Business Writing 203 03
Spring 2007
CRN: 21700     TR 13:00-14:15     MARK 202

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Office hours: TR 12:30-1:00 and 2:30-3:30 by appointment


Prerequisites: It is assumed that students have satisfactory knowledge of English grammar, language usage, punctuation, spelling, and the main aspects of style.

Course Description: During the semester you will practice using different business formats, document designs, and word processing technology. You will conduct business research and analysis, and do a lot of revision, proofreading and editing. Students will apply business communication strategies in preparing letters, memos, reports, a career packet, and in delivering an oral presentation.

However, this is NOT a grammar course, nor an English language course. It is a course to develop your communication strategies for business. You can not pass the class if you do not proofread your work, or if you turn in sloppy work.

Course Objective and Competencies: This course aims to familiarize you with the tools and strategies for achieving your communication goals in business. By the end of the semester you should be able to:

- differentiate between business audiences and their needs (have a “client” orientation);
- select and use the most effective message forms, writing approaches, and organizational strategies to achieve your business goals. Specifically, you should be able to demonstrate a “you” attitude, exercise clarity and conciseness, manage direct and positive tones, neutral tones, indirect and negative tones, and be persuasive;
- use grammatical structures, sentence structures, vocabulary, and style to support a positive business image;
- identify, analyze, interpret, and present appropriate information to support your communication goals (conduct primary and secondary research, draw conclusions, and make recommendations);
- work effectively with others and share resources in preparing a competitive team research project;
- present your personal and professional skills in a competitive format (prepare a resume and job-search letter).
Semester Graded Assignments: Grading criteria for each assignment will be announced when the assignment is made.

- **Ten in-class writing projects.** Short exercises or quizzes over the reading. (10%)
- **Five take-home writing projects.** Short messages or business cases, including Good News, Bad News, a Persuasive Message, a Job-Search Letter, and a Resume Job Portfolio. (25%)
- **A formal analytical report** prepared by a team of five people. This assignment requires you to conduct primary and secondary research to address a business problem that your “client” has asked you to solve (for example, to make a purchasing decision, to evaluate the need for a new product or service, to choose a new business location, etc.). Each team member must contribute a “chapter” based on individual research. This assignment includes a progress report and an oral presentation to the class. (20%)
- **Mid-term exam.** Multiple choice questions and one business case. (20%)
- **Final exam.** Multiple questions and one business case. (25%)

Assignment Due-Dates: Take-home assignments are due at the BEGINNING of the class period. Arrange with me to get an assignment in ahead of schedule if you plan to miss a class. I will NOT accept late papers (you will get a “0” for that assignment) unless you have discussed your problem with me BEFORE the due date. Late assignments will be accepted on a case-by-case basis, with a possible grade penalty (in fairness to students who submit work on time). In-class, time sensitive assignments can NOT be made up. However, I will accommodate excused absences on a case-by-case basis if they are documented and proven. Excused absences are defined as:

1. Illness or injury to the student
2. Death, injury, or serious illness of an immediate family member
3. Religious reasons (California Education Code Section 89320)
4. Jury duty or government obligation
5. University sanctioned or approved activities

The Assignment Schedule gives you a week-by-week itinerary of the material but sometimes it will be necessary to revise the schedule. I will announce changes in class and on the WebCT. Always, always, always – if you are having trouble with an assignment, a deadline, or a team member, consult with me for help as early as possible. There is NO extra credit to get more points or to make up missed assignments.

Expectations: This class is a practice business environment. You will be working with colleagues and peers on resolving real world business problems by applying communication strategies. Principles of American “business casual” are standard today in many parts of the world as guides for behavior during meetings and conferences, at seminars and in professional trainings, and in oral and written communication. Demonstrating courtesy and consideration towards ALL class members is the expected behavior in this class. This includes: being in class on time, keeping cell-phones, watch alarms, and pagers off, and responding to questions and joining in class discussion in a thoughtful manner. Please reserve your snacks for the break period unless you are prepared to share with everyone in the class.
YOU are responsible for keeping up with the class assignments and for any changes which I will announce in class or on the WebCT. If you miss a class, it is YOUR responsibility to find out what was covered in class and what work was assigned. Share contact information with other class members to keep up with the class. I will be using WebCT regularly to post handouts, slides, assignments, and any schedule changes. Use your class network to develop good communication skills rather than turning to me for all your questions about assignments.

Feedback Policy: I will NOT discuss your individual grades, attendance or submitted work, unless we do this in my office. Discussing individual issues tends to disrupt the class. However, I will be glad to meet with you during scheduled office hours or to make arrangements for a more convenient time so that privacy can be maintained.

I am glad to help you with your assignments, but I will not proofread, edit, or “look over” your work. I may choose not to respond to e-mails which demonstrate poor business communication strategies (are not signed with your full name, or which ask me to reply “ASAP”). If you have scheduled an appointment to discuss your work, be prepared with specific questions to take advantage of the time. If you can not keep your appointment, please let me know so that I can dedicate that time to another student.

Grading Policy: How to Get the Grade You Want

Your total individual scores must be near 75 percent to get a “C” grade. You can not get a C if you don’t proofread your work. Serious proofreading errors include subject-verb agreement, noun and verb endings, punctuation errors that interfere with meaning, and spelling. I will post resources to help you with your writing skills on WebCT. Confidential team evaluations will affect your team grade. Class participation will affect your total grade.

“A” = 90 – 100 and stands for an outstanding project. Your supervisor would confidently send an “A” document with no edits. This document would make you stand out among other employees. You might even get a raise or promotion!

“B” = 80 – 89 and stands for a praiseworthy, above average project. Your supervisor would send this document with a few minor edits. This document has a few grammatical, mechanical, and/or format errors.

“C” = 70 – 79 and stands for a satisfactory or average project. This document contains several grammatical, mechanical, and/or format errors. It needs major editing before it could be sent.

“D” = 60 – 69 and stands for below average or minimally passing. This document shows some understanding of the assignment. However, it must be completely rewritten before your supervisor would send it to anyone. If this is a report, the project will take at least a full day just to rewrite, and will require additional research and source work.

“F” = below 60 and stands for a failing project. This document does not show an understanding of the assignment. It would put you in serious jeopardy on the job. Instead of permitting you to rewrite it, your boss may say, “You’re fired!”
Plagiarism: This is a breach of professional ethic in business and could have serious consequences for you as a student and as a professional in your job. Plagiarism is “any attempt to take credit for work that is not your own.” This includes paraphrasing and failing to cite sources.

Using proper citations and giving credit to your sources is critical to success in this course. Plagiarized text is subject to heavy penalties, including an “F” grade for an assignment. Repeated examples of plagiarism over several assignments may result in an “F” for the course. We will review how to identify and analyze good sources for your research assignments. We will also review the process of appropriately citing all borrowed materials. For appropriate citations, you need two things: a complete alphabetical source listing AND individual parenthetical citations at each point in the text where you borrow material.

You must give credit to sources of paraphrases, quoted, or borrowed ideas: Plagiarism (using others’ words or ideas without giving credit through citations and source listing) is cause for a failing grade!

Schedule of Assignments and Readings
This is a preliminary schedule. Changes will be announced in class and on WebCT. Full details and requirements for each assignment will be discussed in class and posted on WebCT.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic and Assignment</th>
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| 1    | January 23, 25 | **Topic:** Course Introduction & Overview. Syllabus discussed.  
**Assignment:** Read Ch. 1 “Communication in the Workplace,”  
 Ch. 2 “Adaptation & the Selection of Words,”  
 Ch. 17 “Correctness of Communication.”  
 Take “Self-Administered Diagnostic Test of Correctness” (pg. 526). |
| 2    | Jan. 30  
Feb. 1 | **Topic:** Fundamentals of Business Writing.  
**Assignment:** Read Ch. 3 “Construction of Clear Sentences & Paragraphs,”  
 Ch. 4 “Writing for Effect,” Ch. 9 “Strategies in the Job-Search Process.” |
| 3    | February 6, 8 | **Topic:** Communicating for Employment. Resumes & Job Cover Letters.  
**Assignment:** Read Ch. 10 “Basics of Report Writing,”  
 Ch. 11 “Short Reports & Proposals.” |
**Assignment:** Read Ch. 12 “Long, Formal Reports,” Ch. 13 “Graphics,”  
 Ch. 19 “Business Research Methods.” |
| 5    | February 20, 22 | **Topic:** Long Formal Reports & Research Methods.  
The parts of the report. Analyzing, interpreting & presenting information. |
| 6    | Feb. 27  
March 1 | **Topics:** Formulating Conclusions & Making Recommendations. Basic Patterns of Business Messages.  
**Assignment:** Read Ch. 5 “The Writing Process & an Introduction to Business Messages,” Ch. 6 “Directness in Good-News & Neutral Messages.” |
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
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<tr>
<td>March 6, 8</td>
<td>Topic: The “Direct Approach.” (Good News &amp; Neutral Messages).</td>
<td>Assignment: Read Ch. 7 “Indirectness in Bad-News Messages.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 13, 15</td>
<td>Topic: The “Indirect Approach” (Bad-News Messages).</td>
<td>Assignment: Read Ch. 8 “Indirectness in Persuasive Messages.”</td>
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<td>March 20, 22</td>
<td><em><strong>MID-TERM EXAM on MARCH 22</strong></em></td>
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<td>March 25</td>
<td>*****SPRING BREAK *****</td>
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<td>April 1</td>
<td>Topics: Sales Letters. Documenting research sources &amp; using citations.</td>
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<td>April 3, 5</td>
<td>Topic: In-class team planning &amp; consultation on Formal Analytical Report.</td>
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<td>April 10, 12</td>
<td>Formal Analytical Report DUE April 17 (at the beginning of class).</td>
<td>In-class Report Team Evaluations (to be completed by all team members). Assignment: Read Ch. 16 “Techniques of Cross-Cultural Communication,” Ch. 15 “Public Speaking &amp; Oral Reporting.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 24, 26</td>
<td>Topics: Cross-Cultural Communication &amp; Effective Oral Presentations.</td>
<td>In-class preparation for Oral Presentations.</td>
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<td>May 1, 3</td>
<td>Oral Presentations</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 8, 10</td>
<td>Oral Presentations (continued).</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 15</td>
<td>FINAL EXAM</td>
<td>11:30 – 13:30</td>
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### Assignment Due Dates

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>In-Class Writing Projects</strong> (10 total)</td>
<td>Same day</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Take-Home Writing Projects</strong> (5 total)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Resume Job Portfolio</td>
<td>February 15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Job-Search Letter</td>
<td>February 15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Good News Message</td>
<td>March 13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bad News Message</td>
<td>March 22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Persuasive (or Sales) Message</td>
<td>May 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid-Term Exam</td>
<td>March 22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Formal Analytical Report</td>
<td>April 17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>May 15</td>
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