, getting assignments and turning them in on time. Collaborative projects must be done with at least one other person unless circumstances require otherwise AND you and I have made a plan regarding this.

Writing Assignments (sample)

Writing assignments are due according to the schedule on the syllabus. Late writing assignments will lose points each day they are late, typically 5% per day (including weekends and holidays).

Required course work and percentages of your final grade:

- 15% -- Unit #1: Applying for Employment—Letters and Resumes
- 20% -- Unit #2: Job Opportunities—Recommendation report
- 15%-- Unit #3: Instructions—Instruction document and user-test report
- 25% -- Unit #4: Writing for Real—Documents to be determined by client
- 10% -- Assessment portfolio
- 15% -- Homework, required Bb assignments, participation (**Note that, on the BB grade section, this is listed as participation but includes several elements.**)

Grading

- Each Writing Assignment must fulfill the requirements as assigned; those that do not receive an “F.” *Think of it as being fired after completing (or perhaps not completing) a project at work.*
- Writing Assignments that barely fulfill the minimum requirements and have excessive spelling, grammatical, or punctuation errors receive a “D.” *Think of it as getting a reprimand at work and, probably, being asked to do some part(s) of a project over.*
- A “C” Writing Assignment is satisfactory: fulfills the minimum requirements but lacks clarity, coherence, or unity and/or has several distracting spelling, punctuation, and grammatical errors. *Think of it as turning in a project and getting no feedback, positive or negative.*
- A “B” Writing Assignment is good: fulfills the minimum requirements and has evidence of coherence, clarity and unity, with few spelling, punctuation, and grammatical errors. *Think of it as getting a pat on the back and a big “thanks” after turning in a project at work.*
- An “A” Writing Assignment is outstanding: clear, coherent and unified; it has very few or no spelling, punctuation or grammatical errors. *Think of it as earning not just the thanks from above but as earning a spot on your boss’s list of go-to people (who will likely be in line for raises and promotions).*

A=91-100%; B=81-90%; C=71-80%; D=61-70%; F=0-60%.

Some assignments for this course build on information used in earlier assignments, so please keep all work from this course until the end of the semester.

Grading for collaborative assignments: Each group member will receive the same grade unless group members request a lower grade for a partial participation or a failing grade for non-participation by a peer.

Conduct

Upper Division Writing classes are pre-professional classes; a significant amount of the work you do will be about learning to communicate as a professional. To further emphasize this point, my expectation is that we will treat the course as a professional work environment, not just another class on your way to a degree.

I assume that all interaction in this course will be civil and show respect for others. Student conduct at NDSU is governed by the Code of Student Behavior, Policy 601.

Among other courtesies, keep your phones turned to vibrate or silent and refrain from texting in class. If you have your computer in the classroom, keep it set at the home page or on a WORD document where you are taking notes, unless I have specifically given time to complete class work using your computer.

Show up for work, on time, every day. Account for your absences; you certainly would need to in a professional setting.

- Plan to work an average of six hours/week to prepare for classes and to write assignments.
- Bring a positive attitude; you will be working with others, not just listening to lectures; you should be practicing small group dynamics, and you should be trying to make the best of any work situation, even if it isn’t your cup of tea.
- If you are having trouble keeping up, talk to me. If you are confused, talk to me. Remember that as your “professional coach” I want you to succeed, but I need to know how to help. Get used to asking for help; this skill will be very useful when you start a new job. Remember too that the Center for Writers is available to help.
- If you have suggestions for improving the course — assignments, classroom environment, readings — share them. Get used to investing in your workplace, trying to make it a better place. Be a good team player.

Communication

Following some simple guidelines will help you to communicate more effectively with me:

- Many times in this class, I will ask you to send me assignments electronically, since one of the goals here is to acclimate to using email as a means of everyday business communication. When you send an assignment, make note of whether I have asked you to send it as email or as an email attachment. You waste time and effort by attaching items that could be covered in the message space itself. On the other hand, if I’ve asked for an attachment, please respect that request. (And include a transmittal message of some kind in the email itself.)

- If you send an attachment, please format it as a WORD document (.doc or .docx) unless I have specifically asked you to do otherwise. The file name should include your last name and the unit and assignment designation (for example, Smith Unit 1 Part 2).
- Please use clear, appropriate subject lines on all email that indicate what assignment you are submitting. If you email me with a question or problem, the subject line should reflect that as well as which course and section to which you belong.
- Make sure you maintain an appropriate tone and that you proofread email messages before sending them.
- I will expect your electronic communications to reflect the standards and goals valued by and taught in this course.
- I respond to emails as quickly as I can but please note that I am not attached to my computer at all hours of the day. You can expect to receive replies to questions or acknowledgment of submitted work within 36 hours (excluding weekends and holidays.)

Sample Weekly Schedule

WEEK	READING	IN CLASS	DUE
Week 1	TC chapters 1, 2, and 3	Discuss UNIT I	Complete the writing sample journal assignment on Bb by 5 AM, Aug. 23. Send UNIT I: Part 1 as an email attachment to me no later than 5 AM, Aug. 27
Week 2	TC chapters 4, 5, 6, 7, and 21	Mock application	Bring a print copy of the three ads for job openings. We'll need these in UNIT II. Respond to the Moonstone letters posted under DISCUSSION BOARD no later than 5 AM, Sep. 3
Week 3	TC chapters 8, 9, 14, and 15	Design: CRAP WORKSHOP—attendance required	1 st draft of UNIT I: Part 2 (letter and your resume). Bring two copies please. Take Bb quiz (available under ASSIGNMENTS) by 5 AM, Sep. 10.
Week 4	TC chapters 10, 11, and 24	Discuss UNIT II	UNIT I: Part 2 as paper documents and electronic files. Unit I: Part 3 due as an email to me no later than 5 AM, Sep. 13. Prepare and send UNIT II Part 1A to me and to your partner by 5 AM, Sep. 14. Send completed questionnaire (1B) back to your partner and to me by 5 AM, Sep. 17.
Week 5	TC Chapters 12 and 13.	Interview partner	Revise your writing sample in the Bb journal by 5 AM, Sep. 24. Send UNIT II Part 2 as an email to me by 5 AM, Sep. 20.
Week 6	TC Chapter 11 and Appendix A	WORKSHOP—attendance required	Bring two copies of 1 st draft of your recommendation report. Take Bb quiz (under ASSIGNMENTS) by 5 AM, Oct. 1
Week 7	TC Chapter 27	DISCUSS UNIT III	Finished recommendation report due today as paper document. Post to Reading in My Field 1 journal on Bb by 5 AM, Oct. 8
Week 8	TC Chapter 16	Create a first draft with your group. Please bring a laptop if you have one.	Send UNIT III Part 1 (first draft of instructions) to me at the end of class. Do the editing exercise (in the EXERCISES folder under ASSIGNMENTS) and send as email by 5 AM, Oct. 15. Submit UNIT III Part 2, your user-test form, as an email attachment by 5 AM, Oct. 11.

WEEK	READING	IN CLASS	DUE
Week 9		Conduct user-test in class. Discuss UNIT IV	Bring at least two copies of your first draft and at least two copies of your user-test form. Post to Reading in My Field 2 journal on Bb by 5 AM, Oct. 22.
Week 10	TC Chapters 17 and 19		UNIT III Parts 3 and 4 due as paper documents. Send UNIT III Part 5 (evaluation) to me as an email by 5 AM, Oct. 25.
Week 11	TC Chapter 23 and Appendix B	Proposal as genre.	Revise your writing sample in the Bb journal by 5 AM, Nov. 5. UNIT IV Part 1 due as an email to me by 5 AM, Nov. 1
Week 12	TC Chapter 18	Create grading rubric for oral presentations.	UNIT IV Part 2 (proposal) due either as email by class time <i>or</i> paper document in class.
Week 13	TC Chapter 26	WORKSHOP	Bring a copy of your client product. UNIT IV Part 3 (progress report) due by 5 AM, Nov. 22 to your client (copied to me).
Week 14		Discuss portfolios.	Take Bb quiz, under ASSIGNMENTS, by 5 AM, Nov. 26
Week 15		Finalize grading rubric for oral presentations.	Infographic exercise due as email attachment by 5 AM, Nov. 28. Assessment portfolio due.
Week 16		Presentations	UNIT IV Parts 4, 5A, 5B, and 6. SUBMIT UNIT IV Part 7 (evaluation of group) by 5 AM, Dec. 6.